Online and hybrid courses at Roxbury Community College are offered on the internet via Jenzabar/MyRCC

As part of our commitment to your health and safety, as well as our desire to ensure your educational success, RCC is offering a variety of instructional methods to help students choose the course that best fits their learning style. Those courses that cannot be completed virtually will meet face-to-face with proper safety and social distancing protocols to ensure the health and safety of everyone.

**ONLINE = A fully online course without set meeting times (Asynchronous)**
Online courses are completed fully online, without in-person meetings. You can complete the work at a pace that best suits your schedule, but you must submit assignments and exams by set deadlines.

**HYBRID = A course with scheduled face-to-face meeting times, and an online component without set meeting times**
Hybrid courses are completed on campus with designated meeting days and times with the remainder of the assignments completed online.

**VIRTUAL = A fully online course with scheduled meeting times (Synchronous)**
Virtual courses are completed online but have set meeting times. You are required to login and participate in course meetings via web-based communication (Microsoft Teams or Zoom) at the scheduled days/times.

Your instructors will communicate with you about how your course will virtually meet prior to the first session. Feel free to email them questions prior to the start of your first day of class to make sure things are as clear and as accessible as possible.
Why choose to study online?

Online courses can offer students flexibility and convenience in scheduling that can sometimes be difficult to balance with face-to-face courses. In spite of these benefits, online courses can come with unexpected surprises for students. First and foremost, online courses require the same, if not more, time, energy, and attention than traditional classes. Students must be able to motivate themselves without the physical presence of others in the class and with the distractions of the home environment. Students must also have solid computer skills to be successful in online courses. Understanding how to create new documents, save files, download and upload documents, and navigate the internet are necessary for anyone taking an online course.

The benefits of face-to-face instruction can't be denied. There's an immediacy to the learning, with an entire class present in the same environment, moving through the material together. Asking questions can feel more natural, and demonstrations may seem more organic and hands-on. It's also useful to have in person reminders about due dates and upcoming expectations. Sometimes, translating those expectations to an online environment can make things more challenging.

However, this doesn't mean that online learning can't simulate those experiences, and the best way to bring the benefits of an in-person environment online is to mimic the in-person components as much as possible.

For example, if you were in a classroom, you would want to make sure you were fully engaged with the instructor and your classmates. You’d also want to make sure you gave off the impression of being fully engaged at all times. Being on a computer can lead to more distractions, so push yourself to stay focused on the lecture for the remainder of the course without navigating away or checking your phone. Leaving your camera and microphone on can help with this, as can writing down notes throughout course sessions, including questions that come up throughout your lectures. Raise your hand when you have a question, or politely request to ask a question in case your instructor can't see you. This may make you feel like you’re spotlighted, but it's really no different than when you’re in an in-person classroom environment. Just like face-to-face learning, questions benefit everyone.

Successful Online Learners

- Regularly visit the course website (several times per week) to check for updates and information from your instructors.
- Practice clear and consistent communication with instructors and student support staff.
- Understand that if you send an email, a response can be quick, but if you do not get an immediate response you should wait at least 24 hours before getting worried.
- Have good time management skills.
- Plan out blocks of time to ensure they can complete all required assignments.
- Set up a quiet, comfortable work environment, free from distractions.
- Remain engaged with the course; ask questions, take full advantage of all online content.
- Practice active listening skills in order to be active learners – take notes on class material and engage with the instructor, other students, and course content accordingly.
- Are comfortable using the Internet and have basic computer skills

Availability

Your course will be available on the first day of class. Check your class syllabus and other communication from your instructors about how your class will meet.

Attendance

Although it may seem easier to attend courses online without the need to commute, students sometimes struggle with the time-management required to get themselves in an academic mindset while learning from home. It's best to schedule your courses in a calendar application on your phone to give yourself reminders about when your class is about to begin. Computer problems and internet connection issues can occur. It is recommended that you try to login 5 minutes before your start time.

RCC’s online attendance policy for online instruction is the same as in-person instruction; students are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings. The course syllabus will include the instructor’s specific attendance policy. If you need to miss a course, please contact your instructor immediately, and as early as possible. Remember that an absence does not excuse you from required coursework and that it’s your responsibility to complete any assignments in a timely fashion. Students are responsible for all coursework during an absence. Excessive absences will have a negative effect on students’ ability to meet the course objectives, and may result in a failing grade.

You can review more information about Roxbury Community College’s attendance policy via the Student Handbook, which can be accessed here: www.rcc.mass.edu/student-handbook

Participation

Face-to-face instruction lends itself well to class participation. Being in the same space allows more personal interaction between instructors and students. Sometimes, online learning environments make communication more difficult. It's harder to pick up on facial expressions, non-verbal communication (raising hands), and even verbal communication. This is why it's important to take initiative as online learners to communicate consistently and professionally with your instructors and classmates. Showing that you are actively engaged with the instructor, the course material, and the coursework, will clearly communicate where you stand in the class to everyone involved. Ask questions when appropriate, keep up with the assignments, and try not to get behind with your coursework.