



Handout: Vista for Students

What Makes a Successful Online Student?

from the Illinois Online Network

1. Be open minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process.
2. Be able to communicate through writing.
3. Be Self-motivated and self-disciplined.
4. Be willing to "speak up" if problems arise.
5. Be willing and able to commit to 4 to 15 hours per week per course.
6. Be able to meet the minimum requirements for the program.
7. Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process.
8. Have access to a computer and a modem.
9. Be able to think ideas through before responding.
10. Feel that high quality learning can take place without going to a traditional classroom.

LMS-related terms

- LMS: learning management system.
- Vista: a specific brand of LMS, used at NCSU.
- Unity ID: your NCSU computing account, required to login to Vista (<http://vista.ncsu.edu>).
- MyWebCT: the page you see when you login to Vista, showing courses in which you are registered.
- Browser Check: a tool that checks to see if your browser is properly configured for Vista. Pass it!
- WolfWare: the "homegrown" LMS at NC State.

Bookmark these websites

- Vista Login: <http://vista.ncsu.edu>
- NCSU Help Desk: <http://help.ncsu.edu>

Additional technology resources

- <http://www.ncsu.edu/it/education>
- <http://www.ncsu.edu/it/essentials>
- <http://sysnews.ncsu.edu>

Important dates to remember

<http://www.ncsu.edu/registrar/calendars/academicsprg.html>

Jan	First day of classes: 1/10 (Wed) Vista maintenance: 1/20 (6am to 3pm)
Feb	Vista maintenance: 2/3 (6am to 3pm) Vista maintenance: 2/17 (6am to 3pm)
March	Spring Break: March 5 – 9 Vista maintenance: 3/3 (6am to 3pm) Vista maintenance: 3/17 (6am to 3pm)
April	Last day of classes: 4/27 (Fri) Vista maintenance: 4/21 (6am to 3pm)
May	Vista maintenance: 5/5 (6am to 3pm) Vista maintenance: 5/19 (6am to 3pm)



Handout: Vista for Students

Communication Tools

Who's Online: Allows students and instructors to see a list of who is currently online in their class and have 1-to-1 private chats.

Announcements: Allows instructors to post announcements for the entire class, individual students, or selected groups of students.

Chat and Whiteboard: A "real-time" learning space where classmates can chat as a group and draw/post images to an interactive whiteboard.

Discussions: A "bulletin board" where students and instructors can post course-related messages. Discussion topics can be "gradable," set to private/public, or released only to select students.

Calendar: An internal calendar tool that allows students to view class-related events, assignments, etc. Students can also post personal entries.

Content Tools

Content File: Allows instructors to add materials to their online course. They can use either the built-in HTML creator or upload files created in Dreamweaver, Word, etc.

Learning Module: Allows instructors to choose how content is organized and delivered to students. Content in a Learning Module can be searched, tracked and released based on specific criteria (i.e. a quiz grade.)

Content Tools (cont)

Media Library: Allows instructors to create a glossary of images, video, audio, or text files that can be grouped and linked to from course content files or Learning Modules.

Syllabus: Helps instructors create a syllabus with standard categories of course information.

Web Links: Allows instructors to create a library of hyperlinks which can then be added to various course locations.

Evaluation Tools

Assessments: Allows instructors to create quizzes to test and grade students' understanding of course content; create surveys to anonymously poll students; create self-tests for students to test their knowledge without being graded.

Assignments: Allows instructors to set up "drop-boxes" for student assignments, grade the submissions, and publish selected materials to the class.

Classroom Management Tools

Groups: Allows instructors to create student groups by hand-picking the teams, by random selection, or by sign-up sheets.

Gradebook: Allows instructors to manage student performance in the course and provides a place to post individual grades to students.

My Progress: Allows instructors and students to view statistics on a variety of "actions" within the course (i.e. number of logins, number of discussion posts, frequency of tools usage, etc.)