

Student Handbook for Online Learning Columbia College



**This student handbook is designed to assist and prepare you to be a
successful online learner.**

Table of Contents

<u>Welcome</u>	3
<u>Columbia College's Online Teaching Philosophy</u>	4
<u>Definitions of Online Delivery Methods</u>	4
<u>Synchronous versus Asynchronous Communication</u>	4
<u>Minimal Technology Requirements for Online Students</u>	5
<u>911 Approach to HELP</u>	5
<u>Browser Compatibility Check</u>	5
<u>Need to Know</u>	6
<u>Online Enrollment and Fees</u>	6
<u>Connect Columbia</u>	6
<u>Online Bookstore</u>	6
<u>Student Passwords</u>	7
<u>Adding An Online Class</u>	7
<u>Holidays</u>	7
<u>Academic Integrity</u>	7-8
<u>Turnitin</u>	8
<u>Library</u>	8
<u>Online Attendance</u>	8
<u>Instructor Availability</u>	9
<u>Activating Your Student Email</u>	9
<u>Online Student Services</u>	9
<u>Dropping An Online Class</u>	9
<u>Proctoring Policy</u>	9
<u>Online Support and Training</u>	10

Dear Online Student,

Welcome to Columbia College!

We are excited that you have enrolled in an online class. Columbia College is committed to quality online courses and online support in all aspects.

We want you to succeed at being an online student.

This Student Handbook, sets forth the general administrative policies, procedures, and benefits of being an online student with 24/7 access to your course work.

Use this handbook as a reference as you enroll in hybrid or fully online courses. When there is a change in the Learning Management System or important procedures we will update this handbook and our Distance Learning Web pages as soon as possible. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about being an online student.

To your success at Columbia College!

Sincerely,

Melissa Colón



Click on icon to hear audio welcome

Melissa Colón
Distance Education Coordinator
Columbia College
209.588.5092
colonm@yosemite.edu

Columbia College's Online Teaching Philosophy

Over the past few years, starting in 2008, Columbia College has become more involved in developing and providing distance learning opportunities for students. Our online instructors attend a rigorous training program that focuses on online design and development, student learning outcomes, addressing student learning styles, regular and effective communication and creating a human presence in the online class.

The success of our online offerings is based on providing quality online education with trained and enthusiastic instructors. Our belief is a motivated student can learn anytime, anywhere. We have a list of online courses that are offered each semester in the schedule and information located on the Columbia College's home page under Distance Learning, Online Classes.

Instructors will *usually* have pre-instructions or additional information about the class posted on their Faculty Web pages.

We believe there are many advantages for taking online classes:

- Students with Busy Schedules
- Self-paced
- 24/7 Classroom
- Transportation Issues
- Remote Areas
- Childcare Issues
- Need to Update Skills for Employment
- Courses Not Offered Locally
- Disabled or Home-bound
- Shyness in Large Groups

Definitions of Online Delivery Methods

There are three broad definitions of online instructional methods at Columbia College:

- **Fully Online Courses** - courses that meet fully online.
- **Hybrid Courses** - courses that have a combination of online and face to face meetings. The on-campus meetings need to be specifically scheduled and listed in the Schedule of Classes.
- **Online Enhancement** – face to face courses that use the Internet and course management software to supplement traditional face to face instruction.

Synchronous versus Asynchronous Communication Mode

Synchronous means there is a live, real time interaction between student and instructor, or student to student. Synchronous communication tools include: chat rooms, CCC Confer Virtual Conferences, Blackboard Instant Messenger, Skype, and other live, real time tools.

Asynchronous means there is no requirement to be participating at the same time, in real time. For example, students can participate in an asynchronous tool such as a threaded discussion

and then return to view other responses posted by other students at different times. Asynchronous communication tools include: threaded discussions, email, blogs, journals, wikis and VoiceThreads.

Minimum Technical Requirements

It is important to have regular access to a reliable computer and Internet connection.

There are minimum standards for equipment and software for online learning:

Microsoft Windows 7, Vista, XP, 2000, or ME operating systems are supported. **Note:** Windows 95 and Windows 98 are not supported. Linux and other operating systems may function, but are not officially supported by the college.

512 Megabytes of memory. 20 Megabytes of disk space.

Macintosh Requirements G4 and G5 Macintosh computers, White iBooks, and Cubes are supported. All MacBook, Mac Pro, Core, and Core Duo computers are supported (including the Mac Mini). Mac OS 9 or OS-X 10.1.x (or higher) are supported

Students should also have access to a reliable personal email and Internet web access account with a commercial Internet Service Provider (ISP). Soundcards, speakers and appropriate software are highly desirable. It is important to have easy access to all of the above on a 24/7 basis from an off-campus site. Technology Skills such as the knowledge of working with file attachments and previous web browsing and web research experiences are strongly recommended. Experience uploading and downloading files to a jump drive also known as a USB drive is also recommended for success.

911 Approach to HELP

Your online instructor is ready to help with assignment and course work issues. When it comes to technology and troubleshooting issues inside the online environment there are other contacts that will assist you. If you experience technical difficulties or cannot log into Blackboard please contact the Blackboard Help Desk at 209.575.6412 (located at MJC) or email the Help Desk at onlinehelpdesk@yosemite.edu. Check the hours of availability on the college's Distance Learning Menu, Student Resources. The Help Desk may provide extended days and hours at the beginning of each semester. Email your instructor and let them know you are experiencing difficulties although they will not be able to help with browser issues, technical issues or reset passwords for students.

Browser Compatibility Check

This [Browser Compatibility Check](#) located on the Blackboard login page is a utility that makes a best effort attempt to detect your browser settings for compatibility with Blackboard 9.1. Use the check as a guide to assist you in determining where a problem might exist if you are having trouble using Blackboard. Also be aware of the fact that certain combinations of browser versions, security settings, firewalls, etc. may cause this utility to report a false detection.

If you pass all the check points, you should be able to use the main features of Blackboard 9.1. If you have red checks then click on the [Quick Tips and Tricks for PC and Mac Operating Systems](#) link to view what browsers are supported and instructions to correct the problems.

There is also a Plug-ins Checker. Please check with your instructor to see which plugins, if any, are required to view media for the course.

Need to Know

Online classes are not easier than face to face classes. Many times students' expectations of online classes are that they are less work or easier. The fact is you will be engaged more frequently in the online class and be responsible for meeting deadlines, checking grades and participating in online class activities regularly.

Online Enrollment and Fees

New students must submit an application as the very first step to enroll at Columbia College [Application for Admissions](#). This is your official notice to the College that you would like to attend and enroll in college courses. Once the electronic signature is processed, the Admissions Office will send an acceptance email, which includes the dates for Assessment, Orientation, Advisement and Registration.

Students who were at one time enrolled at Columbia, but have not attended within the past year, must complete the application to reactivate their student status. The application should also be completed by students who applied to Columbia but never enrolled.

Always check online for latest information about possible fee increases. Online courses have the same fee schedule as face to face classes. Starting in the spring of 2012, students who do not have a zero balance at the end of a day, within 10 days of registering for any classes, will be dropped for Non Payment of Fees. A student, who is a California resident and has a current active BOG fee waiver before registering, will not be affected.

ConnectColumbia

ConnectColumbia is a web portal at <http://www.gocolumbia.edu/> that will help you do things online—like register for classes and check your grades. It's even where you can go to class via Blackboard. Consider it Columbia College—online!

Online Bookstore

The Columbia College Bookstore is located in the Manzanita Building. If you need to order a book online go to the bookstore Web page <http://www.manzanitabookstore.com/>

To buy textbooks for a specific class, you must be enrolled in that class. You cannot buy textbooks for a class you are waitlisted for. Used books are not always available for all courses. While ordering on the web site, you will be given the option to purchase a new book instead. If you select used book only the order will not be filled if the used book is not available.

If we currently do not have stock on a textbook, the book will be placed on backorder. You will not be charged for the book until it becomes available. Faculty reserve the right to change

textbooks at any time. Neither the Manzanita Bookstore nor Columbia College is responsible for books that have been purchased from other sources.

Student Passwords for Online Classes

When new students are added to a Blackboard course, their username and password are automatically generated by the Information Systems Department. The standard log in information is: 6-digit id number ("w" number) Ex. w0123456 and Password: 6-digit birth date, Ex. 041765. If you are a returning student to using Blackboard then you can use the password you may have changed previously in "My Places." If you cannot log in, contact the Blackboard Help Desk at 209.575.6412 or email the Help Desk at onlinehelpdesk@yosemite.edu, check the hours of availability on the college's Distance Learning Menu, Student Resources. Most online classes are available starting 5 calendar days prior to the start of the class.

NOTE: We highly recommend before logging into Blackboard to run the browser compatibility checker located on the Blackboard login page to ensure browser compatibility and maximize the functionality of the online environment.

Adding an Online Class

Electronic add cards are currently only available for Columbia online courses. Please note that completing and submitting an Electronic Add Card does not guarantee enrollment in a course. Once you have completed the Electronic Add Card, it will automatically be forwarded to the course instructor for approval. Once the course instructor has approved your request to add a course, the instructor will e-mail you the instruction on how to register for the class.

IMPORTANT: when attempting to add a Columbia online course, it is the student's responsibility to provide a valid personal email address. If the course instructor is unable to contact you via email, you may not be added to the class. When inputting your email address on the form located on the Columbia College Home page, Distance Learning, Student Resources or in [ConnectColumbia](#), be sure to double-check it for accuracy. After you have attempted to add the course, you should receive email from the course instructor within 3 working days. If you do not, the email address you provided was not valid. Your request to add will be deleted.

Holidays

You can access the Blackboard Learning Management System during holidays. The instructor will inform you of any due dates and deadlines. Use discretion if you need to work on holidays to meet class expectations.

Academic Integrity

Defined: Academic Integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Professors have to obey rules of honest scholarship as do students. Academic integrity means understanding and respecting the basic truths, without which no college can exist.

Academic misconduct, "cheating," is not just "against the rules."

- It violates the assumptions at the heart of all learning.

- It destroys the mutual trust and respect that should exist between student and professor.
- It is unfair to students who earn their grades honestly.

Maintaining Academic Integrity

All faculty, administrators and some staff share the original jurisdiction for conduct violations in the areas of academic integrity. Each faculty member is encouraged to include in his or her introduction to the course a statement of the applications of the Academic Integrity Policy within his or her course as well as a statement notifying students that violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will be reported.

Violations

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy include:

Cheating

Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise; misrepresenting or non-reporting of pertinent information in all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.

Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Intentionally or knowingly helping, or attempting to help, another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

Plagiarism

The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one's own, without acknowledgment. This includes all group work and written assignments.

Consequences

Consequences for violation of the Academic Integrity Policy may range from partial credit to no credit on an examination or assignment.

Turnitin

Turnitin is an anti-plagiarism tool that helps students to write and summarize thoughts and ideas in their own words; and cite sources properly to ensure academic integrity. The Turnitin tool is integrated into the Blackboard Learning Management System. Your instructor will provide instructions on how to upload your document to the Turnitin assignment area.

Library

Registered students and College employees can access the Library's eBooks via the [Library catalog](#) from anywhere in the world. Directions are available on our [I Can Do That Online Help](#) page. Students at the Oakdale satellite campuses can make an interlibrary loan request for regular books, movies and music through their local library or call (209) 588-5179 to make special arrangements.

Online Attendance

Always check your Syllabus for information on your instructor's expectations of frequency of participation. As the Distance Education Coordinator I recommend you plan on participating in your online class a ***minimum*** of 3 to 4 times a week.

Instructor Availability

Each instructor will post their office/contact hours in the Syllabus and provide two or more communication tools in the online environment. Instructors will set guidelines for their timeframe for returning grades and responding to students.

Activating Your Student Email Account

All YCCD students have e-mail accounts established when they register for one or more classes at either **Columbia College** or **Modesto Junior College**. This e-mail account will be used by faculty to contact students enrolled in their classes and for college staff to inform students of important announcements.

Your account will have a 5 GB mailbox size and a 10 MB attachment limit. Students may use this account to easily send and receive messages, manage calendars, and track contacts. [Student e-mail accounts](#) are web-based and can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection.

Online Student Services

Please check out the Student Services Web page to locate the student services you are interested in inquiring about. http://www.gocolumbia.edu/student_services/

- Student Services
- Enrollment and Student Customer Service
- Student Financial Services
- Online Student Services
- Special Services

Dropping an Online Class

When you drop your online course through the Admissions Office or ConnectColumbia, you are removed from the Blackboard online class and can no longer access the materials or content. If you accidentally drop your online class contact your instructor immediately.

Proctoring Policies

A proctored exam or activity is one that is overseen by an individual (called a proctor) who monitors or supervises a student while he or she is taking an exam or completing the activity. The proctor requires a valid ID and ensures the security and integrity of the process.

A proctor oversees the process to ensure the guidelines for an exam or activity are followed. For example, the test may be open book, closed book, may allow the use of the calculator, or may have additional stipulations listed by the instructor.

We have an “open” proctoring policy in place for instructors that require you take an exam with a proctor. The instructor will notify you ahead of time if you need to make arrangements to attend an exam center or find a proctor to oversee your exam.

Online Support and Training

There are many online resources and training orientations to help you succeed as an online student. Here is a 15 minute closed captioned video clip on some of the basics of online learning, [Online Learning Orientation](#). There is also a [Student Quick Guide to Blackboard](#) available. The quick guide provides information on the types of activities you will encounter in an online class and some of the technology skills that are required to participate effectively.

There's a Blackboard Demo Course available and located on the Blackboard Log in page <https://yccd.blackboard.com> for you to explore and participate as an online student. Several times a year the college offers a class "How to Succeed as an Online Student", CMPSC 101 that can help you make the right decision concerning if online learning is right for you.

We also schedule face to face orientations a few days before and several weeks after the semester begins. If you are new to online learning we highly recommend you attend a Blackboard orientation. Check the [Face to Face & Virtual Orientations for Blackboard 9.1](#) schedule link under that Distance Learning Menu, Student Resources for scheduled orientations. Reservations or RSVPs are not required. All face to face orientations are conducted in the Instructional Technology Center, located in Tamarack Hall (Library Building), Room 134. Check out the [Instructional Technology Center](#) Web page for contact information and days and times the center is open for additional drop-in training and assistance.

Your online instructors will provide embedded technology skills, "Getting Started" learning modules, contact information and regular and effective communication tools to help you succeed.