



# **eLearning at UNM-Los Alamos Student Guide**

**Version 1.02  
August 12, 2010**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ELEARNING OVERVIEW.....</b>	<b>3</b>
ONLINE CLASSES.....	3
HYBRID COURSES.....	3
WEB-ENHANCED COURSES.....	4
<b>ARE YOU READY TO TAKE AN ONLINE COURSE?.....</b>	<b>4</b>
ATTITUDES, STUDY SKILLS AND BEHAVIORS.....	4
COMPUTER SKILLS.....	4
COMPUTER ENVIRONMENT.....	4
<b>ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION.....	5
ONLINE COURSE SCHEDULES.....	5
<i>How to Find Online Courses Offered at UNM-LA.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<b>POLICIES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY.....	5
YOUR WEBCT PARTICIPATION MAY BE MONITORED.....	6
<b>THE WEBCT ENVIRONMENT.....</b>	<b>6</b>
ACCESS TO A WEBCT COURSE REQUIRES A UNM NETID.....	6
LOGGING IN TO YOUR COURSE.....	6
GETTING EARLY INFORMATION ABOUT A WEBCT COURSE.....	6
TRAINING FOR THE GENERAL WEBCT ENVIRONMENT.....	6
SPECIFIC WEBCT AND OTHER ONLINE INFORMATION FOR YOUR COURSE.....	7
RULES OF NETIQUETTE AND BEHAVIOR ONLINE.....	7
CREATE A BACK-UP PLAN NOW!.....	7
UNM-LA CAMPUS COMPUTER ACCOUNTS AND WIRELESS NETWORK ACCESS.....	7
EMAIL INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF WEBCT.....	7
<b>TIPS FOR SUCCESS IN ELEARNING.....</b>	<b>8</b>
TIMETABLE.....	8
<b>RESOURCES FOR ELEARNING.....</b>	<b>9</b>
LIBRARY.....	9
TUTORING.....	9
PURCHASING TEXTBOOKS.....	9
SUPPORT.....	10
<b>FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: ELEARNING, TIME MANAGEMENT, AND COMPUTER TRAINING RESOURCES.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: ARE YOU READY FOR AN ONLINE COURSE?.....</b>	<b>11</b>
ONLINE READINESS ASSESSMENT:.....	11
<b>APPENDIX B: COMPUTER SKILLS NEEDED FOR AN ONLINE COURSE.....</b>	<b>15</b>
TABLE 1. BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS NEEDED FOR SUCCESS IN ONLINE LEARNING.....	15
<b>APPENDIX C: COMPUTER ENVIRONMENT NEEDED FOR WEBCT.....</b>	<b>16</b>
TABLE 2. COMPUTER ENVIRONMENT NEEDED FOR WEBCT & ONLINE LEARNING.....	16
BROWSER CHECK.....	17
<b>APPENDIX D: RULES OF NETIQUETTE AND ONLINE BEHAVIOR.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: CREATE A BACK-UP PLAN NOW!.....</b>	<b>19</b>



## eLearning at UNM-Los Alamos Student Guide

### eLearning Overview

Welcome to UNM-LA's eLearning program. Many of your courses at UNM-LA are or will soon be offered online, that is, via eLearning. You may also hear online education referred to as distance learning, online learning, or E-Learning. Whatever it's called, it offers unique challenges and unique opportunities to students.

This guide is primarily directed at students who will be taking a fully online class. However, it contains materials about WebCT and its environment that will also be of use in Hybrid and Web-Enhanced courses.

At UNM-LA, we offer three varieties of online education:

### Online classes

In an online class, you do not enter a classroom - the course is taught entirely online. You might never meet your instructor in person. You will access your virtual classroom using a program called WebCT. Your course materials, such as the syllabus, assignments, quizzes and exams, will all be accessed through WebCT. You will interact with your instructor and classmates using email, online discussions (bulletin boards), chat, and in some cases audio links or phone. Depending on the style of teaching, you may interact at scheduled times, or, more likely, you may interact at different times, as you do in email (asynchronously). You will be expected to complete the course work on schedule and within the semester, just as you do in a traditional classroom. Since you will not be attending regularly scheduled classes, you have the flexibility of working when you like, from wherever you choose. The specific technologies used will depend on the class and the instructor.

Have you heard that online courses are easier and take less of your time than traditional classes? Don't believe it! You cover the same materials in an online course, and you spend at least as much time doing coursework. Although you do not have to commute to campus or sit in a classroom, your instructor will probably assign activities to cover the materials that you would have covered in a classroom. For a traditional 3-credit course, you would expect to spend 2-3 hours outside the classroom for every credit - that's 3 hours in the classroom and 6-9 hours per week outside of class. For a 3-credit online course, you can expect to spend 9-12 hours per week working on the course. That's 1-2 hours per day. You'll spend some of that time working at the computer, and some of that time reading, writing, studying, working problems, etc.

### Hybrid courses

In hybrid courses, you normally meet in a classroom for about half as much time as you would in a traditional classroom, and the remainder of the time you work using WebCT and other computer/online tools. You will be expected to attend the scheduled classroom sessions and to complete all of the work that is assigned online.

## Web-Enhanced courses

In web-enhanced courses, you will meet in a classroom for the usual amount of time (e.g., 2.5 hours per week for a 3 credit course). You will do some activities via WebCT; this might include quizzes, discussions, videos, and other materials available on the internet.

## Are You Ready To Take an Online Course?

Are you ready to take an online course? Succeeding in an online course requires that you be prepared with certain attitudes, skills, and equipment.

If you have questions about taking a specific course online, please contact the instructor of the course (the email address is in the printed schedule or available on the schedule link here:

[http://www.la.unm.edu/PR/class\\_schedule.html](http://www.la.unm.edu/PR/class_schedule.html)). Or contact one of the UNM-LA advisors here: (505) 662-0332.

## Attitudes, Study Skills and Behaviors

Because you do not physically see your instructor or attend classes regularly, when you take an online course you need to be prepared for an environment that is quite different from a traditional classroom, one that requires that students have some attitudes, skills, and behaviors that differ from those in a traditional classroom.

- You need to be comfortable working independently, without face-to-face interactions with your instructor.
- You need to be skilled at reading and writing, because that is how most materials are presented to you and how you communicate with your instructor and classmates.
- You need to be motivated to take the course.
- Time periods for certain assignments may be limited, and if you fall behind, it is often more difficult to catch up in an online course.

To see how well prepared you are for taking an online course, take the **Online Readiness Assessment** in [Appendix A](#). This appendix also contains more information about what to expect in an online course.

## Computer Skills

Because you spend a lot of time working with a computer when you take an online course, you will be much more likely to succeed if you begin by having a basic set of computer and internet skills. If you are not comfortable using a word processor, using email, moving around and searching on the internet, uploading, downloading, and printing files, or managing a file system on your computer, you are advised to obtain instruction and practice in these basic skills before taking an online course.

[Appendix B](#) lists a set of basic computer and internet skills needed for online courses.

## Computer Environment

Your computer must be set up to have a minimum set of hardware and software. You will need to have reliable access to the internet at least once per week, preferably at least three times per week. For some courses, such as those requiring you to view videos or listen to audios or access very large files, you will need access to a high-speed (broadband) internet connection, using cable, DSL, satellite, or wireless technologies, at least once per week. If you don't have high-speed internet access at home, it is available on the UNM-LA campus, in many libraries, and some coffee shops and restaurants.

[Appendix C](#) describes required and recommended computer and internet configurations needed for online courses at UNM-LA.

# Admission and Registration Information

## Admission and Registration

You must be admitted to UNM or to a UNM branch to register for online classes at UNM-LA. There are several admission options, depending on whether you are in a degree program or want to register as a non-degree student.

You can find information regarding admission and registration on the UNM-LA web site here: <http://www.la.unm.edu/SSC/studentervices.html> or call 505-662-0332.

## Online Course Schedules

Most online courses are scheduled within the normal UNM semesters. You should expect to login to the course on the **first day** of the semester, or on the day that the course starts, as listed in the class schedule. You should expect to complete all coursework by the end of the semester, or by the last day of the class, the same as in a traditional classroom. You may have a final exam scheduled during finals week.

## How to Find Online Courses Offered at UNM-LA

There are several ways to find online courses offered at UNM-LA:

- Online courses at UNM-LA are listed in the printed UNM-LA Class Listing, available on campus, through local newspapers, in several locations around the Los Alamos area, and on the Class Schedules page on the UNM-LA Web Site: [http://www.la.unm.edu/PR/class\\_schedule.html](http://www.la.unm.edu/PR/class_schedule.html) - scroll down to the link for online (WebCT) classes.
- You can find UNM-LA online courses in the Banner listing of courses when you search for classes to add:
  - Go to <http://my.unm.edu>, and login using your NetID.
  - After you login, click on the **Student Life** tab and then on **Lobo Web**.
  - Click on **Registration & Records**
  - Under Registration, click on **Search Class Schedule for Classes to Add**, then select **Accept Financial Responsibility** and click on **Submit**.
  - Under **Search by Term**, select the term you're interested in.
  - On the **Search Class Schedule** screen, select:
    - **Subject:** (any or all),
    - **Schedule type:** hold down **Ctrl** and click on everything that contains **"online"** (yes, they don't make it easy!)
    - **Campus:** **Los Alamos** and **Los Alamos Bernalillo** and then click on **Search**.
- You can find UNM-LA online courses in the UNM schedule at <http://schedule.unm.edu>. Select the term you're interested in, and then click on **Los Alamos**. In the Description column, online courses will have the word "online" in their description.

## Policies

### Attendance and Participation Policy

UNM-LA Policy is that class attendance is mandatory. Because "attendance" and "participation" mean something different in an online class, your instructor's policies may differ from the policies you are used to seeing in your traditional classes. Your instructor has the option of dropping you from the course: (a) if you fail to login within a few days after the beginning of the semester or course start date; (b) if you fail to login for more than some number of weeks during the semester; (c) if you fail to turn in significant amounts of assigned work or exams. The details of attendance and participation policies are set by each instructor, and they will be specified in your class syllabus.

If you decide to drop the class, it is your responsibility to do so; you should be aware of University-wide posted deadlines for tuition refunds and mandatory assignment of grades. You should not assume that the instructor will drop you before a deadline if you simply stop logging in.

Dropping a course may affect your financial aid status and/or tuition refund. If you drop after the no-grade deadline, the grade assigned, either WP (withdrew passing) or WF (withdrew failing), is the instructor's decision, the same as for a traditional class.

A student who is dropped for nonattendance will be notified by email to his/her UNM email account (your\_NetID@unm.edu). The instructor's decision is final, but if the student disagrees with the action, he or she must contact the instructor within three working days after the notification is sent.

## Your WebCT Participation May Be Monitored

WebCT allows your instructor to monitor your participation in your online class. In addition to seeing all of the posts and comments that you make in Discussions and Chat, your instructor has access to records of when you logged in and what course materials you opened during each session. This data is made available to the instructor to help the instructor identify students having difficulties with the course or with using WebCT features.

## The WebCT Environment

### Access to a WebCT Course Requires a UNM NetID

In order to access a WebCT course, you must have a UNM NetID. After you have been admitted as a UNM student, you can obtain a NetID by going here: <https://netid.unm.edu/>. You must use your NetID in order to login to the WebCT environment to access your course.

### Logging In to Your Course

- You can login to WebCT here: <http://vista.unm.edu>, using your UNM NetID and password.
- You can also login to WebCT by going to <http://my.unm.edu> and logging in. On the screen that is displayed, you will see a tab called "My Courses." This tab is next to the Student Life tab near the top of the screen. Clicking on "My Courses" will take you to a login screen for WebCT. Use your UNM NetID and password to login to WebCT from this screen.

After you login, you will see a list of online courses in which you are currently enrolled. Click on the one you want to see.

**NOTE:** You cannot login to any WebCT course before the first day of the semester or the first day that the course is offered, if it starts later. This is UNM policy.

### Getting Early Information about a WebCT Course

If you want early information about your WebCT course, you must contact the instructor, and we strongly encourage you to do so. Your instructor's email address can be found by searching the UNM directory at <http://directory.unm.edu>. If the instructor's email is not listed there, you can obtain it by contacting UNM-LA at 505-662-5919 or from the Office of Instruction at 505-661-4693.

### Training for the General WebCT Environment

You need to familiarize yourself with the WebCT environment at UNM, if you haven't already done so. WebCT will be your entry point to your online courses, and it is the environment through which the online course is delivered. **It is critically important that you learn how to use it effectively when you are taking an online, hybrid, or WebCT-enhanced course.**

You can find a WebCT tutorial here: <http://webctinfo.unm.edu/student/> . You should complete this tutorial **before** the beginning of the semester, if this is your first time using WebCT. You can also consult it at any time if you have problems. You can also find helpful information and tutorials at <http://www.la.unm.edu/elearn/student.html>.

Help is available when you click on the word "Help" at the upper right of each WebCT screen, on the gray bar.

When online training in the use of WebCT becomes available (it is currently being planned), you will find a link to it on the UNM-LA web site (<http://www.la.unm.edu>).

## Specific WebCT and Other Online Information for Your Course

The training that you receive on using WebCT, above, is general and is aimed at all WebCT courses offered at UNM. Your instructor may choose not to use all of the functions in WebCT, or he/she may add additional components, such as audio or video clips or links to external web sites. Your instructor will provide an overview of how WebCT and other internet components are used in your class.

## Rules of Netiquette and Behavior Online

This open and interactive learning environment provides several opportunities for communication among students and online instructors in discussion boards, chat, and emails. Online communication should be conducted in a professional and courteous manner at all times; you should be guided by common sense, collegiality, and basic rules of etiquette. Students are expected to be respectful to each other and to the instructor at all times and to refrain from making inappropriate comments. The guidelines listed in [Appendix D](#) should be followed by all students whenever communicating online with instructors and/or classmates.

## Create a Back-up Plan Now!

A backup plan is an insurance policy for you against computer or internet problems. Computer malware, such as viruses, worms, and Trojans are an increasing problem for us all, and one can sneak in and clobber your hard drive and wipe out all of your programs and files. Power outages happen.

Memory fries. Hard disks crash. Your internet connection goes down for several days. These computer problems can happen to all of us. It's wise to have a plan in place so that you can continue with your coursework if you have a computer or internet problem; otherwise, assignments that you completed on time but lost in a crash before they are turned in may be counted as late or may not be accepted. Information on how to create your backup plan is included in [Appendix E](#).

## UNM-LA Campus Computer Accounts and Wireless Network Access

If you never come on campus at UNM-LA, you can skip this section.

If you want to use a computer in one of the computer classrooms or labs on the UNM-LA campus, you will need login using your UNM NetID and password. Computers in the UNM-LA Library do not require a login, but you will still need your UNM NetID to access a WebCT course.

UNM-LA has a campus wireless network. Wireless access is available as open (not encrypted) or secure (encrypted; login authentication with a UNM-LA computer account). To access the UNM-LA wireless network, see the instructions at <http://www.la.unm.edu/Wireless/>. To obtain a UNM-LA campus computer account to access the secure wireless networks, [ITC@unm.edu](mailto:ITC@unm.edu).

## Email inside and outside of WebCT

**Inside:** WebCT has a self-contained email environment, which allows you to email your instructor and the students in your class. You can't send email into this environment from an outside email account, and you can't send email from this environment to an outside email account. Your instructor may or

may not choose to use WebCT email; that is the instructor's decision. If the instructor does choose to use WebCT email, you need to remember to check your email within WebCT every few days.

**Outside:** A lot of people at UNM will use your UNM email address to communicate with you - this is *your\_NetID@unm.edu*. It is important that you read email sent to this address. If you have an email address that you prefer to use (at hotmail, gmail, yahoo, etc.), you can have your UNM email automatically forwarded to your favorite email address. It's easy to set up; here's how to get instructions: Go to <http://fastinfo.unm.edu>, click "Find Answers" and type "forward e-mail" in the Search by Keyword box, and then just follow the instructions.

University policy on forwarding your email is this: *"This action is taken at the student's own risk, and the university is not responsible for any difficulties that may arise from such action, not limited to but including privacy and security problems. Please see policy 2540 in the University Business Policies and Procedures Manual for the full policy on Student Email."*

## Tips for Success in eLearning

### Timetable

#### Before the semester begins:

1. Obtain admission to UNM, UNM-LA or another branch campus of UNM.
2. Obtain a UNM NetID and make sure that you can login to <http://my.unm.edu>.
3. Register for your online course.
4. Email your instructor; you instructor will email back information about the course and time and place of a course orientation (if one is offered).
5. Set up your computer environment.
6. Obtain WebCT training, if you have not taken a course that uses WebCT in the past.
7. Purchase your textbook(s).
8. Make sure you have budgeted enough time in your schedule for an online course

#### On the first day of the semester (or first day the class is available in WebCT):

9. Login to your online course and begin familiarizing yourself with the environment, location of the syllabus and schedule, materials describing the course, course orientation materials provided by your instructor, etc.
10. Read the syllabus and semester calendar.
11. Note the course's attendance policy: you may be dropped if you fail to login or turn in assignments for more than a minimum number of weeks, as determined by your instructor

#### During the first week of the semester:

12. If your instructor offers a face-to-face course orientation, attend it if possible. If no face-to-face orientation is offered or if you cannot attend, work through the orientation materials that your instructor provides.
13. Make a master semester calendar for yourself, showing due dates for assignments, exams, etc. for ALL of your courses. This allows you to see when several things are due at once, and it helps you to plan your study time.
14. Set interim goals and deadlines for yourself. For example, if you have a term paper, decide by what day you need to select a topic, by what day you need to complete a first draft, etc., in order to turn it in on time.
15. Connect with your classmates; email them, chat, or engage in discussions with them.
16. Send email to introduce yourself to your instructor, if the instructor does not have an introduction activity set up.

### During the semester:

17. Login to the online environment regularly. The most successful online students login at least three times per week, and many find that scheduling a regular time and place for doing online course work helps them keep on track.
18. Complete your assignments on time. Organize your study schedule so that you have time to complete reading, research, etc., before assignments and exams. Make sure you understand the consequences of turning work in late or failing to complete it. Be aware that if you fall behind, it can be much more difficult to catch up in an online course than in a face-to-face course.
19. Periodically look at "My Grades" (a component on the menu on the left side of the WebCT screen), or the online grade-book that your instructor uses, to monitor your progress, and discuss your progress with your instructor.
20. Make sure you understand what work items are required and which ones are optional or for extra credit.
21. If you have questions or difficulties, don't hesitate, don't avoid the problem, and don't be shy - **contact your instructor!**
22. Attend online office hours and participate regularly and enthusiastically in online communication activities, such as chats and discussions. Communicating about the materials you are studying is an important part of your learning experience.
23. If you live within reasonable driving distance of campus, find out if your instructor has in-person office hours and attend them or schedule an appointment to meet your instructor.
24. Make use of supplementary resources that often accompany online courses; many publishers make resources such as flash cards, tutorials, video clips, and practice quizzes available to online courses using their textbooks.

## Resources for eLearning

### Library

For information about using UNM-LA's library services, see the Library's website at <http://www.la.unm.edu/~lalib/lib-home.html> . In particular, note the Library's electronic resource link on that page. For questions, call 505-662-0343 or email [ulalib@unm.edu](mailto:ulalib@unm.edu) .

### Tutoring

UNM-LA has a Tutor Center, where adult tutors volunteer their services. To ask questions or gain access to free tutoring, call 505-661-4683 or email Mrs. Meier at [karenm@unm.edu](mailto:karenm@unm.edu) . If you can come on campus during times when tutors are available, you will be eligible for the same tutoring services as students in traditional classes. If you cannot come on campus, they will attempt to connect you with a tutor for phone or email or chat support. Please allow several days for a response; the Tutor Center is staffed part-time, and email or phone messages received after noon on Thursday will not be answered until the next week.

### Purchasing Textbooks

The UNM-LA bookstore is now online, and its website is here: <http://www.la.unm.edu/business/bookstore.html> . For more information, you may contact the manager, Mr. Ciddio, at 505-662-0337 or [sciddio@unm.edu](mailto:sciddio@unm.edu) . You may also purchase your textbooks at an outlet of your choice.

## Support

If this is your first time using WebCT, you will need to learn how to use the environment, and you may run into difficulties that require you to ask for help. Even if you're an old hand at taking courses online, you may still experience problems. If you have a problem, you may:

1. Use the on-screen help that comes with WebCT; click on "**Help**" in the upper right of each screen, and then search for an answer to your problem.
2. Consult the WebCT training materials at <http://webctinfo.unm.edu/student/> .
3. Search FASTINFO on the UNM web site for specific information: <http://fastinfo.unm.edu> . Include the word **WebCT** in your question. If you do not find your answer, use the **Ask a Question** tab.
4. Contact the WebCT help desk on main campus at (505) 277-4848; its hours are 8-5 M-F.
5. Contact the Instructional Technology Center (ITC) at UNM-LA at (505) 662-4699 or [ITC@unm.edu](mailto:ITC@unm.edu). The hours that help is available may vary.
6. Contact resources provided by your instructor, if any.

## For Further Information: eLearning, Time management, and Computer Training Resources

Reading and Studying - The SQR3 Method	<a href="http://www.collegetransition.org/counseling/sqr3.html">http://www.collegetransition.org/counseling/sqr3.html</a>
Time Management	<a href="http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/time.html">http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/time.html</a>
Computer and Online Skills	<a href="http://www.ctdlc.org/remediation/">http://www.ctdlc.org/remediation/</a>
WebCT	<a href="http://webctinfo.unm.edu/student/">http://webctinfo.unm.edu/student/</a>

Your feedback on this Guide is welcome! Please submit additions, corrections, and comments to [furchner@unm.edu](mailto:furchner@unm.edu).

## Appendix A: Are You Ready for an Online Course?

**Online Readiness Assessment:** For each question, check the answer that best describes you. After you obtain your score, be sure to read the explanations of the questions that follow. They contain information about factors leading to success in online courses.

1. My need to take an online course is:  
 a. High - I need it for graduation, my major, or my job.  
 b. Medium- I could take it later, on campus, or substitute another course.  
 c. Low - It's for personal interest; I can take it anytime.
2. Feeling that I am a part of a conventional, face-to-face class is:  
 a. Not important to me  
 b. Somewhat important to me.  
 c. Very important to me.
3. Discussions in the classroom are:  
 a. Usually not very helpful to me.  
 b. Sometimes helpful to me.  
 c. Often very helpful to me.
4. When I have an important job to do, I usually:  
 a. Try to complete it before it's due.  
 b. Need to be reminded in order to get it done on time.  
 c. Put off working on it until the last minute, sometimes finishing it late.
5. When the instructor gives an assignment, I usually prefer to:  
 a. Read the instructions and figure out how to do it myself.  
 b. Try to follow the instructions, but ask for help when I need it.  
 c. Have the instructions explained to me.
6. I like to receive feedback from the instructor on my papers and exams:  
 a. Within a couple of weeks, so that I can review what I did.  
 b. Within a few days, or I forget what I did or why I did it.  
 c. Right away, or I get frustrated.
7. Keeping my schedule in mind, the amount of time I expect to devote to an online course is:  
 a. More than I would spend on a traditional classroom course.  
 b. About the same time as for a traditional classroom course.  
 c. Less time than I would devote to a traditional classroom course.
8. I can use a computer at home or at work to do my coursework:  
 a. Anytime I need it.  
 b. Most of the time.  
 c. Rarely or never; I must borrow a computer or use a public or campus computer.
9. I have access to the internet at home or at work to do my coursework:  
 a. Anytime I need it.  
 b. Most of the time.  
 c. Rarely or never; I must use the internet from a public location, such as a library or campus.
10. Using a computer, I am:  
 a. Expert: very comfortable and very skilled.  
 b. Intermediate: moderately comfortable and moderately skilled.  
 c. Beginner: uncomfortable, and my skill levels need significant development.

11. Using the internet, I am:  
 a. Expert: very comfortable and very skilled.  
 b. Intermediate: moderately comfortable and moderately skilled.  
 c. Beginner: uncomfortable, and my skill levels need significant development.
12. When I have to learn new software on my computer:  
 a. I look forward to it and usually master it quickly.  
 b. I'm a little nervous, but do it anyway.  
 c. I put it off and try to avoid it.
13. As a reader I am:  
 a. Very confident. I understand textbooks easily, with little or no help.  
 b. Average. Sometimes I need help understanding the material, but I usually get it eventually.  
 c. Fair. I have trouble understanding textbooks, and I depend on lectures, discussion, and tutoring.
14. I can express my ideas and thoughts in writing:  
 a. Fluently and with ease, and my instructors give me high marks on my writing ability.  
 b. Fairly well, although I sometimes struggle with expressing my thoughts, and my instructors sometimes correct my grammar, spelling, or wording.  
 c. With difficulty; I do not write easily or clearly, and my instructors have suggested that I need to improve my writing.
15. I am willing to ask for help and explanations from the instructor and call attention to problems with course material or the online environment.  
 a. Almost always.  
 b. Sometimes.  
 c. Rarely or never.
16. I have completed college credit courses totaling:  
 a. More than 50 college credits.  
 b. 25 to 49 college credits.  
 c. Fewer than 24 college credits.
17. I have passed online courses before (from any college or while in high school or in my work):  
 a. 3 or more.  
 b. 1 or 2.  
 c. None - this would be my first.
18. My grade point average is:  
 a. Above 3.2.  
 b. 2.4 to 3.2  
 c. Below 2.4

**Scoring:**

Score 3 points for each a, 2 points for each b, and 1 point for each c.

**Interpretation:**

**40 or more:** You are probably prepared to take a UNM-LA online course.

**Between 28 and 39:** An online course will probably work for you, but you may have to make changes in your schedule or study habits, or you may need additional computer training or equipment.

**27 or below:** An online course may not be a good option for you at this time. Check with your advisor to discuss other UNM-LA course options, to discuss additional preparation you may need, or to discuss how you can work to change your study or work habits.

## Explanation of Questions - What Are Your Problem Areas?

In this survey, questions were targeted at specific areas. Look at your questions and answers to discover where changes or additional preparation may help you succeed in an online course. The comments below refer to each of the above questions, by number.

**1. Motivation and Self-Discipline:** Because online courses give you additional flexibility and freedom of time and place for learning, online students need to be motivated and self-disciplined. When your need or desire for the course is high, motivation and self-discipline are usually easier to achieve. If your motivation or need for an online course is low, you may have difficulty taking yourself into the online classroom and doing the work on your own.

**2,3. Interactions between student and instructor and between students** are important in online courses, but the interactions are seldom or never face-to-face. Opportunities for feeling “part of a group” are present, but very different in an online course. If you feel a high need for interaction with your instructor or classmates, you will need to be able to adapt how you achieve that. Your instructor will build a class environment through discussion questions, group projects, and other activities. You become part of the “group” through your participation and contributions to these activities. If you have a strong need for face-to-face interaction, you may be dissatisfied with an online course.

**4. Time Management:** Online course work requires self-discipline, the ability to motivate yourself, and the ability to manage your time in order to complete work when it is due. While time management is a skill that is not difficult to develop, it is essential for success in an online course. You will benefit from setting aside regular study times and sticking to them. You will benefit from carefully structuring the time you have available for studying and working on your online course. Make sure you know the dates and times when interactions with the instructor or other students are required, and make sure you know when assigned materials are due. If you aren’t good at managing your time, you should learn and begin using some time-management techniques before beginning an online course.

**5, 13. Reading Skills:** Written materials (text, study guide, handouts), whether online or printed, are the primary sources of information in an online course. Instructors may supplement with audio and video clips, but reading will occupy a large portion of your study time. We STRONGLY recommend that you take or place out of English 101 (or equivalent) before attempting an online course, and even more strongly, that you do not attempt an online course while you are taking a Developmental English course (English 99 or 100).

**6. Feedback:** Most online courses are structured so that you turn in and receive feedback on your assignments electronically and within a few days, sometimes more quickly than conventional courses. However, if your course requires that you mail in assignments, the delay in receiving feedback can extend to a week or two.

**7. Time and Difficulty:** Most students report that online courses take as much or more time than conventional courses, and they are as or more difficult. You may save commuting and classroom time when you take an online course, but you may spend more time dealing with the technology, and your instructor will give you assignments that will substitute for the classroom experience and hence, for the time you would spend in a classroom. For a typical 3 credit online course, you can expect to spend 9-12 hours per week on coursework. If you cannot devote the required time to an online course, you should defer taking one until your schedule can accommodate it.

**8, 9: Access to computer and internet:** Online courses are dependent on frequent and reliable access to computers and the internet. While it is not required that you have a computer and internet access at home, it makes taking an online course much, much easier. Many public libraries have computers and high-speed internet access, and these are available on campus in the libraries and computer centers. If you don’t have a computer or internet freely available at home, make sure that you can schedule sufficient time for their use elsewhere before you register for an online course.

**10, 11, 12: Computer and Internet Skills:** Online courses are dependent on computers, communication technology, and the internet. While you do not need to be an expert, it helps if you're comfortable using these technologies, and if you are not, we recommended that you build up your skill base before starting an online course. ([Appendix B](#) contains a list of computer skills needed, and [Appendix C](#) contains a list of hardware and software required and recommended for using WebCT.)

**14. Writing Skills:** Your primary method of communication with your instructor and students will be via the written word, in email, discussions, chats, essays, and papers. Students who are skilled at writing are more likely to succeed at online courses than students who have difficulty expressing themselves in writing. We STRONGLY recommend that you take or place out of English 101 (or equivalent) before attempting an online course, and even more strongly, that you do not attempt an online course while you are taking a Developmental English course (English 99 or 100).

**15. Assertiveness, willingness to ask for help:** When there are problems, either with the course material or course environment, successful students are willing to call these to the instructor's attention and ask for help. If you don't understand the instructor's expectations, or an assignment, or a concept or idea, you need to be willing to ask. Chances are that other students are having the same difficulty, and calling it to the instructor's attention helps not only you but your classmates. If you have problems with your computer environment or with WebCT, you need to be willing to call it to the instructor's attention or ask for help either from the instructor or from the other support resources. If you have personal problems, such as illness or a death in the family, you should let your instructor know why you are temporarily unable to participate, so that he/she doesn't assume that you have just lost interest in the course. Students who willingly make their questions, problems, and needs known to the instructor are more likely to succeed in an online course.

**16, 17, 18: Prior academic experience and success.** Students who have succeeded in conventional courses and in other online courses are more likely to succeed online. However, if you are otherwise prepared to take an online course, don't let your inexperience deter you; prepared students have a high success rate in online courses. If this is your first online course, work through the online documentation and training that is offered in using WebCT before the semester begins, if at all possible.

Materials for the above assessment were freely borrowed from Monroe Community College and Genesee Community College.

## Appendix B: Computer Skills Needed for an Online Course

Because you spend a lot of time working with a computer when you take an online course, you will be much more likely to succeed if you begin by having a basic set of computer skills, including those listed below.

**Table 1. Basic Computer Skills Needed for Success in Online Learning**

<b>Computer Skills</b>
Data entry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typing</li> <li>• Mousing</li> </ul>
Browser <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use urls to connect to websites</li> <li>• Use toolbar to navigate internet, print</li> <li>• Find links on page with mouse pointer</li> <li>• Use bookmarks</li> <li>• Read status information on status bars</li> </ul>
Search <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a search engine such as Google to find information on the internet</li> </ul>
File Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navigate your computer's file system</li> <li>• Copy and delete files</li> <li>• Set up and use folders to organize files</li> <li>• Rename files</li> <li>• Use external storage devices such as flash drives (aka thumb drives, jump drives, USB drives)</li> <li>• Search file system for files</li> </ul>
Window Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage multiple windows</li> <li>• Open and close applications</li> <li>• Scroll</li> <li>• Move and Size</li> </ul>
Word Processor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter and edit text, copy, paste, simple formatting, drag and drop, save files</li> </ul>
Email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create, send, reply to, and forward messages, including attachments</li> <li>• Send to multiple users</li> </ul>
Forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing and submitting online forms (filling in fields, selecting buttons and check-boxes)</li> </ul>
Administration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Back-up your files</li> <li>• Download files</li> <li>• Download and install software</li> <li>• Install software from external devices (CD-ROM, DVD, thumb drive)</li> <li>• Attach and upload files</li> <li>• Use software to protect computer from viruses, worms, Trojans and other malware</li> </ul>
Hardware <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting components</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: Computer Environment Needed for WebCT

Your computer must be set up to have a minimum set of hardware and software, described in Table 2. You will need to have reliable access to the internet at least once per week, preferably more frequently. For some courses, such as those requiring you to view videos or listen to audios or access very large files, you will need access to a high-speed (broadband) internet connection, using cable, DSL, satellite or wireless technologies, at least once per week. If you don't have high-speed internet access at home, it is available on the UNM-LA campus, in many libraries, and some coffee shops and restaurants.

**Table 2. Computer Environment Needed for WebCT & Online Learning**

REQUIRED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A computer with a hard drive, 400 MHz CPU, 256 MB RAM, a mouse or other cursor control device, and a 56K modem or Ethernet card or wireless interface for internet access</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An internet connection and internet interface (cable modem, DSL modem, wireless receiver, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A web browser: The browsers that are supported depend on the operating system and its version. For Windows, in general Firefox 3.6 and Internet Explorer 8 work. For a Mac, the supported browsers are Firefox 3.6 and Safari 4. A more complete list of supported browsers can be found on the vendor website here: <a href="http://kb.blackboard.com/pages/viewpage.action?pagelid=51413176">http://kb.blackboard.com/pages/viewpage.action?pagelid=51413176</a> .  <i>[NOTE: As of August 2010, Google Chrome is NOT supported, and does not work for some WebCT functions. Avoid problems and just use another browser for WebCT.]</i>            Free downloads are available:            Firefox: <a href="http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/personal.html">http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/personal.html</a>            Internet Explorer: <a href="http://www.microsoft.com/windows/internet-explorer/default.aspx">http://www.microsoft.com/windows/internet-explorer/default.aspx</a>            Safari: <a href="http://www.apple.com/safari/download/">http://www.apple.com/safari/download/</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Java Runtime Environment - Java 6 Update 21 (1.6.0_21) or later. A free download is available here: <a href="http://www.java.com/en/download/index.jsp">http://www.java.com/en/download/index.jsp</a> .</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A word processing program, such as MS Word or Word Perfect. A free, basic word processing program that is compatible with MS Word is available online at <a href="http://docs.google.com">http://docs.google.com</a>. Use of this program requires that you obtain a free gmail account, available here: <a href="http://gmail.google.com">http://gmail.google.com</a> . A free download, OpenOffice3, also compatible with MS Word, is available here: <a href="http://www.openoffice.org/">http://www.openoffice.org/</a> . Note that these free programs are not compatible with MS Word (2007) .docx files, but they are compatible with .doc files (Word XP, Word 2003 or earlier).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adobe Reader (free download from <a href="http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html">http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html</a> ) - you will use this to read .pdf files.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Disable</i> the popup window blocker in your browser for this site: <a href="http://vista.unm.edu">http://vista.unm.edu</a></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable Javascript in your browser (usually found in browser Options settings).</li> </ul>
RECOMMENDED (may be required for some courses - check with instructor)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An internal speaker, external speakers, or a cheap headset that plugs into your computer.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional free software, for watching video clips           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Windows Media Player 10.0 or later (free download from <a href="http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/player/10/default.aspx">http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windowsmedia/player/10/default.aspx</a> )</li> <li>Real Player (free download from <a href="http://www.realplayer.com/">http://www.realplayer.com/</a> )</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– QuickTime 7 or later (free download from <a href="http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/">http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/</a> )</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adobe Flash Player 8 or later (free download from <a href="http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/">http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/</a>)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Adobe Shockwave Player (free download from <a href="http://get.adobe.com/shockwave/">http://get.adobe.com/shockwave/</a> )</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MS Word 2007 Viewer and PowerPoint 2007 Viewer (if MS Office is not loaded on computer) (free downloads from <a href="http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/downloads/HA010449811033.aspx">http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/downloads/HA010449811033.aspx</a>)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer security programs, including a virus detection program, a firewall, and programs that protect your computer from spyware. These are especially important if you are running MS Windows. Free and effective versions of all of these are readily available as downloads. You can download free antivirus software from UNM's site here: <a href="http://it.unm.edu/download/">http://it.unm.edu/download/</a> (you will have to login with your UNM NetID and password) .</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If possible, connect to WebCT over a high-speed (broadband) connection to the internet (for example, using DSL, cable, wireless, or satellite) rather than a dial-up connection. Most of the time a dial-up connection will be adequate, although slow. However, a high-speed connection will make it much easier to view video clips and some demonstrations. If you do not have access to a high-speed connection at home, plan your time so that you can use the computers in the Library or other computer or another location with high-speed internet access to view items where a high-speed connection is optimal. UNM-LA has a public wireless internet that you can use if you have a laptop with wireless access. NOTE: Not all public computers will have all of this software, and you may not be able to install it or have it installed for you. Some public computers will limit the amount of time you can use them.</li> </ul>

## Browser Check

When you first login to WebCT at <http://vista.unm.edu> , the program will run a browser check. If your web browser needs to be configured (e.g., to allow cookies, popup windows and Javascript) or updated, follow the instructions on that screen and on the links that the browser check provides.

## Appendix D: Rules of Netiquette and Online Behavior

This open and interactive learning environment provides several opportunities for communication among students and online instructors in the Discussion Boards, chat, and emails. Online communication should be conducted in a professional and courteous manner at all times; be guided by common sense, collegiality, and basic rules of etiquette. Students are expected to be respectful to each other and to the instructor at all times and to refrain from making inappropriate comments. The following guidelines should be observed by all students whenever communicating online with instructors and/or classmates.

- **Be professional** at all times.
- **Be considerate.** Sending spam email to fellow classmates or instructors is not allowed.
- **Be respectful** of other people. Each person is entitled to his or her own opinion. If you disagree, do so respectfully, without sarcasm or ridicule. Remember, when you are communicating online, you don't have the nonverbal cues you get when you are face-to-face. Remember that **TYPING IN ALL CAPS** is usually interpreted as the equivalent of **SHOUTING**. Flaming or ranting is unacceptable - it's the online equivalent of throwing a tantrum in the classroom.
- **Be calm.** If you are upset or frustrated or angry, keep this out of your communications with your fellow students or instructors. An angry or sarcastic comment does little to win respect or cooperation. Think about what you are going to say before you type, and say it in an unemotional, professional manner. Provide adequate information when asking for help or assistance from your instructors or classmates.
- **Think twice before clicking on *Send*.** Both students and instructors need to be sure that they are saying just what they mean. How will the person on the other end interpret a message? While no one can anticipate all reactions, think about how your message may be received, and read over each message before sending. Remember, that's a real, live, feeling person who is reading your email or discussion.
- **Stalking and derogatory comments are inappropriate.** Stalking a classmate, making derogatory or inappropriate comments and jokes, and forwarding emails that make fun of or put down someone because of their race, gender, age, religion, physical characteristics, disability or sexual orientation, are unacceptable and subject to the same disciplinary action that they would receive if they occurred in the onground classroom. Worse, if you do the above in online discussion or email, you leave tangible evidence of misbehavior! If you have concerns about something that has been said to or about yourself or other classmates, you should let the instructor know.
- **Plagiarism, cheating, and other violations are unacceptable.** Plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of ethical student behavior are serious actions in a learning community. Just like derogatory comments, this behavior is subject to the same disciplinary action as if the behavior occurred in the onground classroom.
- Here's a link on email netiquette that is quite comprehensive:  
[http://www.petri.co.il/email\\_netiquette.htm](http://www.petri.co.il/email_netiquette.htm)

## Appendix E: Create a Back-up Plan Now!

A backup plan is an insurance policy for you. Computer malware, such as worms, viruses, and Trojans are an increasing problem for us all, and one can sneak in and clobber your hard drive and wipe out all of your programs and files. Power outages happen. Memory fries. Hard disks crash. Your internet connection goes down for several days. These computer problems can happen to all of us. It's wise to have a plan in place so that you can continue with your coursework if you have a computer or internet problem; otherwise, assignments that you've completed on time but lost in a crash before they are turned in may be counted as late or even not be accepted.

- **Step 1:** Find out what options are available so that you'll have a computer available in case of an emergency (i.e. the computer you normally use is suddenly unavailable). Identify at least one alternate computer that you can use, and verify that you can use it to login to WebCT. Don't just assume that it will work, or that you can use it. Find out what times it's available, and if you need anything special to use it, such as a picture ID, or if you need to supply your own mouse. Make sure it has software that you use in the course, such as Adobe Reader. Your plan could be as simple as using another computer in your house, or asking your employer to allow you to use a work computer in case your computer goes down. It could involve getting a library card and checking to see when the local library computers are available.

**NOTE:** You can use any of the computers in the UNM-LA Library or Computer Center. (You will need a UNM NetID to use computers in the computer labs or classrooms.) You need a picture ID to "borrow" a mouse and headphones in the UNM-LA Library. You need a UNM-LA login if you want to access the wireless network on the UNM-LA campus - contact [ITC@unm.edu](mailto:ITC@unm.edu) to obtain this.)

- **Step 2:** Download and print out crucial course information each week, before a computing emergency occurs. Print out the syllabus and the semester calendar, and keep them in a safe place. Each week, download to a thumb drive or print out the current week's assignments, along with the information you need from the links that may be in your assignment. Print out any additional web addresses you need, such as the link to the publisher's textbook website. It is also helpful to have a printed copy of the names and email addresses of the instructor and of some other students in the class.
- **Step 3:** Back up your critical files, such as assignments and essays, while you are working on them. There are a lot of ways to back up a file. You can use a CD-ROM, DVD, flash memory drive (thumb drive), floppy disk, an internet backup service, your web site or blog, or email them to your UNM email account as attachments (a copy will be stored on the UNM email server). These files have a way of disappearing just before they are due! (Why this happens is an ongoing mystery to most college instructors.) A thumb drive (aka jump drive, flash drive, USB drive) is a relatively cheap and convenient way to keep your critical files at hand, wherever you are, because it is small and easy to use and plugs into a USB port on most computers.