



Online Activity Director Program and MEPAP Classes at Ridgewater College

Welcome to the World of Online Learning at Ridgewater College!

Taking online courses such as the Modular Education Program for Activity Professionals (MEPAP) is a positive experience for many students. Not only will you receive quality online education designed for the working Activity Professional, you will experience networking, collaboration, and idea sharing with your virtual classmates and professionals from many different states.

You will be most successful if you are knowledgeable about the requirements and expectations of taking an online course. This information document of online requirements, suggestions, and FAQ's will be helpful in finalizing your decision to enroll in our online MEPAP classes. 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 Associates Degree and Certificate

Ridgewater College offers a 60 credit Activity Director Associates of Applied Science (AAS) degree and a 24 credit Activity Director Certificate. Both options are fully online with the MEPAP 1 and 2 as a pathway and starting point. Prior learning and work experience may apply, contact the instructor for details.

Necessary Skills and Requirements for Online Learning

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 internet. High-speed internet connection is required. Some personal and facility computers have security or firewall or blocker applications. You may need to disable these applications to access your course materials, videos and other resources.
- Basic computer knowledge and skills along with the ability to perform the following computer functions:
 - Keyboarding, using a mouse
 - MS Word processing; setting up, managing, and locating saved files and documents
 - Save and open documents
 - Print documents
 - Send emails with attachments
 - Conduct internet searches for information
- Good time management skills
- Able to structure time to complete assignments and projects online and off
- Ability to seek and explore resources, work independently and stay on task
- A computer camera and mic will be needed to participate in virtual web conference sessions.

Managing Your Time with Online Classes

When taking an online course, you must plan and organize your time and tasks carefully. **The online program and classes are not independent study. There are weekly due dates and timelines to be met.**

Online classes are not easier than traditional on campus classes. They may actually take more of your time as you are required read course materials online, complete 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 for you to set up a schedule that works for you. 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.

Some of the classes have a weekly schedule, format, and due dates that is rigorous and requires significant time and attention during the semester for successful completion. The classes are not independent study.

Course Delivery and Design

How are the online classes set up and taught?

Delivery format for all courses is based on weekly modules that run Monday morning at 6:00 am through the following Monday evening. All class activities, discussion, assignments, etc. will be due by Monday of the next week by 11:30 pm, unless indicated or noted otherwise. Larger projects will have more time to complete.

Each 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. The modules starting every Monday morning may contain the following information:

- Assignments
- Projects and activities
- Checklist for assignments and activities to be completed for the week
- Discussion topics
- Textbook readings and internet resources

Assignments and Projects

There will be assignments for each module or unit. These assignments will require a variety of different methods of work such as interviews, community research, writing papers and web searches. All assignments are required to be submitted via the Assignment Folders in D2L. It is the student's responsibility to make sure assignments are submitted in the correct folder and by the due date on the folder. Assignments will not be accepted as email attachments. Late assignments will be accepted up to 2 weeks past the due date but will receive 50% deduction in points.

Class Participation/Discussion

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. Students will be required to interact throughout the semester using the discussion room, chat rooms and email for peer and instructor communication. Although the course is taught online, students may need to research relevant topics in a nearby library, the internet, and other community resources.

Quizzes

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

Grading rubric and assessment will vary depending on individual classes and its content and assignments. Many larger assignments have a rubric that is used for grading and student self-assessment.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to review weekly module content and do the required readings and work for each class according to the class schedule and actively participate in online discussion topics. It is the student's responsibility to ensure access to a dependable computer and internet, log in regularly to class, maintain a consistent study schedule, is aware of due dates, and be motivated to work independently.

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.



Checklist for Online Class Preparation

Online classes are part of the Activity Director program. Here are some basic questions and skills necessary for taking online classes.

Hardware and Software Availability

- √ Do you have access to a computer that is no more than 3 years old? Do you have access to the Internet on a regular basis?
- √ Do you have the latest version of Fire Fox, Safari, or Chrome?
- √ Are you able to disable firewalls or security blockers if working at your place of employment?
- √ Do you have a word processing program that has spell checker and can save documents in a .pdf, .docx, or .rtf format?

Comfort Level with Computers

- √ Can you run the programs you need to use on a computer such as word processor, email and web browser programs?
- √ Can you create, save, and manage (copy/move/delete/rename) files on your computer?

Internet Skills

- √ Can you access e-mail and the Internet daily?
- √ Do you know how to send and receive email messages?
- √ Do you know how to attach a file to an email message?
- √ Do you know how receive a file attachment from an incoming email message?
- √ Do you know how to paste text from a word processor into an email message?
- √ Do you know how to locate websites?

Learning Style Considerations

- √ Do you feel that high quality learning can take place without having face to face interaction?
- √ Do you stay on task without direct supervision? Self-motivated? Self-disciplined?
- √ Can you prioritize your workload, or do you procrastinate?
- √ Can you learn from reading source material and completing activities?
- √ Do you usually understand written instructions?
- √ Are you good at assessing and monitoring your own progress?
- √ Can you solve problems and work through difficulties independently?
- √ Are you planning to allocate as much time in your schedule for an online class as you would for a face-to-face class?
- √ Will you have time every week (4-6 hrs) to work on assignments and participate in the learning process?
- √ Do you have support and understanding from family, friends, and coworkers while you are taking an online class?

Communication Skills

- √ Are you able to communicate your thoughts and ideas in written format?
- √ Are you able to communicate using proper grammar, spelling, and sentence structure?
- √ Do you know how to use spell check?
- √ Do you enjoy reading?
- √ Do you see the value of introducing critical thinking into the learning process?



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) About Online Classes

Can I start classes at any time during the semester?

Each class in the Activity program is 16 weeks long. Class start dates are August (fall semester) January (spring semester).

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 the Discussions room and allows students to “post” comments and replies at any time. Live webinar sessions are scheduled throughout the semester using Zoom. The sessions are not required to attend and are recorded.

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

Assignments are required to be submitted in the Assignment 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 .docx 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.
- Computer camera and mic for virtual meetings.

What about firewalls or blockers on my computer?

Students who access D2L or open documents or videos on computers at their work settings often experience problems due to firewalls and security. 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 checklist 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 on a weekly basis. 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. There is further information about getting your books later in this document. The thing to remember is not to wait until the last minute to order your textbooks. Often you will need to begin reading or participate in a discussion topic from the textbook at the start of the 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 being gone.

Ridgewater College Information and Resources

Admissions and Registration Office

Admissions: Stacey Kohn: 320-234-8501

stacey.kohn@ridgewater.edu

Registration: Kara Schmoll: 320-234-8593

kara.schmoll@ridgewater.edu

This office will assist you with questions or concern about your class registration. *Directions for registering for classes online:* <https://ridgewater.edu/admission-aid/>

Bookstore

Bernie Markgraf 320-234-8524

<https://ridgewater.edu/student-services-activities/bookstore/>

Books required for class can be ordered online or purchased in the bookstore. To order books online, you will need to set-up an online account with the bookstore to order books.

Business Office

Jenny Loeschen 320-234-8528

This office can answer any questions you might have regarding your account, payments due, and financial aid.

Library

320-234-8566

<https://ridgewater.edu/library/>

As a registered student, you have full access to the library services. Although you may never physically visit the library in person, there are many resources available to the virtual student. To access library resources, you will need to request a library identification number. Call Karen at the number listed above.

Computer Help Desk and IT Support

320-234-8612

<https://www.ridgewater.edu/student-services-activities/technology-services/>

The computer help desk can answer questions or problems you may have about your Ridgewater College email, the website or general computer issues.

Student Services

320-234-8504

<https://ridgewater.edu/student-services-activities/>

If you would like to speak to a counselor or schedule an appointment, contact Student Services and they will help you.

Ridgewater College Website

www.ridgewater.edu

You can find answers to many questions you might have regarding being a student at Ridgewater College. The website can be accessed through any internet browser. You can also access your college email account and login to D2L on the home page. Take a few minutes to explore and become familiar with the website.

Disability Services

Terry Grinde 320-222-6070

Ridgewater College has a strong commitment to provide equal access for students with disabilities. Please contact Terry to request services or visit the website for more information and qualification for services.

<https://ridgewater.edu/student-services-activities/academic-support-tutoring-disability/disability-services/>

Other Student Related Links

Handbook: <https://ridgewater.edu/about/student-rights-responsibilities/>

College Policies: <https://ridgewater.edu/about/college-governance/>

Student Conduct <https://ridgewater.edu/about/student-rights-responsibilities/student-code-of-conduct/>



Desire2Learn (D2L) Brightspace is the learning management system used by Ridgewater College to deliver classes and information online.

D2L is used in all activity classes 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. D2L accessibility information:

<https://www.d2l.com/accessibility/>

Registration

Ready to get registered? If you are pursuing just the MEPAP classes, then you will register by phone.

MEPAP Registration Only

Here is the link for the registration information:

<https://www.ridgewater.edu/academics/areas-of-study/health-care/activity-director-program/mepap-certification-classes/>

Activity Director Program Application, Registration, and Program Completion Process (for degree and certificate options only)

Application and Admissions for Degree and Certificate

- Apply to Ridgewater College for the Activity Director AAS degree or Activity Director certificate.
 - Complete the online application at www.ridgewater.edu. Click on *Future Student* heading and select *Apply to Ridgewater*. Designate Activity Director on the application.
 - New applicants will need to create and activate a StarID username and password. Follow the steps provided on the screen.
 - Obtain and send high school or college transcript to Ridgewater College Admissions Office. Note; high school transcripts often take a while to process. College application can be submitted right away.
 - Once the Admissions Office has received the application and high school or college transcripts, an acceptance letter will be mailed to the student. This letter will include a link to the online college orientation.
 - When the online orientation is completed, the student will connect with their advisor/instructor for registration.

Admissions Contact: Stacey Kohn, 320-234-8501 Stacey.kohn@ridgewater.edu

Program Orientation and Registration

- For on-campus students, attend orientation and registration day at the college. For out of state/distance students, a link to the online student orientation will be sent to you.
- For out of state students, email Advisor Julie Reginek to set up an advising phone conference call to review each semester class selection and obtain access code to register for classes.
 - *Note- this access code will change each semester for each student.*
- Student registers for classes through their eServices account using their StarID
- The student should become familiar with their eService account;
 - DARS report
 - Grades
 - Financial status

Class Completion

- Meet with advisor (in person, phone or web conference) each semester for advising of classes and registration access code

Internship

- If the student is not working in an activity setting, an internship will need to be set up. Contact Julie Reginek, program advisor, to discuss options.

Last Semester

- Meet with advisor for final evaluation of DARS report
- Apply for graduation when registering for last semester of classes
- Order cap and gown for graduation and participate in graduation ceremony if you are able 😊



*You too can earn your
online Activity Director
Associate's Degree!*



