

2

This **Getting Started Guide** is your source for up-to-date information about choosing a business school or program. Use these tips to get organized and motivated—and get going on making your dreams a reality.

Online or On-Campus

which type of classes should you attend?



There are more online schools, programs, and classes than ever before. While online classes are very convenient, they're also challenging in their own ways. Which is right for you—online or on-campus learning?

Use this **Getting Started Guide's** questions and quizzes to help discover the best fit for your personality, lifestyle and learning style.

Online classes enter the mainstream

Online classes were uncommon a decade ago, but enrollment has tripled since then. Now, **more than 7.1 million students** each year take one or more online classes, according to Babson College research.

high-quality education

You may have concerns about the quality of online learning, and how it compares to a traditional classroom setting. No reason to worry—in a large study by the U.S. Department of Education, online classes were shown to be more effective than in-person courses.



Fast Fact

Most college students—85%—take at least some of their classes online.





Benefits of **online** classes

going mobile

Online classes can keep you on the path to your desired degree because you can access course material from anywhere.

no schedule snafus

Many online classes have weekly homework deadlines. As long as you complete the classwork on time, you can often set your own schedule. Term paper writing at 5 a.m., or class readings at midnight? You bet. This can be especially helpful if you work while going to school.

flexible start and end dates

Some online courses are entirely self-directed. You enroll whenever you're ready, instead of waiting for the school's semester or quarter to begin. Some also offer flexible time frames, so you're given more time to finish if you need—or can finish more quickly if you'd prefer.



world vision

Online classes can include students from all over the country, and even the world. You could be exposed to a wide variety of perspectives and experiences during the learning process.

affordability

Many online degrees can save you money. There's no need to relocate, and the per-credit-hour tuition can be lower than on-campus programs.

less pressure

If you tend to be shy and reluctant to speak up in class, having the option to respond to each assignment in your own time will be appealing.

Fast Fact

In a survey by the Society for Human Resource Management, 79% of organizations reported that they had hired a graduate of an online program in the previous 12 months



“ If you’re walking down the right path and you’re willing to keep walking, eventually you’ll make progress. ”

—President Barack Obama

Benefits of on-campus classes



no excuses

If you’re required to attend class and get yourself into that lecture-hall chair, you’ll be motivated to make it to campus and less likely to fall behind on your work.

social time

It can be easier to strike up friendships with other business students, set up study groups and network with your peers when it comes time to hunt for jobs. In-person connections can last a lifetime.

collaboration

Do you thrive when you’re working on projects alongside others? If so, the on-campus option is something to consider.

one-on-one attention

If you’re enrolled in a challenging course, it’s helpful to have the option to meet with your professor one-on-one when the going gets tough.



Quick quiz: Which is best for you?

Check the box in the column that best describes yourself to see whether you lean toward online learning or the on-campus experience:

Self-motivation

online

I'm very self-motivated and believe staying on top of my coursework will be a snap.

I prefer the convenience of watching webinars and doing coursework on my own schedule.

I have a strong social network. While it might be fun to meet my fellow students, I'd rather be enrolled in an online program now instead of enrolling in an on-campus program later.

I'm not shy about emailing or calling my professor if I have questions.

I'm aware that communicating with others online has its pitfalls, but I know how to communicate sensitively.

on-campus

I do best when I have a regular schedule of classes.

I can adjust my work and family responsibilities around a class schedule.

I look forward to seeing other students in class and making new friends.

I think being able to interact with a professor in person will be helpful to me.

I enjoy participating in class and am not shy about raising my hand to either ask or answer questions.

Social environment

Teacher interaction

Class interaction



What are online classes really like?



If you enroll in an online business course, you may interact with your teacher and other students using a video-chat format. Or, your class could be set up entirely in an online learning environment, such as Blackboard. The instructor or professor writes questions that are posted to this system, and students respond. It's similar to email.

Assignments may be turned in directly to the professor's email address, posted to a virtual "drop box," or shared online for the entire class to see.

5 Terms to Know

Asynchronous learning >>

Students complete classwork on their own schedule; self-paced

Course management system >>

Online portal through which students access discussions, homework, quizzes and other tools

Hybrid classes >>

A combination of online and traditional classroom instruction

Synchronous learning >>

Instruction and learning happen simultaneously in real time

Virtual library >>

Collection of information in digital format



Make a brighter future for yourself

Whether you choose an online or on-campus business program, you're getting a head start in a competitive job market. Making this change in your life will also give you a great sense of satisfaction. While a business degree or certificate will prepare you to enter the profession of your choice, it's also about pushing yourself, becoming more confident, and discovering all you're capable of.

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“ A beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you. ”
—B. B. King