

U.S. Career Institute

Student Handbook



STUDENT HANDBOOK



U.S. Career Institute
2001 Lowe Street • Fort Collins, CO 80525
1-800-347-7899
www.uscareerinstitute.edu

© 2012, Weston Distance Learning, Inc. 0200000SH01C-22

All rights reserved. This book is protected by copyright. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, including photocopying, or utilized by any information storage and retrieval system without written permission from Weston Distance Learning, Inc.

Table of Contents

Executive Directory	1
Graduate Comments	2
A Personal Letter from Our Founder	3
More Graduate Comments	4
Meet the President of Your School	5
Contact Information	6
How to Submit Assignments.	6
FAQ	7
Fast Facts about Your School	10
Fast Facts about Your Course.	10
How Long Will It Take to Finish the Course?	11
Academic Code of Conduct for the Distance Education Student	12
Learn to Learn At Home	13
Success Strategies.	15
Systems of Support	15
The Learning Process	17
Get Out That Notebook.	19
The Mess That Stress Creates	20
Time Management	21
Set a Schedule, and Stick to It.	22
Let's Get Started!	24
Works Cited	24
Useful Forms	24

Executive Directory

Pamela L. Weston
Founder

Ann Rohr
President

Joyce Lindquist
Vice President of Operations

Janet Perry
Director of Education



Graduate Comments

“Your school should be really proud. I always hear great comments about U.S. Career Institute graduates. I’m glad you insisted upon accuracy and a very professional approach. It makes all the difference in the world.”

Linda T.



“I really enjoy my work. Sometimes, I wonder how I manage to get paid for doing something that is so much fun. I can’t really thank U.S. Career Institute enough. The training was terrific, and so is the field. It’s wonderful.”

Gail M.



“You really do have great teamwork in presenting your U.S. Career Institute course. When I needed help, the right person responded. My instructor was not only my teacher to me, but a friend, as well. I can’t say enough. The course was well-rounded, covering every aspect of the profession. I landed the first position I applied for. Thank you for your wonderful support through the course, as well as your understanding.”

Shirley S.

“You gave me a good background to be successful. Thanks for the great career.”

Pauline R.



“I thoroughly enjoyed the course. I have secured a full-time job, and my employer is very impressed. I told her how thorough the course was, and she said my training must have been excellent!”

Ellen B.

A Personal Letter from Our Founder

Dear Student,

Welcome to U.S. Career Institute! I established the school to provide distance education to people like you—people who want to study independently from the comfort of their own homes.

You'll find your coursework clear and easy to understand—whatever career you choose to work toward. You'll have plenty of opportunity to apply and develop what you learn in real-world situations, as well as with the help of self-graded, Practice Exercises. We design our courses to help you further your education and achieve your career goals. After all, the key to success is professional-quality training—and that's precisely what your course provides!

You're in a class of one, so you can move through the material at your own speed. Once you grasp the material, you don't have to waste time sitting in class, listening to a teacher lecture about topics you already know. If you're still working on a topic, you don't have to struggle to keep up with the pace of classmates. Your learning always proceeds at the pace that is best for you!

Our staff and faculty are here for you. Just pick up the phone or turn on your computer if you find yourself struggling with a new concept, confused by something you've read or simply in need of a little motivational talk. Call toll-free at 1-800-347-7899, or e-mail your instructor at instructors@uscareerinstitute.edu to receive answers, explanations and help right away. We will do everything we can to help you succeed!

I know that you will enjoy your course, and I wish you the best of luck as you progress toward your new career goal.

Pamela L. Weston

Pamela L. Weston
School Founder



Pamela Weston

Pamela Weston established U.S. Career Institute in 1981. Since that time, she has helped tens of thousands of students complete their training. Pam has conducted extensive research to seek out the most effective teaching and learning methods for distance education students.

More Graduate Comments



“I can honestly say that without U.S. Career Institute’s course, I would never have been equipped to attempt this type of career. Your course thoroughly prepared me to enter the field. Thank you for everything.”

James W.



I couldn’t let this opportunity pass without saying to you all just how very much I appreciate the unfailing courtesies, kindness, efficiency and enthusiasm with which you responded to my many seemingly stupid questions during the past months. My heartfelt thanks to you all.”

Anne E.



“I really want to thank everyone at U.S. Career Institute for their help. I used to have money problems, and I was really distraught, but not anymore.”

Kay S.

“The training and skills I received through U.S. Career Institute were above and beyond what I had hoped to receive. Thank you for helping me obtain a career, and thank you for putting together such a wonderful, professional, enjoyable, reasonably priced and thoroughly complete course. I could go on and on raving about your course. I gladly would refer anyone to take a U.S. Career Institute course.”

Cynthia S.



Meet the President of Your School

Dear Student,

What is the best thing that one can say about any learning program? Graduates are successful in using the skills that they gained.

Many students and graduates of our courses share their achievements with us. The main reason for their success is that all of our courses involve hands-on, real-world training. In your course, you, too, will have plenty of practice applying what you study. As you progress through your program, you will prove that you can perform skills needed for your new career because you will actually do them!

Let's talk about what you receive when you begin your education. Your course includes expertly authored lesson books—U.S. Career Institute customizes all of its own material to give you the best education available. We write each lesson in everyday language and include specific, attainable learning objectives. Your materials are easy to read and understand—we write our courses with our students in mind. We believe that learning should be fun! That's why you will find your lessons informative and easy to complete. All you need to do is carefully read the material—then follow all of the Practice Exercises and assignments step by step.

When you enroll at U.S. Career Institute, you receive much more than just your course materials. Your instructors know that you can benefit from effective learning aids.

For example, a course in medical transcription includes flashcards to help you learn medical terminology. A course in fitness and nutrition provides instructional DVDs to hone your personal-trainer skills. And a course in medical coding includes coding software designed to give you hands-on practice. We include everything that you need to succeed in your education!

I know you will enjoy your course, and I look forward to seeing you get off to a fast start. So don't wait! Open that first lesson, and send in your first assignment as soon as you can!

I look forward to serving you while you are a student, signing your certificate when you complete your course and sharing your success experiences when you begin your new career!

Ann Rohr

Ann Rohr
President



Ann Rohr

After beginning her career in elementary education, Ann took time off to raise a family. She joined U.S. Career Institute in 1993 to continue her education career. Ann's 16 years' experience as an educator and administrator show her commitment to providing you with a quality education.

Contact Information

Remember that all of us at U.S. Career Institute are dedicated to your education. Our staff members want to help you successfully complete your coursework and launch into your new career. We are here to assist you every step of the way!

Important contact information follows. Please don't hesitate to give us a call or send us an e-mail should you have any questions, comments or concerns. Please have your student ID ready.

Instructors: 800-347-7899 or instructors@uscareerinstitute.edu

Student Services: 800-347-7899 or stuserv@uscareerinstitute.edu

Automated Student Information/Record: 800-373-0100 or log in at www.uscareerinstitute.edu

Automated Payment/Quiz Line: 877-599-5857 or log in at www.uscareerinstitute.edu

How to Submit Assignments

You may submit completed assignments in a number of ways. You will receive faster feedback if you submit assignments online or via e-mail.

Multiple-choice Assignments or Quizzes

Online at www.uscareerinstitute.edu

Quiz Line: 877-599-5857

Mail: 2001 Lowe Street, Fort Collins, CO 80525

Assignments or Quizzes

E-mail to assignments@uscareerinstitute.edu

Fax: 877-599-5863

Mail: 2001 Lowe Street, Fort Collins, CO 80525

Please include your course code, name and student ID on all assignments and in the subject line of your e-mails.



FAQ

Following are some frequently asked questions about your school and course.

▶ **What do I do when I have a question?**

When you have a question, we are here to help you. You can reach us in a number of ways with the contact information in this Student Handbook. Also, we included a Student Assistance Form at the end of this handbook. If you have a question, you can photocopy and complete one of these forms, and return it with your next assignment. We will return the form with an answer to your question. Please call or e-mail us for assistance if you have a question that stops your progress in the course.

▶ **What information do I need to include in all correspondence with the school?**

Correspondence includes tuition payments, quizzes and other assignments. Please include your name, student ID number and course code on all correspondence with the school. You can find your course code on your course outline. You can find your ID number on your payment coupon. With your ID number, we can properly record all grades and student information.

In addition, please be sure to use the proper cover sheet or multiple-choice scanner sheet for each assignment.

▶ **Is there a deadline to complete courses?**

Your course is designed to be completed in four to six months. However, you have up to 12 months to complete a course. If your tuition payments are current at 12 months, and you need more time to study, please contact Student Services to request extra time to complete your course.

▶ **How long might it take to complete a U.S. Career Institute course?**

While there is no time limit, you can complete a U.S. Career Institute course in four to six months if you dedicate time to your studies.

▶ **How can I submit quizzes and assignments?**

You can submit multiple-choice quizzes through the mail, or take them online or on our Quiz Line (877-599-5857). You can mail, fax or e-mail other assignments to the school. If you want to e-mail an assignment, send it as an attachment in a Word document. Make sure the body of the e-mail, as well as the subject line, has your name, ID number, quiz number and course code. We will send an e-mail confirmation of assignment receipt in 24 to 48 business hours. (Be sure to check your junk and spam filters/folders.)

▶ **Can I mail more than one quiz in an envelope?**

You may mail up to three pieces of paper in one envelope without paying extra postage.





▶ **When will my assignment be graded?**

Instructors grade mailed assignments within one to two business days of the school receiving your assignment. E-mailed assignments receive quicker feedback due to reduced delivery time.

▶ **What is the grading scale?**

A = 92-100%

B = 85-91%

C = 75-84%

D = 70-74%

F = Below 70%

You must earn a 70% or above to receive a passing grade.

▶ **How long do I have to resubmit an incomplete quiz?**

There is no pre-established time limit to resubmit an incomplete quiz. We suggest you resubmit it as soon as practical to make sure you have time to complete other assignments.

▶ **When will I receive my next shipment?**

We send shipments based on the schedule included in your Course Outline. Shipments are delayed if we do not have your signed enrollment agreement on file or if your payments are not current.

▶ **How soon will my shipment arrive?**

U.S. Career Institute sends shipments as book rate mail, which takes from 10 to 14 business days to arrive.

▶ **How do I find out my GPA, current balance, last shipment date or last assignment you received?**

You may access the automated line at 800-373-0100 to get this information. You can also check this information on your student Web account by logging in at www.uscareerinstitute.edu

▶ **How can I let U.S. Career Institute know when I will make my next payment?**

Call Student Services at 800-347-7899 or email stuserv@uscareerinstitute.edu. Be sure to have your student ID number ready.

▶ **How do I obtain a student Web account?**

*You already have an account if you provided an e-mail address upon enrollment. If not, simply log on to www.uscareerinstitute.edu and click **Student Login**. On the next page, click **Create Account**.*

▶ **I still owe tuition and did not elect to make automatic monthly payments. How do I make payments?**

With your course materials, you receive payment coupons and envelopes. Each payment coupon includes the amount due and due date. Make all checks payable to U.S. Career Institute. Please note that the payment due date is the date when U.S. Career Institute should receive the payment. Please do not send cash for tuition payments.

You may also call Student Services at 800-347-7899 or the Quiz Line at 877-599-5857, or log into your student Web account to make a payment.

Check out our AutoPay program to avoid the monthly hassles of submitting tuition payments. See the Life's a Beach insert included with your course material.

▶ **What is an IMS or Course Outline?**

*It's an **I**nstruction & **M**aterials **S**chedule found on your Course Outline. You will find a list of items that you will receive in each instruction pack. In addition, the document outlines the grading scale, weights of each quiz, course code and course objectives.*

▶ **What do I need to begin my course?**

To begin your lessons, you need your course materials, a pencil and eraser for exercises and notes and a blue or black pen or computer for your quizzes. You will also want to have blank paper available for taking notes. You'll need to provide the postage if you mail your quizzes to the school. As you progress through the course, the school will let you know if you need any additional items.

▶ **How do I gain credit for my course and earn my certificate?**

You must complete all mail-in quizzes and attain a passing average of at least 70 percent to gain credit for your coursework and earn your certificate. We will award you with your certificate when you have completed all of your required assignments with a passing average and have paid your tuition in full.

▶ **Will my USCI certificate course work transfer as college credits to another school?**

In general, USCI certificate courses do not transfer as college credit. Your course is based on clock hours rather than credit hours. USCI does not imply or guarantee the transferability of credits from its courses.

▶ **What do Graduate Counselors do for students?**

Graduate Counselors serve as your career coaches and provide career search training. They train you on anything and everything to prepare you to find your dream position. They provide help and input on creating your resume, marketing your services, jazz up your business cards, starting a home business and more. Graduate Support Services will be available to you as soon as you have earned your certificate.



► **What are graduate referrals?**

Graduate referrals are USCI graduates who successfully work in their field. They volunteer to speak to our current students to share their experiences and their transition tips from school to work.

Fast Facts about Your School

Pamela L. Weston founded U.S. Career Institute in 1981. It is the largest school in the country that teaches people to work primarily from their homes. In the years since its founding, U.S. Career Institute's programs have successfully trained tens of thousands of people.

Because U.S. Career Institute is a Colorado organization, the Colorado Department of Higher Education, Division of Private Occupational Schools, approves the school's programs. Your school is a member of the Better Business Bureau; the Chamber of Commerce in Fort Collins, Colorado; and the Colorado Association of Career Colleges and Schools.

U.S. Career Institute wants you to feel secure that you will receive the highest-quality and most up-to-date education. Accreditation is a strong indicator of a school's ability to meet rigorous educational and business criteria. U.S. Career Institute is pleased to be nationally accredited by the Accreditation Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, 1601 18th Street North West, Washington, DC 20009; www.detc.org.

Fast Facts about Your Course

Your course is organized into easy-to-follow instruction packs. Each lesson will teach you specific skills to prepare you to begin your new career.

The lessons in the course are self-contained and have complete, step-by-step directions. These directions are designed to eliminate the guesswork from the studying process.

Your Course Outline lists all course lesson titles, required quizzes and course materials that you will receive. Keep it handy for easy reference and to track your progress throughout the course.

Your lessons contain a variety of learning activities, including Practice Exercises that you grade yourself and open-book, mail-in quizzes. You can take many quizzes online, or you can send completed quizzes to the school for grading and evaluation. Your instructors will return your results to you to provide on-going feedback. You will always know how you are doing in your course!

Perhaps the most important point for you to remember is to follow the directions in your course to complete your assignments. Complete the reading, studying, learning activities and quizzes as your course directs. Always remember to check the results of your exercises. Review any errors that you may have made, and be sure you understand the correct answers. This is how other students have succeeded in our courses; this is how you also will succeed.

How Long Will It Take to Finish the Course?

Your course is self-paced, and you have up to one year to finish your course (or more time if you request it and your tuition payments are current). You can choose how quickly or slowly you move through the course. If you're ready to begin your new career right away, you will want to progress through your studies more quickly.

Following is a Course Completion Planning Sheet. This simple tool will help you reach your goal of completing your course as quickly as possible.

Take a moment now to outline the most important reasons that you want to begin a new career. Then, list the dates by which you would like to complete each pack of lessons. Here is a guideline for how long each pack may take:

Pack 1 3 to 4 weeks

Pack 2 3 to 4 weeks

Pack 3 3 to 4 weeks

Pack 4 5 to 6 weeks

Pack 5 4 to 5 weeks

On your sheet, write the target dates that fit best with your plans. After you complete the Course Completion Planning Sheet, refer to it often. Post it on your refrigerator or bathroom mirror so you can refer to it when you need motivation. Use this tool to help you focus on your goal of completing your course and beginning a new career.

Course Completion Planning Sheet

I would like to begin a new career because:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My goals are to complete:

Pack 1 by _____

Pack 2 by _____

Pack 3 by _____

Pack 4 by _____

Pack 5 by _____

Academic Code of Conduct for the Distance Education Student

As a student of a DETC accredited distance education institution, I recognize that in the pursuit of my educational goals and aspirations, I have certain responsibilities toward my fellow distance learners, my institution and myself. To fulfill these responsibilities, I pledge adherence to this Code of Conduct. I will observe fully the standards, rules, policies and guidelines established by my institution, the Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council, the State Education Agency and other appropriate organizations serving an oversight role for my institution.

I will adhere to high ethical standards in the pursuit of my education, and to the best of my ability will:

1. Present my qualifications and background truthfully and accurately for admission to the institution.
2. Observe the institutional policies and rules on submitting work, taking examinations, participating in online discussions and conducting research (where applicable).
3. Never turn in work that is not my own, or present another person's ideas or scholarship as my own.
4. Never ask for, receive or give unauthorized help on grade assignments, quizzes and examinations.
5. Never use outside books or papers that are unauthorized by my instructor's assignments or examinations.
6. Never divulge the content of or answers to quizzes or examinations to fellow students.
7. Never improperly use, destroy, forge or alter my institution's documents, transcripts or other records.
8. Never divulge my online username or password (where applicable).



Learn to Learn At Home

How can you succeed as a distance-learning student? As you may have guessed, a lot of your success depends on what type of student you are. You're likely to do well as you learn from home if you know your goal and are eager to achieve it, if you have a positive attitude and keep your studies as a high priority. Why? Well, distance learning does require a certain amount of self-motivation—you must be able to work independently to succeed.

At this point, you may think that distance-learners are born, not made. But that's not necessarily true! You can teach yourself to succeed in learning from home. Let's look at a few tips.

- ▶ Remember to follow instructions as you study at home. Complete all of the readings and Practice Exercises—even if you don't think you need to do so.
- ▶ Review any mistakes you make, and be sure you understand why you made them. After all, doing so will only help you as you complete your open-book quizzes. And remember, mistakes are normal; they are part of the study process!
- ▶ Find a learning place in your home that is comfortable and has adequate lighting. This may be your kitchen, living room or bedroom—or a special study area that you create. Doing this will help remove stress and tension and allow you to concentrate on your coursework.
- ▶ Keep all course materials close at hand, including writing materials, reference books and anything that you will need during your study sessions. This will prevent interruptive trips across the room—and loss of concentration.
- ▶ To keep your mind clear for learning, you will need to schedule study sessions in time periods when you will not be distracted. Remove yourself from your family's traffic and noise patterns, and inform family members not to disturb you during your study session. Also, schedule this time period when you are alert and likely to be at your best. Scheduling will probably be the biggest challenge that you have to face. But most everyone can find a one-hour time period during the day to concentrate on learning, especially if that learning leads to a new and satisfying career.
- ▶ Your study sessions do not have to be long, bleary-eyed marathons. In fact, we all learn and concentrate better when study sessions are kept short—not exceeding one hour each.



- ▶ Your learning sessions should, however, be everyday activities. Regular study sessions help you remember yesterday's material and tie it to the new activity. Also, when you do this, you constantly reinforce your learning and solidify your skills to make them a permanent part of your abilities. Invest an hour of your day in your studies. The more regular you are in your study habits, the sooner you'll taste the rewards of your new skills!
- ▶ Also, ask questions. You're going to have questions from time to time. When you have a question, ask it.
- ▶ Get the right answer. U.S. Career Institute is happy to answer your questions.
- ▶ Lastly, use what you learn! Tell your family members or friends about what you're studying. Also, read articles and any other literature that pertain to your course. Each day or two, see if you can recall and summarize the last lesson that you studied. Following this practice makes correct responses automatic!

Every day of our lives, we can learn something new. How well we learn it depends on how we focus our attention. If you follow the above practices, you will become a better learner. As soon as these new practices become a part of your habit pattern, you will find that you quickly and easily absorb new facts that will be at your command and ready for immediate use. Chances are that relatives, friends and acquaintances will be amazed at your new skills! In addition, you will recognize that you are a more confident and more effective person.



Success Strategies

Let's tackle the topic of success strategies. First, what are they? Well, success strategies are plans of action that help you accomplish specific goals or succeed at something. In this case, you want to succeed as a U.S. Career Institute student. Your goals likely include performing well in your course, completing your course and launching your new career!

Let's look at some of the success strategies you can use to achieve your goals.

Systems of Support

An important success strategy is to stay motivated. Previously, you read that successful at-home learners are self-motivated and independent enough to study without much encouragement. Unless you're the best cheerleader in the world, you're going to need a little motivation and encouragement from time to time. So where can you find the support that you need? Well, you can develop your own systems of support for motivation.

Let's look at some examples of support systems. Perhaps you're working to complete an accounting course. You'd like to open your own small accounting business someday. A friend of a friend started his small business a few years ago. This small-business owner probably would be a good person with whom to form a relationship. He might act as a mentor to you, offer advice about the business world, tell you what did and didn't work for him and explain what lessons he's learned or what he wishes he'd done differently. He may be able to encourage you or assist you with your studies. This mentor is a support system! And mentors usually feel quite privileged to serve in that capacity.

Your local library could be another support system. Maybe there's even a college or university library nearby that you can access. If you need help with your studies or more information as you progress through your course, get to know the reference librarians at your local library. Reference librarians love the thrill of the hunt and will be eager to help you find information to answer your questions. At smaller libraries—and even at some larger college libraries—reference librarians really get to know the students who often ask for their help. These librarians will begin to notice what types of material are most helpful to you and then can better guide you. Perhaps most importantly, you may find that the more you use your library and enlist the aid of reference librarians, the less help you'll need as you gather information. Soon, you'll be ready to apply the reference librarians' techniques all by yourself!



Your instructors are another crucial part of your support system. Don't forget that you can contact them whether you have questions, comments or concerns or simply need a little motivational boost. They're standing by, ready to help you.



You may also build a community of “study buddies”—other education-seeking friends or associates. You may find time to have coffee together, run ideas by each other and generally provide each other with support and encouragement as you reach your educational goals.

The Internet is another—yet powerful—support system at your fingertips. There are thousands of chat rooms, message boards, blogs and listservs available on every topic imaginable. Let's go back to our example at the beginning of this section. Suppose you are taking an accounting course and hope to open a small accounting business someday.

Well, get online, and find a chat room for small-business owners or for accounting students. Sign up for a listserv that provides information to small-business owners. You'll meet people in your field who can offer advice and support. Perhaps you'll even be able to form personal relationships with small-business owners or accountants in your area whom you met online. The possibilities are endless!

You see, even though you're a distance-learner, responsible for motivating and encouraging yourself, there are resources out there for you. Develop systems of support to help you as you work toward your new career!



The Learning Process

Another way to help yourself achieve your goals is to understand the learning process and how you can make it work for you. If you understand how learning works, you can maximize your education at U.S. Career Institute.

Take a few moments to assess your learning style. You can find many learning-style assessments online. One of our favorites is at www.edutopia.org. Type “What’s Your Learning Style?” in the search box. Then, click on What’s Your Learning Style? on the search results page.

You may be surprised what you learn about your style! Different people learn best in different ways. Some people learn when they hear a concept explained. Others have an easier time remembering something if they can see it, like a shopping list or graph. And yet others learn by doing or teaching a concept to someone else.

How do you learn? Do you learn best when you listen and talk? Try to explain what you’re studying to friends and family members. Do you learn best when you read material, see it on the page? Then find a quiet place to study. Do you learn best when you are active—when you do something? Take notes or highlight passages as you read your lessons. Teach others what you learn.

Perhaps you already know that people can be intelligent in different ways. Maybe you have a friend who’s particularly good at learning music but who isn’t great with words. Maybe you’re good at math but struggle a bit when it comes to understanding other people.

More than 20 years ago, a man who studied educational psychology proposed a new way of thinking about human intelligence. Instead of one measure of intelligence, Howard Gardner suggested that different types of people possess different types of intelligence. Gardner identified eight different types of intelligence according to *Psychology: Core Concepts*, by Philip G. Zimbardo, Ann L. Weber and Robert L. Johnson.

Linguistic intelligence describes a person who’s good with words. Logical-mathematical intelligence pertains to a person who’s good with numbers and logical reasoning. Spatial intelligence refers to a person who’s good at pictures, while someone with bodily-kinesthetic intelligence is good at using his body.

Musical intelligence refers to a person who’s good at music. Interpersonal intelligence describes a person who’s good at understanding other people, while intrapersonal intelligence refers

to a person who’s good at understanding himself or herself. Lastly, a person with naturalist intelligence is someone who understands plants and nature—someone with a green thumb.



In what types of intelligence do you excel? Where do you struggle? You know, it’s certainly possible to improve areas of your intelligence. If you know your intelligence strengths, you can better strategize your study habits. You can identify the areas that you need to strengthen.

For example, if you take a medical assisting course, you may have no trouble reading and understanding the lessons because you're good with words—you possess a lot of linguistic intelligence. But you might have to answer some short-essay questions for this course, and that requires you to do a little logical reasoning, applying what you've learned in your course to other situations or topics. If you know that you're lacking logical-mathematical intelligence, you can focus that much more on your assignment. You can really try to improve this area of intelligence!

Another element of the learning process is active learning. It's important to be an active learner: You should think about and question your studies. Try different ways of solving problems. Doing so will help you remember more about what you read.

Now, let's tackle one last element of the learning process: studying. Maybe you're the type of person who takes a lot of notes and pays close attention to everything you read. When it comes time for your exam, you just need to glance at your notes for a quick review session, and you're totally prepared for the test.

Maybe you simply scan your lessons and rush through your assignments, never really bothering to commit to memory anything that you read. Before your exam, you engage in some heavy-duty studying. You practically have to read your entire course again to prepare for the test.

Everyone has a different approach to studying. Some people study each night throughout an entire course; others cram the night before the exam. However you choose to study, let us give you a few tips.

Learning experts state that if you plan and scan a lesson, you will increase your learning effectiveness by 25 percent or more. What's planning and scanning? Well, there are several steps. When you begin a lesson, read the introduction. Find out what you will learn in the lesson. Once you identify your learning objectives for the lesson, you will work toward specific goals.

Next, scan the entire lesson. Take between 5 and 15 minutes to read headings, bold and boxed print, the first sentences of paragraphs, charts, graphs, tables and any symbols and illustrations. This will give you a firm idea of what you will learn—and what you will have to do to achieve your goals for the lesson.

Then, write notes in the margins of your lesson or on your own paper. Highlight important instruction on the lesson pages. When you take notes, you will put the knowledge in your own words, and make it a permanent part of your pattern of skills.

Once you complete a lesson, review the instruction within 24 hours. This will help you verify your understanding of the concepts and procedures, and it will further reinforce your learning.

Get Out That Notebook

As we talked about the elements of learning, you probably noticed that we mentioned note-taking. Yes, you guessed it. Note-taking is another success strategy—another plan to help you achieve your goals.

Some students find it difficult to take notes—there's the urge to write down every concept or practically every word! Note-taking can be especially hard for distance-learners because you're not listening to an instructor's lecture. You can't just raise your hand, ask a question and jot down the answer.

So, how can you, as you learn from home, be a good note-taker? Well, first remember that you should not—and cannot—write down on paper everything you read. Copying your lessons will not help you learn the material. Simply jot down the main concepts. Also, write down any questions that you have. Then, you can either go back later and search for the answers in your lesson packs or contact your instructor.

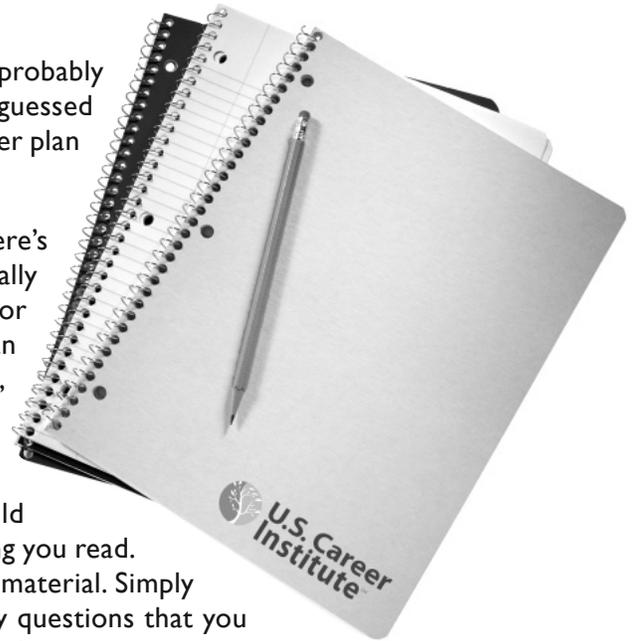
According to Sally M. Johnstone and George P. Connick, editors of the *Distance Learner's Guide*, you can take notes using five stages: record, reduce, recite, reflect and review. First, record everything you believe is necessary as you read. Write down what you think is important. Then, reduce the notes that you took. Try to keep only the main points. Next, without looking at your notes, recite them in your own words. Be sure to check yourself for accuracy and completeness.

Let a day or two pass. Then, reflect on what you wrote. Reread your notes, and think about how they relate to what you're learning. Lastly, review your notes each week. This will reinforce what you learned and help you avoid those last-minute cramming sessions!

Maybe you wonder why you even need to bother to take notes. After all, your quizzes are open book, right? Well, this is true. But have you ever heard someone say that an open-book test can be more difficult than a closed-book test? This is because if you study, take notes and are prepared for an open-book test, you know the material. You look up answers to questions that you really don't know, but for the most part, you're using your lesson books only as an aid. When you're prepared for an open-book test, you'd probably do just as well on a closed-book test.

Now, let's say you didn't study or bother taking notes at all. When it's time to take your quiz or do an assignment, you have to look up every single answer. You might second-guess the answers you find because you never really bothered to understand the material in the first place. The quiz takes you a long time to complete, and you're mentally exhausted when you finish. To top it all off, if you didn't learn the material when you read it the first time, did simply finding the answer in the lessons and copying it onto your quiz help your learning process? Probably not.

If you take notes, study and learn your material, you'll not only do better on exercises and exams, you'll really excel in your new career, as well!



The Mess That Stress Creates



In today's society, it's fair to say that we all deal with stress. We all struggle against time constraints. The ability to manage time and stress is another success strategy.

First, let's define stress as strain, tension or pressure. Canadian scientist Hans Selye, a world-famous pioneer of stress research, defined stress as the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it. The causes of stress are many and vary from person to person. Some main sources of stress can be work, family relationships, school, changes in lifestyle, fears and anxieties, vacations, physical problems and time commitments.

It is important to learn to manage the harmful effects of stress in your life. One of the first steps in managing stress is to identify its causes. After you identify the stressors, you should determine if the problem can be solved. For example, if you are aware of a series of deadlines for work projects at the end of the month that cannot be dispersed throughout the month, you need to prepare for that time as well as you can. Finish other work early so you have more time for the project, don't schedule appointments that week, etc. If you worry about those projects rather than work to meet the deadlines, this will only make the problem appear worse than it actually is.

Another important strategy to manage stress is to accept the facts of the situation. Inevitably, you will encounter times when an event or responsibility is unpleasant, and you may have to make tough decisions. At this point, think carefully, check the facts and realize that there is no other alternative during these times.

An additional approach to deal with stressful situations is to look forward and not dwell on the past. You can create stress if you worry about what already happened—perhaps you did poorly on a quiz. Try to take a constructive and less-stressful approach, and begin to plan for the future. For example, study your mistakes so you learn from them, and focus on doing better when you take your next quiz.

Dr. James Rippe, an authority in the world of health and fitness, recommends that individuals put an equal amount of time into family, health and business or school. This balanced arrangement will not allow one aspect of your life to control everything else.

Dr. Peter Hanson, author of *The Joy of Stress*, lectures and teaches seminars on stress. He believes that stress can lead to better health, and he views stress as an asset, not a liability. He says that to handle stress, you must manage your priorities, time and details, and commit yourself to exercise and relaxation. He also states that it's important to have a healthy diet and to spend time with family and friends.

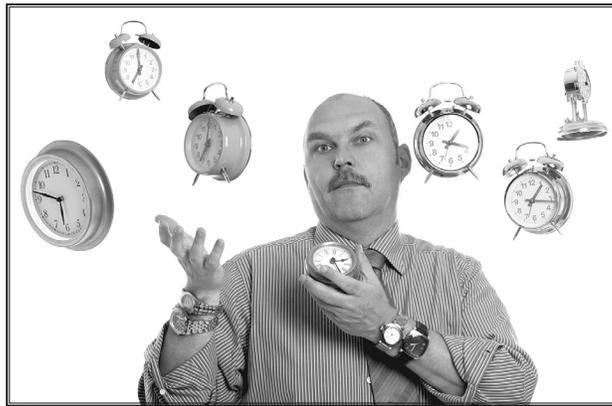
Stress is a part of everyday life, and learning to manage our personal responses to stress is an important part of that life. If managed correctly, the stressors will not overwhelm you. Instead, they can test you with limits and force you to meet new challenges in creative ways!



Time Management

Now, what about time management? Well, there's no denying that time is a valuable resource. We all share the same amount of minutes and hours available each day. Since we cannot change this fact or borrow time from previous days, all that we can do is use the time wisely.

Time management consists of simply organizing yourself to make the best use of the time available and making the choices most appropriate for you. Time management is also about effectiveness. Let's clarify the difference between effectiveness and efficiency. Selecting the right task demonstrates effectiveness, and efficiency describes finding the best method to complete that task. Both are necessary concepts, but effectiveness allows you to work smarter because you work on what is important.



To better learn to manage your time, first identify and set goals. Write down your goals to make them more visible to you and to increase your commitment to them. Time management consultants agree that a daily to-do list is invaluable. Make your list a regular part of your routine. List all of the activities that you want to accomplish that day, and rank them by level of importance. The ranking order works well because you rank the activities that allow you to achieve your goals higher on your list.

One of the most essential tools for effective use of time is a schedule. To begin to work on a schedule, set aside a period of time each day to reflect and plan. This brief time spent each day will save you hours in the long run. Also, estimate in advance how much time a particular task will take. For example, if you have to complete an assignment, and you estimate it will take you a week, don't leave yourself only a day to do it. And don't forget to schedule time for breaks and relaxation!

The final step in planning your work is to work your plan. Keep your schedule visible as a reminder of your goals. To finalize your scheduling, keep track of your progress toward a particular goal, and record your accomplishments.

Regardless of how well you plan your goals and schedule your time, you will inevitably run into obstacles. One such obstacle stems from overcommitment. If you spend time on what others want, you become unable to concentrate on your own goals. Many individuals do not know how or are afraid to refuse a request. For your own sanity, learn to politely refuse requests that are not in your best interest!

Another obstacle we may encounter is an inability to delegate, or entrust tasks to others. However, delegating is a key concept in successful time management. Many of us don't delegate, which results in less time spent on the critical tasks that need our attention. You often perform activities at work and home out of habit. Try this technique: Whenever you face a task, ask yourself if someone else can handle it. Think about it. Can your daughter throw in a load of laundry while you study? Can your husband drive your son to basketball practice while you work on a quiz? Probably. So ask them to do so!

Keep an orderly desk to help you manage time. Your desk can and should be a tool to make you more effective. Michael LeBoeuf, author of *Working Smart*, offers some guidelines for this topic.

For example, keep only one project at a time on top of your desk, and make that project your top priority. If you have a school exercise to finish, that should be the only item on your desk. Also, keep items off your desk until you are ready for them. And don't be sidetracked by other tasks because they are easier or more appealing. Sure, maybe Lesson 7 of your course seems more interesting than Lesson 4, but you should work on the top priority item—Lesson 4—and continue to work on it until completion. When you complete a task, send it on its way. Then, check your priorities, and move to the next item.

Everyone has the same amount of time available. What we do with that time is up to each of us to decide. Some people, through successful time management principles, make the most of their lives and create greater personal satisfaction for themselves and those around them. So, give a few of these time management ideas a try!

Set a Schedule, and Stick to It

When we talked about time management, we talked about the importance of scheduling. Well, creating a schedule for your studies is an important success strategy. You can create a weekly organizer, and fill in the days and dates.

At the beginning of each week, write in all of your nonnegotiable commitments for the week, such as when you're at your job or busy with your family. Then, find time slots that won't be interrupted. Write STUDY TIME in big red letters across these times. Highlight them. Put stars by them. Do whatever it takes to keep these appointments. And remember to check your calendar often. Following is a sample weekly organizer that you can use as a guide.

Weekly Organizer							
day/date							
5 am							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
noon							
1 pm							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							

You have already learned that you should study somewhere that is quiet, comfortable and well-lit. Do not allow yourself to be distracted, and schedule study times when you are alert and likely to be at your best. Lastly, your study sessions don't have to be marathons—in fact, they shouldn't exceed an hour—but you should make studying a part of your daily routine.

There you have it. You know all about success strategies and how these strategies can help you reach your goals. Remember to put what you've learned here to use. These success strategies have proven to be a great help to students—that's why they're called success strategies! So, take advantage of them. Use them to help you succeed at being a good student, completing your course, starting a new job and doing well in your career!

Let's Get Started!

You are now ready to begin your course. You will be pleasantly surprised at how easy it is to learn with our step-by-step instruction. Now, simply turn to Lesson 1, and start to read. As soon as you do, you will be on your way to a new and rewarding career.

Good luck in your course!

*The most precious things of life are near at hand.
Each of you has the whole wealth of the universe at your very door.
All may be yours by stretching forth your hand and taking it.*

John Burroughs

Works Cited

Hanson, Peter G. *The Joy of Stress*. New Jersey: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 1987.

Johnstone, Sally M. and George P. Connick, Ed. *Distance Learner's Guide*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., 2005.

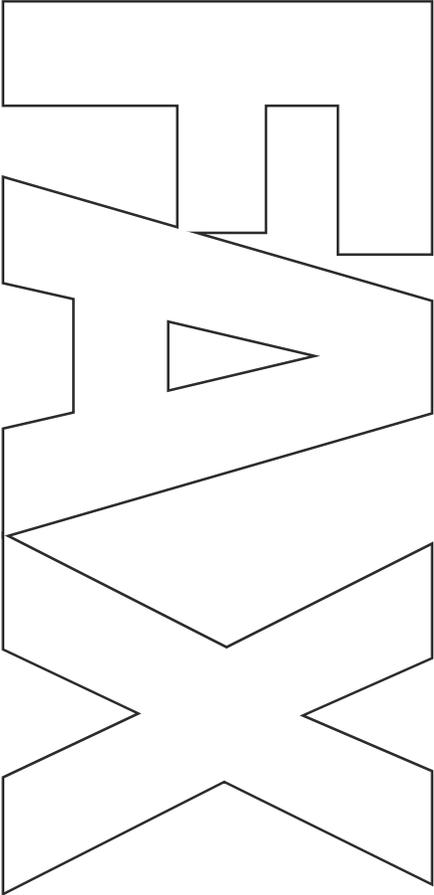
LeBoeuf, Michael. *Working Smart*. New York: Warner Books, 1988.

Zimbardo, Philip G., Ann L. Weber, Robert L. Johnson. *Psychology: Core Concepts*. Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2003.

Useful Forms

Following is a Student Assistance Form and a fax cover sheet. Please make copies of these forms should you need to use them to submit questions or assignments to the school during your studies.

Student Assignment



1

Follow the directions on the quiz answer sheet.

2

Use this completed form as your fax cover sheet.

3

Fax this form and your assignment to

(877) 599-5863

4

PRINT clearly in ink.

Your Name:	_____	Your ID#:	_____
Your Phone Number:	_____	Course Code:	_____

Student Assistance Form

1. Print your name, address, phone number and student ID in the blanks provided.
2. Check the box for the type of assistance you need.
3. Print your message in the space provided.
4. Mail this form to U.S. Career Institute.

_____ ID number
name

address

city state zip

course code phone #

U.S. Career Institute
2001 Lowe Street
Fort Collins, CO 80525

- Change of Address Missing or Damaged Material Student Account/Payment
 Instructor (Assistance with Lessons): Course _____ Lesson _____
 Equipment Counselor Assistance Other: _____

PLEASE RESPOND TO ME VIA: the phone number above; FAX me at _____;
 e-mail me at _____; write me at the above address; no response necessary.

My Question/Message: (please be specific)

USCI Reply On Back