What should I **know** before I take an online course?

1. **If online courses are for you.** It all depends on your learning style. You have to be an independent learner. To check if you are ready to take online courses take the [SmarterMeasure](#) assessment. You should also know your limitations. If you do not have the time to devote to the class or access to a computer you may not be ready for an online course.

2. **That online classes aren’t easier than classes where you meet face to face.** While you aren’t completely on your own in an online course, it does require independence and self-discipline.

3. **That you will be expected to interact with your classmates and your instructor.** You will still have to “talk” to people. You will not only be required to communicate with your instructor but you will be asked to communicate with your classmates via chat, discussion board or even video. You won’t be able to hide behind your computer.

4. **That you will have to ask questions.** Don’t be afraid to ask your instructor for clarification, explanation or instructions. Reach out to your classmates. You can’t afford to fall behind all because you didn’t want to speak up.

5. **What technology is required?** You’ll need access to computer, laptop or tablet with a strong and reliable Internet connection. You may also need administrative rights to the device in order to install software.

6. **Some basic computer skills** such as sending an email with an attachment, using a discussion board, downloading software and using various browsers is a must.

7. **That you will still need to purchase a text book.** It could be a hard copy or an e-book but you’ll need it.

8. **That online courses have deadlines.** While an online course offers you flexibility it doesn’t mean you can turn assignments in and complete exams whenever you want. There WILL be deadlines and due dates.
9. **How to communicate.** Communication in online courses focuses around the written word. Know how to communicate clearly and effectively using proper grammar and spelling.

10. **That you can do it.** With the right skills and motivation, you’ll be a success in your online course.

For technical assistance with Blackboard, the EPCC Blackboard Help Desk is available toll free 24 hours a day, 7 days a week year-round at 1-888-296-0863.