Syracuse University Online Quick Reference Guide

The Online Student Success Team

The Office of Online Student Success exists to create an environment where online students feel supported as members of the Syracuse University community. As an Online Academic Advising Office, we engage with students to help provide them with the coordination of resources and strategies to empower academic and personal development and success. Additionally, we support engagement and familiarity with the online environment through practice sessions, resources, connection to our ITS HelpDesk, and more.

Questions? We're here to help! Please do not hesitate to contact us at orangeonline@syr.edu or 315.443.3256.

Asynchronous and Synchronous Course Content

Many of Syracuse University's online courses have two components to complete your weekly coursework:

1. **Asynchronous Course Content:** Your instructor will assign coursework that is required to complete PRIOR to your live session meeting time. This coursework could include:

- Videos
- Readings
- Assignments
- Projects

2. **Live Sessions (Synchronous Sessions):** Live sessions allow you to join your instructor and classmates in a virtual classroom. Typically, once per week at a designated time, your class will meet in an online web meeting room. This session will place you in a live virtual classroom where you will interact with your instructor and fellow classmates. Many instructors will use these live sessions to review and expand on the course content you completed prior to your live session.

Know your Virtual Environment

Blackboard is a learning management system and your virtual learning environment while enrolled in online courses. Blackboard is designed to allow students and faculty to participate in courses delivered online using online materials and activities.

Inside Blackboard you will find:

- Virtual Classrooms including Zoom & Blackboard Collaborate Ultra
- Important announcements & updates
- Virtual engagement tools (i.e. share content, whiteboard, polling, etc.)
- Discussion boards and threaded discussions
- Course materials, assignments, exams, etc.

Hardware Requirements:

For the best virtual experience, we recommend your computer meet the following minimum hardware requirements**:**

- Minimum of 2 GB available disk space Your courses & course materials
- Dual-core processor: 2.0 GHz
- RAM: 2 GB+
- Internet connection; Minimum download speed: 5 Mbps / Minimum upload speed: 3 Mbps

If you have problems logging in or need assistance with hardware, please contact the **ITS Service Center** at help@syr.edu or 315.443.2677. The [ITS Website](#) itself has its own wealth of information you may find useful. Pay particular attention to the [Services Section](#) for other important information.

Live Sessions (within Blackboard) (via Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate) will serve as the platform for:

Class Discussions: Your online course may have required live sessions for instruction and interactive class discussions. Live-session class discussions require that you participate with a microphone and web camera. You must be prepared to discuss the past week's asynchronous material prior to your scheduled weekly live-session class discussion.

Office Hours: Instructors may post online office hours to give students opportunities to ask and clarify questions about the course, review assignments or upcoming coursework.

Study Groups: In some courses, you may be assigned a group project where you will need to meet on a regular basis to complete the project. As a student, you have the ability to create Blackboard Collaborate sessions for you and your group members to work on group assignments.

Assignments: Are created by your instructor and can be used for simply submitting homework or to participate in a back-and-forth review process of projects and papers.

Taking Online Assessments: There are a variety of testing options within this program, some examples are: submit a paper, upload a document, complete an online test, and do an online presentation. Your instructor will provide guidelines for the online assessments.

*The format of course assignments and tests should be listed in the course syllabus - make sure you have read the syllabus and are able to be prepared and make any needed accommodations for assignment and test requirements.

Joining Your Live Class Session

To access a live session, log into Blackboard and click on your specific course in the "My Courses" section of your landing page. Then, select the section your Instructor has indicated for joining the live sessions. Or, if provided by the instructor, you can click your virtual session invite link.

After you locate the appropriate session, click on "Join Course Room" or "Join Session." Generally, you can join the session in advance, where you may be added to a virtual waiting room. If you don't see "Join Course Room", it is possible the session has not opened yet; be sure to check the sessions date and time you selected.

Upon entering the live session, you will be prompted to set up your audio and video.

In order to take your session experience to the next level, you have a virtual space to engage with other participants with all the great tools.

- Chat with everyone in the session or privately with other classmates or instructors
- View attendees and their roles

- Moderators and presenters can share content, start polling, use whiteboards, etc.
- Personalize your meeting settings

Within the live session, you have the ability to:

- Set up your audio and video or connect your phone for audio as backup
- Add a virtual background
- "Raise your hand "and provide emoji feedback
- Research help and support options if needed