

# **What Is In An Online Degree?**

**Making Sense Of  
Online Education  
Options**

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# Introduction

The online degree is a powerful tool to improve your career and income options. No longer do you have to spend your days driving to and from school. You do not have to dedicate four or more years to doing nothing but living on a campus getting your education. With online degree programs, you can easily explore all that the world has to offer with a degree in the field of your dreams and get that degree when it works for you.

The problem is, though, that the online network of online degree programs is huge. Not only are there specific online universities and colleges that you can attend, but many of the largest schools in the world are now offering online degree programs as well. They offer the ability for you to get your education from large universities without stepping foot on their actual campus. The benefits of this are enormous.

Your task, then, is to determine which school is offering you the very best opportunity for success. Which school is offering you the program that you are most interested in? What type of degree can you get from these programs? How in the world will you do your educational requirements on the Internet?

To help you to answer all of these questions, use this e book as a guide. You will find helpful tips to finding the right schools and to finally getting the degree that you are interested in, through distance learning. You will also learn about the advantages as well as the disadvantages of online learning. We will take you through the process of getting enrolled and getting your life started.

That is the best thing about online degrees. You can take back your life and do with it whatever makes you happy. This e book is for anyone that wants to get a degree but just did not have the time to do it before now.

If life did not allow you to get your degree when you left high school, it is for you. If you could not afford to attend a standard college, this is for you.

If you wish to continue your education and better your career, then this is for you as well.

No matter why you want to enroll in online degree programs, we will help you to make the best decision.

One thing to keep in mind throughout this e book is your ability to meet the challenges that you are likely to face with online degree programs. The fact is that this is a unique method of learning that may not be right for everyone. Yet, if you take this degree program seriously and strive to complete it as you are directed by the school, you will walk away from your computer with an accredited, justified degree that really will open doors for you.

Continuing your education to gain a university degree can increase your earning potential. Recent research by the U.S. Census Bureau found that on average, working adults with a Bachelor's Degree earn about \$23,000 a year more than those with only a high school diploma. It pays to get into an accredited college degree program and earn your degree.

Can you do it? Or, should we say, are you ready to do it?

You can finally win at the game of education and the rewards are endless.

# Chapter 1: What Is An Online Degree?

You have likely seen them advertised throughout the web. The online degree is a tool that allows just about anyone that is interested to get their degree from online colleges and universities. If you enroll in an accredited school, which you will learn more about later, you will be able to obtain the exact same degree as you would get if you attended that school full time or part time in the traditional way.

Online learning allows you to do the course work, the homework and even the lecturing aspects of the course of study on the web or on your computer. There are many formats for distance learning. Determining the right one for your needs and abilities is important.

Here are some ways that you will be able to learn in these programs.

1. You can attend virtual classrooms set up like message boards, forums or blogs and communicate with your classmates as well as your instructor. You communicate in this manner when you have the time to do so.
2. You can use technology such as web cameras to actually watch a traditional class lecture happening. These can be done live or in most cases they are taped so that you can view them when it works for your needs. In some cases, you may be able to communicate in a live classroom with the teacher and classmates as the lessons progress from chapter to chapter.
3. You can use CD ROM learning programs as well. Here, the coursework is self studied, at your own pace. You may need to come into the school or visit secure online testing facilities to take quizzes or to send in coursework.

4. Email is likely to be one of the methods you use to communicate with classmates as well as with your instructor. Files including class work can be emailed to your instructor. Instant messaging can be used, in some cases, to help get your questions answered.
  
5. Classes may include just online tutorials that will be presented as a classroom lecture is. You will listen and interact with the online program, learning as you go.

There are countless other ways that schools set up their online learning programs. From live communication to self study, there are plenty of opportunities for you to find the type of learning environment that fits with your specific needs.

In many cases, these learning objectives are set in place to allow individuals to get the best type of learning program based on what the coursework is and the need of that student is.

Schools often offer several options for distance learning degree programs. There is not one set method or model that is used. When considering the various schools to select from, you should insure that the type of learning method that you prefer is offered there.

## **What Can An Online Degree Do?**

When the online degree was first offered, it was done in such a way that allowed students to get caught up in their coursework or perhaps just get their lectures and classroom visits in from home while they still came into the school and took tests, met for finals and for discussions, which was a rare occasion.

Then came the scams. Yes, there were several various online learning companies out there that were nothing more than scams. They promised that you could learn whatever you needed and wanted to without going to school in the traditional method.

The fact is that these schools did allow for you to learn online, but they were missing one critical thing. These schools were not accredited. While you could learn from them, your degree or certificate that you earned was not necessarily something that was recognized by employers. Therefore, your education may have been solid but you could not use it to benefit your life.

Yet, online degree programs and online learning in general have become much more realistic and advanced than this. The fact is that, today there are hundreds of schools that are offering online degree programs to those that are interested. In fact, most schools that offer online educational degrees today are accredited, and often top tier schools. We will talk more about why accreditation is important later on.

Once you enroll and obtain an online degree, you are able to use that credential to better your life in any way that you can.

If you get a nursing degree, then you can get a position in the field of nursing that you have studied in.

If you get a degree in education, you are ready to be certified to become a teacher in the field in which you obtained your degree.

If you get a degree in computer programming, you can become a computer programmer.

The online degree allows you to get into a new position or better your current position. In short, it works in the same way that any other degree would work for you. The only difference here is that you will not be spending countless days at the school itself. The school is accessed via the Internet instead.

## **Are They Easier?**

One thing that you should note is that there is a misconception that distance learning is easier than that of a traditional school. This is untrue. The fact is that you will learn the same academic studies that you would have learned in a traditional school setting but you will learn them online instead of in your local school.

In many ways, the dedication, motivation and the self paced study are much harder to maintain in an online degree program.

If you are looking for an easy way to get your college degree, the online learning community is not necessarily it. For example, let's say that you enroll in a 2 year program to earn your nursing degree. You are a mother and have a job. You figure that you can easily get in a class here and there and end up finishing your degree.

Now, as you are going through your life, you will need to find the time for studying. After a long day of fighting with the kids, you have to make a decision. Do I want to stay up for another hour and do my studies or should I just go to bed? If you do not have the motivation, or the time management skills to complete your degree online, you will not earn anything. You must persevere through each day and each class.

Although the work is no more challenging then you will find in your traditional school, you now have to keep your schedule and do the work on your own, without a teacher pushing you to complete it. You still have that teacher and you may still have deadlines to meet, but you do not have a class at 10 am everyday, necessarily.

Still, the online degree may be the perfect way for you to get your education. Keep reading to learn more about it to really answer the question, "Is this for me?"

## Chapter 2: Why Study Through Distance Learning

Now that you have a basic understanding of what an online degree is, you may be asking yourself, why should I choose this route to getting my degree?

The fact is that there are many reasons and we will take a look at the top ones here. When you read through this e book, you should spend some time determining just how well distance learning would fit into your life. Does online education meet your specific life?

These benefits that we are about to share are really only the top ones and you may have many more. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that there are many benefits to online education.

### Time

If you ask most people what they would like more of, their answer is time. We rush here to there and there is just not a whole lot of time for you to spend your days in school. In respect to the online degree, the fact is that you can learn while the rest of your life is in full swing. Let's compare.

If you graduate high school and enter a college in your local area, you are going to spend probably the next four years dedicating your life to your education. Well worth it, of course.

Yet, this time for education includes time to drive to and from the school, or perhaps you will forgo this all together and live on campus, sucking all of your time to put to school. You also get not much of a choice in when you take your classes. Often students have classes so spread out that finding a job to work around them is impossible.

Or, you can use online education. Here, you can live your life as you are and get in your coursework when your schedule fits it. Some people are naturally night owls and work better during the late night hours. Here, you can do that. Or, you can take a class at four in the afternoon one day and then find that you can sneak another one in at eleven in the morning the next time.

Which online degree programs give you is the option to use your time as you need to. You can study faster, complete that degree in much less time than a traditional school. Likewise, you can take more time if you need to so that you can better stay on top of the other aspects in your life. Time is one of the most crucial benefits that elearning offers you.

## **No Travel**

Another benefit of online college degree programs is that there is no travel involved. You do not have to have travel to and from the campus location. You do not have to waste your time driving in rush hour traffic to get to your class before it starts, again. This is not only an added bonus, but for those that have a hard time moving from place to place, it is a great way to take full advantage of educational opportunities.

If you are handicapped, unable to leave your home or just do not drive, then the distance learning option may be a great opportunity for you to get into the field that is important to you.

In addition, you will find that there are no commuting costs either. With the rising cost of fuel, most people will appreciate this. No gas money is needed, no parking fees for the school's lots, and no time off work. You just get to attend school.

Of course, we should mention that in some courses, you may need to attend lab learning classes. For example, in a nursing degree program, you are still required to get your clinical rotation in. To do this, you may need to travel to

the school, if local to you. Or, you may be able to secure these hours through a local business that has a working relationship with the school. Most of the time, if these opportunities are needed; your school will have the ability to provide you with the locations to complete them.

## **Internet Skills**

As you get into the school of your dreams, you may find that you are learning more than just what you set out to do. One of the benefits that you receive second hand through online learning is the ability to use the Internet. While some teens of today have absolutely no problem with doing anything and everything on the web, some older individuals might.

You will learn things like researching, using communication technologies like files, various software programs, web cameras, and much more.

Why is this important? Not only has it become a very important skill to have for life in general, but more and more businesses are relying on the Internet skills of their employees to do their jobs. You are going to find that the skills you learn here are ideal to take with you into the working environment.

## **Save Money**

We saved this one for now because you will need to do a bit more research on your specific school to determine if in fact you will save money when getting a degree by distance learning or not. Not all schools are the same cost and therefore you need to consider this based on the specific school that you decide on.

But, in most cases, you are undoubtedly going to save money. The cost for an education on the web typically runs lower, in most cases, than tuition at the state or national colleges and universities. The simple cost of enrollment is much lower in this method. However, you are likely to save more money on tuition anyway.

- You will save on travel costs, no fuel costs, no parking fees, and no cost for having the car in the first place.
- You will save on meals. You will not have to pay top dollar for a cup of coffee to keep you awake during class.
- You will save on material fees. In most cases, you will have software to use rather than large textbooks filled with information you probably will not cover. Some courses may require textbooks, though.
- You do not have to pay room and board. This alone can save you thousands of dollars for each year you attend. You do not have to rent a dorm room, apartment or other second living arrangement to be close enough to the school to attend.

Comparing the costs of an online degree school and a local community college may be a different story. You may have to spend a bit of time comparing this yourself, based on the location of the school and what it offers.

Yet, it is important to note that some community colleges do not provide as many courses to study as the online options. You can get a higher degree in some online learning schools as compared to some local community college degree programs.

Again, these are just some of the many reasons why you may be interested in getting an online degree. What are your reasons? Take a minute to jot

them down. Determine if they are met by what the degree programs can offer. The flexibility alone is more inspiring than most realize.

# **Chapter 3: Who Are Online Degrees Best For, Anyway?**

You may not realize this, but anyone that is looking for education can use distance learning to get it. Depending on what type of education you qualify for will determine what you are able to apply for.

Just like in any other type of education, you need to have a foundation of knowledge to enter into the programs. If you live in the United States, you will need to have completed high school in order to earn a degree in a university, although you may be able to begin earning some credits for that degree beforehand. But, there are various programs to think about.

## **Online Learning Before College**

One thing you may not realize is that online learning is not just for the college level and ready student. Well before this time you can be learning through the help of the web.

### **High School**

Those that are in high school can often learn through the process of online learning. They can seek out their beginning level college courses to get them started in the process.

Here, you will want to work with the administration of not only the college but also with your high school to determine your ability to qualify. You may need to meet specific GPA status before being allowed to do this.

## **Home Schooling**

Parents home schooling their children can take advantage of online education as well. There are many home school curriculums that are already computer based, many of which will you CD ROMs designed by top educators.

Now, children are able to go online to get the education they need. This allows for several key benefits including instruction that is in the home but is still taught by a certified teacher.

These programs are offered to children as young as elementary school and provide for every level of education. Some parents find that enrolling their child into a program like this allows them to get the certified education the child needs that perhaps the adult can not provide as clearly as needed.

## **Preschool**

Yes, even the preschool aged child can get into the process of learning on the Web. Working with an adult, usually their parents, they can tap into the world of online learning to learn all sorts of academics in various types of environments.

In fact, some children that have done this have shown to go on to do even better in a standard school setting down the road.

## **Learning After College**

You have already gone to college or perhaps you never were able to go to college in the first place. No matter what you did then, you are older now and not too sure if entering the college scene is right for you again. If you are considering it then it is by all means the ideal choice for you. Any person that is looking for an education can succeed in getting one now that this type of opportunity is available to you.

### **Never Received College Education**

There is no reason why you can not enroll in an online school now, no matter what you are doing with your job and family, and no matter your age. Online education allows you to get the most out of life by providing you with the opportunity to become educated without having to stop life in its tracks to do so.

### **Certification**

Perhaps you are already out of college and now you need to recertify to keep your education up to date to keep your current position. Online education and online degree programs are in place to provide that for you. There are plenty of schools around the web that offer all sorts of recertification programs for those that need them.

### **Advancing Your Degree**

If you currently have a degree but you would like to take it to the next level, online degree programs can help you to do that as well. These are designed in such a way as to allow you to move to the next level of your education without worrying about losing your position at the same time.

If you are in a current position but would like to further your degree to earn a better position down the road, then Online degree programs are designed to allow you to do that.

As you will see in later chapters, Online degrees are designed from the beginning of educational goals through many levels. Sometimes, you will be able to get your Doctorate from an accredited online Online degree school. So, advancing your career can be done ideally on the web through these programs. The best part is that you do not have to stop working to make it happen.

### **Just For Information And Fun**

Anyone can enroll in an online degree program if they are just looking for an education. Let's say that you are retired and looking for something to do. Perhaps you would like to study history in detail. Or, perhaps you would like to learn to do something new such as becoming a writer.

These are things that you can do no matter what age you are or what your goals for using this information are.

In fact, there are plenty of individuals that are senior citizens going back to school to learn something new or to expand their knowledge. The fact is that online Online degree programs are ideal for just that use. Educating you without you having to stay behind in life is a great tool to actually have and to use.

As you can clearly see, Online degree programs and online learning is designed for just about anyone out there looking for an opportunity to excel with more of an education.

## Where You Can Start

When you begin entering the world of online education, you will have to follow the same basic guidelines as you would for any other school. You will first need to start with a goal to obtain a Bachelor degree and move up. The good news is that the online degrees that are available range widely. You can in fact get your doctorate or law degree if you are interested in doing just that.

But, before you can do this, you may be required to take entrance exams as well as determine where your education stands as of now. To get into college level courses, you will need to provide information as well as records stating that you have a GED or have graduated from high school levels. In the cases where you will be able to attend prior to completing high school, your school is likely needed to sign off onto this.

If you have not been in school in a while, you may also want to consider taking some refresher courses to help you get back on track. If you are continuing your career education, this is not needed in most case.

Finally, what you need to know is that you are not in this process alone. You will be working with counselors and others that will guide you through finding the right program, online degree and courses to get started with. This is a rewarding type of education, not something you are doing alone without anyone to guide you.

# Chapter 4: Understanding Accreditation

One thing that you will hear a lot about is accreditation. This term sounds fancy and important, but really it is quite simple. The WorldNet Dictionary says that accreditation is,

“The act of granting credit or recognition, especially with respect to educational institutions that maintains suitable standards.”

This really does sum up what you need to know.

What does this have to do with you and your Online degree? It is quite simple. You need to enroll in a college or university that is going to provide you with the highest level of education for your money. When you get your degree, you should know that you have what it takes to make it in that field.

Not only will employers want to insure that your education has come from an accredited school, but you need to know how to do your job well.

## What Does Accreditation Mean, Then?

What does it take for a school to be accredited? Why is this type of school better? An accredited school is one that has demonstrated that it is teaching what is required to educate students in that field. Schools will need to have an outside company come in and observe their school. They are looking for the board to decide that the school is approved for teaching the highest quality of information.

They will find out things like how the school provides education, what their resources are like (are they adequate) as well as determine if the school provides basic educational services that meet the demands and the minimums that are in place.

There are several different ways that a school can be accredited. Most of the time, the school will entirely be accredited, meaning that all of their courses are considered approved. In other cases, just certain schools within the college or the university are accredited. When you are applying for admission into the school, you should insure that it is fully accredited.

For any school to become accredited, they will need to pay a considerable amount of money to do so. In addition, the process is not easy nor is it everlasting. The school is going to need to be re-certified as accredited every several years. In addition, the accreditation process can take several years to complete.

Why does any of this matter to you? A school that is accredited is one that has gone through great lengths to insure that you are provided a good education by attending there. A school that goes through all of this expense and time is a means of showing that the education they provide is effective in the field.

## **Beware Of Non Accredited Schools**

We have all seen the ads.

“You can get your bachelors degree in just 30 days!”

“You can become an MD in just 6 months and four easy payments of just \$199 each!”

These are schools that you need to stay away from. Short and sweet, just stay away from them.

There is no way that these companies can offer you the full fledged education that you will need to get the job or the career that you are after. You can even call these companies diploma mills because all they are doing is writing out some type of diploma and mailing them out after your final payment has been mailed.

Sure, they may make it look like you are learning something, but their degree is not going to stand up in the real work place. Each day, people get taken by these scams and unfortunately lose their money.

The sad part is that employers are not stupid. They know which schools are accredited and which are holding your resume down.

## **Not All Are Bad, Though**

It would not be fair for us to say that all schools that do not hold accreditation are bad schools. This is in fact untrue. There are several reasons for this. For example, an accredited school will get their accreditation from a private organization. In the United States, many of these organizations are not regulated and, therefore, their standards may be quite different.

On the other hand, some schools just do not pursue accreditation. In fact, this is very much true of schools that have religious affiliations. Here, the simple fact that the accreditation process is very costly can cause the school to lose a good amount of money.

On top of these things, it takes several years for a school to become accredited. New schools may even have the latest advancements in technology, be fully staffed and provide innovative training and education but not be accredited. They could be in the middle of it or may not even be pursuing it.

## What To Do As A Student

As a student, then, what are you to do? When it comes to finding out if a school is worth the cost, you should take into consideration accreditation. But, you should do so knowing a few things.

First, realize that accreditation is done for online schools just as it is done by those in traditional form. Some of the standards may not fit well. Nevertheless, ask questions. Find out if the school is accredited and who has done the accreditation. The online accreditation organization is that of The Distance Education and Training Council. Yet, some are being accredited by the standard accreditation organizations as well.

In either case, ask these questions.

- Is the school entirely or specific schools within it accredited?
- If not, is the school in the process of getting their accreditation at this point?
- If not, why not?
- If the school is accredited, take a few minutes to verify which organization accredited the school.
- Is this organization legitimate? You can find this information rather easily on the web just by looking at the Better Business Bureau or doing a search.
- If the school is not accredited or in the process of getting it, find out if they were turned down. If so, find out why?

Why go through this trouble? It is quite simple. Your degree, your education and your funding is going towards that valuable online degree. You deserve to make the best decision possible and you can only do this with all the information in hand.

Taking accreditation seriously is important. Getting these answers is essential. With so many bad apples on the web looking to take your money, you do need to know what you are investing in as well as what it will get you.

Finally, the bottom line is that you should take into consideration this fact.

If it is too good to be true, it probably is.

Before you begin learning, learn about your school's ability to provide for you. [eLearningYellowPages.com](http://eLearningYellowPages.com) only lists accredited schools in the directory, so it is a good place to start.

## Major Accrediting Commissions

To learn more about accreditation, the processes and what is included in this certification, contact any of the major accrediting commissions located throughout the US. Here are 6 of the major commissions to contact.

- Western Association of Schools and Colleges  
At: [www.wascweb.org](http://www.wascweb.org)
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
At: [www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org)
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools  
At: [www.msache.org](http://www.msache.org)
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges

At: [www.neasc.org](http://www.neasc.org)

- North Central Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities

At: [www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org](http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org)

In addition, you can contact the commission that handles online accreditation with your questions about specific Online degree schools.

The Distance Education And Training Council

At: [www.detc.org](http://www.detc.org)

Or, contact the governmental organization that helps to provide this information. Visit the U.S. Department of Education

At: [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

## Chapter 5: What You Can Expect

Now that you know a bit about online degrees, you will next want to know what you can expect from it. Let's skip over finding the right school for now as you should still be trying to decide if the online learning experience is right for you. Don't worry, we will do that next.

Here is where you are. You are enrolled in the perfect online school getting ready to earn your online degree. What is school going to be like? What are your classes going to be like? How will you communicate with your teacher?

You probably have a lot of questions and on top of that, each school is going to be a bit different than the next one. But, here are some of the basics of what you will see when it comes to Online degree learning.

### Communication

Communication is vital in the world of education. You have to be able to talk to your teachers, ask questions and get the information that you need. Some schools have their own software programs in place to allow this to happen. Others will use various other systems based on what needs they have.

Some commercial software packages that are quite common are those such as WebCT as well as Blackboard. Your school is likely to have these software programs in place and will give you the details of it. Some are completely designed software packages. Others are just simply websites that have message boards on them.

When it comes to using these programs, they are a bit different than you would think. If you went to class in a traditional setting at your local college, you would come to class at the same times as other students as well as the teacher. But, this is not what happens in the traditional Online degree program. Here, you will use an asynchronously systems. That means that students as well as your teachers will meet at different times.

Let's say that you have to work 9 to 5 each day. Your perfect time for a class is at 7pm, when everyone is settled and you have some time to yourself. No matter what time you plan to do your coursework, you can log into the software program or even the website, if that is the method in which it is designed and simply do what needs to be done.

In this system, students as well as teachers will meet at different times. The lectures and the coursework is completed when it is convenient for you to do so. You will participate in the study at different times than your classmates.

## **How It Works**

In a typical class at one of the better online colleges and universities, you will simply start your week with an email from your teacher or instructor. The instructor will tell you what the week's topics for discussion and learning will be as well as send out the assignments that you will need to complete. The instructor is also likely to provide you with information in the form of a short lecture. He will also add topics for your classmates and you to talk about.

You will go through the week doing your assigned work. It can be anything from reading the lectures to providing papers and even meet for conference system participation calls. You can read other student's questions as well as ask your own. You will participate in discussions, usually done in forum style so that students can post when it is convenient for them to do so. And, you will send in your work to your instructor through email. He sends it back, graded.

## But, Technology Is Not Left Behind

Many of the more advanced Online degree schools do not leave your education to just emails and software. Today, many of them incorporate much more technologically advanced systems. Yes, this is a bit of fun and it allows you to communicate with your teacher and students in a more direct way.

If you enjoy the ability to hold class discussions or are a learner that does better with hearing and seeing rather than just reading, these are technological advancements that you will want to look for in the school that you select.

- **Chats.** If you have ever been in a chat room, then you know what we are talking about. Some schools or courses will schedule chats to keep the class working together. By doing this, your instructor can bring the entire class together to talk about the various topics set forth. These may be mandatory or simply additional methods of communicating.
- **Online Video.** Today, you see the news on your laptop in streaming video. Many of the best online schools are now providing this type of video for their educational abilities. Simply, you can sit down with your cup of coffee and watch a lecture unfold in front of your eyes. These classes are ideal for those courses that are just too detailed to provide through written lectures.
- **Video Conferencing.** Some of the most technologically advanced schools may provide for this service as well. All you do is sit down, coursework in front of you and listen and watch the live lecture. With this type of software, you can raise your hand to discuss with the teacher, answer questions and even ask them. All of this is done in real time.

As you can see, there are many fun and interesting ways that you will be able to enjoy your education when it comes to Online degrees. The fact is that not all schools are the same though. If you see something here that really makes you smile, make sure that you look for it in the school that you attend.

In addition, realize that each course will likely have their own methods of educating you. Some courses need more hands on attention than others do. Some courses may be simple self studies where others rely heavily on lectures.

In any case, now you have had a look at what the normal practice is likely to be for your online degree. Let's help you to find the best school for you to get into now.

# Chapter 6: Selecting The Right Online Degree School

We have talked about the methods of accreditation and how it is essential for you to find a school that is fully accredited. Yet, there is much more to your school than just that. You will need to put together your own plans for attending as well as find the school that offers what you are looking for.

In later chapters, we will help you to understand what some of the various degrees are that you can obtain through Online degree programs. First, though, let's figure out what the school has to have for you to enroll there.

## Selecting Schools

Besides accreditation, you will want to take other things into consideration before selecting the right online educational organization for your specific needs. No school is worth your time or your money if they can not provide the type of education that you are looking for. This means determining if they offer the programs that you are interested in first.

Picture in front of you a large clipboard, full of all of the online degree school options that you have. A good place to start is the directory at [eLearningYellowPages.com](http://eLearningYellowPages.com). Only accredited schools are listed there, and a space for you to take notes. As you go through the next sections, you will be figuratively crossing off the schools that do not apply to your needs. Your goal is to narrow down the field so that you can find the select few schools that offer the very best educational opportunity for your needs.

## Programs Offered

Your first goal will be to determine which schools offer the courses that you are interested in. Simply, if they do not have what you are looking for, then they can not provide your education to you.

Here are some questions to answer in that regard.

- **Does the school offer the entry level program that I am interested in?** They will need to do this or, you will not find any benefit going to that school.
- **Does the school offer you the ability to advance in this career path with their school?** If you can only take entry level courses at that school, you will need to advance, then, to more advanced schools to finish your degree.
- **What length of study can you obtain at that school for your degree?** Some schools are now offering well beyond the Associates degree and even the Bachelor's degree. You can, in some fields of study and in some schools, advance to Doctorate levels of education through the Online degree programs.
- **Does the school offer me the specialized area that I want to study?** For example, if you find a school that offers nursing degrees but you would like to obtain a degree that is in forensic nursing, if this is not offered, specifically, you may not meet the requirements to be certified as such.

Now, these are just the first things to take into consideration. If you visit the website of any online degree school, the first thing you need to know is if that school offers what you are looking for.

When it comes to looking for long term educational opportunities, this can pay off for you. It is faster, easier and just more economical to stay with the same school, if possible throughout your educational career. This may not be possible in some fields of study, though.

## What's Involved

Next, you need to determine what each of those schools will offer during the courses. Again, here are some of the questions that you will want to answer for yourself to determine how well the school fits these needs that you have in place.

- **How long does the course take to complete for you to earn your degree?** While every degree program is different based on the amount of knowledge that you need to have and practice you need to obtain, believe it or not there are differences here. Determine what the average length of attendance is for your specific degree goals.
- **What types of courses are offered from that study?** If you are looking to specialize, you will want to make sure that your field of study is provided there. In addition, you will find differences in some subject from one school to the next. Finding the amount of coursework in your educational background is going to be necessary.
- **How are classes taken in that degree field as well as that school?** As we mentioned before, there are plenty of various types of methods for taking classes. Some schools offer less flexibility here and others offer more. Determine how you will attend your classes to get your education.

## What is The School's Reputation?

Beyond that of accreditation, your school has set forth a reputation that is likely to tell you what you can expect from that school if you attend. There are many things that contribute to the reputation, but you will want to determine what it is that you can expect from your school nevertheless.

As you sit there, you probably have an opinion about the best schools in the country now that are traditionally based. Perhaps you think that Yale is the best school or you may even think that perhaps Harvard is. The reputation that school has is important. The same is true about the online educational community. Many top tier schools now offer online degree programs with the same curricula as their on campus programs.

Again, here are some additional questions to ask of your school to help check off the schools that are not right for you.

- **What do you know of that school?** Many people have heard good and bad about the school. Sometimes it is important to take note of these things. This can be especially helpful in cases where you know of someone that has been educated at that school.

This first hand knowledge can be very important to your opinion of the school as well as what the school has provided in the past.

- **What can you learn about that school?** Just like any other purchase you make, doing some background work can be quite helpful. Here, you will want to look for reviews of the school online offered by other students. Avoid trying to obtain these reviews directly from the school's site as these are obviously biased.

Instead, work on providing yourself with necessary information by looking for information from others that have attended. If you ask, they are likely to provide just what you are looking for.

- **What do professional organizations have to say about the school?** There are plenty of professional college level commissions that usually do have something to say about it. In addition, you can learn about the school through checking them out on the Better Business Bureau's website.

## Learn About Their Success

When you attend an online school to earn an Online degree, your goal is to walk away from that online degree with success, of some sort. One of the benchmarks for a school is how well they provide this education.

Now, as a new student it is hard to know what your education will be like. You won't know what is provided for and what is not. Instead, what you will need to do is to learn as much as you can from those that have passed through those virtual doors.

One way to do this is to learn from those that left. You are not likely going to be able to pull up their names and numbers and give them a call though. Yet, you can learn from them in several other, key ways.

Here are yet another set of questions that you can ask of the school to determine if it is the right one for you.

- **How many students are enrolled per year and of them, how many graduate on time?** This information can be obtained right from the Online degree school. In most cases, you will find this information to be posted right on their website. Asking this question is

vital as it can provide you with an idea of what is likely to happen to you.

Will it take you just six months as the school claims? Or, do most of its graduates extend that to 12 months instead? If this information is not readily available, simply ask for it.

- **What do graduates accomplish when they leave the school?**

This too is another question you want to know. Are the graduates from the school successful? Do they find employment right away? In addition, where are they now, several years after they have graduated?

This information can serve to guide your decision simply because it is the likely path you will take. If many of the school's graduates go on to solid positions and five years later are earning six figures, you know their education paid off. Again, to get this information, request it from the school. You probably can find it right on their website as well.

- **What is their graduate's pass rate for exams and licensing procedures?** Here, you want to know the facts. How many students leave their nursing, medical, law or other degree programs, take their licensing tests and pass the first time? Most universities collect this information and can provide it to you.

This information is especially important for the type of education you are looking into. Sure, their law program has graduates passing the bar well but what about getting a nursing license? You should know what the likelihood of you securing that information actually is.

## **What Services Does The School Provide?**

Your list is probably pretty well down to just a few schools by now. As you go through the process of finding the right school, you should also pay

attention to what that school will provide to you in the way of various services. Just like any school, you need to know what to expect in this regard.

Here are some questions to ask your school about the services that they provide to their students.

- **Does the Online degree school provide for extra help in the way of tutoring?** If you were in a traditional school, you may need to work with a tutor when things got a bit rough. How does your Online degree school provide this additional help if it is needed? Most importantly, how does this process work for you?
- **Does the online degree school provide for access to the teacher or instructor should you need it?** What happens if you just do not understand something? How will you communicate with your teacher one on one? If you are unable to convey your problems through email, how does the school, or the teacher, handle these problems for and with you?

You should be able to easily reach your instructor for help as well as one on one time with them. Of course, this may differ from one teacher to the next, though.

- **What about financial aid?** Most of those that are attending college today need some help with financial aid. From scholarships to funding and even to financing your education, you may need this help. Does the school offer it as well as do you qualified for any of the programs that it offers?

You will find that most of the online degree schools do provide for some level of education in this means. You may need to insure that the programs are programs that for which you do personally qualify.

In addition, some offer scholarship programs to those students that meet requirements, just like a traditional school would do.

Of course, there is much more that you will need to take into consideration when it comes to earning your Online degree. In fact, you are bound to spend countless days considering the right school.

If you were enrolling in a standard, traditional college, wouldn't you give it all of this attention as well?

While many people do not like to take the time to research, asking and getting answers to all of those aspects listed here really can make sure that you get the best education available for your dollar. In many, many ways, success is right around the corner, if you find the right school to accomplish it in.

## Chapter 7: Program Choices

Everything sounds great. You have found all sorts of information on the various schools. Now, just which program do you plan to enroll in?

While it can be hard to make up your career choice no matter what type of school you plan to attend, you will want to do your best to take into consideration all of the aspects that are important to you. To help you in picking the right career path for your needs, take the time to read through the descriptions of thonline degree programs offered by the online degree school you plan to attend.

Only you can make the decision about which career is right for you. But, to give you some idea of what career choices are out there in the world of e-learning, we have some broken down for you here. By no means are these completely all of the options that you have.

### Business

In Business degrees, you will find such options as:

- Associate of Arts General Business Studies
- Bachelor in Science in Business/Accounting
- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
- Bachelor of Science in Finance
- Bachelor and Masters in Marketing
- Bachelor and Masters in Human Resource Management
- Masters in Business Management
- Master of Business in Global Management
- Bachelor and Masters in Public Administration
- Doctor in Business Administration
- Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership

## Technology Degrees

Bachelors of Science In Business as well as in E Business  
Bachelors of Science in Information Systems  
Bachelors of Science in Information Technology  
Masters in Information Systems  
Doctor of Management in Organizational Leadership  
Bachelor of Science in Visual Communication

## Health Care Online Degrees

Bachelor of Science in Health Administration  
Bachelor of Science in Nursing  
Masters in Health Care Management  
Masters in Health Administration  
Masters in Nursing  
Masters in Nursing and Health Care Education  
Masters in Science in Nursing Integrative Health Care  
Doctor in Health Administration

## Education Degrees

Bachelor of Science in Education/Elementary Education  
Master of Arts in Education in Administration and Supervision  
Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction  
Master of Arts in Education and Early Childhood Education  
Master of Arts in Education and secondary Teacher Education  
Master of Arts in Education and Special Education  
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership  
Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership with Specialization  
Continuing Teacher Educational Programs

## [Social And Behavioral Science Online Degrees](#)

Bachelor of Science In Criminal Justice Administration

Bachelor of Science in Human Services Management

Masters of Science in Administration of Justice and Security

As said, this list is anything but exhaustive. In addition to these online degree programs, many distance learning degree schools also provide for under graduate studies, graduate degrees, graduate certificates as well as just individual, single courses that you may be interested in taking.

### **Guidance Help**

To help you to make the right decision about your educational goals, you will find that online degree schools also provide you with resources such as a counselor to help you to make the right decisions for you. No matter where you are in the course to education, they can help you to find the educational requirements you need to land the job that is essential to your own well being. Take full advantage of these services.

## Chapter 8: Enrolling, The Process

You have finally found your school. You have found the perfect program to enroll in. You are about to start on your online degree career. So, what are you waiting for?

The enrollment process for online degree schools is not much unlike enrolling in another other type of school. You will first need to put in an application to that school. In some schools, especially those that are parts of traditional universities and colleges (even schools like Harvard) offer online degree programs.) The application process will take just a few minutes, sometimes done right online.

Online degree schools will then ensure that you are qualified to attend their school. If you are enrolling in a Master degree program, they want to insure that you have the undergraduate and Bachelor degree requirements as well. In some cases, you will need to insure that these credits can be moved from one school to the other.

### Requesting Information

One thing that you will need to do is to request detailed information about the courses and the online degree that you plan to earn. Since it is important for you to understand how the courses work, you will need to learn in detail about them. The good news is that you can find all of this information available to you right here on the web.

Most of the online online degree schools will require you to either fill out an online request form or contact them to request it. They will then send you packages in the mail will all of the details that you are going to need. What's more is that they will have a guidance counselor call you to begin talking to you about your needs, desires and goals.

From this point, you will need to complete your application and submit it. Once it is fully reviewed and you are accepted into the school, you will learn when your classes will start, how they will work, as well as what your goals will be. Of course, you will need to make payment before the learning process begins as well.

## What You'll Need

As a child, you probably got a list of supplies that you would need for school before school started for the year. When it comes to the online degree, it is still important to pack your bags for your education. But, what you will need is much different now than it was with the traditional school

Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- **Your computer.** It is essential to have a good, working computer that you can rely on. You should insure that it offers spam protection and virus protection (and that it is running) so that you can insure there is no reason you can not get online to work on your degree.
- **Internet access.** Beyond just having the Internet to use, you should try to have high speed Internet access or an effective high speed modem. You are likely to be watching video streams, uploading and sending emails and files and you will need to be able to do all of this without a problem. Take into consideration having high speed if possible.
- **Textbooks.** In some courses you will need to purchase or rent textbooks for your degree study. This will be dependant on the school and most importantly the type of course you are taking. It is essential to have the right tools in hand. Some schools will not require this material, but most will.

- **Software.** You may need to purchase additional software for your computer. In some cases, this software is part of the cost of paying for your education through the online degree school. In most cases, you will need to have specific software in order to watch the lectures, to attend virtual classes as well as to communicate with others.
- **Other materials.** Like in traditional settings, you will need to have your standard paper and pen. You should try to have a headset that will help you to hear the video streams without clogging up everyone else's need for quiet. Your online degree teachers will help you to know what else you need to have to get started.
- **A Quiet Place.** One of the most important aspects is to have a quiet place to work. You are going to need a place to work on your projects, write papers and to stay focuses. Of course, your computer needs to be in those locations as well.

## Chapter 9: The Cost

Going to college is very expensive. It does not matter what, where or how you go, it will cost you. However, when you consider the fact that your education will likely improve and you will end up in a good paying job, this helps to make the cost of school a better realization.

When it comes to getting an online degree, you are likely to pay a decent amount of money. As discussed earlier, the costs for going to an online school are generally less than attending a school full time. But, do not take our word for it.

You should invest in determining which school offers the most bang for the buck. BUT! We can not emphasize enough that your education is much, much more important than your cost. Choosing a cheaper school that offers the same qualifications, same educational experience is not a bad thing. Choosing a school solely because it is less expensive can cause you to be wasting your money.

### Financial Aid

Another thing to keep in mind is financial aid. Most schools today offer some help to the student that is looking to attend a college or university. This holds true for the Online degrees as well. No matter where you are in the world, what your goals are, there is likely to be opportunities to find financial aid for your education.

Some Online degree schools offer help to those that just can not afford it as well. You may qualify for reduced educational programs. While we would not recommend choosing a college because it offers this, it is still a method to getting your education that you may be interested in

## Other Funding

In addition to financial aid, do not forget about the [scholarship programs](#) that abound. Yes, even online degree learners can find countless opportunities to save when working with these schools. The schools themselves often offer opportunities for those that need them. Scholarships often can be used for funding your education from various other organizations as well.

Government grants and programs are beginning to allow for online degree learning as well. If you think you may qualify, check out the US Government's Department of Education website at [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov) to learn more about these programs.

# Chapter 10: The Challenges

Let's be honest here. Earning an Online degree is not something that everyone needs or should do. The fact is that the experience of the college atmosphere is something that can not be duplicated in that of the standard Online degree program. And, while we believe the E learning is a wonderful way to learn, we have to point out the simple facts that there are some people it may not be right for.

## Your Own Learning

When it comes to your education, you are your own best and worst enemy. One of the most essential problems that those that are involved with online degree programs will have is keeping themselves on track. It is very easy to push off you work for another day or for you to do later. Those that are no good at managing their time can easily find themselves behind the game. This can be very costly to someone that is looking to actually make something of their degree.

To state this simple, you will gain quite a bit of freedom and flexibility when it comes to obtaining your degree online. At the same time, you will find that this freedom can be the worst part of the entire learning experience as well.

To remedy this problem, it is essential that you keep yourself motivated to excel. Know what your goals are, post them near your computer and reflect on them daily. Realize that your first dedication needs to be to your education simply because your future depends on it.

If you find that you are not a person that can manage time wisely or you are someone that needs more structure in place, Online degree programs may not be right for you.

## **It Broke**

While the dog can not eat your homework, the Internet can. With this type of learning you are dependant on your computer and your Internet connection. When and if it fails, you are sure to find yourself struggling to get your course work completed.

To solve this problem, you may want to take into consideration a back up plan. Perhaps you will use your desktop computer for your coursework but just in case something does happen, you can rely on your laptop or another computer at a friend's home.

In addition to this, you need to realize that you may need to hone your computer skills to be successful as well. You will need to stop and insure that you know how to use the necessary software programs. If you are not good at typing, then it may be beneficial to take a quick course to improve this.

## **It's Not For Me**

Another problem that you may face is having to actually deal with a computer monitor instead of a face. Some people do not do well without the personal interaction of a teacher and other students. Some students are wired to not be able to do well without having things like eye contact and personal interaction.

In addition to this, you may need to learn just how to communicate more effectively through the web. You will need to be able to type out your feelings, concerns, discussions and thoughts rather than saying them. Not everyone is capable of doing this right off the bat. But, there are plenty of individuals that can learn it successfully.

As we have said throughout this e-book, you need to start off by making sure that online degree learning is the right type of learning for your needs. There are bound to be issues that come up. You may not like it. Or, you may just not have the time that you thought you had to dedicate to getting your degree.

In any case, your goals should be to focus on finding the right type of degree program for your specific talents and abilities. Believe it or not, the online degree does work well for many people. Only you can decide, though, if you are one of those people.

# Chapter 11: Tips For eLearning Success

If you have made it this far, then you get a congratulations. You are well on your way to becoming successful with your online degree program. Although there seems to be a lot work that goes into the process, you may find that it is not all that hard after all. Nevertheless, we do have some tips for you to take into consideration.

1. **Determine first if online degree programs are for you.** Spend some time really researching the good and the bad and see how well you fit within those goals.
2. **Never settle for something that is not what you want.** If the Online degree school you are considering does not offer exactly the program that you are looking for, or you did not see it listed here, do not worry, it is probably out there. Make sure you do not settle for the wrong program as you really do not get any benefit from this.
3. **Do your homework to learn as much as you can about the school you plan to attend.** Not only will this save you time from making a mistake but it will allow you to find the school that you fit well into. With so many out there, you should commit to some time to do this successfully.
4. **Dedicate a space and time for learning.** Just because you have all the flexibility in the world with your education does not mean that you should not plan ahead. The fact is that you need to insure that your education comes first. In that, you need to plan a schedule each week to include time for your lectures and your homework. This really will make or break how well you do.

5. **Consider online programs for continuing education.** If you are looking for a good way to continue your education or to keep your licensing requirements, online programs are ideal for doing just that. They can provide you with an ideal means for finding the educational goals you need without stopping life in its tracks.
6. **Don't fall for gimmicks.** As with any other type of educational opportunity, you will need to insure that you know who the school is, what you are doing and do not fall for ploys in advertising. You want to insure that you have all that it takes to succeed, not the best price or best ad in town.
7. **Plan to succeed.** Give yourself every opportunity to get ahead. If taking your education to the next level is important to you, then make it happen. Do not stop in your tracks because it gets too challenging or too boring. Find ways to make it all come to life.
8. **Communicate with your classmates and teacher.** Many of the newest technologies allow you to do just that. Take full advantage of the opportunity to get all the interaction you need.

# Conclusion

You have made it. Now, the question comes at you.

Are Online degree programs right for you?

Again, only you can make the decision on this. You will find countless reasons why you should not do it. You don't have time. You can't afford it. You just do not know what you want to do with yourself. Sure, these excuses may hold you back, but consider what an Online degree can do for you too.

- It can propel you into a new career.
- It can get you a better paying job.
- It can allow you to fulfill your dreams more than you could have.
- It can improve your self esteem.
- It can lead you down a road you want to go.
- It allows you to be in control of your future.

The Online degree is a powerful tool to have and to use. Is it what will change your life for the better? For many, many people it has. If you take a look at trends and believe them, it is likely that more learning will happen through the web each year. Soon, students will not even realize that there were those of us out there that questioned it.

Take some time to learn what is out there for you and for your goals. The online degree may seem like a complex process but really it is all

about you making a decision about your future and then making it happen.