

Zero to Success in 77 Days

A Week-By-Week To-Do List for the Term for Online Learners

An academic term at Oregon State University moves very quickly. Ten weeks of classes – 77 days – and you find yourself facing finals week. Successful students are ones who stay on top of all of the little details. Here’s a list you can follow to enhance your chances of success.

Quick List Resources – you will see these referenced again, below:

[MyOSU Portal](#)

[Ecampus Student Services](#)

[Blackboard](#)

[Technical Help](#)

[Proctored Exams](#)

Week Zero (Before the term starts)

- Print out your “detail schedule” from your account in [Student Online Services](#). Make note of your classes, the name(s) of your instructor(s), and review the sample syllabus found as a link in the course schedule until you have access to the current term syllabus for each course. 
- Visit the [Academic Calendar](#) to make sure you stay organized throughout the term. Here, you will find the first day of the term, finals week dates and important dates such as the last day to add or drop classes.
- It’s not the most entertaining reading, but you should bookmark the complete list of OSU’s [Academic Regulations](#) to refer to as you need to throughout the term.
- If you can, buy your textbooks before your classes start. That way you’ll be ready for the first reading assignment, which is likely to be assigned immediately in the materials for the first week of class.
- Blackboard is OSU’s Learning Management System (LMS). Login and become familiar with Blackboard’s dashboard using http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/services/start/blackboard_login.htm.
- Periodically check Blackboard to find out if any of your classes have been activated prior to the start of the term. When they become available you have a great opportunity to get familiar with each course and its layout, any materials you have access to prior to the first week, etc.
- Buy a planner or adjust your current time management system to make room for your new academic responsibilities. Plan time to balance all of your known commitments (work schedule, recurring activities and meetings, time you have for class requirements and study time). 

Week One (1)

- Check to make sure your **ONID account** is active and working (if you haven’t already by using Blackboard). ONID is a primary mode of communication for the university. If you haven’t signed up for ONID yet, visit the [ONID Homepage](#) and follow the “Sign Up for ONID” link on the left hand side of the page.
- Check **Blackboard** to see a complete listing of the courses you are signed up to take. If any classes are missing from your list, contact [Ecampus Student Services](#) (ecampus@oregonstate.edu or 800-235-6559). Proactive communication during Week 1 is a good strategy. For additional Blackboard FAQ’s visit [Blackboard Help For Students](#). 

- Have you purchased your books yet? If there have been any changes in your schedule or textbook requirements, order your materials as soon as you can to shorten the time it may take for your books to arrive.
- Log in early in the week to every class and actively participate.** Don't buy into the myth that the first class isn't important. Every class is important, especially in the quarter system where we only have ten weeks!
- A tip for the Discussion Board: often in Week 1 you will be asked to introduce yourself in each class. Cut down on your demand for time by composing a standard bio and then adjust as needed to meet the requirements of each course. 
- Find your syllabus for each class. You will likely find your course syllabus in the Course Materials or Course Information folder of the class. Sometimes instructors will also email your syllabus directly to you or post information and direct links to the syllabus in the first week's announcements. Your syllabus is just that important! Review this document thoroughly. You can use it to help you:
 - Write in your planner when assignments are due and tests are scheduled.
 - Understand what your major assignments will be and devise a plan for prioritizing your efforts.
 - Establish a regular reading and study schedule for all of your classes. If you don't know how to do this, you can visit with your advisor learn more from the [Academic Success Center](#) (ASC).
 - Learn your professor's and TA's names, contact information and office hours or the best way to make contact.
- If you make schedule changes, do so as soon as you can this week, so you do not have to make up a lot of missed introductions, missed assignments, and course information.

Week Two (2)

- You are caught up in every class, right? If you have any questions about your syllabus or expectations for the course, now is a good time to clarify with your instructors.
- Are you actively participating in your Discussion Boards in each class? Here's an idea: be the first to post a response! Or... if others have responded and you want to offer additional value to the week's discussion, read all of the other students' posts, research the subject further, and then, post a response that offers a different point of view.
- Hopefully by now you are checking your ONID account, class Announcements and the Discussion Board on a daily basis. If not, it is time to start.
- Check Blackboard on a daily basis. This week, look for information and materials that were not posted last week.
- Get contact information from at least one other student in each of your classes. Not only do you have a resource if you ever need to form a study group, clarify an assignment, or partner up for a project, but the two of you could connect virtually with other students to form a study group. Do you know about Google+ [Messenger](#) and [Hangout](#)? If you have a Gmail account, these are interesting tools for group text-chats and real-time video meetings, respectively. 
- If you are considering dropping or adding a class during the second week, it is a good idea to consult with your advisor. The deadline to drop a class is 11:55 p.m. on the Friday of the second week.

Week Three (3)

- 20% of the term is gone! Review your syllabi and start your preparation for midterms. You should also get a start on projects or papers that might be due later in the term.
- How are you keeping up on your reading? Are you struggling at all with note taking? Any issues in keeping up with your homework? Don't let small problems early in the term become big problems later in the term! Visit the Academic Success Center (ASC) online.

- Need help learning a concept? Ecampus provides our distance students with free [online tutoring](#) in a wide variety of subjects: accounting, biology, chemistry, economics, mathematics, physics, Spanish, statistics and writing.
- Identify a question or concern you have about each class after the first few weeks and make it a point to visit your professor during office hours. It is a good way for you to get to know them, and more importantly a good way for them to put your face to your name on their roster. It also shows them you care about your learning.
- Are you familiar with your Library resources? Check out [Ecampus Library Services](#) for more information and a vast amount of support.



Week Four (4)

- Don't be surprised if your first midterms are happening this week (maybe you even had some last week). Scheduling your studying in advance helps you minimize your stress during the weeks when you may have more than one exam. Be sure you are familiar with how [Exams and Proctoring](#) works at OSU Ecampus
- Look Back: The first exam always gives you a chance to do a critical evaluation of yourself and your term thus far. Being a student is most likely only one of your major roles in life. In terms of a time investment (class time, reading, studying, and project time), 3 or 4 classes equates to a full-time job, 2 courses easily demands the time of a half-time job. Are you performing the way you want? If not, visit your advisor or the ASC to strategize on how you can do better.



Week Five (5)

- Look Forward: Very soon, you and your advisor will be planning for next term. Understand that whether your advisor is a professor or professional advisor, he/she has a very full schedule. Scheduling an appointment now assures that you will get in to see your advisor before priority registration starts later in the term. If you need an external trigger to help you remember, use Halloween (fall term), Valentine's Day (winter term), and Cinco de Mayo (spring term) as target dates for advising appointments.
- It is wise to see your advisor every term**, even if your specific academic major doesn't require it. You can prepare by using the Ecampus [schedule of classes](#) to choose your classes for the upcoming term. Make sure you write down the course CRN number, prerequisites and course availability the **Planner** in **MyDegrees** (OSU's degree audit system) to develop your academic plan.
- It is important for all students to balance their academic lives with meaningful activities outside of the classroom. How are you spending your time when you are not in class or studying? Are you interested in any campus-based clubs or organizations and considered how you might get involved? Are you considering opportunities to gain experiences that your classes don't offer or that will allow you to apply what you are learning in the classroom? You might discuss your interests for getting involved with your advisor or with an instructor for ideas.
- Have you reviewed the grading system at OSU? Deadlines are approaching in Week 7 for selecting S/U (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory) grading instead of traditional letter grades for your classes. Become familiar with the definitions and your eligibility using OSU's [Academic Regulations](#) to be aware of the signatures you need to gather and the deadlines for doing so. As an Ecampus student, this process may take some additional time.



Week Six (6)

- 50% of the term is gone! **Have you made that advising appointment yet?**
- The first phase of Priority Registration for next term starts in Week Eight. During Phase 1, you can register for up to 16 credits. Remember you should see your advisor well in advance of priority registration. You can stay aware of relevant registration dates and procedures by using this [Registration Page](#) or by logging into Student Online Services, clicking the “registration” link and then clicking the “Check Your Registration Status” link. By the start of week six, you should be able to see your priority registration date on this screen.
- During week three, we recommended contacting your professors. It is good to do that again this week. Possible topics of discussion could again include concepts you don’t understand or questions you have, but by this time, you may have received grades in your classes. It would be good to review that graded material with the professor or your TA, especially if you have questions or are concerned about your performance.
- Friday of Week 7 is the deadline to withdraw from a class or to change from letter grading to S/U grading. You will need signatures from your advisor for a change of grade. To understand these policies, consult with your advisor or take a look at [Academic Regulations](#) 12 and 18.

Week Seven (7)

- With registration on the horizon, you should look in Student Online Services to see if you have any holds that might impede your registration. To do this, log into the [MyOSU](#) portal, go to the “Student” page, and look under “My Student Stuff” on the left hand side. You will find a link to “view holds” to find out what issues you need to address before registering for classes.
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- The Registrar’s Office provides a number of links to helpful tips, video how-to’s, and answers to frequently asked questions to improve your experience of course planning and registration. What new tricks of the trade can you learn from these [Registration Videos](#)?
 - If your class has a second midterm, it is probably happening this week or next. Are you prepared? Consider what worked or didn’t work on your first exam and how you might improve your performance on this exam. Remember the suggestion to make a buddy in every class – you might consider forming a study group or partnership to prepare for upcoming exams.
 - Friday of this week is the deadline to withdraw from a class online or change from letter grading to S/U grading. By now you should have collected any signatures needed.

Weeks Eight and Nine (8 and 9)

- Look Back: This is a good time for self-assessment. Are you sticking to your study plan? Are you caught up on reading? How are those final papers and projects coming? Are you getting enough exercise and sleep? Are there any habits you want to adjust going into the last two weeks of the term?
- Look Forward: Get yourself ready for finals week which begins next week. If you haven’t done so already, write down the time and location of all of your finals – Do you still need to arrange for proctored exams? This information should be in your syllabus and a link to help you is provided above, in Week 4.
- Some classes wrap up significantly by Week 10 – next week!! Are there final conversations you want to have with your professor now? Are you caught up with all possible assignments turned in? If you have a participation grade for your Discussion Board posts or blog entries, have you contributed fully?



Week Ten (Dead Week)

- Phase 2 of priority registration usually starts sometime this week. You can add to your original 16 credits, and you can add your name to a wait list for a class if the department has made one available. To learn how to wait list, check out this site: http://oregonstate.edu/registrar/node/93/#Registration_Videos for information and a “how to” video.
- You should confirm information for final exam and due dates with your instructor to make sure nothing has changed. As you did with your midterms, develop a study schedule and plan ahead for how you might negotiate the stress of final week requirements.
- Final labs, papers, and projects are often due this week.



Finals Week and Beyond

- Prepare yourself to handle the logistics of finals. Make sure you ready yourself with any needed supplies such as study guides, special calculators, extra pens, pencils, and anything else you might need for the exam. Whether you will be testing in your own environment or in a proctored situation, you need to feel prepared.
- If you will be testing or writing final papers in your own space, prepare your environment as well. A quiet setting free from distraction will be important.
- On the day of your final exams, follow these tips:
 - Bring a form of photo identification
 - Bring any items allowed by your instructor for the exam (i.e. calculator, book, notes, etc.)
 - Reminder: cell phones, laptops, and/or PDAs are not allowed during your exam
 - When you complete a proctored exam, it will be sent to your instructor for grading.
- As your instructors finish their grading, they will post your final grades to Student Online Services. All grades are due the Monday after finals week. Your term GPA will be calculated and your cumulative GPA will be updated by Wednesday after finals week. Make sure you look at your grades.
- Good students will always seek clarity on a grade if it was lower than expected. Make sure you are already aware of your grades on each assignment and that you read any feedback provided by your professor for every assignment before asking about something that surprises you. If you have questions, follow up with your instructors as soon as you can to get clarity on your grades.



WHEW – 77 Days goes by fast!

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK – Prepare again for next term using Week Zero as your guide!

For questions or additional information about any of these strategies and resources, please contact:

OSU Ecampus Student Services Center

Toll Free: 800-667-1465

Email: ecampus@oregonstate.edu