

Student Guide for Online Learning

This guide to online learning will help you navigate your online courses at OU with confidence. It includes basic information on contacting support, navigating Moodle, understanding the different formats of online learning, and completing online tasks. It also provides additional student tips and resources. Happy learning!

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1. Support Options

You have access to many resources and support teams to help you through whatever problems you may experience. Don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to make sure your online learning experience is a positive one.

1.1. e-Learning & Instructional Support (e-LIS) HelpDesk

[e-LIS](#) supports Moodle and other online learning systems, such as Panopto, WebEx, Google Meet, etc. The e-LIS department offers support to students, faculty, and staff who have e-learning related questions. To get immediate help, call (248) 805-1625 weekdays 8 am to 8 pm, and 10 am to 12 pm on Saturdays. Alternatively you may fill out a [Help Ticket](#), or use the Get Help link at the top of any page in Moodle.

Zoom, a virtual conferencing software, offers 24/7 support via [online submission](#) or live chat support at the [Zoom Help Center](#). A test meeting can be accessed any time at the following link: <https://zoom.us/test>

YuJa, a virtual conferencing, video/lecture capture, and media management software, offers 24/7 phone support by calling (888) 257-2278. Submit a ticket with YuJa by emailing support@yuja.com. Finally, get a quick answer to a short question by tweeting @yujanow

1.2. OU Help Desk

The [OU Help Desk](#) supports the Oakland University community, faculty, staff, and currently enrolled students with technology related questions. Contact them for help connecting to Internet resources, finding a solution to technology issues, or accessing the Oakland University email system. To get immediate help, call (248) 370-4357 (HELP) or send an email to helpdesk@oakland.edu.

1.3. Accommodations

[Disability Support Services](#) (DSS) acts as an advocate for students with disabilities and works with 500-600 students per semester. Students with disabilities should work with the DSS office to get accommodations, such as captioning videos or receiving extra time on exams.

1.4. Technology Limitations

Make sure to communicate any technology limitations you may have to your professors as soon as possible. For example, you might not have the technology (computer, webcam, mic, etc.) to attend a live online class. You might have internet connection issues, and cannot travel to an alternate location

to get online. Ask your professors for alternatives if you do not have access to technology to complete online tasks. You can also contact the provost's office about your technology limitations to receive assistance by emailing provost@oakland.edu.

1.5. Other Options

Outside of these formal support teams and resources, don't forget that you can reach out to your professors and fellow students! We are a community of learners, and we're all here to help each other have a positive online learning experience together.

2. Moodle

You'll find your online courses on a platform called Moodle. Moodle is Oakland University's learning management system. There are many ways your instructor may use Moodle, such as posting their course materials (syllabus, presentations, handouts, etc.), creating, receiving, and grading assignments, initiating class discussions via online forums, dividing students into discussion groups, offering quizzes, and providing a centralized online gradebook.

This guide will go into further detail about Moodle under the **Completing Online Tasks** section. You can also reference our [Moodle Help Videos for Students playlist](#) on YouTube.

You can access Moodle in multiple ways:

- Typing moodle.oakland.edu in the address bar of any web browser.
- Clicking the Moodle button at the top of the [OU homepage](#).
- Clicking on a Moodle link that your professor sent to your OU email address.

Login to Moodle with the first part of your OU email (NetID) username and email password. For more information, reference the [Logging Into Moodle/Resetting Your Password](#) help document.

2.1. Dashboard

Once logged in, the Dashboard page shows you the list of courses you may click on to enter. Your courses will become available on Moodle one week before the start of the semester. If the e-LIS office has important announcements or information for students, those will appear as text links above your courses. Clicking on these will expand them to show the entire message.

The Moodle dashboard is like your Moodle homepage that lists all of the courses you are in or have been in over the past year. You can use it to organize and view:

- Your online course overview
- Your calendar

- Your upcoming events
- Your timeline
- Other important Moodle information

You will likely find yourself taking more than one online course at OU, in which case, it's important to know how to navigate multiple courses on Moodle.

Moodle automatically arranges your dashboard chronologically, sorted by which courses you last accessed. In the top left of the Course Overview section, you can further sort your courses according to the semester in which you've taken or plan to take them; you can choose to only see **All**, **In Progress**, **Future**, or **Past** online courses.

If you want to further organize specific courses according to something other than time, you can choose to "star" them.

1. Click the three dots in the bottom right corner of the course card you want to star.
2. Click **Star This Course**.
3. View starred courses by clicking **Starred** under the top left menu.

You can also choose to hide certain courses from your dashboard.

1. Click the three dots in the bottom right corner of the course card you want to hide.
2. Click **Remove From View**.
3. View hidden courses by clicking **Removed from View** under the top left menu.
4. You can unhide a course by clicking the same three dots, then clicking **Restore To View**.

If you don't want to view your courses according to Last Accessed, you can go to the first menu in the top right of the Course Overview and select **Course Name**.

If you don't like the Card layout of your Course Overview, you can go to the second menu in the top right of the Course Overview and select **List** or **Summary**.

3. Formats of Online Learning

Your professors may choose from several formats and tools for online learning in your classes. It's likely that not all of your professors will choose the same tools, so be ready for variations. There are two primary online learning formats:

- **Asynchronous Online Learning** - Your professor may add course materials to your Moodle space such as files, forums, assignments, and quizzes, which typically allow you to participate in class at any time up until a due date. When using Moodle for assignment submissions, avoid submitting to your professor via email.

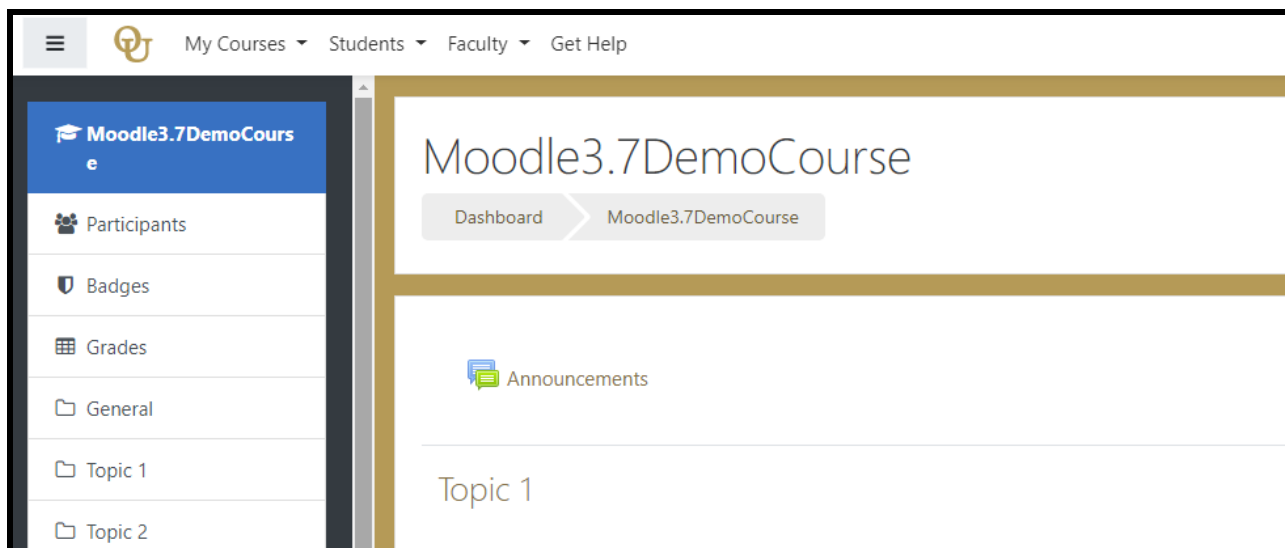
- **Synchronous Online Learning** - Your professor may hold certain class sessions using Zoom, [YuJa](#), or [Google Meet](#). These live lectures will require you to attend online in real-time. Zoom, YuJa, or Google Meet activity in Moodle will allow you to access the live meetings when your professor schedules them. Any required live meetings will be listed in Sail/Banner when registering for the course. Your professor may schedule other sessions that are optional or provide alternatives for participation, such as reviewing recordings of the session after the fact. Zoom works with Windows, Macintosh, even smartphones and tablets. It does not work on Linux or a Chromebook, so if that is all you have, you could find a friend or family member with a Windows, Mac, smartphone or tablet in order to attend your Zoom classes.
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4. Completing Online Tasks

Your instructor will use a variety of tools in your online course to convey information and allow for engagement with the class material. The following is an overview of some of the most common tools and methods they may use.

4.1. Communication

Look for emails or posts from your professors in the Announcements forum in your course [Moodle](#) space to receive notifications about the syllabus and other important class information. The Announcements forum is typically found towards the top of your Moodle course. Any message your instructor posts to the Announcements forum will also be sent to your OU email.



When learning online, you will need to be prepared to adjust to new communication expectations compared to your face-to-face (F2F) classes.

- Check your OU email regularly, ideally multiple times per week.

- Look for your professor's email address in your course syllabus or on [SAIL](#).
- Submit work only from your @oakland.edu account to ensure your identity.
- If your Moodle course provides a Quickmail block, this will allow you to send email to instructors and fellow classmates without the need for looking up email addresses.

4.1. Moodle Notifications (OU email)

When taking online courses, the various communication methods can be difficult for students to manage at first. Between forums, announcements, and other text-based notifications, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by all the messages and emails you might receive. But there are several ways you can streamline your notifications process so you only see exactly what you need and want to see.

To start, know that you cannot unsubscribe from a course's Announcements forum. This forum is specifically for your professor to send you important course-related information, so you will always receive a Moodle notification and an email copy of the message.

But with other communications, you have the option to unsubscribe.

To unsubscribe from a forum post:

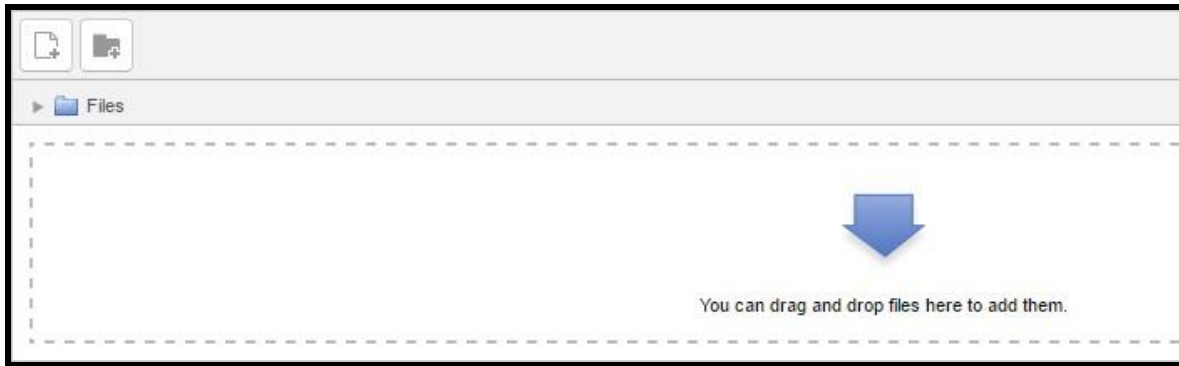
1. Go to the forum.
2. Look under the Subscribe column, and find the forum post you don't want to receive notifications about.
3. Move the slider from blue to grey, or right to left, in order to unsubscribe from that post.

Digest mode is an OU email that gets sent to you once a day to keep clutter out of your OU Gmail inbox.

4.2. Submitting Moodle Assignments

Your instructor may use the [Assignment](#) tool in Moodle, which provides you with the convenience of submitting assignments online. You don't have to pay for printing or worry about forgetting the paper, just upload it once you're done.

Assignments in Moodle are like an online dropbox where you can submit papers and other files. All student submissions to assignment activities are seen only by the instructor, who can download the files and grade student submissions.



Your professor may include relevant files that need to be downloaded to complete an assignment, such as a worksheet or rubric. These may be under the Assignment on the course page, or within the Assignment activity.

If there are any files you need to download, they will likely come in at least one of these forms:

- Downloadable file (Word document)
- PDF hosted in Moodle
- URL for a Google Doc/Slide/Sheet/etc. hosted in the Google cloud

To save a copy of a downloadable file:

1. Click the link to the file. It will automatically download directly to your device.
2. Open the file under your downloads, and move it to wherever you want to save it.

To save a copy of a PDF file:

1. Click the link to open the file in Moodle.
2. Click the arrow with a line under it at the top right of the file's window.
3. Select where you want to save your file on your device and click **Save**.

To save a copy of a Google cloud file to your own Google Drive account:

1. Click the link to open the file in Google.
2. Click **File**, then **Make a Copy**.
3. Select where you want to save your file and click **Ok**.

Once you've saved a copy of your file, you can open it, fill it out however you need to, save your work, then submit it for grading.

Depending on your course's assignment, you may not have to download any files. Your assignment may just be to write and upload a paper, for example. In which case, you would skip the downloading part and move on to the submission procedures.

To submit an assignment, start by clicking **Add Submission**. Here, you have two options.

Option 1: Drag and Drop

1. Drag and drop your file from your desktop or documents folder directly into the assignment dropbox.
2. Click **Save Changes**.

Option 2: Upload

1. Under File Submissions, click the **Add** button that's shaped like a piece of paper.
2. Choose whether to upload a file directly from your device, or select a file from a cloud storage account like Google Drive or Dropbox.
3. To upload from your device, click **Choose File**.
4. Select the file you want to submit and click **Open**.
5. Give the file a name to save it as, then click **Upload This File**.
6. Click **Save Changes**.

After submitting your assignment, you have the ability to:

- View your assignment's submission status
- View your grading status
- View your file itself
- Add comments to your submission.

Depending on your professor's settings for the assignment, you may be able to edit or remove your submission if you need to make changes before the assignment is due.

Note that your professor will be able to see a timestamp for when your assignment is submitted, and Moodle will tell them whether the assignment was early or late.

Some professors will also put settings so that the dropbox will not accept late submissions, so **make sure to double check your due dates** as you complete your assignment.

Once your professor has graded the assignment, your grade will appear, as well as any comments or feedback documents your professor may have included.

4.3. Participating in Moodle Forums

Your instructor may use the [Forum](#) tool in Moodle, an asynchronous tool that functions similar to many social media platforms, meaning you don't need to be online at the same time to use them. Someone posts to a forum and another user can read that post a few minutes later and reply, or hours or days later.

There are many ways your instructor may use forums, such as:

- Reporting and editing posted assignments
- Discussion of readings

- Online debates
- Discussion of case studies
- A library of online resources discovered by the students
- A student lounge

Before you make a post, you will want to read all of the instructions. Most often, your professor will likely use either a standard forum where students can make as many posts as they like, or a forum where each person posts a single discussion. They may ask you to make a post about a certain topic, and then reply to other students' posts.

There are also some other (less popular) forum setups, like a Q&A forum, where your professor may post a single question that students must respond to before seeing other students' posts.

To post in a forum:

1. Click **Add a New Discussion Topic**.
2. Write your subject and message.
3. Click **Post To Forum**.

To reply to a forum post:

1. Click on the post.
2. Click **Reply**.
3. Write your message.
4. Click **Submit**.

When replying like this in a forum, you're in "quick reply mode."

(You may also [reply to forums via email](#), which we have a separate help document to explain.)

Week 1 Discussion Topic 1

• [Subscribe](#)

Display replies in nested form

Move this discussion to ...

Move



Week 1 Discussion Topic 1

by [Victoria Tomaszewski](#) - Friday, 14 August 2015, 2:58 PM

I believe surrealistic art is more diverse than that of Salvador Dali. Can you give me names of other surreal artists to prove that there is a lot of great surreal painters from the 1920's through the 1970's? Help me out!

[Edit](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)



Re: Week 1 Discussion Topic 1

by [Nicholas Bongers](#) - Friday, 14 August 2015, 3:24 PM

Rene Magritte is an excellent surrealist painter that rivals that of Salvador Dali. His compositions with clouds, and scale are very sought-after, and many of his famous paintings are very recognizable. You can see more of his works on <http://www.renemagritte.org/>

[Show parent](#) | [Edit](#) | [Split](#) | [Delete](#) | [Reply](#)

“Quick reply mode” is simple to use and hides additional features. Clicking **Advanced** will make these additional features appear.

When you click **Advanced**, you can change your subject, use the HTML editor in your message, attach any files you may want, and then click **Post To Forum**.

4.3.1. HTML Editor

The HTML editor allows you to customize your message with a variety of features. You can:

- Format your text with headings
- Bold or italicize text
- Create bullet points or a numbered list
- Underline or strikethrough text
- Indent or change the alignment of text or other files like images
- Create hyperlinks within your text
- Insert an image, video, or audio file
- Draw a picture directly in Moodle
- Take a picture, and record audio/video directly in Moodle

To create hyperlinks within your text:

1. Write out a word or phrase.
2. Highlight it.
3. Click the **Link** button or hit **Ctrl K**.
4. Paste the link.

5. Click **Open in a New Window**.
6. Click **Create Link**.

This can be very useful when referencing websites within a forum post, and it's much better than simply pasting the link in as text. You can also remove the link by clicking the **Unlink** button.

To insert an image:

1. Click the **Insert or Edit Image** button, which looks like a framed picture of a mountain.
2. You can enter the URL of an image you've found on the web.
3. You can also directly upload an image to Moodle by clicking **Browse Repositories**.
 - a. Choose to upload an image directly from your device, or select an image from a cloud storage account like Google Drive or Dropbox.
 - b. To upload from your device, click **Choose File**. Select the image you want to upload and click **Open**.
 - c. Give the image a name to save it as, then click **Upload this File**.
4. To make sure your image is accessible, write a brief description of it in the box beneath the words "Describe this image for someone who cannot see it."
5. Click **Save Image**.

To insert an audio or video file:

1. Click the **Insert or Edit Audio/Video File** button, which looks like a camera on a piece of paper.
2. Follow roughly the same process as inserting an image.

This makes responding to something like a forum (with a video, instead of or including text) very quick and easy.

To record audio directly in Moodle:

1. Click the **Record Audio** button.
2. Click **Record**.
3. Speak or create whatever sounds you want to record.
4. Click **Stop**.
5. You can pause while recording, and you can play your recording back to you.
6. When you're satisfied, click **Upload**, then **Insert**.

You can record a video or take a picture following the same process.

You likely will not need to use all of the functions in the HTML editor. In general, your forum posts will contain mostly text and maybe some links. But it's good to understand the possibilities you have within the HTML editor.

4.4. Completing Moodle Quizzes

Your professor may use the [Quiz](#) tool in Moodle, which offers scored quizzes that go into the Moodle gradebook. Your professor may use this for quizzes, tests, exams, or ungraded review. Quizzes can be open ended, but are often available for a set time-period to be taken.

Before you take a quiz, you will want to read all of the instructions.

The quiz page should tell you:

- When the quiz is due
- How long you have to take it once you start an attempt
- How many attempts are allowed

To begin taking a quiz, click the **Attempt Quiz Now** button.

Within the quiz, you can navigate between questions by clicking the **Next Page** button or clicking the different numbered boxes under Quiz Navigation. You can also flag a question if you'd like to come back to it before you finish your quiz attempt.

Make sure to read each question carefully. Some common question types you will find in a quiz are:

- **Multiple Choice** - These questions are the most common question types in Moodle and are often automatically shuffled. They will be automatically graded at the end of your quiz.
- **Short Answer** - These questions are similar to fill in the blank type questions. You will need to type out the exact answer.
- **Essay** - These questions provide a box to type in or even upload a file as an attachment. Essay questions will not be automatically graded at the end of your quiz. Instead, your professor will manually grade them at a later time.

To finish a quiz:

1. Click **Finish Attempt**.
2. Review your answers and make sure you've answered each question.
3. You may go back to questions by clicking **Return To Attempt**.
4. Submit your answers by clicking **Submit All and Finish**.

Depending on your professor's settings for the quiz, you may or may not be able to see the correct answers afterwards.

If you need accommodations for a quiz, such as a longer amount of time for your attempt, or a different due date, contact your professor as soon as possible to see what options are available.

4.5. Lecture Capture with Panopto

Your instructor may choose to use [Panopto](#), a lecture capture software that can also be used to record a professor's face and voice while recording their computer screen. Panopto recordings will be accessible in your Moodle course. Students are not present during the recording. During playback, Panopto has a note taking mechanism that allows you to type and save time-stamped notes as you watch the lecture recording.

Note: There are many other screen-capture software options your professors may use other than Panopto to record lectures and post them on their Moodle course page. This can include Camtasia, or Loom, for example.

4.6. Live Lectures and Meetings.

4.6.2. Zoom

Your instructor may schedule lectures or other meetings using [Zoom](#). Zoom is a video conferencing tool that works well for hosting and recording live meetings.

Oakland University has a license for Zoom that allows faculty, staff, and students to use the tool in connection to their OU Google account (which uses their NetID login information). With OU's license, students can join their instructor's meetings and they can also host meetings of their own.

For more information, you can read our [Student Guide to Zoom](#).

4.6.3. YuJa

Your instructor may schedule lectures by using YuJa to either record a lesson or host a live session. YuJa provides 3 services within 1 product:

1. Synchronous video conferencing classroom environment, similar to Webex or Zoom
2. Lecture capture/video recording, similar to Panopto, Camtasia, or Loom
3. Media management in Moodle

Students can also use YuJa to create screen recordings. Reference the [Student Guide to YuJa](#) help document for further information.

4.6.4. Google Meet

Your instructor may also use [Google Meet](#), especially to hold live office hours or student conferences. Google Meet is like WebEx, with a more streamlined design but less functionality.

To attend a Google Meet session, you will need a link to the session, either posted in Moodle or sent to your OU email address, as well as information about the meeting dates and times.

You will either click the link to join, or you can join through your phone by calling in and typing in the meeting's information.

You can learn more with this basic [video guide to Google Meet](#).

For more information on WebEx and Google Meet, you can read the [Online Student Services Video Options](#) document.

4.7. Interactive Activities

In Moodle, interactive activities can be placed within a Book resource, or they can appear on their own on the main course page. Moodle can host a variety of interactive activities, also called H5P activities, that your professor may use.

These can include: images with hot-spots, interactive videos, word searches, drag-and-drop tasks, presentations, and more.

Interactive videos allow you to play a video and interact with different elements while watching it. These elements can be in the form of text, images, links, and questions. The interactions in a video may or may not pause the video until you've interacted with them, so be on the lookout so you don't miss any.

For most interactions, you simply click on the button as the video plays and you will see whatever element is there. For some interactions, the elements will pop up automatically and cover part of the screen.

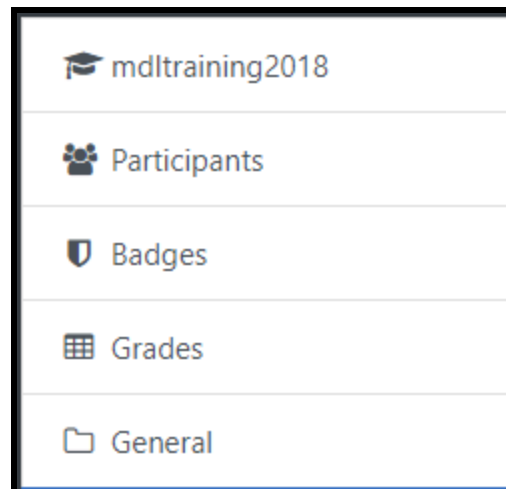
To answer questions in an interactive video:

1. Read the question. It may be in a button you have to click, or it may pop up on screen.
2. Select the correct answer.
3. Click **Check**.
4. If you got the answer correct, click **Continue** to move on. If you got the answer wrong, retry the question if that option is available.
5. Make sure to click **Submit Answers** before you exit the video so you can receive a grade for completing the activity. This **Submit Answers** page usually appears as a star icon at the end of the video's timeline, though it may pop up earlier in the video depending on your professor's settings.

This is just one type of interactive activity your professor may or may not choose to incorporate into their course. If you have any questions about a specific activity, contact your professor or the e-Learning and Instructional Support team through the [e-LIS Support Portal](#).

4.8. Viewing the Gradebook

Your instructor may use the [Moodle Gradebook](#) to keep track of and post student grades. If your professor is using the Moodle Gradebook, it can be accessed by clicking Grades in the menu of the left-hand side of your class Moodle space.



Each professor formats their gradebook a little differently, but in general, most gradebooks are set up with one of two options.

Option 1: a sum total of points

- All the assignments in the course add up to a sum total of points.
- Every assignment directly affects your grade according to the amount of points it is worth.
- Ex: a 15 point quiz and a 15 point forum would affect your grade equally.

Option 2: a weighted gradebook, with percentages assigned to each grading category

- Ex: 10 percent for quizzes, 40 percent for forums, and 50 percent for assignments, adding up to 100 percent.
- In a weighted gradebook, no matter how many assignments are added to a category, that entire category will still only contribute a certain percentage to your overall grade.
- Ex: the grade you receive on a 15 point quiz might affect your overall grade in the course differently than a 15 point forum, depending on how many quizzes and forums are in each category.

With either gradebook option, you can see each graded assignment and what you got on it. The course total will not reflect points for assignments you have not completed yet. You can also click on each assignment for a closer look at it.

If you don't submit a past due assignment and you see a "dash" (-) for that item in your gradebook, your professor will likely replace that with a 0, which will negatively affect your grade.

If you have any questions or concerns about a specific grade, you should contact your professor immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester.

4.9. Group Collaboration

With online courses, you don't have to miss out on all the peer interactions of in-person classes, even though you're not physically in the same place together.

We believe it is incredibly beneficial for students to have efficient and enjoyable ways for online collaboration with classmates. Communication and project collaboration are the most important categories for which you will need tools.

Read the [Student Remote Collaboration](#) help document to learn more.

5. Digital Organization and Productivity

When taking online courses, digital organization and productivity is extremely important in order to manage all your files, tasks, communications, and due dates.

While there are many digital organization and productivity tools out there, we recommend students use the wide variety of free Google apps and tools available in G Suite for communication, storage, collaboration, and more.

Read the [Digital Organization and Productivity](#) help document to learn more.

6. Tips from OU Students

The following tips were submitted by OU students who have participated in online classes previously.

- You need to be checking your email and your Moodle every single day, multiple times.
 - An online semester still has the weight of a normal semester. Be smart. Do your work to your best ability. Utilize resources.
 - If your course uses Moodle's Internal Email, you'll need to log into Moodle to check that.
- Academic dishonesty *is still academic dishonesty*.
 - If your professor wouldn't be happy with you using your notes on an exam in person, do not do it while taking an online exam.
- Plan to dedicate the same amount of time to assignments as you would in a F2F course.
- Practice Patience. Your professors might be as new to online learning as you are. They are looking for answers from their department and their colleagues. *Please be courteous.*

- Use the **Participants** link to see who else may be in your class in order to form study/support groups.
 - We are all in this together. You can still contact the numerous student, faculty, and administration leaders on campus to help you get through this.
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7. Resources

- e-LIS Helpdesk: Fill out a [Help Ticket](#), or use the [Get Help](#) link at the top of any page in Moodle.
- [Online Learning Resources for Current Students](#) provides information on first steps, tips, and technical requirements.
- [Sample Online Course](#) provides a Moodle Student Orientation to online courses.
- [The Tutoring Center](#) is available for online tutoring in selected subjects. [Find a Tutor](#) to see course and tutor availability. On that page you can click the Schedule Appointment link to secure an appointment time.
- [The Writing Center](#) is available for real-time online [appointments](#).
- [Disability Support Services](#) (DSS): This department on campus assists students with disabilities.