

Gauging Student Readiness for Online Learning

At the beginning of your course, ask students to complete an online self-assessment to help gauge their readiness for online class work. This self-evaluation will help them better understand the behaviors and skills they will need to succeed in an online course and identify areas where they might need to focus additional efforts. Results of the self-evaluation will help you to identify areas where students may need additional support. Below are some examples of questions you might include in an online self-assessment.

- **Time management**
 - Do deadlines cause you stress, or do they motivate you?
 - Do you have at least 12 hours a week to devote to the online course?
 - Do you keep an organized calendar to track due dates for course work?
- **Persistence in overcoming obstacles**
 - Do you know where to go for additional help or for support with understanding course content?
 - Do you know where to go for additional technical help or support?
- **Independence**
 - Are you adept at setting and meeting goals?
- **Communication style**
 - Do you enjoy communicating via email, by text, and with other technology?
 - Are you comfortable having an honest and respectful online discussion with people that you have not met face-to-face?
- **Comfort level with technology**
 - Do you feel comfortable installing or updating software?
 - Do you feel comfortable searching the internet, bookmarking sites, downloading files, and uploading files?
 - Do you know how to access technical support?
- **Study skills**
 - Do you have a place to work that is free from distractions?
 - Do you like to learn through podcasts, videos, and other online resources?

For an additional resource for online readiness assessments, visit [Online Readiness Assessment by Vicki Williams and The Pennsylvania State University](#).

An effective way both to use the information gleaned from these self-assessments and to help students feel more comfortable reaching out to you is to schedule one-on-one meetings with them. Use the time to discuss students' assessments and to identify ways you can support them, as well as ways they can work to develop the skills they need to succeed in the online course. For example, since time management is a critical skill for online learning, instructors should provide a customizable weekly schedule to help students stay on track and meet course expectations. You may also want to ask students to share their study schedule with you so that you can help them to determine if they have allotted enough time for specific tasks.