



Online Activity Director and Activity Assistant MEPAP Classes at Ridgewater College

Welcome to the World of Online Learning at Ridgewater College!

Taking online education courses such as the Modular Education Program for Activity Professionals (MEPAP) is a positive experience for most students. You'll be most successful if you're knowledgeable about the requirements of taking an online course. This informational list of online requirements, suggestions, and FAQ's will be helpful in finalizing your decision to enroll in our NCCAP approved online MEPAP education course. First time taking an online class? It will be important for you to read this information very carefully and get any questions you might have answered before jumping in.

Online Activity Director and Activity Assistant Program

Ridgewater College offers the following online pre-approved training programs that meet the NCCAP Modular Education Program for Activity Professionals (MEPAP) component.

Basic Activity Class (MEPAP Part 1) (NCCAP #25126-16-M2-NT)

This is a 4 college credit class that consists of 4 main units.

- Unit 1: Introduction to Activities and Aging Services
- Unit 2: Health and Social Issues in Aging
- Unit 3: Activity Care Planning and Documentation
- Unit 4: Activity Calendar Planning and Program Delivery
Basic Activity Program Practicum/Internship



Activity Management Class (MEPAP Part 2) (NCCAP #25126-16-M2-NT)

This is a 4 college credit class that consists of 4 main units.

- Unit 1: Introduction to Activity Management
- Unit 2: Activity Department Management
- Unit 3: Communication Skills for Activity Managers
- Unit 4: Volunteer Management
Activity Management Program Practicum/Internship



Both the Basic and Management classes are offered fully online and meet the Quality Matters™ national standards and certification for online courses. Classes start at the beginning of each semester- late August and early January. The course design offers flexibility for the working activity professional but in a semi-structured format that allows for networking, collaboration, and communication with other activity professionals in the class. Please check the NCCAP website for certification tracks and requirements. www.nccap.org

Cost for both programs is based on per credit tuition. Contact the business office for current online tuition cost. The MEPAP classes do not qualify for financial aid.

Since the MEPAP courses lead to Activity Director and Activity Assistant Certification, the courses are rigorous and require significant time and attention during the semester for successful completion.

Necessary Skills and Considerations for Online Learners

You should have a good foundation of basic time management and computer skills in order to be successful in an online course.

- Regular Internet accessibility. Students must have regular access to a dependable computer and the internet. High speed internet connection is recommended. Some personal and facility computers have security or firewall applications. You may need to disable these applications to access your course materials.
- Basic computer knowledge and skills along with the ability to perform the following computer functions:
 - Keyboarding, using a mouse
 - Word processing; setting up, managing, and locating stored files
 - Save, open, and print documents

- Send emails with attachments
- Conduct internet searches for information
- Good time management skills for structuring time to complete assignments and projects
- All students automatically receive a Ridgewater College email account. This email is the official form of email communication between the college, instructor and student. It is the student's responsibility to check this email account regularly for college and class related information.
- Ability to seek and explore resources, work independently and stay on task
- Good time management skills to complete assignments, projects, readings, and discussions online and off
- Communicate and express yourself effectively in writing

To experience an online demo course, click on the following link and follow the directions on the page.
<http://www.minnesotaonline.org/students/DemoCourses.html>

Online Course Time Scheduling Suggestions

When taking an online course, you must plan and organize your time and tasks carefully. **Online classes are not independent study. There are due dates and timelines to be met.** Online classes are not necessarily easier than traditional on campus classes. They may actually take more of your time as you are required to provide written assignments, participate in discussion topics, conduct web searches, etc. You must take the initiative in planning for your course work. Students are often working full time and need to organize course work studies around job and family obligations. This makes it even more important to set up a schedule. Online courses require you to read and comprehend assignments with little assistance. Therefore, if you do need assistance, make sure you are asking for it with enough advance time to get a response from the instructor before the assignment is due. It is always in your best interest to NOT leave assignments until the last minute. For example:

- *It is 9 pm at night and you are working on a web search assignment that is due at 11:59pm. You discover that you do not understand one of the questions and need clarification from your instructor. You email your instructor asking for help but the instructor is not checking email at that late hour. You are unable to complete the assignment without further clarification.*
- *You have all of your work almost done and are going to finish it right before it is due. A family emergency comes up and you must be with your family. You do not have time to finish your assignment before the time it is due.*
- *You have left a discussion topic until the last minute because you know exactly what you want to say and are sure it will only take 15 minutes or so. When you sit at your computer, you realize the Internet server is down or your computer is acting strange and you have no way to post your entry before the required timeframe.*

Setting up a schedule will not necessarily make you an efficient person. Even with a schedule, realize that sometimes things get in the way of completing your tasks.

Communication with the Instructor

One of the most important factors in being successful in online learning is staying in touch with your instructor. If you are having problems or do not understand the requirements of an assignment, you need to let your instructor know immediately.

Desire2Learn (D2L) is the program used by Ridgewater College to deliver classes and information online. D2L is used to deliver course information, assignments, handouts, readings, and other material. You will be able to access this information at anytime, anywhere, as long as you have connection to the internet and a web browser.



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Can I start classes at any time during the semester?

Each class in the Basic and Management programs is sixteen weeks long. Start dates are at the beginning of fall and spring semester. The classes are designed to deliver specific course content (modules) weekly and include a variety of learning opportunities.

Do I have to be online at a certain time each week?

No. Because students in the class are from different geographic locations, it becomes a challenge to accommodate time zones. Class participation is done in discussion rooms and allows for students to “post” comments and replies at any time. Webinars are scheduled throughout the course by are optional. The sessions are recorded and posted in the course for later viewing.

How do I submit assignments? Can I email them to the instructor?

Assignments for online classes are submitted in the course Dropbox folders and will not be accepted by email.

How much time will I be required to put in a week for the online class?

You can expect to spend a minimum of five to ten hours a week completing assignments, doing the required reading, participating in discussion topics, and doing web searches. Everyone has a different learning rate and style. Your computer skills will also determine how much time you will need.

What kind of programs do I need on my computer?

Microsoft Office is the preferred word processing program. Assignments are required to be submitted in a .doc or .rtf format. Some of the documents provided in the class are .pdf format. You may need to download a free Adobe Reader plug-in to view those documents.

What about firewalls or blockers on my computer?

Students who access D2L or open documents on computers at their work settings often experience problems due to firewalls. If you are planning on using a computer at your work, you will need to check with your organizations I.T. person for any security issues.

Do I need high speed internet connection?

Yes, it is highly recommended. There are some modules where you will be required to watch a video. With dial-up connection, you will not be able to access the videos. If dial-up is your only option, you may need to find an alternative option such as a library or family/friends computer.

Do I need to be good at using the computer?

Basic skills are essential. See the necessary skills on page 1 for specific requirements.

What if I am a procrastinator? Will I be successful?

Probably not! Online classes are not an independent study format that you can put off. There will be due dates and other course requirements that you will need to stay on top of. Online learning requires motivation, self-discipline and being self-directed. Good time management skills are also important.

How do I get the books I need for the class?

Books can be ordered online from the campus bookstore. Further information about getting your books will be emailed to you once you have registered for class.

What if I need help?

Your instructor is there to help you. If you do not communicate with the instructor, they will not know that you are having problems or are frustrated. Quick start guides are also available to assist you with using the different D2L tools.

What if I will be gone on vacation and an assignment is due during that time?

Arrangements can be made with the instructor for alternative options prior to your absence.

I work full-time; will I be able to do the class?

Most of the students enrolled in the MEPAP classes are working full-time. Assignments, projects, and other course activities are designed for the working activity professional and uses their residents, facility, staff, and community for a hands-on experience.

I am working in an activity department; will I need to do the 90 hour internship requirement?

If you are currently working in an elderly focused activity program, you will complete a series of practicum projects in addition to the module assignments. Students not working in an activity setting will need to complete the required 90 hour internship.

Course Assignments and Participation

Assignments and Projects (50% of final grade)

There will be assignments for each module/unit. These assignments will require a variety of different methods of work such as interviews, community research, writing papers and web searches.

Class Participation/Discussion (30% of final grade)

Your success in the online class is based on active, continued class participation. You need to read assigned chapters, articles, content pages and other relevant information in order to be prepared for the discussion of the topic. You also need to participate in weekly activities, assignments and discussions.

Quizzes (20% of final grade)

Quizzes given in the program are simply another method of assessment of the student. Quizzes are conducted online, are timed and will have a designated time in which they will be available to the student

How are classes set up and taught?

Each Monday morning at 6:00 am a module will be released. This module will focus on a particular topic(s) that we will cover for the week. Along with the content in the modules, there is reading from the textbooks, supplemental reading material provided in Desire2Learn (D2L) and internet resources to visit. Weekly discussion topics and student networking are also required.

Internship/Practicum

All students are required to complete a 90 hour internship/practicum in addition to the module course work and assignments.

Yes! I want to register for classes, what should I do next?

After reading this information, contact Julie with any questions you might have. If you are feeling comfortable with the information and requirements and would like to register, here's what you need to do:

1. Call Ridgewater College registration office at 1-800-722-1151, ext 8592 or 8593 to register. See link to program website below for program registration information.
2. Arrange for tuition payment
3. Obtain your student ID number from the registrar upon registering
4. Email the instructor (Julie) with your name, mailing address, phone, and email address so additional information can be sent to you.
5. Get the required textbooks (information will provided in an email reply to you)
6. Communicate with the instructor with any questions you might have
7. Start thinking about how you will set aside and manage your time and schedule once the class starts
8. Make sure your computer is in good working order, firewalls and pop-up blockers are disabled.

Registration information and codes for the Basic Activity Program (MEPAP Part 1) and Activity Management Program (MEPAP Part 2) are located online at:

<https://www.ridgewater.edu/programs-and-majors/technical-programs/Activity-Director-Assistant/Pages/MEPAP-Info.aspx>

Instructor Contact Information

Julie Reginek
Ridgewater College
2 Century Ave
Hutchinson, MN 55350
1-800-722-1151 ext. 8588
Julie.reginek@ridgewater.edu

