

**MOUNT ALOYSIUS COLLEGE**  
Cresson, PA 16630

**STUDENT HANDBOOK**  
**for**  
**ONLINE COURSES**

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## **Introduction to Distance Learning at Mount Aloysius College**

Welcome to Distance Learning at Mount Aloysius College. Our distance learning courses are offered in fully online and hybrid formats. Online courses are conducted solely through electronic communication and our hybrid courses provide a combination of in-class and online learning. This guide offers basic information to help Mount Aloysius College students succeed through distance learning.

Distance learning students at Mount Aloysius College are provided with many of the same resources as on campus students. As a member of the Mount Aloysius College community, you will be given a college e-mail account, will be able to register and to access your grades online, and you will have access to the Library's catalog and databases.

If you are in a fully online program and will not be visiting our campus, you will receive your username and password by mail after you register for your first course so that you can access all of these resources. **Save this information!** You will need it to access critical information during your time as a student with us. On campus students enrolling in online courses should be familiar with the resources available on campus and are encouraged to contact the help desk for questions related to computer access.

Students considering taking online or hybrid courses are encouraged to review the Self-Assessment and Equipment Requirement sheets and the Tips for Online Learning found at the end of this document. Online and hybrid courses require a tremendous amount of self-discipline and work. Students considering distance learning courses should be prepared to log into the course site several times a week, work independently and put the same amount effort—or more—into a distance learning course as a traditional classroom course.

## **Mount Aloysius College Portal Page**

The Mount Aloysius College Portal Page will serve as your gateway to college resources. It provides secure access to all college internet resources and applications. The secure portal page can be accessed by keying <https://portal.mtaloy.edu> in the address bar of your browser. On the right hand side of the page, you may:

- Click on “Portal Login Page” and enter your username and password to access the Library databases and your personal section of the College’s I-drive for file storage.
- Click on “Student Email” and enter your username and password to access your college e-mail account.
- Click on “Campus Web” and enter your username and PIN to access your grades and online registration.
- Click on “Library Catalogue” to access the Library’s catalog of books, periodicals, and videos.
- Click on “Mount Blackboard” and enter your username and password to access the Blackboard course management system (see more below).

## **E-mail**

Your Mount Aloysius College e-mail account is accessible from any computer with access to the Internet. To access e-mail from off campus go to <https://portal.mtaloy.edu> and click on “Student E-mail” on the right hand side of the page. Enter your e-mail username and password.

Official communication from the College will be sent to you via your student e-mail account. All college communications, announcements, and course registration notifications are sent to this address. It is important that you check it often several times per week during the semester. The College E-mail Policy is attached as Appendix A.

## **Blackboard**

Blackboard is Mount Aloysius College’s course management system for online courses. You will access your syllabus and course materials, receive and turn in assignments, and carry on discussions with classmates (if required) within the system.

- Go to <https://portal.mtaloy.edu>.
- Click on “Blackboard” on the right hand side of the page and enter your username and password.
- Click on the name of your course to enter the course.

For students who are new to Blackboard, the help desk section of the portal site offers two useful links: Getting Started with Blackboard and the Blackboard Tutorial. Both of these documents can answer many basic questions about how to use Blackboard for courses, including how to log in and how to submit assignments.

## **Helpdesk**

The Mount Aloysius College Information Technology Helpdesk is accessible by e-mail (helpdesk@mtaloy.edu) and by phone (814) 886-6502. There is also help available on Mount Aloysius College Portal Page. Go to <https://portal.mtaloy.edu> and click on “Helpdesk” at the top of the page. Student login information, should you misplace it, is available by clicking “Student Login Info” on the Mount Aloysius College Portal Page.

## **CLL Online Programs Sites**

The site for CLL online programs is designed for students who do not visit campus on a regular basis. The site can provide students with timely information related to courses and program offerings. You should check the site often for news updates, as well as to view the current course offerings and schedule.

## **Library**

Although you may have libraries conveniently close to where you live and work, they may not have all the resources that you will need. The Mount Aloysius College Library is committed to meeting your needs with access to services necessary for you to complete your course work, regardless of where you are located. Access to the library catalog, electronic databases, and interlibrary loan is simple and convenient through the Mount Aloysius College Portal Page. Using your username and password, log in to the portal using the Portal Login Page Link. Click on the services tab and then library. The College library databases offer access to many publications used for course completion. The library offers other helpful services online, including an “Ask a Librarian” service which allows students to request assistance from a librarian while not on campus.

## **Ordering Your Books**

Books are ordered and paid for separately from your registration. Textbooks are available through the Mount Aloysius College Bookstore and can be purchased in person or online. To order textbooks, go to [www.mtaloy.edu](http://www.mtaloy.edu) (link to be named later). Textbooks can be shipped to the student or reserved at the Bookstore for pick-up. Textbook ordering dates, posted on the website, are the same as regular campus ordering dates unless the dates for the course are otherwise specified. Distance learning students wishing to sell back their texts at the end of the semester must do so in person. Book buy back will not be conducted through the mail.

## **Advising & Course Registration**

Registration for online courses by full-time, on campus students will take place through the regular on campus registration process. On campus students must meet with an academic advisor

prior to registering. Off-campus students registering for their first course at Mount Aloysius College must complete the registration form found on the CLL Online Programs Site. Registration for subsequent courses will be done through the College's online registration system, Campus Web. Questions about registration can be referred to CLL or the Registrar's office.

Students enrolled in fully online programs will be assigned an academic advisor in addition to their CLL contact. The academic advisor will be a faculty member from the program of study when possible. Students in online programs will be advised by phone, email or in-person if they chose to visit the campus. On-campus students are to schedule in-person advising sessions with their academic advisor.

### **Registration for Courses by Campus Web**

1. Go to the website <https://portal.mtaloy.edu> and click on "Campus Web" on the right hand side of the page.
2. Enter your user name in the **User Name** field and your PIN in the **PIN** field and click the **Login** button.

Note: If you have any holds on your record preventing you from registering, you will see the message "*You currently have holds. You will not be able to add/drop courses at this time. Please see the Registrar for details*", followed by a listing of your hold(s). You will not be able to register until you clear your hold(s). Contact the Registrar's Office for more information on holds at (814) 886-6400 or registrar@mtaloy.edu.

3. Click on **Course Search** on the left side of the screen under "Academics". (Note: If you click on **Student Registration**, a screen will appear stating that you have no listed courses for the current semester. You should then click on **Course Search** on the left side of the screen.) The selected term should default to the current semester. If it does not, use the drop-down menu to choose the current semester and click the "Change" button.
4. Using the selection parameters in the "Search for Courses" window, find your first course. You should limit your search at least by Department. If you do not put in any search limitations, the system will be slow and will bring up all courses being taught in the current semester.
5. When one or more courses are listed on the screen, you may click on a course to see the catalog description and other information. You may click on an instructor's name to see his/her class schedule and other information.

To return to registering, click on **My Schedule** on the left side of the screen. Do not use the "Back" button on your browser. If you do click on the "Back" button, you should then click the "Refresh" button and click on "Retry".

6. To add a course to your schedule, click on **Add** on the right side of the course listing. You should get a message that the course was added successfully.
7. Click on the **schedule** link to see your updated schedule.
8. To continue adding courses, click on **Course Search** on the left side of the screen and repeat the above process.

You may **not** register for a course that:

- Is closed (full);
- Overlaps in meeting time with another course for which you are registered;
- Is a repeat of a course you have already taken;
- Requires instructor permission

9. If you enter an incorrect course, click on **Drop** on the right side of the course on the “My Schedule” screen. Once you have dropped a course, you will not be able to re-add it.
10. Once you have added all your courses, if you wish to print your schedule, go to the “My Schedule” screen, click on **Reformat as a printable page**, and print from the new window.
11. Be sure to click **Logout** when you have finished.

### **Personal Information on Campus Web**

1. Go to the website <https://portal.mtaloy.edu> and click on “Campus Web” on the right hand side of the page.
2. Enter your user name in the **User Name** field and your PIN in the **PIN** field and click the **Login** button.
3. Click on **My Profile** or **Personal Info** on the left side of the screen. A listing of your personal information, a summary of your academic information, your most recent final grades and most recently registered courses will appear.

If any of the information listed is incorrect, please notify the Registrar’s Office.

### **Grades**

Grades will be made available electronically approximately 7-10 days after the last day of each semester and can be accessed via Campus Web using the instructions given below.

### **Unofficial Transcript of Grades on Campus Web**

1. Go to the website <https://portal.mtaloy.edu> and click on “Campus Web” on the right hand side of the page.
2. Enter your user name in the **User Name** field and your PIN in the **PIN** field and click the **Login** button.
3. Click on **My Grades** on the left side of the screen. A box with the question: “*Which student package for displaying grades?*” will appear. (The “package” indicates whether you are an undergraduate or graduate student.) The default will be “Display all grades”. Click on the “Search” button.
4. A list of all courses you have taken and your grades for them should appear. To print an unofficial transcript, click on the link at the top “Reformat as a printable unofficial

transcript”. A new window will open with the printable transcript; click on “File”, then “Print” to print. Close the transcript window when you have finished.

5. Because Mount Aloysius does not transfer in grades for transferred courses, if you have transferred courses, your “in-house” credits and GPA should be the same as your total credits and cumulative GPA. If they are not equal, please see the Registrar.
6. The GPA Calculator – If you click on the link for “the GPA calculator”, a box will appear that will allow you to enter credits and/or GPA to calculate the required credits or GPA or resulting GPA. For example:

If your current credit hour total is 80.00 and your current GPA is 2.255, and you will take an additional 40 credit hours and want to achieve a final GPA of 2.5:

- a. Enter **40** in the “additional credit hours” box
- b. Enter **2.5** in the “resultant GPA” box
- c. Press the “Calculate” button
- d. **2.99** should appear in the “average GPA for those additional hours” box

This means you would have to get an average grade of B for the 40 credit hours you have remaining.

### **Self-Assessment and Equipment Requirement**

The “Are you Ready?” document found on the following pages is an online learning self-assessment questionnaire. The intent of this document is for you, the student, to determine if you are ready to participate in online learning. There is a vast difference between online learning vs. traditional “classroom” learning. Online learning success is based largely on the student’s ability to take the initiative to learn, read, comprehend and complete the material placed on a course site. Please take the time to complete the questionnaire as well as review the computer equipment requirements for participating in online courses.

## **ARE YOU READY?**

**Part I.**        **Directions:** Answer each of the following questions with Yes or No.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I have ready access to a computer on a daily basis.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I have ready access to the Internet on a daily basis.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to navigate in a computer environment.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Typing is an easy task for me.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I am able comprehend information that I read.

If you have answered **NO** to any of the questions in Part I, you are **not** ready to participate in an online course.

If you did not answer no to any questions to Part I please proceed to Part II.

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**Part II.**        **Directions:** Answer each of the following questions with True or False.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I know how to complete basic software downloads.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable with exploring new ideas or material independently.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ I am comfortable with typing my ideas or questions in an area that all of my classmates can see.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ I prefer to work independently.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ It would be easy for me to set aside 15-20 hours a week for an online course.

If you have answered **FALSE** to 2 or more of the questions in Part II, you are **not** ready to participate in an online course.

If you did not answer False to two or more of the questions in Part II, please proceed to Part III.

**Part III.**        **Directions:** Answer each of the following questions with True or False.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ I have the self-discipline to login and participate in an online course several times a week.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ I like to exchange ideas in a format that can be viewed by all of my classmates.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Sending attachments and uploading documents are computer skills in which I am very comfortable.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Taking a test online does not intimate me.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I think it would be educational and enjoyable to work in groups through an online format.

Answering False to any of the questions in Part III could inhibit your success as an online learner. If you have answered False to two or more of the questions in Part III then it is highly recommend that you **DO NOT** participate in an online course.

If you have answered False to one of the questions in Part III and you feel you can overcome that statement, **AND** you have successfully proceeded through Part I and II...**YOU ARE READY** for online learning. Enjoy your experience!

## EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

The computer and technical criteria listed below are requirements for participation in an online course. If you are planning to participate in an online course, be sure your computer meets these standards. Please Note: These are standard minimums; your instructor or course may require you to have other types of computer/ technical capabilities on your computer

**Directions:** Please check off all that apply to your computer Windows or MAC.

### **Windows**

\_\_\_\_\_ 500 MHz Pentium III Processor

\_\_\_\_\_ Windows 2000 or XP with necessary critical updates and security patches (see MS download site for details)

\_\_\_\_\_ 512 Mb RAM

\_\_\_\_\_ Audio Card

\_\_\_\_\_ Printer

\_\_\_\_\_ 15 Gig Hard Drive Space

\_\_\_\_\_ Internet Service Provider

\_\_\_\_\_ Latest compatible browser of Netscape or Internet Explorer. If AOL is your Internet Provider, download, install and use a compatible browser only. Do NOT use the browsers embedded in the AOL software.

\_\_\_\_\_ 56.6 Kbps Modem (DSL or Cable preferred)

\_\_\_\_\_ Internet Browser (Internet Explorer Recommended – 6.0 or higher)

\_\_\_\_\_ Screen “Popup Stoppers” (if installed) must be deactivated prior to using Blackboard or taking Blackboard tests online.

\_\_\_\_\_ Cookies and (updated) Java must be enabled

\_\_\_\_\_ Word Processing Software – MS Word preferred

\_\_\_\_\_ Current up to date Anti-Virus Software

\_\_\_\_\_ Adobe Acrobat Reader Installed (Available as a free download)

## MAC

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mac OS 8.5 or later
- \_\_\_\_\_ G3 233 (or faster) PowerPC Processor
- \_\_\_\_\_ 64MB of RAM
- \_\_\_\_\_ Virtual Memory turned on, set to 128
- \_\_\_\_\_ 60 Gig Hard Drive Space
- \_\_\_\_\_ Printer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Audio Card
- \_\_\_\_\_ Internet Service Provider
- \_\_\_\_\_ 56Kbps or better Internet connection for both audio and video (DSL or Cable preferred)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Internet Browser (Internet Explorer Recommended – 6.0 or higher) If AOL is your Internet Provider, download, install and use a compatible browser only. Do NOT use the browsers embedded in the AOL software.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Screen “Popup Stoppers” (if installed) must be deactivated prior to using Blackboard or taking Blackboard tests online.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cookies and (updated) Java must be enabled
- \_\_\_\_\_ Word Processing Software – MS Word preferred
- \_\_\_\_\_ Current up to date Anti-Virus Software
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adobe Acrobat Reader Installed (Can be downloaded for free)

If you cannot meet all of the standard equipment requirements above, your online experience may not be successful. We highly recommend that your computer equipment meets or exceeds the criteria above before planning to participate in an online course.

If you have further questions, please contact the help desk at (814) 886-6502 or [helpdesk@mtaloy.edu](mailto:helpdesk@mtaloy.edu).

## TIPS FOR ONLINE LEARNING

1. **Participate.** In the online environment, it's not enough to show up! We need to hear your “voice” to feel your presence, and we especially need your comments to add to the information, the shared learning, and the sense of community in each class.
2. **Be persistent.** Remember that we're all working in a fairly new environment. If you encounter any difficulties, don't wait! Send a note immediately to the instructor of the course listed on the syllabus. Most problems are easily solved, but we have to hear from you before we can help.
3. **Share tips, helps, and questions.** For many of us, taking online courses is a new frontier. There are no dumb questions, and even if you think your solution is obvious, please share it! Someone in the class will appreciate it.
4. **Think before you push the Send button.** Did you say just what you meant? How will the person on the other end read the words? While you can't anticipate all reactions, do read over what you've written before you send it.
5. **Be patient.** As much as your instructor will try to be prompt in answering questions, please do not expect instantaneous responses to your queries. Learn how to set break points in your study, so that you can return exactly to the point when your question is answered. Be patient with yourself as well; give yourself time to fully understand the material.
6. **Plagiarism, cheating and other questionable activities** of an ethical nature are serious **violations** in a learning community. You should expect to be treated accordingly. Specific policies regarding such violations are discussed in the Student Handbook, which is available in hard copy from the College. As each instructor may have additional policies regarding academic dishonesty, students should read course syllabi carefully.
7. **Read and read again.** Online learning requires a considerable amount of reading. Realize that these courses may be more demanding or require more time than a classroom-based course.
8. **Navigate the site.** Spend some time just navigating your way through the class and making sure you are aware of where each of the buttons/links takes you.
9. **Manage your time.** You will find that your time management skills will be critical in an online course. It is far too easy to spend either too little or too much time on a class. Set designated blocks of time to work on the class and let others know that you are unavailable at that time. This will help you keep up with the assignments and with the interaction required in most online classes.
10. **Be successful!** Successful online learners have self-motivation, self-discipline, and good time management skills.

## Appendix A: College Email Policy

### **Purpose of the Policy**

There is an expanding reliance on electronic communication among students, faculty, staff and administration at Mount Aloysius College. This is motivated by the convenience, speed, cost-effectiveness, and environmental advantages of using email rather than printed communication. Because of this increasing reliance and acceptance of electronic communication, email is considered one of the College's official means of communication.

Implementation of this policy ensures that faculty, staff, and students have access to this critical form of communication. For the majority of faculty, staff, and students, this will not represent any change from what is currently done. However, it will ensure that all faculty, staff, and students can access, and be accessed by email as the need arises.

### **Scope**

This College email policy provides guidelines regarding the following aspects of email as one of the College's official means of communication:

- College use of email;
- Assignment of email addresses;
- Use and responsibilities associated with assigned email addresses; and
- Email communication expectation.

### **Policy**

#### **1. College use of email**

Email is an official means for communication within Mount Aloysius College. Therefore, the College has the right to send communications to faculty, staff and students via email and the right to expect that those communications will be received and read in a timely fashion. The College's email system can be accessed on campus and off-campus if you have an Internet Service Provider.

#### **2. Assignment of email addresses**

The Information Technology Services will assign all faculty, staff, and students an official College email address. It is to this official address that the College will send email communications. This official address will be the email address listed in College directories.

#### **3. Redirecting email**

The College recommends that faculty, staff and students use the College's email system however, a faculty, staff or student may have email electronically redirected to another email address. If a faculty, staff or student wishes to have an email redirected from his or her official address to another email address (e.g., @aol.com, @hotmail.com) they may do so at his or her own risk. The College will not be responsible for the handling of email by outside vendors. Having an email redirected

does not absolve a faculty, staff, or student from the responsibilities associated with communication sent to his or her official email address.

**4. Email communications expectations**

Faculty, staff and students are expected to check their official email address on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with College communications. The College recommends checking email twice a week at a **minimum**, in recognition that certain communications may be time critical. “I didn’t check my email,” error in forwarding mail, or email returned to the College with “Mailbox Full” or “User Unknown” are not acceptable excuses for missing official College communications via email.

**5. Educational uses of email**

Faculty may determine how email will be used in their classes. It is highly recommended that if faculty have email requirements and expectations they specify these requirements in their course syllabus. Faculty may expect that students’ official email addresses are being accessed and may use email for their course accordingly.

**6. Appropriate use of email**

In general, email is not appropriate for transmitting sensitive or confidential information unless an appropriate level of security matches its use for such purposes. In addition, it is suggested that important documents be sent with a return receipt. The following criteria relate to email use:

- All use of email, including use for sensitive or confidential information, will be consistent with the Systems Security and Operational Procedures policy located on the intranet.
- All use of email will be consistent with local, state, and federal law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). All use of email, including use for sensitive or confidential information, will be consistent with FERPA.
- Communications sent to a faculty, staff, or student’s official Mount Aloysius College email address may include notification of college-related actions.
- Email shall not be the sole method for notification of any legal action.