Student Handbook

for

Online Courses

THOMAS EDISON
STATE UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Thomas Edison State University and your online course. As an adult learner and online student, you probably appreciate the freedom of earning credit toward your degree while studying on your own schedule and in your own location. However, to complete your coursework, you need to be self-disciplined and self-motivated. You also need to be organized so that you can study on a regular schedule. When you bring these qualities to your coursework, you will make steady and rewarding progress toward your educational goals.

The Online Student Handbook contains the information you need to get organized and to stay on track as you proceed through each Thomas Edison State University online course. The principal sections of the Handbook are indexed in the column at the right. These sections contain essential guidelines for completing various administrative tasks for which you are responsible (e.g., acquiring your course materials, submitting assignments, arranging for examinations, and keeping the University informed of status changes), meeting the academic standards established by the University, and pursuing your education with honesty and integrity.

All this information needs your careful attention so that you get the most out of your courses and receive the proper credit. Before doing anything else, please read the Handbook carefully and refer to it frequently. Students often find it helpful to print the Handbook for easy reference.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Thomas Edison State University is committed to maintaining academic quality, excellence, and honesty. The University expects all members of its community to share the commitment to academic integrity, an essential component of a quality academic experience.

Students at Thomas Edison State University are expected to exhibit the highest level of academic citizenship. In particular, students are expected to read and follow all policies, procedures, and program information guidelines contained in publications; pursue their learning goals with honesty and integrity; demonstrate that they are progressing satisfactorily and in a timely fashion by meeting course deadlines and following outlined procedures; observe a code of mutual respect in dealing with mentors, staff, and other students; behave in a manner consistent with the standards and codes of the profession in which they are practicing; keep official records updated regarding changes in name, address, telephone number, or e-mail address; and meet financial obligations in a timely manner. Students not practicing good academic citizenship may be subject to disciplinary action including suspension, dismissal, or financial holds on records.

All members of the University community are responsible for reviewing the Academic Code of Conduct Policy in the University Catalog and online at www.tesu.edu.

Academic Dishonesty

Thomas Edison State University expects all of its students to approach their education with academic integrity—the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception. All mentors and administrative staff members at the University insist on strict standards of academic honesty in all courses. Academic

dishonesty undermines this objective. Academic dishonesty can take the following forms:

- Cheating
- Gaining or providing unauthorized access to examinations or using unauthorized materials during exam administration
- Submitting credentials that are false or altered in any way
- Plagiarizing (including copying and pasting from the Internet without using quotation marks and without acknowledging sources)
- Forgery, fabricating information or citations, or falsifying documents
- Submitting the work of another person in whole or in part as your own (including work obtained through document sharing sites, tutoring schools, term paper companies, or other sources)
- Submitting your own previously used assignments without prior permission from the mentor
- Facilitating acts of dishonesty by others (including making tests, papers, and other course assignments available to other students, either directly or through document sharing sites, tutoring schools, term paper companies, or other sources)
- Tampering with the academic work of other students

Plagiarism

Thomas Edison State University is committed to helping students understand the seriousness of plagiarism, which is defined as using the work and ideas of others without proper citation. The University takes a strong stance against plagiarism, and students found to be plagiarizing are subject to discipline under the academic code of conduct policy.

If you copy phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or whole documents word-for-word—or if you paraphrase by changing a word here and there—without identifying the author, or without identifying it as a direct quote, then you are plagiarizing. Please keep in mind that this type of identification applies to Internet sources as well as to print-based sources. Copying and pasting from the Internet, without using quotation marks and without acknowledging sources, constitutes plagiarism. (For information about how to cite Internet sources, see Online Student Handbook > Academic Standards > "Citing Sources.")

Accidentally copying the words and ideas of another writer does not excuse the charge of plagiarism. It is easy to jot down notes and ideas from many sources and then write your own paper without knowing which words are your own and which are someone else's. It is more difficult to keep track of each and every source. However, the conscientious writer who wishes to avoid plagiarizing never fails to keep careful track of sources.

Always be aware that if you write without acknowledging the sources of your ideas, you run the risk of being charged with plagiarism.

Clearly, plagiarism, no matter the degree of intent to deceive, defeats the purpose of education. If you plagiarize deliberately, you are not educating yourself, and you are wasting your time on courses meant to improve your skills. If you plagiarize through carelessness, you are deceiving yourself.

For examples of unintentional plagiarism, advice on when to quote and when to paraphrase, and information about writing assistance and originality report checking, click the links provided below.

Disciplinary Process for Plagiarism

Acts of both intentional and unintentional plagiarism violate the [Academic Code of Conduct](#).

If an incident of plagiarism is an isolated minor oversight or an obvious result of ignorance of proper citation requirements, the mentor may handle the matter as a learning exercise. Appropriate consequences may include the completion of tutorials, assignment rewrites, or any other reasonable learning tool in addition to a lower grade for the assignment or course. The mentor will notify the student and appropriate dean of the consequence by e-mail.

If the plagiarism appears intentional and/or is more than an isolated incident, the mentor will refer the matter to the appropriate dean, who will gather information about the violation(s) from the mentor and student, as necessary. The dean will review the matter and notify the student in writing of the specifics of the charge and the sanction to be imposed.

Possible sanctions include:

- Lower or failing grade for an assignment
- Lower or failing grade for the course
- Rescinding credits
- Rescinding certificates or degrees
- Recording academic sanctions on the transcript
- Suspension from the University
- Dismissal from the University

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Good written expression is the key to success in Thomas Edison State University Guided Study courses. The following information is meant to help you work to the required standards. The suggestions on writing style and structure and the advice on answering questions can be applied to both your written assignments and your examinations.

The general rubric below will give you a basic understanding of important things to consider when preparing your written work. The rubric is **not** a definitive tool for scoring your work; it is merely a guide to give you an idea of things your mentor might consider when evaluating your written expression.

Excellent to Exemplary	Work is complete, original, insightful, and of a quality that exceeds the expectations of the assignment or question and the course level. It demonstrates an in-depth understanding of course issues and a high level of analytical skills. Thoughts are expressed clearly and logically with few, if any, errors in grammar and mechanics. Transitions consistently help move the reader from one major idea to the next. References are from reputable sources, and sources are properly cited.
Satisfactory to Very Good	Work is complete and of a level that meets the expectations of the assignment or question and course level. It demonstrates a sufficient understanding of course issues and adequate analytical skills. Thoughts are expressed clearly and logically, and the work demonstrates a college-level understanding of grammar and mechanics. Transitions are used adequately to help move the reader from one major idea to the next. References are from reputable sources, and documentation of sources contains few errors.
Marginally Acceptable to Satisfactory	Work is partially incomplete and/or of a quality that only partially meets the expectations or fails to meet the expectations of the assignment or question and course level. It does not adequately demonstrate an understanding of course issues, and a demonstration of analytical skills is lacking. Thoughts are expressed awkwardly and sometimes illogically, and the work contains significant grammatical and mechanical errors. Transitions may be used sparingly or not at all. References may be inadequate and from disreputable or poorly chosen sources, and documentation of sources is poorly presented and/or inadequate.
Minimal Pass to Marginally Acceptable	Work is incomplete and/or of a quality that only partially meets the expectations of the assignment or question and course level. It demonstrates little or no understanding of course issues and fails to demonstrate analytical skills. Thoughts are consistently expressed in an awkward and illogical manner, and grammatical and mechanical errors distract the reader. Transitions between thoughts and ideas may be missing throughout the work. Necessary references may be inadequate, completely missing, and/or chosen from disreputable sources. References are not cited or they are cited inadequately and/or improperly.

Fail	Work does not address the question or questions asked and/or it demonstrates a lack of effort. It lacks demonstrated understanding of course issues and analytical skills. Thoughts are incomplete or consistently expressed in an awkward and illogical manner. Grammatical and mechanical errors distract the reader, and transitions between thoughts and ideas may be missing throughout the work. Necessary references may be inadequate and completely missing and/or chosen from disreputable sources. References are not cited or they are cited inadequately and/or improperly.

Adapted from the work of Dr. Bonnie Mullinix, Monmouth University

Writing Style

Written work—including papers, assignments, and examinations—should be presented clearly and concisely in a formal expository style. Clear writing is a product of clear thinking. Observe the basic rules of grammar and punctuation. If you have problems with your writing, get help. Four useful references are listed in the Introduction section of the "Student Handbook for Guided Study Courses" and are available from our materials supplier.

Structure

A well-structured essay has a minimum of three components: introduction, body, and conclusion. Carefully review each of your essays before submitting to ensure that you have included each component.

Research

Papers and lesson activities may require that you conduct research. You may use libraries convenient to your location. But also keep in mind that the New Jersey State Library and the Library for the Blind and Handicapped offer services and resources to Thomas Edison State University students. Students may visit, call, or fax the library, located at 185 West State Street in Trenton, New Jersey. Professional library staff are available to assist you.

>Reference librarian: (609) 278-2640 ext.103
>Internet: www.njstatelib.org

The Library's interactive website for students at Thomas Edison State University (http://www.njstatelib.org/research_library/services_for/thomas_edison_state_university/) includes information about obtaining a free library card as well as full-text journals online, databases, access to the catalog, interlibrary loan request forms, request forms for photocopies, and a range of other subject-specific information.

Citing Sources

You must acknowledge the source of all expressions and ideas that are not your own. If you have

questions about a standard format for references (citations), refer to General Information > Writing Style Guides, to **Writing Research Papers** by James D. Lester, or to **A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations** by Kate Turabian. When quoting or paraphrasing another's words, cite the source(s) of your information. Failure to cite sources is plagiarism. (See Academic Integrity.)

When you use Internet sources, please do so with caution. Choose reputable sites, and look for the credentials of the author. In your citation, give as much pertinent information about the site as possible. For example, include the author's name, the title of the article, the date on which the article was created, the date you retrieved it, and the web address (the URL). For samples of how to cite Internet sources, refer to the latest edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, or to online sources such as:

- Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)
  (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/)
- The Writing Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison
  (http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Documentation.html)

Relevance to the Question

Answer the question asked. Identify the main verb in the question and answer accordingly. For example, if you are asked to analyze a problem, do not describe the situation. Select the subtopics implied by the question and deal with each of them so as to answer the entire question.

Coherent Argument

The development of the argument and the supporting facts in an essay should be like the ribs on a skeleton—all clearly related to the backbone of the question. It is always a good idea—whether responding to an assignment or to an essay question on an exam—to sketch an outline of your arguments before you start writing. Then you can see the most logical way to arrange the elements of your essay.

Implications of the Question

Many essay questions require that you consider at least two (often opposing) points of view. When this is the case, you should choose one approach from the following:

- State a preference for one view rather than another.
- Show that both views are equally valid, given the evidence.
- Demonstrate that neither is particularly impressive.

Also remember:

- Questions beginning with "How far . . ." often expect you to discuss limitations as well.
- Questions beginning with "Would you agree that . . ." often expect you to show that you are aware of the arguments that could be used to oppose your point of view.
- Essay questions that make a statement or pose a problem and then ask you to discuss the statement or problem might require more than one point of view and also some resolution of the problem.
- A question starting with the phrase "What use is . . ." expects you to state why the study of X is

useful in understanding problem Y and in what ways it is not useful. Sometimes you might illuminate your main argument by citing an approach that you think is more useful than the one specified in the question.

- Your answers should always provide evidence that supports your assertions

CHANGE-OF-STATUS REQUESTS

Submit all requests for extensions, transfers, and withdrawals to the Office of the Registrar using the correct change-of-status form provided in the General Information area of the course website (see under Administrative Forms) or on the University's "Students Forms" page at http://www.tesu.edu/current-students/Student-Forms.cfm (Current Students > Student Forms). Follow the directions on the form for submitting each one. You can print the PDF file and mail or fax it to the office or person listed on the form.

If you do not have the correct form, make your request **in writing** to the registrar. Action on the request will be based on its postmark, fax date, or electronic submission date and on the University policies in place at the time. Include the appropriate fee with each request. Current fees are listed in the University Catalog. **If your change requires new exam dates, you must inform the Office of Test Administration as soon as your request is verified by the Office of the Registrar.**

Extensions

Students making satisfactory progress may apply for an eight-week extension per course. Mentors must certify that 50 percent of the coursework has been completed, and the student must pay the extension fee. Other than the mentor's certification, no other documentation is required.

The Office of the Registrar will process the request and notify the student of the new course ending date. With the exception of extensions related to military deployments, all students must pay for the extension. This requirement applies even in cases of medical illness or financial hardship. In cases involving military deployments, documentation presented must show deployment dates relevant to the specific course.

For further information about requesting a course extension, see Requesting a Course Extension on the University website (Current Students > Request Course Extension).

Transfers

Requests for transfer from one course, course delivery mode, or course section to another will be considered prior to the first Friday of the course. Transfers may be denied because of lack of space in the requested course. Requests for transfers must be on the proper form or in a letter to the Office of the Registrar containing all the information requested on the "Request for Transfer" form. **Transfers are permitted only to courses offered within the same term**.

Withdrawals

You can withdraw from a course by using the "Request for Course Withdrawal" form. You may be eligible for a tuition refund depending on how many weeks have passed since the semester began.

Comprehensive Tuition students, however, are not eligible for a tuition refund.

Withdrawal from a course does not affect your status in your degree program at the University. You will remain enrolled in the University and retain all previously earned credits.

CONTACTING YOUR MENTOR

If you need guidance through a difficult assignment, you can seek help from your mentor. However, the University expects students to be self-directed. With this in mind, courses are developed according to an independent study model. If you need in-depth help regarding prerequisite knowledge for a course, the mentor may recommend that you look into Smarthinking.com or the services of an independent tutor.

Contact your mentor if you have any difficulty understanding your mentor's comments on your assignments. You should also direct questions regarding examinations and final grades to your mentor. The Center for Learning and Technology (CLT) office staff cannot help you with grade-related information.

Note: Please do not call, write, or submit assignments to your mentor before the scheduled start-date of the semester. When you contact your mentor after the semester begins, please do so either by email or by calling during the office hours indicated by the mentor on the course website.

Important note about email subject lines: Many mentors have junk-mail filters that will automatically delete your message if you do not include the following information in the subject line of your email: your name, the University name (TESU), course name and number, semester and year, and the nature of the communication. For example:

Figure 1. Sample email subject line for sending introduction to mentor	
From:	Joe Student
Sent:	July 14, 2017
To:	Professor Smith
Subject:	Joe Student, TESU, HIS-101-GS001, Introduction

Figure 2. Sample email subject line for sending messages to mentor	
From:	Mary Student
Sent:	October 8, 2017
To:	Professor Smith
Subject:	Mary Student, TESU, MAR-301-GS001, August 2017, Question
about	Midterm

COURSE MATERIALS

As soon as you register for a course, you may purchase course materials by calling the textbook supplier, MBS Direct, at (800) 325-3252 or via the University's MBS website (http://bookstore.mbsdirect.net/tesu.htm). The supplier will ask you what course(s) you are taking and for what term and will arrange to send you all the necessary materials.

When you receive your course materials and are ready to start your online course, please take a minute to check that you have everything you need. Consult the "Course Materials" section of the online Syllabus for a complete list.

Course Website

Your course website on myEdison provides a complete set of course guidelines and specific information about the course you are taking. For instructions on how to proceed through the assignments, read the Syllabus and consult the Course Calendar and individual modules.

Also included on the course website are week-by-week dates for each semester (see Course Calendar and General Information) and all the administrative forms you need for the course you are taking (see General Information).

Textbooks

The "Course Materials" section of the Syllabus lists all the textbooks assigned for each course. Some courses also have a study guide (sometimes called a course guide or student guide) that presents course-related activities including self-assessment exercises, problem sets, and reading assignments in the textbooks.

Certainly, the most convenient way to order texts for Thomas Edison State University courses is from our textbook supplier. The University Catalog provides an order form and gives information about how to order by Internet, phone, fax, or mail. You can purchase your books from other vendors, **but if you do, you must be sure you are buying the correct edition of the textbooks for the semester in which you are taking the course.** The best way to be sure of the correct edition is to call or ask the textbook supplier.

Media Components

Media components—DVDs, CDs, and computer software— are included in many courses. Check the "Course Materials" section of the Syllabus for a list of required media components.

DVDs and CDs are purchased from MBS. In select courses, indispensable videos are streamed directly from the course website to accommodate students (especially in the military) who are unable to or prohibited from leasing media.

Administrative Forms

Administrative forms for the course you are taking are found in the General Information area of the course website. You will need these forms to do any of the following:

- Select a proctor for on-site ("pen-and-paper") course examination(s) ("Proctor Request Form").
- Request an extension to give you added time to complete coursework ("Request for Extension").
- Withdraw from the course ("Request for Course Withdrawal").
- Transfer from one course, course delivery mode, or course section to another within the semester for which you have registered ("Request for Transfer").
- Update any personal information you previously sent to the University ("Student Data Change Form").

Additional student forms can be found on the University website at
http://www.tesu.edu/current-students/Student-Forms.cfm.

DOING THE WORK OF THE COURSE

Once you have received all the necessary course materials, your responsibility for doing the work of the course includes completing course assignments (see Preparing and Submitting Assignments), making sure the written assignments reach your mentor, identifying a proctor for your examination(s) (see Examinations and Proctors), and studying for and taking your examination(s). You are also responsible for keeping the University informed of any change in the status of your progress through the course (see Change-of-Status Requests).

Online courses at Thomas Edison State University use the myEdison portal along with Moodle, the learning management system (LMS), as their delivery platform. If you are new to myEdison and Moodle, please take the time to familiarize yourself with the myEdison learning environment and how to navigate it before you formally begin the course. If you know what to expect, where to go, and how to find things, you can better pace yourself and complete your work on time.

How to Proceed

For each online course you take, start by reviewing the Online Student Handbook and General Information area of the course website. Then read the Syllabus so that you understand clearly the goals of the course and its organization.

As you work on each unit of study (i.e., module, unit, or lesson), keep the following general sequence in mind:

- Skim the assignment and related course documents to acquaint yourself with the learning activities and materials. This will help you plan the time needed to complete the work required.
- Check the information on module or unit objectives, which will help you focus on key points in the reading assignments and the commentaries that accompany them.
- Read the assigned textbook sections and any study notes or commentary in the study guide or course website.
- Do any relevant self-test exercises and check your answers.
- Prepare and submit all written work to your mentor (see the section Preparing and Submitting Assignments).
- Participate in all class and group discussions.

Use the Course Calendar as a guide as you plan activities and schedule assignments. If you are juggling work, family responsibilities, and other courses, you will need to plan ahead to keep up with your course activities and related deadlines. Submitting your assignments on time is essential when contributing to the dialogue in the course. Use the Course Calendar so you don't fall behind on any portion of the course.

EXAMINATIONS AND PROCTORS

General Information

Many online courses (primarily undergraduate courses) require you to take proctored midterm and final examinations. These exams are administered either as online exams using the University's Online Proctor Service or as pen-and-paper exams taken at an approved exam site under the supervision of an approved proctor.

Exams are an important part of your final grade, typically counting for as much as 50 percent of your grade in an online course. (Note: Exam requirements and grading weights vary from course to course. Please consult the "Grading and Evaluation" section in the Syllabus. To receive credit for an online course, you must earn a grade of C or better in area of study and graduate courses or D or better for a course not in your area of study, based on the weighted average of all assigned coursework. Graduate students must maintain a B average to remain in good academic standing.)

Course exams usually have a time limit of two to three hours. Exams may contain objective questions (multiple choice, true-false, matching, etc.), short essay questions, long essay questions, or a combination of these types of questions. For clarification about what will be covered on the exam, contact your mentor and check your online course Syllabus.

All exams are closed-book and closed-notes unless otherwise stated in your course. For proctored pen-and-paper exams taken at an exam site, the inside cover of the examination booklet will also indicate whether study materials are allowed during your exams.

Although some courses allow you to use a textbook during proctored examinations, you will not be allowed to use any other sources of information, whether hard copy or electronic, during the examination. Unless otherwise stated, you may not take a laptop, tablet, smartphone, or any other type of computer or computing device, electronic-communications, playback, or recording device with you to an examination.

If you are found using unauthorized materials during the exam, you will receive an F on the test. In addition, any attempt to copy or remove from the test site information contained on the test will result in a failing test grade. Such actions may possibly warrant action by the University's Ethics Committee as well.

Online Exams

Online exams at Thomas Edison State University are accessed administered through the Examinations section of the course website. Unless stated otherwise in your course, all online midterm and final exams are proctored exams that can be taken using the University's Online Proctor Service.

The Online Proctor Service (OPS) offers you the convenience of taking exams from your home computer. Through this service, you no longer need to travel to an approved proctor site to take tests. To use OPS you will need a webcam, a computer with a microphone and speakers, and a reliable high-speed Internet connection.

Scheduling Your Online Exam

Check the course Course Calendar for the official dates of your midterm and final test weeks. You may take your exams at any time during those two official exam weeks.

1. We strongly recommend that you schedule your online exams during the first week of the semester to secure the time/date that works best with your schedule during the official test week. There are no fees associated with the OPS option. However, if you schedule a test appointment less than 72 hours in advance, there is a $5 fee charged by the OPS vendor. There is also an option for last-minute test scheduling called Take It Now, which requires an $8.75 fee to be paid directly to the OPS vendor. If you schedule in advance, you will not encounter any OPS fees.

2. Click the Online Proctor Service link, and then select the Getting Started tab.

3. Create a username and password, and then select the New Exam tab.

If you have technical problems related to any of the processes, please refer to the technical support contact information provided on the OPS site.

Taking Proctored Exams Online

To take your exams, you will need to have a reliable Internet connection and a computer with a working webcam, microphone, and speakers.

When your test day arrives, log in to the [Online Proctor Service](#) a few minutes before your scheduled exam time. **Log In** with the username and password you established when you scheduled your exam appointment, and then click the **My Exams** tab. After verifying your identification, your online proctor will tell you when to log in to your course space to open the test link. The online proctor will then guide you through the process.

If You Are on Extension

If you are on extension and using OPS, you should call the OPS vendor at 855-772-8678 to schedule a test date for your extended course.

Statement about Cheating

Whether you are taking a proctored exam or an unproctored quiz, you are on your honor not to cheat during the exam. Cheating means:

● Looking up any answer or part of an answer on the Internet, or using any other unauthorized source to find the answer.
● Copying and pasting or in any way copying responses or parts of responses from any other

source into your online test. This includes but is not limited to copying and pasting from other documents or spreadsheets, whether written by yourself or anyone else.
- Plagiarizing answers.
- Asking anyone else to assist you by whatever means available while you take the exam.
- Copying any part of the exam to share with other students.
- Telling your mentor that you need another attempt at the exam because your connection to the Internet was interrupted when that is not true.

If there is reason to suspect that you were cheating in any way, you run the risk of being given a failing grade in this course. The University also reserves the right to submit essay answers (where required) to a checking service to check for plagiarism. If plagiarism is detected, you will also be given a failing grade.

Pen/Paper Exams

If you are taking a pen-and-paper exam, you will need to select a proctor who meets the University's guidelines (see below) and to submit a "Proctor Request Form" by the end of the first week of the semester. You must submit this form at the beginning of each new semester for each course in which you choose to take the pen-and-paper exam(s), even if you are using the same proctor from previous semesters. You will receive email notification when your proctor has been approved. If you are late in sending in the "Proctor Request Form," the mailing of your exam(s) will also be late.

Proctors are not aware of your semester deadlines, so make sure you complete all required exams by the last day of the semester. If you cannot take a scheduled examination—or if you have filed for a course extension—you must notify your proctor immediately. Proctors are required to return your exam to the University if it has not been administered within thirty days of receipt.

If you have been granted an extension, you will need to send OTA an email at testing@tesu.edu three weeks before your desired test date to request that the exam be mailed to your proctor. The Office of Test Administration cannot guarantee that the exam will arrive on time if you do not provide a three-week lead time in making the request. Again, proctors are not aware of extension deadlines, so you must be sure to take all required exams by the last day of the extension.

Make sure you are ready to complete the test when you arrive on test day, because once the exam seal is broken, you will be graded on the work completed. Examinations may not be retaken. For pen-and-paper exams, please be sure to review the exam cover carefully before you break the exam seal to verify that you have the correct test for the course in which you are enrolled. If this information is not accurate, immediately notify your proctor so that OTA can be alerted. Your proctor will then be provided with instructions.

Selecting and Requesting a Proctor (Non-Military Students)

Nonmilitary students have two principal options for selecting a proctor for pen/paper exams:

- **Option A:** Select a proctor at a site near your home or place of work.
- **Option B**: Take the test at Thomas Edison State University in Trenton, NJ.

Option A: Select a Proctor at a Site Near Your Home or Place of Work

You can take Thomas Edison State University pen/paper exams at an accredited college or university or at any public library. It is advisable to find a location close to your home or workplace so that you have easy access during the official test week, especially if you are taking more than one course per semester.

- **Accredited college or university**—Contact your local college or university and find a full-time member of the testing office or a full-time professor or professional staff member. Adjunct and part-time professors do not qualify.
- **Public library**—A full-time librarian at a public library is acceptable as a proctor. Librarians at elementary and high schools, however, do **not** qualify.

Note: We do **not** send exams to employers, coworkers, corporate training offices, members of the clergy, family members, or friends.

Be sure to verify that your proctor is available during the designated test week. Once the proctor is approved, the exam will be mailed from Thomas Edison State University two weeks before the official test week. Call your proctor the week before the official test week to confirm delivery of the examination(s) and to set up a specific test date. Never travel to your test site unless you have confirmed that your test is there. Unless you have received an official course extension, all exams and assignments must be submitted by the last day of the semester.

If you select Option A, there are three steps to complete:

1. Go to http://www.tesu.edu/degree-completion/Proctor-Requests.cfm to access either the Online Proctor Request Form or the Paper Proctor Request Form.

2. If you are using the Proctor Request Form, submit all the information online using the appropriate forms during the first week of your term (GS, OL, Epack and TECEP Exams; Military Proctor Form; International Proctor Form). You will receive verification when your proctor has been approved. If you do not receive a proctor confirmation email within five (5) business days, contact OTA at testing@tesu.edu.

3. Call your proctor the week before the official test week to verify receipt of all test materials. Then schedule a test date that is convenient for you both. **Note**: The proctor will not be aware of your course deadlines, so it is your responsibility to make sure all exams are completed by the last day of the semester or, if you have been granted an extension, the last day of that extension.

Option B: Take the Test at Thomas Edison State University in Trenton, NJ

If you live or work near Trenton, you may elect to take your pen-and-paper exam at Thomas Edison State University. Specific test dates are listed on the University's website at http://www.it-frontdesk.com/resv/tesu/. Test sessions are offered at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. in the testing room at 111 West State Street.

If you select Option B, there are two steps to complete:

1. Go to https://forms.tesu.edu/dfprocto.php or the Paper Proctor Request Form for our Trenton test room. If you do not receive a proctor confirmation email within five (5) business days, contact OTA at testing@tesu.edu. .

2. Go to the online Test Scheduling System to select your test appointment. Students are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis, so reserve a seat for your exam as soon as possible. Students can usually take two exams per test date, but that may not be the case if your exams are more than two hours each. If you have questions about scheduling, contact testing@tesu.edu.

Selecting and Requesting a Proctor (Military Students)

Military students can take examinations using a proctor who meets the guidelines discussed below. The University must first approve the proctor before any examinations can be mailed or completed.

Acceptable Proctors

Acceptable proctors must be a neutral third party with no ongoing relationship to the student. The proctor cannot be a student at Thomas Edison State University. In addition, the proctor should hold a position of responsibility, be able to communicate in English, and have no conflict of interest with either the student or Thomas Edison State University. Any full-time commissioned officer (CWO2 and above), serving on active duty, who is senior to the student in rank and not serving within the student's direct chain of command, may fulfill this requirement.

Acceptable proctors for military students include:

- Commissioned officers of your unit not in your direct reporting chain to the commanding officer, that is, division officers, department heads, platoon commanders, special/subordinate staff officers with whom you do not have a direct supervisory relationship
- NCPACE reps
- Test control officers (TCO)
- Education services officers (ESO)
- Career counselors
- Base librarians
- Chaplains

Unacceptable proctors include coworkers, direct or immediate supervisors, family members, friends, and medical staff at hospitals, medical centers, and clinics.

Students serving at remote or isolated postings should make every effort to find a proctor outside of their direct reporting chain. If this is not possible, contact the Office of Test Administration at testing@tesu.edu.

Requesting a Proctor

To request a proctor and obtain approval from the University:

1. Complete the Military Proctor Request Form found on the University's "Proctor Request—Military Students" page at http://www.tesu.edu/military/Proctor-Request.cfm.

2. Select your state or country and corresponding base from the drop-down list under Method 1 on

the form. If your location is **not** listed, then choose Method 2, and provide the name, rank or title, and work-mail address of your proctor.

3. Please be accurate in submitting all contact information. Incorrect contact information can lead to serious delays in taking your exam and in completing your final grade report.

Once we have your Proctor Request Form, your exam will be mailed from Thomas Edison State University two weeks before the official test week. Contact your proctor the week before the official test week to confirm delivery of the test and to confirm your test date. **You must complete all assignments and exams by the last day of the semester** unless you have been granted an official course extension.

If you are deployed and want to continue with your course at your new location, please submit the "Proctor Request Form" in the same way as described above. Students who are deployed are eligible for course extensions if they complete a "Request for Extension" form and provide a copy of their deployment orders. If you are deployed but opt to wait until your return to finish the course, simply notify your base proctor that you will be taking the test when you return. This is possible *only* if you have received an official course extension. No exams will be administered after the last day of the semester unless an official course extension has been granted.

Important Reminders

- If you do not submit a "Proctor Request Form" for each course in which you wish to take the pen-and-paper exam(s), OTA will not know where you intend to take your exam(s). You **must** submit a proctor form at the beginning of each new semester, even if you are using the same proctor as in previous semesters.
- It is your responsibility to verify that the proctor's name and mailing address are correct and up to date. If this information is wrong and the exams are mailed to an incorrect address, the delivery of your exams will be delayed.
- If you are on extension, your exams will not be mailed out automatically by OTA. An official course extension in a course means you have an additional eight (8) weeks in which to complete the course. Office of Test Administration staff members do not know when you plan to take tests during your extension period unless you notify them. You must send an email to testing@tesu.edu three (3) weeks before your desired test date to request that the exam be mailed. Students taking exams in the online format should contact OTA three business days before the test date to have the test link opened. Please include your University ID and specify the course and semester.
- **Nonmilitary students**: If you are using Option A and you know your proctor is approved, he or she does not have to complete Page Two of the "Proctor Request Form" each semester. It is your responsibility, however, to verify that the proctor's name and mailing address are correct and up to date. If this information is wrong and the exam is mailed to an incorrect address, the delivery of your exam(s) will be delayed.
- A "Proctor Request Form" should be submitted only if you plan to take your exam(s) in the pen-and-paper format. If you choose to take your exam(s) online through the OPS, you will schedule your test appointment directly with the OPS vendor.

GETTING STARTED

Before you begin the course or courses for which you have registered:

- Familiarize yourself with the myEdison learning environment and how to navigate it.
- Check that you have all of your course materials conveniently near your workstation. (See the section Course Materials.)
- Take note of your mentor's contact information.
- Refer to the Course Calendar, download or print it out, and fill in the dates by which assignments must be submitted. To find the dates, refer to the table of week-by-week dates posted in the calendar. (See also General Information > Week-by-Week Dates in your course website.)
- Make arrangements during the first week of the semester to take proctored examinations. (See the section Examinations and Proctors.)

You might need to work on specific study skills to help you cope successfully with distance learning. The following publications, available from our textbook supplier, may be helpful in this regard.

- *Harbrace College Handbook* by John C. Hodges (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich)
- *How to Study in College* by Walter Pauk (Houghton Mifflin)
- *College Reading and Study Skills* by Nancy V. Wood (Holt, Rinehart & Winston)
- Study Skills for Today's College Student by Jerold W. Apps (McGraw-Hill)

Mentors

You are assigned a mentor for each online course you take with Thomas Edison State University. Contact information for your mentor can be found on the course website.

You will submit all individual assignments to your mentor. He or she, in turn, will send comments on your work directly to you. Your mentor is also responsible for grading exams and quizzes in a given course and for evaluating your online participation.

If you need guidance through a difficult assignment, you can seek help from your mentor. However, the University expects students to be self-directed. With this in mind, courses are developed according to an independent study model. If you need in-depth help regarding prerequisite knowledge for a course, the mentor may recommend that you look into Smarthinking.com or the services of an independent tutor.

For instructions on contacting your mentor, see the section Contacting Your Mentor.

Smarthinking

Thomas Edison State University offers students access to the Smarthinking online tutoring service free of charge. Smarthinking is particularly helpful if you are taking courses in writing, mathematics, statistics, accounting, economics (macro and micro), chemistry, biology, or physics. You may also access Smarthinking if you are taking other subjects but need help with writing. Military students using the GoArmyEd portal should link to Smarthinking directly from the GoArmyEd portal.

Time Schedule

Online courses at Thomas Edison State University generally follow a 12-week format. Regarding time schedules, bear in mind that

- Assignments are due at regular intervals.
  Note: The University's late assignment policy states that written assignments should be submitted no later than the due date unless prior arrangements are made with the mentor and a new due date is established. If you submit an assignment after the due date without having made arrangements with the mentor, a minimum of 5 points (based on an assignment grading scale of 100 points) or 5 percent of the total points will be deducted for each week, or part thereof, that the assignment is late. In order to receive credit for the discussion forum assignment, the student must actively participate during the assigned discussion period. Also, unless you have registered for an extension, assignments submitted after the semester ends (or after the extension date expires) will be returned to you ungraded.
- Midterm exams are scheduled during Week 7 of the semester (Week 5 for eight-week blended courses).
- Final exams must be taken during the last week of the semester.

To complete your work within these time limitations:

- Develop a regular schedule.
- Allow sufficient time for your studies.
- Do not procrastinate about completing reading, writing, and discussion assignments.

Note to Students with Disabilities

Thomas Edison State University is committed to providing reasonable accommodation for students with verified disabilities who are qualified for admission. If you would like to discuss or request accommodation for Thomas Edison State University coursework, please contact the Office of Students with Disabilities at (609) 984-1141 ext. 3415 (voice) or (609) 341-3109 (TTY). It is your responsibility to disclose and verify any disability to the Office of Students with Disabilities when requesting accommodation. All such disclosures will be kept strictly confidential.

ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

Online discussions in Thomas Edison State University courses are asynchronous. That is, they are not conducted as chat rooms where all participants are present at the same time. Rather, you and the other participants contribute to threaded discussions that are accessible to everyone taking the course at the same time and, of course, to the mentor. There may be a deadline for your contributions to the discussion, and those contributions will be considered part of your coursework.

Communication among fellow students and with the mentor is a critical component of online learning. Participation in online discussions involves two distinct activities: an initial response to a posted question (discussion topic) and subsequent comments on classmates' responses. Meaningful participation is

relevant to the content, adds value, and advances the discussion. Comments such as "I agree" and "ditto" are not considered value-adding participation. Therefore, when you agree or disagree with a classmate, the reading, or your mentor, state and support your agreement or disagreement. You will be evaluated on the quality and quantity of your participation. Responses and comments should be properly proofread and edited, professional, and respectful.

Because the mentor will assign a grade for the discussion requirement of your course, quality of comments (both initial and subsequent) are critical. So how do you stand out and attract the attention of your classmates and mentor via the discussion forum?

Here are six key ways to help you generate an effective post, guaranteed to engage your audience and elicit thoughtful responses from your mentor and classmates.

1. **Do your homework.**
   Complete the assigned readings for the module and delve directly into the material. How can you possibly write about a specific concept or topic if you don't have a clear perspective of the course material directly from the start? As you're reading, make connections between the text and the "real world" – find ways to make the concepts applicable to your own life. What value does the content offer you? What added value will you bring to the context of the material? Immerse yourself in the readings so when you're ready to begin writing, you'll be fully prepared to present an authentic, meaningful response.

2. **Wake up your classmates with a strong argument or perspective.**
   Develop a strong argument and support your statements with evidence from the course materials. In other words: research, research, research and cite, cite, cite. Be concise and articulate your ideas thoroughly. Pose an additional question with supported documentation. Explore all parts of the discussion question and get students to think beyond traditional measures. Not sure if your ideas will garner the attention you're looking for? Be sure to reference a rubric to keep you on track.

3. **Be relevant.**
   A post placed in an authentic context is the key to generating a successful discussion. Include personal or professional experience (when it's applicable), and support your ideas with text evidence. Are you learning about something that you have direct experience with or currently explore in the workplace? Offer real-world application of these ideas to bring added value to the conversation and resonate with other students. Remember to always relate direct references to concepts you're learning about and establish those connections with evidence from academic sources.

4. **Bring something unique to the post.**
   What's the added value you're contributing to the dialogue? Provide a video clip, article reading, or link to an outside resource that highlights the message you're conveying; do something extra that requires others to think and respond to the ideas you're sharing. Establishing a standpoint and supporting it with evidence are great ways to demonstrate that you are not only making connections with the content but also attaining a deep understanding of the material.

5. **Prepare your response in a text editor before you post.**
   Whether you love working in the cloud via Google Apps or are a longtime fan of Word, use your favorite text editor and draft your response in a text editor before you post to the discussion board. In doing so, you'll have a better chance to ensure the post is cohesive, coherent, and complete. You're also more likely to catch grammatical errors and other mistakes there first.

6. **Leave participants wanting more.**
   Post your response, engage with your classmates, and continue to ask follow-up questions. Be an integral part of the conversation and add value to what is being discussed. Some of the best online discussions continue in the minds of others long after you post to the discussion forum. So the next time you post – ask yourself: What's the added value I can bring directly to this discussion? Conduct your research, support your ideas, be relevant, and work hard to make it happen!

PREPARING AND SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Each online course has a set number of individual activities or assignments that you should complete and submit to your mentor. Many also include a final paper or project in lieu of a final exam. The number and type of activities/assignments, however, vary from course to course. Instructions for activities/assignments also vary from course to course and mentor to mentor. Follow the specific guidelines set forth by your course and/or mentor.

Assignments are an important part of your final grade. To receive credit for an online course, you must earn a grade of C or better in area of study and graduate courses or D or better for a course not in your area of study, based on the weighted average of all assigned coursework. (Graduate students must maintain a B average to remain in good academic standing.) You will receive a score of 0 for any assignment not submitted.

The University's late assignment policy states that written assignments should be submitted no later than the due date unless prior arrangements are made with the mentor and a new due date is established. If you submit an assignment after the due date without having made arrangements with the mentor, a minimum of 5 points (based on an assignment grading scale of 100 points) or 5 percent of the total points will be deducted for each week, or part thereof, that the assignment is late. To receive credit for discussion forum assignments, you must actively participate during the assigned discussion period. Also, unless you have registered for an extension, assignments submitted after the semester ends (or after the extension date expires) will be returned to you ungraded.

Preparing Assignments

Read the assignment requirements carefully, including any specific instructions on length, formatting, style, etc., provided by your mentor. If no specific instructions are given, here are some general suggestions for you to follow:

- Include sufficient identification on every assignment submitted (e.g., your name; the course name, course code, and section number; and the assignment number or title).
- For assignments with multiple questions, identify the question number and restate each

assignment question before providing your answer.

- Review your assignment before submitting it to make sure you have completed the assignment in full. Also, carefully proofread your work for spelling and grammatical errors that could affect your grade.
- Keep copies of all assignments submitted. With electronic submission (see below), assignments are not likely to get lost. But neither the University nor your mentor can assume responsibility for lost assignments. Copies are also useful if your mentor should contact you for clarification about certain parts of the assignment or if you wish to discuss particular comments.

Submitting Assignments Electronically

When satisfied that your assignment represents your best work, submit it to your mentor by means of the assignment link provided in the respective Module or section. The assignment link integrates directly with the online Gradebook and constitutes an easy and secure way to submit assignments and receive feedback from your mentor. Use the Add Submission button within this link to locate and attach your assignment file. Click Save changes to submit your assignment. Be sure to follow any specific instructions from your mentor regarding what file type you should use when submitting the assignment.

Your mentor will assess and evaluate your assignment—usually within a five days of receipt—and return it with his or her comments. Comments on your assignments are intended to enhance your learning. Take the time to read them carefully.

In many courses, your mentor will grade your assignments using an embedded rubric, which is a scoring tool built into the assignment link and gradebook that allows your mentor to evaluate the work of all students based on the same set of criteria. In courses where your mentor will be using embedded rubrics, you will have access to the rubrics used to grade your assignments. You may view the rubric before submitting your assignment, and your mentor's grade and comments will be returned using this same rubric.

To find out your assignment grade and get feedback on your assignment, click Grades or the assignment link itself. If you wish to have information about your grades before you receive your graded copy, please contact your mentor directly. Do not contact Thomas State Edison University for this information.