

Online Education FAQ's

Students and schools often have common questions concerning online distance education.

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1. Is online learning for me?

You need to determine if the advantages of online learning outweigh the disadvantages.

Advantages: Convenient, flexible, 24/7 course access, unlimited online resources, independent working schedule.

Disadvantages: Technical skills needed (see next questions), face-to-face contact is limited.

Generally, self-motivated, self-disciplined individuals with good reading and comprehension skills will do better in an online course than others. But this is also true of face-to-face courses.

2. What type of computer skills do I need?

Online students are expected to have a basic knowledge of how to work with their computer and its operating system and a basic knowledge of software applications such as word processing, email, internet browser, and search engines. See ALHSO's [Minimum Technology Requirements](#) document for more information.

3. What type of computer hardware/software do I need?

See ALHSO's [Minimum Technology Requirements](#) document. Some courses will require additional software which is included in ALHSO's [Textbook-Software Requirements](#) document, which is updated annually.

4. How do I enroll in an online course?

Registration information can be found on the [ALHSO.org](#) website under the Recourses tab, [Registration Forms](#) link. You may also email ALHSO superintendent Dr. Jim Grunwald at grunwajr@mlc-wels.edu for assistance.

5. After enrollment, how soon can I access a course?

Once registered for an online course, two things must occur before you will be able to access your course online. The ALHSO needs to create a user account for you and your course instructor needs to make the course available to students. About a three weeks before the start of the course your account will be created. A week or two before the start of the course ALHSO will email you information on how to access your course online.

6. How much does it cost to take an online course?

Information on current ALHSO registration fees and tuition costs are included in the [Registration Form and](#)

Information Document available on the ALHSO.org website under the Recourses tab, **Registration Forms** link. Some schools will cover the registration fee and course tuition for their students, while other schools expect the parents/students to cover the cost. Check with your local WELS school for their policy.

7. Do I need to purchase a textbook or materials for an online course?

Many online courses will use the same textbook used in a face-to-face version of the course. However, some online courses access all course materials directly via the internet at no additional cost. See ALHSO's [Textbook-Software Requirements](#) document (updated annually) for detailed information concerning your course. Contact the course instructor with any questions.

8. Where do I work on the course, at school or at home?

ALHSO expects that students attending WELS schools work on the course at school at a set time each day, just as they would for any other course they are taking at the school. Students not attending WELS schools typically work on the course at home.

9. When do online courses begin/end?

First semester courses begin in late August and end in mid-December. Second semester courses begin in early January and end in mid to late May. Summer term courses begin in early June and end in late July. Consult the ALHSO.org website for specific dates.

10. What is the time commitment for an online course?

As a general rule of thumb, the time commitment for an online course is expected to be similar to the time commitment if the same course were taught in a traditional face-to-face classroom.

11. How do online courses work?

Online courses through ALHSO are accessed through the Internet. Once students enroll in a course they are given a username and password that allows them to access the course website. ALHSO uses Moodle as its learning management system (LMS) to facilitate its online courses. Students do not install the Moodle on their computer; they simply use its tools directly from the ALHSO Moodle website. A typical course is divided into a series of lessons, similar to a face-to-face course.

12. Do I work through the course independently?

Not usually. Often other students will be taking the course at the same time and you will communicate with them and the instructor via the discussion tools in the LMS. The instructor sets specific deadlines to complete each activity, but students usually do not need to access the course at a specific time each day.

13. Do I have to be online at a certain time every day?

ALHSO online courses are offered in an asynchronous format, which means students and instructors do not all have to access their course at a specific time each day, but can access and work on the course at times that are convenient to them. In most online courses it is extremely important that students participate in the course Monday through Friday each week. Specific requirements for participation will be laid out by your instructor.

14. What does a typical online lesson look like?

The instructor will break the course down into a series of lessons and will provide a "lesson guide" to lead the students through each lesson. A typical lesson might include reading materials from a textbook or an online source, discussion of the material with other students and the instructor via a discussion forum tool, and assignment type activities that each student completes and submits to the instructor via an assignment tool. Many online courses also have self-correcting online quizzes/tests.

15. How do online courses compare to face-to-face courses?

Online courses are treated the same way as face-to-face courses and are held to the same academic standards. **The content** will be similar, if not identical. Online courses can include assignments, presentations, discussions, projects, tests, etc. The course materials will often be reworked for online delivery, but the content remains the same. High school and college transcripts usually make no distinction whether a particular course was completed online or face-to-face.

The difficulty level of the course work is intended to be the same. Do realize, though, that you do not have the imposed structure that accompanies a face-to-face course. Being successful in an online course does require an extra measure of self-discipline to stay on task and get work in on time.

Time commitment is expected to be similar between an online and a face-to-face course. (See the answer to **What is the time commitment for an online course?** for a more detailed answer.)

Main differences between an online and a face-to-face course are that scheduling of class/study time is more flexible, communication with instructor and classmates is online, course materials have been reworked for online delivery, work is submitted online, and students need to be able to stay on task without prodding.

16. How do I get technical help?

While it is usually the responsibility of students to seek local technical help with the computer and software they need to take an online course, technical assistance on accessing the course and working with the LMS (Moodle) will be available through ALHSO. Feel free to contact ALHSO superintendent Dr. Jim Grunwald for assistance at grunwajr@mlc-wels.edu.

17. I am new to online learning. Is there an orientation session available?

Yes. Once you have registered for an online course an account will be created for you. About two weeks before the start of the course you should receive instructions on how to access a free online orientation that will lead you through working with online activities commonly used in online courses.

18. Do online course credits transfer to other schools?

Whether a course was taken online or in a traditional classroom environment should have no bearing on whether the course transfers in to a school or not. Ultimately, it is the school that you want to transfer the course to that needs to determine if the course will be accepted or not. Hence, it is always wise to check with the receiving school prior to starting a course.

19. If my question was not answered, what should I do?

If your question was not listed, or if you have a question or comment on a provided answer, please send an email to the ALHSO superintendent, Dr. Jim Grunwald, at grunwajr@mlc-wels.edu.