# An Essential Element Within All Online Courses
A Getting Started Page

A **getting started page** is the online equivalent of welcoming students to an in-person class on the first day. Much like the first day of class, the getting started page welcomes students, provides an overview of the course, sets the tone for the course, and orients students to online learning at HPU. A link to the getting started page usually appears in the left-hand course menu in a "course welcome" section that also includes the syllabus and announcements menu items.
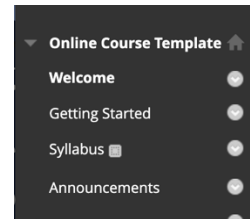
Following are components we recommend in any getting started page:

1. **Introduce yourself** in writing accompanied by a photo or embed a video introducing yourself.
2. Give an **overview of the course** and describe its context within the discipline.
3. Explain **how you will be accessible to students** throughout the course and how they can get help when they are stuck or confused.
4. Include a **"getting to know you activity"**: this can be student introductions through the discussion board or some other ice breaker activity that allows students to start interacting before they begin accessing the content.
5. Provide a short list of **specific next steps** to get started. For instance: "before starting module 1 of this course, please do the following: read the course syllabus, read all items in the orientation to distance learning at HPU, and post to the introduce yourself discussion forum."
6. Include an **orientation to online learning at HPU**, such as the following *(feel free to copy/paste directly in Blackboard)*:

Orientation to Online Learning at HPU

Use this as an opportunity to familiarize yourself with HPU distance learning expectations and the support services available to assist you in your academic journey. You are an integral part of our learning community, and we are all here to help you to succeed.

Orientation Objectives

Upon completion of this orientation, you will be able to:

- acknowledge the HPU student code of conduct
- obtain academic support if needed
- obtain support for accessibility issues and request specific accommodations if needed
- obtain technical support if needed
- navigate and complete course activities through Blackboard
- Understand student complaint procedures

Student Code of Conduct

Each student must be able to study, learn and enjoy their educational career at Hawai'i Pacific University. If these freedoms are to be experienced by all students, they must be respected by all. Therefore, students are expected to act in ways that demonstrate respect for order, decency, personal honor, and the rights of others. Implicit in the Code of Student Conduct is the understanding that students are responsible for making their own decisions and

accepting the consequences of those decisions. Students are expected to respect the rights and privileges of others. The Code of Student Conduct applies on all university premises and at all University activities, whether on or off campus. The university reserves the right to apply the Code to any student's behavior even when it occurs off campus and/or is unconnected to a university activity if, in the judgment of the university, the alleged misconduct adversely impacts the university community or its objectives.

To review the Code of Student Conduct and its procedures, visit the Student Handbook.

Netiquette Expectations

At HPU, we have a commitment to clear and respectful communication across all learning modalities. Though many of us are used to informal communication in digital spaces, it is important to maintain professional communication standards in our online learning environments. For the purposes of clarity and establishing learning communities built upon a foundation of mutual respect, many distance learning educators refer to what is called "netiquette". Please familiarize yourself with The Core Rules of Netiquette as excerpted from the book *Netiquette* by Virginia Shea and Discussion Board Netiquette.

Hardware and Software Requirements

To access information regarding hardware and software requirements for distance learning, please explore the IT Knowledge Base.

Distance Learning Support Services

To be successful in our online courses, you will be expected to possess basic technical and digital literacy skills. At a minimum, you must be able to navigate Blackboard, send emails with attachments, upload files, download and install software, and locate resources in digital databases and library collections.

As such, please take a few minutes to learn about the following support services at HPU. Explore all the web pages and links for each of the bulleted items by visiting:

- Accessibility Services
- Center for Academic Success
- HPU Help Desk
- Navigating and Using Blackboard
- Student Complaint Procedures

Student Privacy and Accessibility

We are committed to student privacy and accessibility. Following are privacy and accessibility statements from the HPU supported suite of digital tools.

- Blackboard Privacy Statement
- Blackboard Accessibility Statement
- Panopto Privacy Statement
- Panopto Accessibility Features