



Distant Learner Handbook

2021-2022

FOR STUDENTS OF THE REAL WORLD.

Central Texas College Distant Learner Handbook

Two valuable resources that you should bookmark for easy reference are the Central Texas College (CTC) website at <https://ctcd.edu> and the Distance Education and Educational Technology (DEET) website at <https://online.ctcd.edu>. Content available at these websites will not be repeated in this handbook.

What is a distant learner? You are classified as a distant learner not by your location but by the delivery method you choose for your classes. These include **OLL (online)**, **OSL (online self-paced)**, and **OBL (blended)**. Refer to the **Courses** tab at the DEET website for detailed descriptions of these delivery methods. Find the **Schedule at Quick Links** at the DEET website for a listing of courses. Courses may vary in length, but all courses have a posted start and end date. As with any class, you are expected to participate in your distance education courses, meet any deadlines, and demonstrate consistent progress.

As most classes (to include face-to-face) transition to **Blackboard**, Central Texas College's (CTC) **Learning Management System (LMS)**, you may find that you will need to be able to navigate through Blackboard. We recommend that you review the **Blackboard Tutorial** at <https://online.ctcd.edu/orientation.cfm>.

What is EagleMail? CTC students are assigned a permanent EagleMail account for all college- and course-related electronic communication. See this website for instructions: <https://www.ctcd.edu/students/current-ctc-students/student-email/>. Missing important information from CTC or your instructor because you didn't check EagleMail is not a valid excuse.

How do I get help?

These are important contacts for academic and technical support:

- **Eagles On Call Center** for Student Services Advisors at <https://www.ctcd.edu/students/current-ctc-students/academic-advising/distance-education-students/>
- **Student Resources** Quick Link at https://online.ctcd.edu/student_resources.cfm
- **Blackboard technical support** at https://online.ctcd.edu/on_demand_blackboard.cfm

As a CTC student, you have access to all student and support services, to include academic advising, disability support, tutoring, the career center, the writing center, the library, and the book store. See <https://www.ctcd.edu/students/current-ctc-students/> for details.

If you are near Central Campus in Killeen, TX, you can take advantage of the **Academic Studio—Student Success Center** (<https://www.ctcd.edu/locations/central-campus/student-support/student-success-persistence/academic-studio-student-success-center/>) and the **Advanced Math Lab** (<https://www.ctcd.edu/academics/instructional-departments/mathematics/advanced-math-lab/>).

Free online writing labs and math tutoring are provided in Blackboard. Online tutoring and homework help for U.S. military and their families is provided at no cost by the U.S. Department of Defense and Coast Guard Mutual Assistance at <https://military.tutor.com/home>.

Where do I get book and course syllabi information?

Go to <https://www.ctcd.edu/academics/booksinstructional-materials/> to identify the instructional materials required for your course(s). You may order from the CTC Bookstore, MBS Direct, or other sources. If you choose “other sources,” be sure that you use the correct ISBNs or you may be lacking an important item, such as an access code for an online resource. Order early enough to receive your materials prior to the first day of class. Recognizing the high cost of textbooks, some CTC classes do not require the purchase of textbooks or use **Open Educational Resources (OER)**. This will be noted on the booklist. Check the **OER button** for a list. Digital OER materials are free, but if you prefer a printed version, most offer a low-cost printed book.

A generic course syllabus is provided at <https://www.ctcd.edu/syllabus/syllabus.asp>. Your instructor will supply a more specific syllabus in print format or through Blackboard.

What is Blackboard?

The Blackboard Learning Management System is used for all CTC online and blended classes, and most synchronous virtual and lecture classes. You will have access to your classes in Blackboard approximately 72 hours prior to the first day of class. Log in at <https://ctc.blackboard.com> using the username and password as described on the login page. Check out the information at the **My Institution Page** and then select your course from the **My Courses** box. CTC provides 24/7/365 technical support for Blackboard at https://online.ctcd.edu/on_demand_blackboard.cfm.

How often should I log into Blackboard?

You are expected to demonstrate consistent progress in your distance education courses. Most courses have activities, such as a syllabus quiz, course contract, or discussion board post, that you must complete during the first week of class. Failure to do these activities may result in your being withdrawn from class by your instructor. If you sign up for two or more concurrent classes, don't expect to be able to complete one before starting the other one.

Also, be aware that you can be dropped by the business office for **non-payment**. If this happens and you believe it is an error, take action immediately. It can take a minimum of 24-48 hours to get you back into your classes and into Blackboard.

Absence/Participation Policy: The census date is the day that CTC legally certifies with the State of Texas the number of enrollments in each course. This chart depicts the census date based on course length:

Length of Class in Weeks	Census Date	Last date to Withdraw From a Class
3	2nd Class Day	2nd Week
5	4th Class Day	3 1/2 Week
8	6th Class Day	6th Week
10	7th Class Day	7th Week
12	9th Class Day	9th Week
16	12th Class Day	12th Week

Instructors are required to document attendance through the census date by requiring students to complete an academically related activity or to communicate extenuating circumstances to the instructor PRIOR to the census. For all courses, including self-paced, lack of evidence of active student participation before the census may result in the student being dropped from the course and having to pay tuition and fees. For blended or hybrid classes where the first class meeting is after census, completion of a graded activity is still required.

Faculty are not allowed to initiate a withdrawal after the census. After the census date, withdrawals must be initiated by the student.

NOTE: For co-requisite classes, a withdrawal/drop from one class will result in an automatic withdrawal/drop from the other co-requisite class.

What is academic misconduct?

CTC takes academic misconduct very seriously. Academic misconduct is not only plagiarism, but instead includes, but is not limited to,

- sharing passwords and other log-in information to Blackboard or BioSig-ID.
- masking IPs, using Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). or otherwise disguise location.

To ensure that you do not commit academic misconduct which could lead to a grade of 0 in the course or a disciplinary action of suspension or expulsion, please refer to the Academic Misconduct Policy in the CTC Catalog and in the Student Handbook.

How do I get an extension?

An extension is a privilege, not a right. Extensions MAY be available at your instructor's discretion. You are responsible for requesting an extension and providing any related documentation. You must request the extension prior to the end of class. Your instructor does not have to grant your request, or he/she may limit the extension to a few extra days based on the amount of coursework remaining. In order to be considered for an extension, you must meet ALL of these requirements listed in your course syllabus.

Who do I contact?

Your first **Point of Contact (POC)** for course concerns is your instructor. Your instructor's contact information will be listed in the course menu of your Blackboard course, and he/she will send you an introductory email to establish contact. Your instructor's supervisor's contact information will be listed in case you can't get in touch with your instructor or you have a grievance that you have first tried to settle with your instructor.

Other POCs are listed at <https://online.ctcd.edu/contact.cfm>.

Use this checklist to get started. The checklist is also at the **Student Resources** link at the DEET website.

Distant Learner Checklist

Processes may be slightly different for Texas residents, non-residents, and military students. Please select the track that applies to your situation.

1. Get started (prospective students) at <https://www.ctcd.edu/students/prospective-students/>.
2. Get academic advising at <https://www.ctcd.edu/students/current-ctc-students/academic-advising/>.
3. Register and pay for classes at <https://www.ctcd.edu/students/current-ctc-students/registration/>, through a military portal, or at the CTC site.
4. Check your EagleMail account: <https://www.ctcd.edu/students/current-ctc-students/student-email/>.
5. View a syllabus at <https://www.ctcd.edu/syllabus/syllabus.asp>.
6. Identify your books at <https://www.ctcd.edu/academics/booksinstructional-materials/>.
7. Explore the **Distance Education and Educational Technology (DEET)** website at <https://online.ctcd.edu/>. Pay particular attention to the technical requirements and the **Student Resources** Quick Link.
8. Access Blackboard at <https://ctc.blackboard.com> up to 72 hours prior to your course start date.
9. Read the course syllabus and any start here information and note due dates for assignments.
10. Access your classes frequently and complete assignments as scheduled. You may be administratively withdrawn for non-participation if you do not complete certain required activities the first week of class.
11. Be aware of **CTC's Scholastic Honesty Policy** and the consequences for transgressions: <https://online.ctcd.edu/plagiarism.cfm>.
12. Communicate with your instructor(s). Contact your instructor for any questions about your course and notify him/her of any situations that may affect your ability to complete your coursework as scheduled. Note that you must meet the qualifications to be considered for an extension, and it is your instructor's prerogative as to whether it will be awarded.
13. Get **24/7 technical support** for Blackboard and **BioSig-ID** at https://online.ctcd.edu/on_demand_blackboard.cfm.
14. Contact the **CTC Information Technology (IT) Department** at <https://www.ctcd.edu/students/student-it-services/> for help with EagleMail or Eagle Self-Service.
15. You can install Microsoft Office 365 free at <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/office>.