

Online Learning at St. Catherine University

Online learning happens in two different formats at St. Kate's – hybrid and fully online.

Hybrid learning includes both face-to-face and online environments. Usually the time between the two environments is split half-and-half (one week online; one week face-to-face). However, the schedules for specific courses may vary.

Online learning happens entirely or almost entirely online. Sometimes a campus visit is required at the beginning of a degree sequence. There may also be some specific synchronous online course meeting times that are part of the course plan, usually using an online video conferencing tool. However, most of the work happens online asynchronously, with students contributing at different times each week during the course.

St. Kate's is dedicated to each student's success, and offers services and support in a variety of ways:

- Mobile access for courses
- Student support services
- Accessible course design to meet all students' needs
- Extended hours for our Help Desk support

Active learning, sometimes called “engaged learning” emphasizes student-focused learning within an instructor-facilitated environment. All online courses are designed with this approach. The courses emphasize building knowledge from experience, which is particularly relevant for the adult learner. In the active learning environment, the student is ultimately responsible for her or his own learning.

You can think of the course content as the “clay” you use to construct your own knowledge via meaningful learning activities that will include reading, writing, debate & dialogue, critical analysis, problem-solving, as well as collaborative activities with your peers.

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I work full-time and have a family? Will I have enough time to take courses?

Taking a course in an online environment does not mean you will have less work to do. The flexibility of the online environment is a great benefit. However, the time that you do not spend in an actual classroom will be accounted for in other ways through reading assignments, discussion board postings, quizzes, etc. Below is a chart that can help you gauge how much time you can expect to spend in an online course:

Course Credits	Weekly Work
2 credit course	300 min = 5 hrs.
3 credit course	450 min = 7.5 hrs.
4 credit course	600 min = 10 hrs.

You will be expected to participate during each week of the semester in an online class at St. Kate's. Many classes establish a weekly schedule that is included in the syllabus so you have an idea of what to expect.

What if I take a hybrid or fully online accelerated course?

Accelerated courses are 7.5 weeks long. Students appreciate the programmatic benefits of moving through coursework in a shorter time. However, you must be able to accommodate the increased workload and faster pace. Expect to spend 15-18 hours each week participating in an accelerated course.

What if I can't regularly come to campus?

If you take a hybrid course, you will be expected to come to campus. When exactly you come to campus is determined on a course-by-course basis. Fully online courses have no campus requirements or expectations unless the program includes an initial campus orientation visit or optional summer seminars.

What if the only computer I have is my work computer?

In order to install all necessary browser plugins and software, you will need administrative rights to your computer. Some work computers do not allow for this; most personal computers do.

What if my internet comes from the coffee shop down the street?

Accessing the internet via local businesses might present some challenges. The connection may be slower than at home (because it's shared by everyone). Public WIFI could pose security issues. It's also advised that you find a quiet place to study, and a busy business location might not provide that environment. In addition, most places such as coffee shops regulate how much time customers spend using their internet.

What if I can only get to the public library to do my work?

While this would provide you a quiet place to study, using a public computer at a library will not allow you to install the necessary browser plugins.

What if I only have an iPad or other tablet device?

While these devices are great for many things, you may find that you need something more robust to complete your assignments and do all of your work. Software such as the Microsoft Office Suite cannot be installed on most tablets and some course material may not be viewable from a tablet.

Recommended Minimum Computer Specifications

A list of recommended minimum computer specifications is available on the [McGlynn Information Technology Center](#) website. A high speed internet connection (DSL or cable) is also recommended.

Tools for Online Learning

The Help Desk provides information about the tools and technology available at St. Kate's. Some of the tools used most often by students in online or hybrid courses are:

D2L/Brightspace

D2L/Brightspace is St. Kate's learning management system. All of your course materials – such as a syllabus, course documents, readings, lectures, etc. – will be housed here. In addition, interactions such as discussion boards and quizzes are found within the online course sites.

A [sample course](#) is available for review:

Username: katie

Password: gowildcats!

When you see the Brightspace landing page, click on the nine-dot menu, then on the link to the St. Kate's Sample Online Course.



Collaborate

On occasion your class might meet synchronously (at the same time) during the semester. When that happens, Collaborate is St. Kate's tool of choice for video conferencing.

Panopto

Panopto is the lecture capture system on campus. Faculty teaching online and hybrid courses frequently use Panopto to record videos or create screen captures. Students can also make presentation recordings.

Email, Google Drive and Google Hangouts

St. Kate's uses Google Apps for Education for email, online document storage & collaboration, and informal video conferencing. Email accounts are the official means of communicating with students.

Success Factors

Learning in online environments is different than face-to-face learning. If you haven't experienced this type of learning, consider these tips to help you succeed.

Understand the weekly schedule expectations

Knowing the schedule of the course is one key component to having a successful experience. If it's a hybrid course, when do you meet face-to-face and when do you meet online? What are the requirements for each type of session? Does the course follow a standard weekly pattern?

What is the flow of a typical week in this course?

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Use weekly checklist to monitor progress							
Assigned Readings							
Guided & Reflective Learning							
Online Discussion							
Chat							
Course Assignment							
Practical Application Assignment							

Enjoy the benefits of taking a hybrid or online course

Typically, taking a hybrid or online course gives you more flexibility in your schedule. You will also have access to your course materials anywhere, any time. And, you may find that many courses emphasize self-directed learning with specific practical applications to your life.

Check in regularly

All St. Kate's online courses require that you participate several times each week. Check your course syllabus for details.

Brush up on your time management skills

Working online brings flexibility, but also distractions. Know how to manage them and allow for sufficient time to complete your work.

Be comfortable with a computer

Be familiar with the basics of getting around online, using email, and creating documents in Microsoft Word. All St. Kate's students are provided with free access to Microsoft's Office 365.

Be motivated and self-directed

The flexibility of an online course means that you will be accountable for your own learning. It's important that you understand your role in constructing your own learning and understand the faculty's role in helping you with that. Are you able to stay focused and on track with the course work?

Know how to express yourself online

Much of the work online will be done in discussion forums. Do you learn well by reading others' ideas? Are you able to express yourself with your writing?

Have a dedicated work time and place

Set aside a specific time and a specific place each day to study or participate in online activities. Having this kind of structure can help avoid or eliminate distractions.

Need more information?

For additional information or assistance, contact the St. Kate's Help Desk at 651-690-6402.