

Considerations for E-Learners with Disabilities

E-Learning can be the solution to many students with disabilities' accommodation needs. However, taking courses on-line can also create the need for unforeseen or new types of accommodations. There are a few things an E-Learner with a disability should consider.

1. ***How well do I manage my time?*** The nature of E-Learning courses requires independent study. That is, in order to be successful, a student must be able to manage his/her time. It is necessary for a student to set up and adhere to a regular study schedule and keep track of assignments and due dates. This may be more difficult for a student who is used to in-person reminders from an instructor or academic coach. Managing one's time requires discipline when balancing on-line courses and other day-to-day activities.

2. ***Does my disability affect my ability to process and comprehend information and succeed in an on-line course?*** Certain disabilities make it difficult to manage the content, directions, and discussions of an on-line course. It is important to familiarize yourself with the E-Learning course in which you are enrolling. Most CUW E-Learning courses are offered in one of two formats, or a combination of the two. Some courses are offered via lectures on DVD. Other courses are offered over WebCT, an on-line course management system. In either case, the instructor may not be readily available to deliver information in a different format or to clarify any misunderstandings. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor for information regarding the delivery and assessment methods of the course. Once you have an understanding of the how the course will operate, consider the characteristics of your disability. What types of obstacles do you anticipate?

3. ***Will I need to utilize adaptive equipment or software to complete an on-line course?*** Certain disabilities make the use of adaptive technology or software necessary in order to fully access an on-line course. Like you are responsible for having a computer and an internet connection, you are also responsible for having all necessary equipment or software before beginning the course. If you need suggestions for the type of equipment or software that may help you achieve full access to a course, feel free to contact [Nicole Gahagan](#).

4. ***How comfortable am I with computers and technology?*** All students taking an on-line course must assess their comfort level with computers and technology. E-Learners with disabilities must also assess their comfort level with adaptive equipment and software. Most adaptive equipment and software takes some getting used to. Most retailers of adaptive equipment and software will offer training with the sale. Take advantage of these offers if you are not familiar with the product.