UMA Online Learning Tips

Learning online can be intimidating, especially because many of us developed learning skills in a traditional classroom. To succeed in a virtual classroom, you need to adjust your study habits and adapt to new technologies.

1. Take Advantage of the Resources around You

Here at UMA, there are resources to help you get the most out of your courses. Take advantage of [Coaching and Tutoring services](#) to guide you through your journey as a student. An **Academic Success Coach** can assist you from admission to graduation, helping you overcome barriers along the way. Reach out to [Advising](#) and [Counseling](#)—we're here to help! For technology questions, [IT](#) is available, and [UMA Library Services](#) is another important academic resource to familiarize yourself with.

Engage in **networking opportunities** with classmates and instructors. Instructors can be a valuable resource for you as a student. Start by sending a quick email to **introduce yourself**—small connections can end up going a long way. **Read your syllabus** to find our when instructors hold **office hours**, and don't hesitate to ask questions. Interact with your classmates in discussion forums and group projects in your courses. To build stronger relationships with campus community, follow UMA's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages and participate in [Student Life](#) activities to meet fellow students. Consider joining one of [UMA's Clubs & organizations](#) to network with students who share similar interests. You may even want to consider taking a [work study position](#) or volunteering in exchange for a free course with the UMA Volunteer Waiver program.

2. If Possible, Get Your Employer On Board

Many employers are happy to support their employees' college pursuits as long as it doesn't interfere with their job duties. In certain cases, they may even be willing to help with **tuition costs**, particularly if your course of study relates to the business. Your employer may also be willing to give you **flexible hours** or **remote work privileges** to help you fit coursework into your schedule. If you have a long commute, saving yourself those hours on the road can free up significant time. Make sure you have enough flexibility to balance the time commitment of online courses with your job.

3. Prepare and Plan for Online Success

Learn what the **technology requirements** are for your online courses. UMA's programs work with both PC and Mac computers, and are compatible with major web browsers. When choosing a course, **check the syllabus** to ensure you have no personal or professional scheduling conflicts. Be realistic about the demands and choose a course that will fit into your schedule. If you're ultimately pursuing a degree or certificate, remember to be **flexible**. There are going to be semesters when taking two or three courses is achievable, and others when you may only be able to dedicate the time to one. Keep in mind that planning too far in advance can be overwhelming at times. Try mapping out a semester or two in advance rather than planning your entire academic curriculum at once.

4. Don't Underestimate the Time Commitment

Online courses are rigorous! Don't treat them differently than you would a regular class. Without face-to-face reminders, it can be easy to overlook looming deadlines and wind up scrambling to finish at the last minute. To avoid this, **schedule regular study time**, preferably daily. During study sessions, look through upcoming assignments to ensure you've budgeted enough time to give them all your best effort. Though online courses are inherently more flexible than traditional face-to-face classes, the time commitment required to succeed is no different. You'll need to manage your time well. **Block time on your calendar** not only for completing assignments, but also for research and for participating in discussion boards.

5. Know Your Strengths, Challenges, and Motivators

Set yourself up for success by making plans you'll actually stick to. If you're not a morning person, don't plan on studying before work. If you're consistently exhausted by 7 p.m., don't schedule study time for the late evening hours. Some people work best in long uninterrupted chunks of time; others fare better with shorter more frequent sessions. The key is to know yourself well enough to **create a routine** that enables you to do your best work.

Reward yourself with something that encourages you to stick with your work until it's done. Consider what motivates you. Yes, education is its own reward, but it doesn't hurt to build in more immediate rewards for your hard work. **Set a goal** and treat yourself when you accomplish it. This doesn't have to mean an expensive or indulgent treat. Even allowing yourself to watch your favorite show will work if that feels rejuvenating to you.

6. Create a Quiet Workspace and Consistent Routine

Designate a **study space** in your home just for your coursework, so you don't have to clear things away each time you need to attend a class. **Separating work from home** is crucial when taking an online course. Try finding a quiet room, or section of a room, with minimal

distractions. Studying in the same place at the same general time creates a stable routine as you participate in your courses each week.

7. Schedule Time for Relationships

Attending school, whether online or in a traditional classroom, is challenging. You'll need both logistical and emotional support throughout. Students who find themselves neglecting their **support networks** in order to take classes are much more likely to drop out. Be sure to communicate with the important people in your life – let them know what you are doing and what kind of support they can provide if needed. There will be times when you must give your all to your coursework, so make sure to carve out time during the less intense periods to **spend time with your family and friends** and nurture those relationships. Knowing that you've made time to spend with the important people in your life can make periods of intensity more bearable for both you and the people you love.

Sources:

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