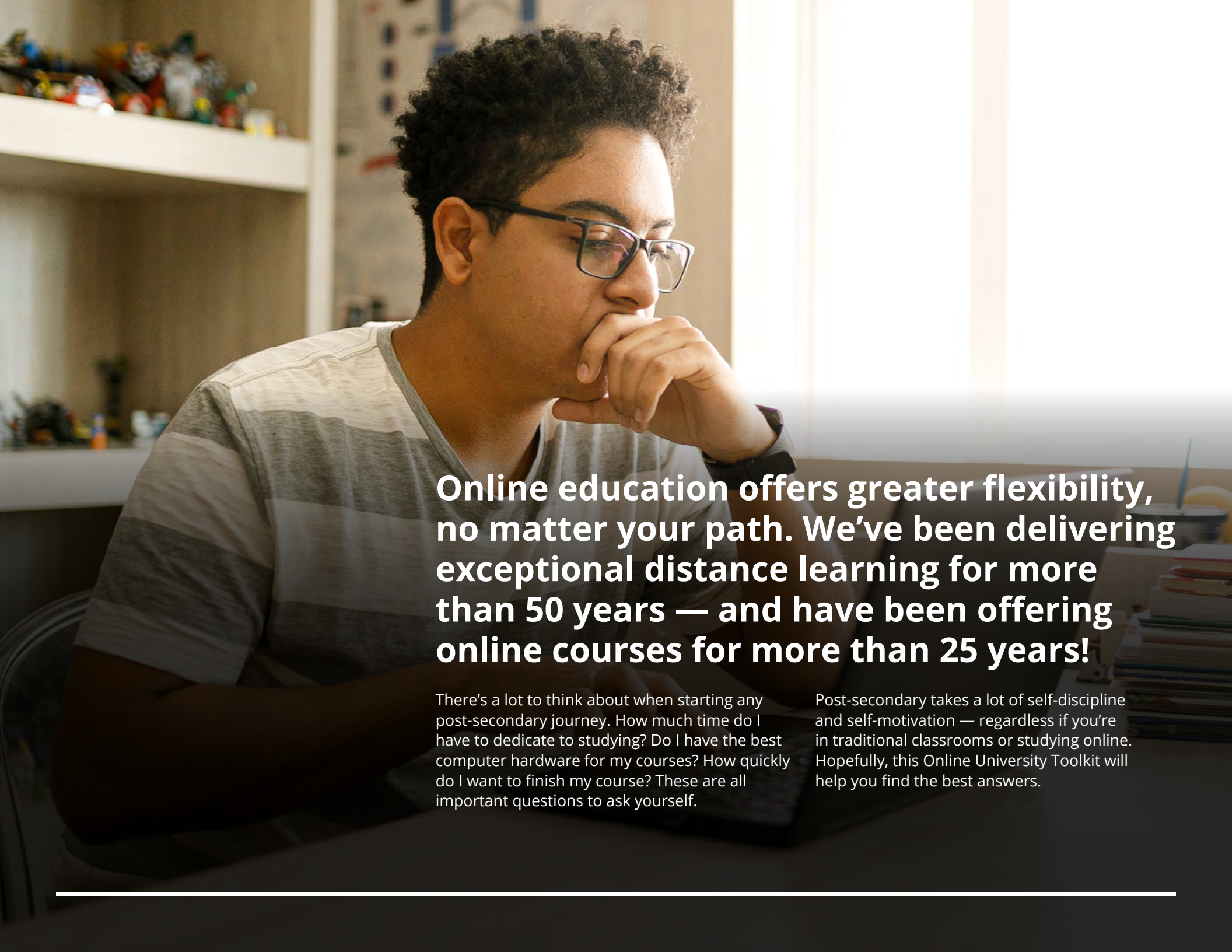


ONLINE UNIVERSITY TOOLKIT





Online education offers greater flexibility, no matter your path. We've been delivering exceptional distance learning for more than 50 years — and have been offering online courses for more than 25 years!

There's a lot to think about when starting any post-secondary journey. How much time do I have to dedicate to studying? Do I have the best computer hardware for my courses? How quickly do I want to finish my course? These are all important questions to ask yourself.

Post-secondary takes a lot of self-discipline and self-motivation — regardless if you're in traditional classrooms or studying online. Hopefully, this Online University Toolkit will help you find the best answers.

Why study with Athabasca University?

If you have concerns about how you'll pay for your education, or whether you'll have enough time to study, online learning could be the solution you're looking for. Athabasca University's online post-secondary education model provides four unique benefits.

1 **Gaining experience that can help you advance in your career.**

This is a typical benefit of post-secondary education, but what makes Athabasca University special is how learners who are already working can advance in their current jobs during their education. A survey conducted by the Learning House shows that 45% of online post-secondary students saw a salary increase as a result of their education, while 36% received position promotions.

2 **Enhanced concentration.**

Studying and completing coursework on your own time means not having to try to fit your life around when school happens. Instead, school happens when it works for your life. When you study and work during the times that best fit into your life, that offers ample opportunity to focus more intently, concentrate harder and learn more.

3 **Lower costs and student debt.**

When you study with Athabasca University, you're not paying for all the extra costs associated with studying full-time. Our courses are pay as you go, so you only need to pay for the class you're taking and not all the extra campus fees. Plus, the e-texts are included in your course cost! With your entire curriculum delivered to you online, it's estimated you could save upwards of \$20,000 a year, compared to private universities.

4 **Athabasca University is an accredited institution**

Studying with Athabasca University is no different than studying with any other institution. Our courses are held to the same high standards as other universities, the credits you earn at Athabasca University can be transferred to many other schools across the country, and your education credentials will be recognized across industry when it's time to start your career.

The top 10 courses to get you started

Regardless of the direction your post-secondary journey may take, there are a few fundamental courses that can earn you credits for nearly any path you choose.

Whether you're considering another institution down the line, or are thinking about enrolling in an Athabasca University program, these courses are likely going to be a part of your program plan. These courses don't have any prerequisites, so anyone can start their post-secondary journey.



The Top 10 Courses to Get You Started

Most post-secondary degree programs require one or more of these foundational courses.

Course Number	Course Name	Number of institutions accepting AU course credits	Potential diploma matches	Potential degree matches
<u>Accounting (ACCT) 253</u>	Introductory Financial Accounting	404	Business, Accounting	BComm, BAdmin, BBA, BMgmt
<u>Administration (ADMN) 232</u>	Introduction to Management	240	Business, Accounting	BComm, BAdmin, BBA, BMgmt
<u>Administration (ADMN) 233</u>	Writing in Organizations	392	Business, Accounting	BComm, BAdmin, BBA, BMgmt
<u>Biology (BIOL) 235</u>	Human Anatomy and Physiology	157	Nursing, General Arts & Science	BSc, Nursing
<u>Computing (COMP) 200</u>	Introduction to Computing and Information Systems	91	Computing Programming & related	BSc (Computers), BSc (general)
<u>Economics (ECON) 247</u>	Microeconomics	315	General Arts & Science, Business, Accounting	BA, BComm, BAdmin, BBA, BMgmt
<u>Economics (ECON) 248</u>	Macroeconomics	317	General Arts & Science, Business, Accounting	BA, BComm, BAdmin, BBA, BMgmt
<u>English (ENGL) 255</u>	Introductory Composition	195	General Arts & Science, Business	BA, BComm, BAdmin, BBA, BMgmt
<u>Psychology (PSYC) 289</u>	Psychology as a Natural Science	226	General Arts & Science, Nursing	BA, BSc (an elective for many degrees)
<u>Psychology (PSYC) 290</u>	General Psychology	133	General Arts & Science, Nursing	BA, BSc (an elective for many degrees)

Keys to academic success

For some, independent learning might be a brand new venture. Here are a few areas to focus on that can help you with this new way of learning and refine those independent studying skills.

Study skills

Refining your study skills is going to be key for succeeding in your post-secondary education. Studying is a lot more than cramming the night before an exam. Studying works best when it's a continual process throughout each of the courses you take.

That's why we developed our [Study Skills Series](#). It's a free collection of modules that you can download to help you refine those study skills crucial for academic success. Topics explored in our Study Skills Series include [improving reading retention](#), [taking effective notes](#), [the steps involved in good writing](#) and [overcoming common academic adversities](#) that every student experiences.

E-texts

You might remember a few rules from high school around textbooks such as read the book from start to finish and don't write in the margins — forget those rules! In post-secondary, your e-texts are your go-to tools for confirming everything you need to know to be successful in your course.

When it comes to reading your e-texts, the course syllabus will point to specific sections for you to read and review. This way, you can focus on the content most crucial for your course.

Writing inside your e-texts can help you better understand the information. Highlighting sections and writing in the margins on your e-reader can help you retain the information you need for your course.

Here are a few other pieces of advice for getting the most out of your e-text:

- Survey your e-text chapters at the start of each section you're reading. This way, you can get an idea of how the chapter is structured and where to find the information you need.
- As you read through each section, recite the content to yourself and find new ways of explaining the same information. Putting information in your own words helps you retain everything you just read.

- Discuss what you read with friends or take advantage of the online course forum or chat group. Ask questions of each other about the content to help stimulate your curiosity and solidify the new knowledge you're acquiring.
- Ask questions about everything you're reading. Ask the who, when, what, where, why and how to help better understand the full context of the information. You won't need to ask all the questions for everything you read, but take some time to dig deeper in your textbook to get more out of what you're reading.
- Make sure to take regular breaks. Cramming all at once almost never works. Taking breathers away from your textbook will help you absorb and reflect on the information you just read.

If you want to know more tips and tricks around using your textbook to its fullest potential, [check out this great article](#) from the Study Skills section of our website!

Time management

Just because there isn't a set classroom time doesn't mean you should go without a schedule. In fact, we have found three key factors that can keep your schedule on track and avoid procrastination:

- Plan your week starting on Sunday.
- Leave a little extra buffer time in your schedule for the unexpected.
- Eliminate your distractions during your set study time.

Procrastination

Planning your own study schedule can sound like overkill, but as an independent and online learner, having a set schedule will increase your chances of not only completing the course, but doing so without cramming it into the last few weeks before the deadline. There are a few simple tricks to ensure you don't fall into the procrastination trap:

- **List what you gain and lose by putting the task off.** Ask yourself these simple questions: What do I gain by not studying? What do I lose?
- **Follow Athabasca University on social media** to receive regular tips for how to keep on track. You can also use social media to form a study cohort to keep each other motivated.
- **Write on an index card** that you will complete the assignment by a certain date. Hang the index card in a prominent place as a reminder.
- **Break projects into smaller, more manageable sections** and set a deadline for each one. You can even study in small blocks of time, taking a short break every hour (or whatever increment works best for you).

- **Work with your tutor** and find out which modules of your course are going to have the heaviest workload. This way, you can plan out your course and set regular calendar reminders with your deadlines.
- As you accomplish each task, **reward yourself.** Do something fun. You deserve it. You got the job done!

Time management tools

To help you stay on track, we developed a few time management tools to help you make sure you can budget the right amount of time in your day to finish all your coursework.

For a ready to use solution, there's the [downloadable Excel scheduling tool](#). This tool allows you to input the hours you have dedicated for other commitments, ultimately seeing when you can dedicate time to your studies.

If you're looking at completing a whole program with Athabasca University, try our [Degreeworks](#) tool. In addition to providing a planner for the current semester you're in, it can also help you schedule your time through multiple semesters, right to the end of your degree!

Scheduling your time ahead and knowing how much time you need to complete your coursework is the foundation for a successful post-secondary experience with Athabasca University.

Quick tips from our online learner community

If you're feeling ready to start your journey with Athabasca University, there are a few last pieces of advice that we want to offer you — and this advice is coming straight from people who found success with Athabasca University!

To help you out, we took to social media and asked our learning community what advice they would give to a new Athabasca University student. Here's what they came back with:

Don't underestimate the power of your course tutor.

Every Athabasca University course has tutors who are available to help you through your coursework. They provide a wealth of experience and advice, and are always happy to help you succeed.

Don't take more courses than you think you can handle.

It's important to understand that our courses do take the same kind of time commitment as any other post-secondary course, so make sure you budget your time wisely.

Build yourself a study schedule.

If you're having difficulty budgeting your study time, setting a study schedule could be the key to knowing how much time you can truly dedicate to your studies.

Stay connected with other learners.

In addition to our tutors for each course, we have an international community of learners on Athabasca University's social media pages who are happy to help wherever they can.

Do work every day.

The more you work at your studies, the faster you can complete your courses — not to mention how much more you'll learn in the process!

Take one step at a time.

It can be frustrating when it feels like you're not finishing your course as quickly as you want. Stop and take a breath. You're making good progress. Just learn at the pace that feels best for you.

Do study questions as you read.

Completing your questions as you read means you'll be able to address sections of your coursework while the information is fresh in your mind, and you'll be able to better retain that information.

Figure out your best time to study.

Some people are early risers; some people are night owls. The better you know when you focus and work best, the better your coursework will turn out.

Be dedicated.

Post-secondary learning is no small feat. Dedicate the time and attention that your studies deserve. Your GPA will thank you later on.

Set aside time every day as it works for you.

Setting a time to study is important, but it can be easy to feel derailed when life happens. When the unexpected comes up, simply shift your study time. Being flexible with your schedule will help make sure you can still successfully complete your coursework. As long as you're making a regular effort, you'll stay on track.

Know your course dates.

Make sure you know when your midterm and final exams are, when all of your courses are due and how to ask for an extension.

Know who your tutor is.

Knowing how to reach your course tutor and what their office hours are will be a crucial part to your success. All this information will be in your course introduction letter, so keep it handy!

Get to know the Student Success Centre and the Info Centre.

When you have questions that come up about studying with Athabasca University, this will be the best first stop to find the answers. Make sure to reach out and they'll be able to point you in the right direction.

The library is your friend.

All the tools and tricks you need to know about reading and writing for your course can be found at our library. We have a range of webinars and other resources on multiple subjects to make sure you have all the information you need for your course.

Additional resources

Even though learners at Athabasca University study independently, none of our learners are ever truly alone. In addition to tutors and the larger community of online learners, there are resources available to help you through your studies.

If you need assistance with a writing portion of your coursework, check out Athabasca University's [Write Site](#). It's a collection of writing resources and guides that can help you refine any written assignment for your course, and also improve your overall writing skills for the future.

If you're looking for assistance with your math skills, visit Athabasca University's [Math Site](#). It provides math assessments, explores learning types and provides further guidance that can help improve your overall skills in math.

If you're struggling with your personal life, balancing the external factors that can affect your studies or any other mental health issues you may need assistance with, Athabasca University can provide you with [counselling services](#). The counselling services that we provide can help you with a range of education barriers such as [exam anxiety](#), time management, study skills and career planning for after you complete your post-secondary journey.



Ready to start your AU experience?

athabascau.ca/admissions/applying