The World Needs Visionaries

Student Handbook
for
Online Learning

AY 21-22

PREFACE

This student handbook contains policies, expectations, and resources to help you succeed and enhance your experience with Claflin University's online courses and programs. Please note that all policies are subject to annual revision.

At Claflin University, our ambition is to provide student-centered, experiential learning that will enable you to reach your highest potential in the pursuit of academic, professional, and leadership excellence.

The tools in this handbook will enable you to embrace your role as a valued member of the Claflin University community. I encourage you to thoroughly review the handbook to ensure that you are knowledgeable of the privileges and responsibilities of every member of our academic community.

I hope that you will utilize this handbook to support your learning experience, and I invite you to contact me if you have any questions.

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The role of the Office of Online Education

Vision

The Office of Online Education positions Claflin University as a global leader with a commitment to academic scholarship and excellence; focused on meeting the challenges of a dynamic and diverse educational community, by implementing innovative solutions and forming entrepreneurial strategic partnerships.

Mission

The Office of Online Education will:

- Launch innovative solutions to facilitate the university's ability to meet the needs of its students, faculty, alumni, and local community.
- Provide a human-centered instructional technology environment, which emphasizes seamless interaction between people and technology, to facilitate the success and growth of our global learning community.
- Be recognized by all stakeholders as an essential partner in teaching, learning, research, and community engagement.

DISTANCE LEARNING: WHAT IS IT?

Students who seek flexibility and convenience in their studies may benefit from distance learning courses[1]. An online course is equivalent to a traditional classroom course. The following advantages are offered by taking online classes[2]:

- Getting access to courses anywhere, anytime, from any mobile device.
- Lower Total Costs
- More Comfortable Learning Environment
- Pacing Options
- Geographic Flexibility
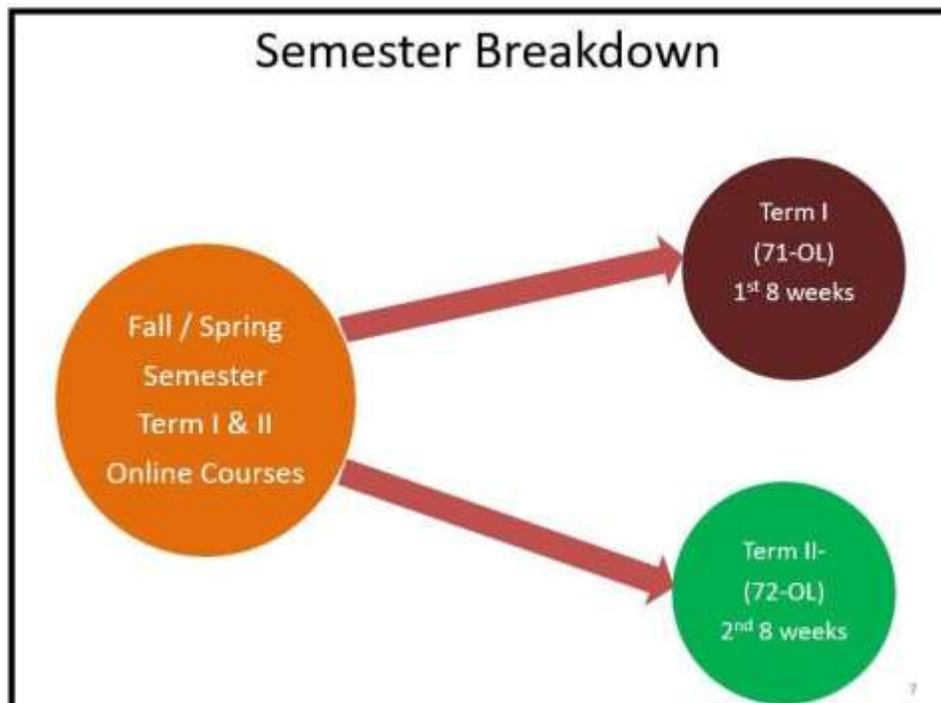- Career Advancement
- Improve Your Technical Skills

The growth in online enrollments has outpaced the overall growth of higher education in multiple years (3.7 percent increase), as reported in annual reports. According to Federal data, 6,932,074 students enrolled in distance education courses at degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the fall of 2018.[3]

Defining Online Course Modalities

Online instructional methods at Claflin University can be broadly categorized as follows[4]:

- Online courses - those held entirely online.
- Hybrid courses combine online learning with face-to-face meetings.
- Online Enhancement - An online component to regular classroom instruction enhanced by Internet access and Learning Management System (LMS-Moodle).

Claflin University offers classes over two 8-week semesters in the fall and spring semesters. Intensive courses of 8 weeks are offered to students to make things easier for them. This allows them to concentrate on just two or three classes at once if possible. This scheduling plan has been proven to help students stay on track and graduate on time.

A Guide to Successful Online Learning

These tips have been compiled by the Office of Online Education to help you become a successful online learner:

- Self-motivation, self-discipline, and assertiveness are essential. In an online class, you are more likely to be responsible for keeping up with your studies.

- An online course works in exactly the same way as a face-to-face course, it is neither easier nor takes less time or energy.

- Ensure that you log in at least twice or three times a week. Effective time management is essential. Make better use of your time by planning ahead.

- Since you will interact almost exclusively through written communication in an online course, you should be comfortable with electronic communication and capable of effectively expressing yourself in writing.

- You should be familiar with the use of technology, the Internet and email, as well as how to download, upload and save files.

- You should be well acquainted with your instructors and the best way to contact them. Please contact your instructor, with whichever method he or she specifies, if you experience difficulty.

- You should always communicate with your instructor via your Claflin University email.

Do you possess the skills required for online learning?

Considering taking an online course at Claflin University? Would you like to be sure you have everything you need? Using this self-assessment tool, you can explore how online courses work, learn how to succeed in your online courses, and test your computer and internet connection for their compatibility with online learning.

Student Resources: https://www.claflin.edu/academics-research/online/c-u-moodle-login

Online Readiness Self-Assessment: https://form.jotform.com/212424045194045

Web Browser Detection: https://www.whatismybrowser.com/developers/tools/iframe

Orientation for Online Students

An orientation for new online students is offered every semester by the Office of Online Education. Students are the priority at Claflin University, who provide numerous ways for them to succeed, including providing an online orientation and ongoing support. During Claflin University's orientation, students learn about the Learning Management System (Moodle) and support services like the virtual library, as well as time management tips. This is a great opportunity to get to know your faculty and academic staff. An overview of students' orientation is provided in the video below:

https://claflin.ensemblevideo.com/Watch/OL_ED_Orientation

How to Get Help

Our online course resources have been arranged to make it easier for students to begin an online course.

Department of Online Education

Claflin University's Office of Online Education provides 24/7 support to online students from the beginning of their program to completion.

Support from the Information Technology Services Division

If you encounter any technical difficulties, such as:

- Your password is not working, and you cannot access Moodle
- When you try to login to Moodle, you receive error messages
- The online courses you have registered for are not accessible
- There seems to be a discrepancy in your course schedule

For more information, you can reach the Office of Online Education at 803-535-5108. Please feel free to email us at online@claflin.edu

Assistance with academic work

You can access resources, such as class schedules, grades, and registration, through the MyClaflin portal. MyClaflin portal.

You should contact your instructor about any questions you may have about the course materials, course policies, grades, etc. The following procedure should be followed if you wish to make a complaint:
https://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/academicaffairs/SARA/SC_SARA_Website.pdf

Rules of netiquette

Etiquette refers to a code of behavior in society, and netiquette refers to good behavior online. Netiquette rules and guidelines for online courses don't exist officially; however, the following items constitute a basic list of the expectations for netiquette during online learning:

- It is important to read emails carefully to ensure that you understand what they are saying.
- It is important that you read and re-read responses carefully before sending them. It is important to proofread for incorrect grammar, spelling, and punctuation to ensure the reader does not become confused.
- You need to know who you are talking to. Make sure that the person(s) with whom you communicate is the one(s) to whom your message should be sent.
- Include a relevant part of the original message in your reply, or cite the original message.
- Whenever you ask a question, be specific.
- If you wish to receive a response, please include your name at the end of your message, as well as contact information.
- You should use uppercase and lowercase appropriately when typing. It seems rude to use ALL CAPS since it resembles shouting.

Technological Requirements

We have established minimum requirements for the hardware and software needed to ensure the proper operation of Claflin University online courses. Students need a Claflin University username and password to access Moodle and other tools and services provided by the university. For security reasons, student passwords expire every 90 days. As part of an effort to address the concern of Cyber Security, students will be required to change their password every 90 days. Every 90 days, passwords must be changed, but it is advised to change them even more often (e.g. every 60 days). The password change will affect systems like email, Moodle, MyClaflin and access to Library databases [6].

Minimum Hardware and Software Requirements

	Recommended Specs:	Minimum Specs:
Processor:	1.6 GHz dual core processor or higher	at least 1.6 GHz or above; or less than three years old
RAM:	8 GB or higher	at least 4 GB
Internet Access: **IMPORTANT**: you will need to purchase Internet service through your local provider	broadband access (e.g., cable, DSL, satellite, wireless broadband, mobile broadband)	an internet connection capable of at least 2 Mbps **NOTE**: a speed of less than 2 Mbps may impact the time to access coursework
Screen Resolution:	1280 x 1024, 1280 x 720, or higher	1024 x 768
Operating System:	Windows 10 Mac OS X 10.14 or higher	Windows 8.1 Mac OS X 10.14 **NOTE: Linux and Chrome OS are not supported!**
Office Suite:	Google Docs (free) Microsoft Office 365 (free)	Microsoft Office 2016 or later
Web Browser: (latest version)	Chrome (latest version), Mozilla Firefox (latest version), or Safari (latest version; Macs only)	
Computer Storage:	10 GB free	
Sound:	any; headphones or external speakers are also required	
Webcam:	Review the syllabus to see what's required	
Anti-Virus:	Microsoft Security Essentials (Windows) ClamXav (Mac)	
Other Software:	Adobe Acrobat Reader	

CONTACT IT: helpdesk@claflin.edu | 803-535-5767

https://www.claflin.edu/about/offices-services/information-technology/contact-it

Resources for Online Students

The Office of Online Education maintains a website that provides online students with important resources.

You can find the following resources:

- A list of different academic program requirements
- Academic success resources (book store, library, tutoring, online writing center)
- Resources for assistance (advising, registration, financial aid)

https://www.claflin.edu/academics-research/online

Accessibility for online courses

Students with disabilities can use online course materials and tools regardless of physical or developmental challenges. Course content and assignments are accessible to students in the sense that they can access, perceive, and navigate them; submit assignments; and successfully use the course tools. Visit the Student Support Services website for more information.

https://www.claflin.edu/student-life/services-support

Moodle: How to access courses in Moodle

Claflin University uses Moodle as its learning management system for all of its online courses. At Claflin University, each student has their own username and password for internal applications, such as Moodle and MyClaflin. Students enrolled in online programs at Claflin University can obtain a picture ID from Claflin's enrollment services office. In online courses, instructors may require proctored exams and universities may request identification verification.

Here are a few recommendations for maintaining a strong password

Passwords should not be shared with anyone for any reason. This includes family members, friends, classmates, faculty, and staff. Claflin University or its representatives will never call you or send you an email asking for your password.

If your password is compromised, change it immediately

It is imperative that you change your password as soon as possible if you suspect that it may have been compromised. After you have reset your password, please contact the office of information technology.

Don't write down or store your password in an insecure manner

It is generally advisable not to write down your password. It is always a good idea to store passwords in a secure place and destroy them when no longer needed.

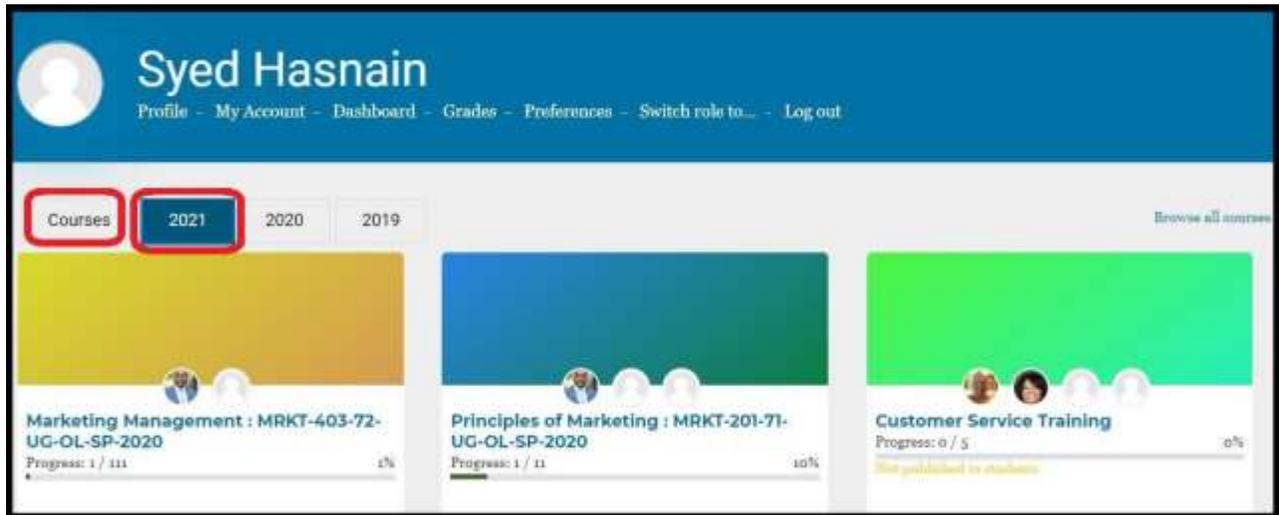### The following instructions will help you access Moodle.

Get direct access to Moodle

You can always access Moodle via https://online.claflin.edu. You should see a screen similar to the following:

How to access your courses

After you login to Moodle, you can navigate through the courses you are enrolled in by clicking on the "Course Home" page. In "My Courses," widgets are arranged by term. By clicking the course name, you will be able to access it:

Using self-service

The Self-Service section of the university's website is found by selecting "MyClaflin." Students use the Self-Service section to register for courses or check grades.

In case you do not see your registered course in My Courses, contact the registrar's office. https://www.claflin.edu/about/offices-services/office-of-the-registrar

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

Textbooks: How to Order

If you would like to order textbooks, go to
https://claflin.bncollege.com/shop/claflin/home. This site will automatically provide
you with the textbooks you need to take your registered courses, eliminating the need
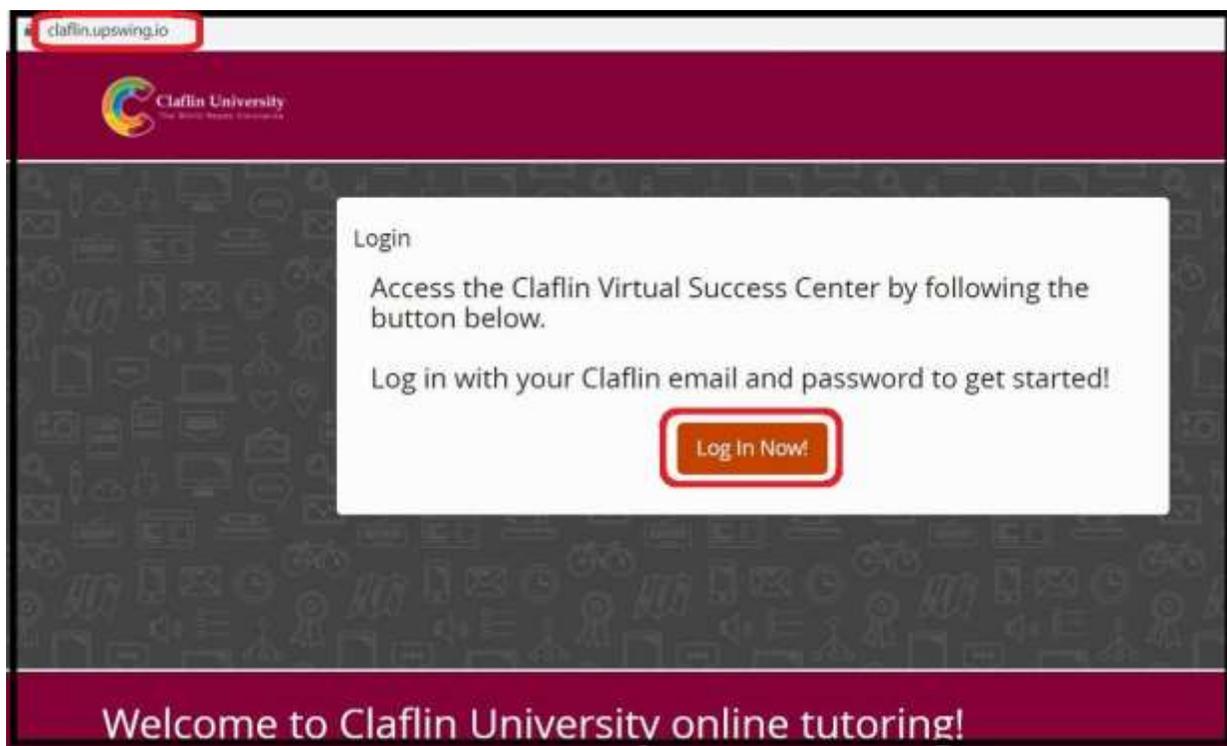to search for them.

The virtual library services

You can access a comprehensive list of general library resources on the University Library website at claflin.edu/academics-research/academic-resources-support/library/online-database.

With our online education services, our University Library provides support directly to instructors and students participating in online and off-campus courses. In addition to library instruction and reference services, this service is also available to assist with the delivery of library documents. Online learners are offered telephone, fax, email, and U.S. mail services.

Tutoring and writing services

Students are able to receive 24/7 free tutoring and online writing assistance from the Office of Online Education by partnering with UpSwing. Online academic support is available to Claflin students free, confidentially, and conveniently. The on-demand service offers writing support in all subject areas, as well as brainstorming assignments, discussing ideas for papers, proofreading, editing, and creative writing beyond the typical academic paper.

https://claflin.upswing.io/

Career Development

Online students can benefit from a variety of services and resources offered by the Career Development Center at Claflin University. Staff from the Career Development Center assist students with their career planning by helping them arrange webinars and virtual meetings. Please visit the website to learn more
https://www.claflin.edu/student-life/career-development

ONLINE COURSES AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The student will be expected to complete all course work on their own. It is vital that students distinguish between their own ideas and those derived from other sources when preparing any papers or other written work submitted for course or degree requirements.

POLICY STATEMENT

"Claflin University prohibits all forms of academic or scholarly dishonesty, including written or oral examinations, term and research papers or theses, modes of creative expression, and computer-based work. Scholarly dishonesty includes lying, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and the falsification or misrepresentation of experimental data. (See Claflin University Student Handbook Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics") [7].

Proctor/Testing Information

Assessments are often carried out in professional settings while students are supervised. The syllabus of your course will clearly state if Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor will be used for identity verification.

Students can easily take an online test using LockDown Browser once their instructors have instructed them to download, install, and use the application. Higher education's leading remote proctoring solution is Respondus Monitor®. It enables students to take online tests from the comfort of their homes while maintaining their integrity during the process.

https://web.respondus.com/he/lockdownbrowser/

https://web.respondus.com/he/monitor/resources/

Student Support Services and Policies

The following information is for your guidance

ACADEMIC ADVISING & REGISTRATION

INTRODUCTION

The world of academic advising can be an adventurous journey, and your dedication and commitment are greatly appreciated. Thank you for embarking on the path toward proficiency and high-quality practices in Proactive and Appreciative approaches to advising.

Academic advisors are partners in the online student's educational journey. Advising for online students is centered on building rapport and trust within the advising relationship with students, creating a degree plan that maps out the academic path through graduation, monitoring student performance to identify academic challenges, fulfilling degree requirements, assisting with course registration, and supporting students by connecting them to other Claflin services. For a holistic advising experience, coaching is incorporated into the advising services to help students establish and achieve their academic and career goals.

The MyClaflin portal includes information about how to contact your academic advisor as well as advising information. Information about academic advising is available at https://www.claflin.edu/academics-research/special-programs-and-opportunities/academic-advisi ng

Course registration

Students can register for courses within MyClaflin through the Registration Menu. For information on courses, go to https://my.claflin.edu/ics/Portal_Homepage.jnz?portlet=Course_Schedules&screen=Advanced+Course+Search&screenType=next

Dropping Classes

By using MyClaflin Self-Service, students may drop any course. For more information, visit https://www.claflin.edu/about/offices-services/office-of-the-registrar

100% Refund Period/Drop

To qualify for a 100% refund of tuition and per-credit-hour fees, a drop must be approved prior to the 100% refund deadline published for each semester. There are specific dates for certain courses that are 100% refundable; please consult course listings for details.

Withdrawal from the University

When ALL courses that a student is enrolled in during a semester are terminated, it is considered withdrawal. Students who are taking only one course and drop that course would not be considered a drop. In other words, this is a withdrawal.

Attendance Policy

To qualify for financial aid, a student must attend classes. Student participation in course activities helps auditors confirm a student's attendance. It is recommended that students engage in online activities like discussion boards, reading materials, assessments and quizzes every two to three days.

It is expected you will spend approximately 8-12 hours per week, per course, which includes at least 5 hours of work online per week, including participation in online discussion forums.

Financial Aid

Learn about financial aid at https://www.claflin.edu/admissions-aid/financial-aid. On this page, students can find financial aid information, information about financial aid for military veterans, information about completing the FAFSA and information about consolidating student loans.

Paying for Tuition/Fees (Billing)

For information on how students can pay their tuition and to view important dates for billing and refunds, please visit the Claflin University Admissions and Aid website.

https://www.claflin.edu/admissions-aid/tuition-and-fees

Counseling

Trying to achieve your life goals, overcome challenges, and enhance your personal growth is what the Student Support Services can do for you. Find out more at https://www.claflin.edu/student-life/services-support/counseling-services.

The video link below will give you more information about student support services

https://claflin.ensemblevideo.com/Watch/y3H7EmGq

Student Complaint and Grievance Procedures

We hope minor differences can be resolved without needing to engage in the following process. Sometimes, however, a more formal process will be necessary. A student who cannot resolve their complaint with his or her institution should contact the SARA portal for his or her state.

- o Claflin University Student Complaint/Grievance Form

https://www.claflin.edu//docs/default-source/template-files/student-complaint-form.pdf?sfvrsn=53553d0e_2&sfvrsn=53553d0e_2

- o NC-SARA Student Complaint Process

https://nc-sara.org/student-complaints

ACCREDITATION AND STATE AUTHORIZATION

- Claflin University Online Programs are Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC).[5]

- Claflin University is part of the NC-SARA organization, which adheres to a common set of policies for online education offered by member states, districts, and territories. Whenever you change your address, you must notify Claflin University's Registrar. Send an email to registrar@claflin.edu from your Claflin email account with your Claflin STUDENT ID number to update your address. Visit the NC-SARA website for more information.
  - https://www.nc-sara.org/

Sources

Resources can be found on this page that will help students become more familiar with the online rules and procedures.

[1] https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/07/DistanceCorrespondenceEducation.pdf

[2] https://oedb.org/ilibrarian/10-advantages-to-taking-online-classes/

[3] https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=80

[4] https://er.educause.edu/articles/2012/11/online-educational-delivery-models--a-descriptive-view

[5] https://sacscoc.org/

[6] https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/password-checklist

[7] https://www.claflin.edu/docs/default-source/academic-affairs-student-services/2020-2021-claflin-university-student-handbook.pdf?sfvrsn=5466040e_0#:~:text=POLICY%20STATEMENT,%2C%20and%20computer%2Dbased%20work.