

## Myths of Online Learning



*So you are thinking about starting an online course and are not sure what to expect. You know that the popularity of online learning has grown tremendously since the early days of the Internet. Still, there exist misconceptions about online learning and you have questions. Keep reading for answers, as here HACC debunks some of the most common myths of online learning....*

### Myth #1: Students have to teach themselves the material.

Your instructors at HACC are a highly visible and involved part of your online courses! As in the in-person classroom, their primary concern is the teaching and engagement of students. HACC online instructors are well-trained and well-versed in the best practices in instructional design and online teaching. They deliver lectures and content in various formats, and reinforce concepts through additional guided learning activities. HACC instructors personally design course materials such as syllabi, assignments, assessments, videos, interactive discussions, and even group projects - all with the goal of promoting student learning and success.

### Myth #2: Online Courses Don't Provide the Same Level of Interaction with Instructors or Other Students

Online courses typically require a certain level of class interactivity from students with the intention of helping them be successful. Online faculty offer office hours during which they meet with students via video conferencing, phone calls, chat, or text messaging. In some courses, students participate in group activities and use collaborative tools like Skype or Zoom to confer with each other.

Also, online students participate in HACC clubs, organizations, and forums. They access all the activities and services available to members of the student body taking in-person courses, such as athletics, career services, advising, and tutoring. Building friendships and networks is easy for HACC Hawks – whether they take courses online, in-person, or a mix of both!

### Myth #3: You can't earn a degree online.

Not only can students pursue legitimate learning online – these days they can earn degrees ranging from diplomas to doctorates! Online courses at HACC span our disciplines and we offer numerous fully online degrees that include diplomas, certificates, and Associate degrees:

<https://www.hacc.edu/OnlineLearning/OnlineDegrees/OnlineCourses/index.cfm>

We also offer educational opportunities designed to help students learn a new skill or improve existing skills, through our online not-for-credit offerings provided by our Workforce Development program:

<https://www.hacc.edu/ProgramsandCourses/NoncreditCourses/index.cfm>

### Myth #4: Employers don't value online education.

Employers respect online learning. According to U.S. News, 95% of human resources managers report that they would hire candidates who have taken online courses. When considering candidates, most employers look at a variety of factors: first impressions; work history; educational experience; etc. As online education becomes more and more common, employers are able to cite a growing body of evidence of its effectiveness. An added benefit of online learning is that the skills it teaches students, such as familiarity with technology and online communication and collaboration, are increasingly valued in the workplace.

### Myth #5: Online courses are of a lower quality.

Sometimes prospective students assume that the online learning experience could never compete with the in-person experience. They fear that they won't find the same level of quality and support. But the percentage of students enrolled in online courses keeps rising, suggesting the quality of the experience. Online courses at HACC adhere to academic standards and accreditation requirements. Students are expected to complete course activities just as they do in the in-person environment, and as they do so they gain valuable time management and self-motivation skills. They easily access support as needed from HACC instructional technology professionals, as well as from our librarians, tutors, and Access Services.

## Myth #6: All online courses are self-paced...and that's bad!

While it is true that there are self-paced online educational opportunities out there, many more programs are structured similarly to those at on-site institutions. This is the case at HACC. There is a structure to online courses, with teachers delivering instruction and students completing work according to prescribed schedules. Students do have flexibility within the specifications of the schedule - and they find that the control they are able to exercise over their schedules significantly aids in their learning and performance.

## Myth #7: You have to be a “tech wiz” to take an online course.

Most online learning platforms require only basic knowledge about computers, as they are designed to be straightforward and user-friendly. Of course, all new skills take practice! HACC offers many resources for those needing some extra support. Instructors help new online learners become familiar with the online learning environment, to promote their comfort and success.

You can find a sampling of the type of technical skills you'll utilize when you explore the videos, practice discussion, and practice dropbox in the Week 1 module of this Sample Course.

## Myth #8: Financial aid isn't available for online learning.

Today's online students enjoy roughly the same financial aid options as students taking in-person courses. The same can be said of scholarship opportunities. In fact, HACC offers over 200 unique scholarship opportunities to students:

<https://www.hacc.edu/Paying/TypesofAid/Scholarships/index.cfm>

*If the idea of online learning still holds uncertainty for you, talk with someone who already has tried it. Given the popularity and quality of online education, you surely will find many people who have had positive, rewarding experiences! Browse the testimonials of HACC online students available on our website. Contact us at HACC to ask questions and discuss our online learning opportunities. We have been a leader in virtual learning for years and love to talk about our success with students! When it comes to online learning, you have nothing to lose – and much to gain.*