DISTANCE LEARNING AT BRAMSON ORT COLLEGE

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2005

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What is Distance Learning?

Distance Learning at BRAMSON ORT COLLEGE is the delivery of educational programs to students through the use of Internet technologies, in particular the World Wide Web. In most cases course work offered through distance learning does not require the student to ever physically be on campus. Students may take a combination of on-campus courses and distance education courses or may choose to take all of their courses through distance learning. Information about BRAMSON ORT's distance learning program can be obtained at the college's homepage at http:// www.bramsonort.edu

Why Study through Distance Learning?

1. WIDE CHOICE: Distance Learning provides a wide range of choice in academic programs without geographic boundaries. For example, students anywhere in the country or world can choose to take BRAMSON ORT' Business Management program without ever traveling to New York.
2. FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING: Many employers find it difficult to release employees for on-campus study even when it is deemed good professional development. You can get on-line any time of the day or night for distance learning courses.
3. NO COMMUTING: For students who are home because of family commitments, disabilities, or lack of transportation, distance learning allows you to study from home.

Who Should Study through Distance Learning?

Distance Learners must be highly motivated and self-directed. The student must have the discipline to establish a regular study schedule each week and adhere to it without having to be reminded by an instructor or classmates to meet deadlines. The successful distance learner must be a committed student.

Distance Learners should have some familiarity with computers or insure that their first course is an introduction to computers. Students are expected to be familiar with e-mail and general knowledge of the Internet. Some knowledge of word processing will also be necessary to send attachments such as papers to the instructor.

All BRAMSON ORT students, including distance learners, must have a high school diploma or GED. All must meet the prerequisites for the course in which they desire to enroll. Students may be required to take basic skill assessments on-line prior to registering for courses.

To test your readiness for a distance learning course take a self assessment at . http://BlackBoard.prenhall.com/public/reid/Is_DL_4_Me.htm

What special vocabulary do people use when talking about Distance Learning?

There are a number of terms that are used in Distance Learning and in this document that may be unfamiliar if you have never taken a Distance Learning course in the past. Some of the basic ones include:

On-line or online: Refers to course work done through use of Internet technologies.

On-ground: Refers to traditional course work done on campus.

Chat, chat room: Refers to a type of online discussion with one or more people often within area in real time. A chat room can be set up by the web course management system such as BlackBoard.

Live Chat: Refers to type of online discussion that is happening in real time. Students and the instructor can conduct a live chat at different locations but at the same time.

Threaded discussions: Refers to online discussions on a specific topic that may be set up by the instructor. Students can post messages or respond to messages on an online discussion board provided by the web course management system such as BlackBoard. The initial message posted by the instructor or a student may be responded by other messages. These series of messages create a thread of messages.

BlackBoard: Software program that is used to deliver on-line course work with features of showing the class files, a threaded discussion board, a calendar, or a chat room.

What Does Distance Learning Look Like?

Before registering for a distance learning course for the first time, students are encouraged to access sample BlackBoard courses, instructions, and help pages. This will help students become familiar with the BlackBoard interface and navigation. No ID is needed to view a sample course. To view a sample course go to: Bramsonort.edu/dl_home.htm .
Click on "BB" link and then login as "Bramson ORT" – "Bramson ORT.

What Distance Learning is NOT!

Distance Learning courses are not self-paced. Assignments and homework are due on a fixed scheduled much as with traditional courses. Threaded discussions (defined later) may be required as class participation. While a student may not be required to be on-line at a specific time in the day, there are deadlines and weekly or more frequently required class assignments.

What about Textbooks?

Most distance learning courses require textbooks. These can be ordered from the College and shipped or may be ordered through an online bookstore such as AMAZON.COM. Students ordering through the BRAMSON ORT bookstore will be charged postage. Colleges near the student's home may also have bookstores that have the required text.

What Is Required to Complete Distance Learning Courses from Off-Campus?

Although students can access computers on the BRAMSON ORT campus or from many municipal libraries or Internet cafes, BRAMSON ORT encourages students to own their own computers to take distance-learning courses. The college recommends a fairly recent model of computer with either telephone or cable network connections to the World Wide Web.

Guidelines for a computer set-up include:

- Pentium IV with at least a 1.6 GHz processor (It is very difficult to use distance learning with Macintosh systems)
- GB Hard drive
- 128 MG RAM (256 MB RAM or more recommended)
- 56k,DS L or cable modem (recommended)
- a CDROM drive and sound card
- Printer
- Windows XP operating system

Along with their home computer, students must have an Internet Service Provider (ISP). The college does not provide a dial-in Internet connection. It is possible to come to a BRAMSON ORT campus to utilize a computer laboratory to complete an on-line course. In this case you would not need your own ISP.

The latest versions of Internet Exlorer or Netscape Navigator are the preffered browsers. The use of AOL browser for BlackBoard class access is not recommended..

Browser settings require Javascript enabled, Java enabled, and Cookies enabled. Some students have computers with Javascript turned off as a security measure. Some of the menus and links on both BRAMSON ORT's homepage and BlackBoard will not work if Javascript is turned off.

Frequently asked questions on distance learning

- Can you start anytime?

  No, all courses run a typical 16 week semester.

- Are the courses self-study?

  No, they are all instructor driven. There is interaction between the students and instructor

- Do I have to have a computer at home to take this course?

No, you can use the computers in the computer lab at the college to do your online course. The college's computers will allow you to access BlackBoard.

- How do I take exams?

  Although each individual course may have different evaluation methods, some online courses have self-tests that students take and get instant results. Other courses require final exams that are taken on campus or proctored by an approved proctor.

- Who can serve as an approved proctor?

  Usually proctors are professors or staff members at a college campus in the student's area. Your instructor will need the name, title, address, phone number, and email of your proctor. The instructor will send the exam and instructions for proctoring.

How to get started taking distance learning courses at bramson ort college

Admissions

 (For students new at BRAMSON ORT):

The admission information is availabe at http://www.bramsonort.edu.
There are several ways you can access the admissions application:

1. On-line at http://Bramsonort.edu/ApplyOnline.htm. Follow instructions including payment.

2. You can also download the admissions form from the web site, print it and mail it to BRAMSON ORT COLLEGE.

3. You can request that an application be sent to you via regular mail or stop by and pick it up at the the Admissions Office.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid Information is available at Bramson ORT's website.
http://bramsonort.edu/FinanciaAidM.html

Registration for Courses

Distance Learners must first fill out the Bramson ORT ORT College Admissions Application and be admitted prior to registering for a Distance Learning Course. Upon acceptance , students will be given a ID number and assigned an adviser. Distance Learning students must contact an adviser by email before registering for courses. If you are uncertain about whom to contact, send your e-mail inquiry to dl@Bramsonort.edu. First time students will be unable to register without advisor permission. Your instructor's name or an advisor's name and e-mail address will be listed in the course description or on the college's Distance Learning Web site.

 The on-line registration procedure is graphically described in the tutorial
http://bramsonort.edu/RegistrationTut.html

Beginning Your Classes

All the online distance learning classes use BlackBoard. BlackBoard courses typically become accessible within the first week of classes.
Watch the demo to learn how to enter your class
 http://bramsonort.edu/BlackBoardTut.html

An orientation is offered for those students who are able to visit either the Main Campus or Bensonhurst Extension Site. The BlackBoard orientation for the online students will be scheduled in a computer lab   To see the orientation schedule, please visit the BRAMSON ORT distance learning web site at http://www.BramsonORT/dl_home.htm.

   For students who are unable to attend the on-campus orientation, please visit the online BlackBoard orientation.