



For Participants Use and Future Reference

Username:

Password:

Your Username and Password were assigned by the Program Office when you were accepted; they are the same for logging into your StFX email account and logging into your course on Moodle. See # 5, page 6.

Diploma in Intellectual Disability Studies

St. Francis Xavier University
Box 5000
Antigonish, NS B2G 2W5

Program Office Contact Information

Local.....902-867-3319
Toll-free (within Canada)1-877-867-5562
Fax902-867-5154
Website<http://www.sites.stfx.ca/continuingeducation/INDS>
Email.....inds@stfx.ca

Course Material is the property of St. Francis Xavier University Continuing & Distance Education Department. Course material may not be used for other purposes other than this program or copied in whole or in part without prior written permission from the Director of StFX Continuing & Distance Education. Course material is not available for purchase by individuals not taking part in the program.



Table of Contents

Page

Welcome3

First Things First4

- StFX email accounts page 5
- Student Responsibilities page 6
- Learning at A Distance page 7

Technical Guidelines9

 Technical Assistance Contact #s..... 10

Required Readings 11

Library Service 11

The Writing Centre 11

Academic Standards/Regulations 12

Registration/Fees/Withdrawal Policies..... 13

University Contacts 14

University Motto 14

Getting Started – Moodle Learning Management System 15-17

Appendices

Appendix A - Studying: Some Basic Tips 18

Appendix B - Writing Papers 19

Appendix C – Basic Writing Tips 20



Welcome

This handbook is for distance education students who have registered for a Moodle-based course through the Continuing & Distance Education Department at St. Francis Xavier University. See **Appendix A** for technical guidelines.

StFX Office Staff:

Director, Continuing & Distance Education: Janice Landry
Coordinator: Trudy Delorey
Program Assistant: Cindy MacEachern
Technical Assistance: cdesupport@stfx.ca
Program Office: inds@stfx.ca

Course Instructors:

Please refer to the Course Syllabus in Moodle for current information on course instructors.

Contact information for **technical support** is provided on the log in page on Moodle and on page 10 of this handbook. It is also emailed to registered students prior to course start date.

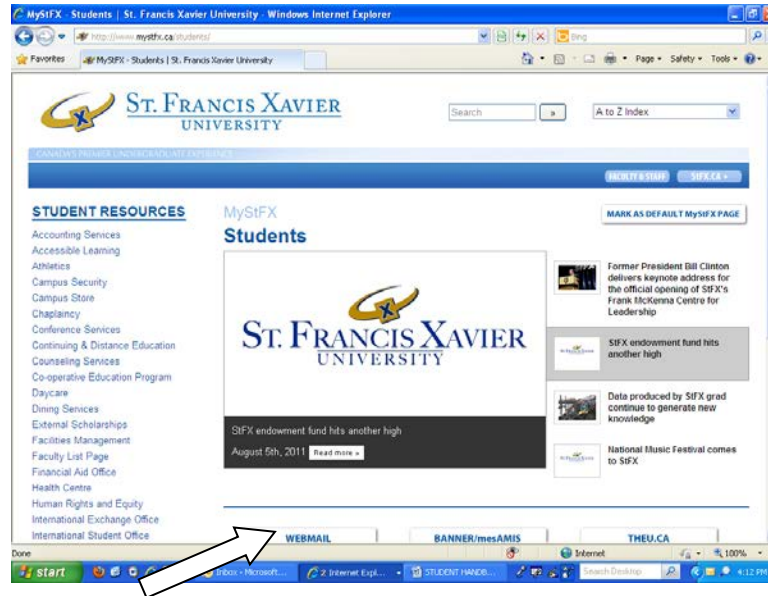
First Things First

Seven Important Steps

1. **Read this handbook carefully**, particularly if you are a first-time student or if this is your first experience with online education.
2. **Prior to the course start date**, you will receive an email to your personal email address or a letter indicating your StFX University username/password and student ID #. **You must use your StFX e-mail address to take the course.** Instructors use StFX e-mail addresses to contact students. Contacting the class as a group is an automatic process and does not permit substitution of non-StFX e-mail addresses. Even if you use another e-mail address, **check your StFX e-mail account regularly, preferably daily.** To ensure that it is working properly, send a test message from your StFX account to your instructor with a copy to the Program Office during the first week of the course, as per #3 below. Likewise, your student ID number is particularly important for services that you may need to access as the course progresses. For example, in a research assignment, you may need help from the University Library. You will need your student ID for this purpose. Your student ID is included in the email/letter you will receive with your username and password.
3. **Establish communication with your instructor early.** Send an e-mail message to your instructor within the first few days of the course. Her or his email address is given in the Course Syllabus folder on Moodle. Send a brief message stating that you are ready to begin. This is like a roll call at the beginning of a classroom course. **To send an email**, log onto the StFX website, www.stfx.ca/ and click on **MyStFX in the top right of the screen.**



In the next screen click on Webmail (see screen shot below) and then log on using the username and password you received from the program office. You should change your password immediately so no one but you has access to your account – just remember to write it down in a safe place until you can remember it with ease.



4. **Make arrangements for regular access to a computer**, if you have not done so already. It is your responsibility to have access to a computer that meets the technical specifications on page 9.
5. **Log onto Moodle as soon as possible after receiving word that the course is open.** Once you open your web browser, log onto Moodle using the URL <https://moodle.stfx.ca/login/index.php>. From the welcome screen, enter your username and password (**they are the same as your StFX email username and password**). This information was provided to you in the initial contact email. If you misplaced the information or need assistance, contact the Program Office, 1-877-867-5562 or inds@stfx.ca or cdesupport@stfx.ca.
6. **Spend some time looking through the course material to become familiar with the content.** Begin to familiarize yourself with the different features of Moodle and how it works. **It is your responsibility to have a basic knowledge of how to manage Moodle before you begin the course.** If you encounter any technical difficulties, please call the technical assistant (see page 10) or the program office.

Review the lessons and assignment instructions fully before starting, recording all deadlines. This will ensure that you can pace yourself in relation to your other responsibilities. Please pay attention to deadlines. Your assignment has to be submitted by a designated date. It is required that you contact your instructor in advance if you believe you will be unable to submit an assignment on time.

7. **Remember!** This course is an exciting learning opportunity and we want your experience to be a positive one. If you have any difficulties or questions that are not dealt with in this handbook, please contact us.

Student Responsibilities

Overview

Your co-operation is appreciated.

- **Observe all deadlines.** If you can't meet a deadline, please communicate with the course instructor and program office staff as soon as possible. This is both a courtesy and a practicality.
- **Set a disciplined study schedule** to keep on top of the work. Within the general guideline of 10-12 hours per week, you are responsible for your own learning. This requires careful budgeting of time.
- **Prepare and submit written assignment(s).** If possible, send material so that it is received earlier than the published deadline. Your assignment should be **sent by e-mail attachment to the instructor with a copy to the program office.** The course discussion board (Moodle) will give assignment details and where to send them.
- **Inform the Program Office as soon as possible of any change in your student status,** e.g., withdrawal, emergency situations, change of address, phone or email etc. This is important in terms of keeping accurate records, receiving possible refunds, etc. Notifying your instructor does not constitute formal withdrawal from a course. You must contact the program office.
- **Provide feedback.** At the conclusion of each course, a formal questionnaire will ask you to rate both the course and its administration.

Learning at a Distance

”Going to Class”

In traditional undergraduate programs you would attend lectures as often as three times a week. In this distance education program, lecture notes and the materials on which lectures are based are provided on Moodle. The work in these courses is reading with comprehension (not memorization), taking part in the online discussions, and completion of assignments.

The Course

Admittance to Moodle gives you access to lecture notes, web links, prompts for journaling, etc. The information outlines requirements, learning objectives, and schedules and also presents actual learning materials in a series of lessons, which *may* include the following:

- Outline of specific learning objectives
- Factual and theoretical material
- Mini-lectures (instructor’s commentary)
- Reading assignments
- List of recommended readings
- Study questions
- Self-test activities
- Writing assignments

The internet features allow you to electronically connect with other resources. You will be able to communicate with your instructor and classmates through the course Discussion Board and access links to resources at different Web sites.

Is computer-based education an effective substitute for traditional classroom-based education?

When compared with other types of learning, online learning has its advantages and disadvantages. You know **in advance** and **in detail** what you are expected to learn, since the material that you need is provided at the beginning of the course. This is a tremendous advantage in terms of planning your time and preparing your assignment.

However, perhaps **the most important contributors to success are your motivation, commitment, and self-discipline.**

What makes a successful student?

Success in any course of study is as much the result of good organization as of individual academic competence. Only through good organization and careful management of time can a participant take full advantage of the flexibility and freedom offered by distance education.

Courses vary in their requirements, but it may be helpful for you to think in terms of spending 10-12 hours per week for reading, reflection, journaling and taking part in Moodle discussion.

Many students find that home study is challenging because of the amount of reading involved, but that is the nature of this type of study. In fact, about 60 percent of the time spent on a home-study course will probably consist of reading, reflecting and journaling. About 20 percent of the time will involve online discussion with fellow participants and the remainder will be spent in completing your assignment(s).

Successful distance students are usually those who:

- have clear educational goals
- can set priorities
- are motivated and are self starters
- know why they are taking the course
- have the support of family and peers
- set aside regular periods for study
- communicate regularly with their instructor

Taking an online course may be a new experience for you. If so, please read the next section carefully.

Technical Guidelines

In order to take a Moodle format course, you must have the following:

- A StFX e-mail address (see the welcome letter from the Program Office)
- A basic familiarity with a computer in terms of using the Internet, sending email, etc.

Windows Specifications

Operating System:	Windows XP minimum, or Windows 7 or higher recommended
Processor:	1 GHz Pentium 4 minimum, 2 GHz Core 2 Duo recommended
Memory:	512 MB of RAM minimum, 1 GB recommended
Hard Drive Space:	1 GB free disk space
Browser:	Internet Explorer 7.0 minimum, Firefox or Chrome recommended
Email:	Students must use their StFX email address (provided by TSG)
Plug-ins:	Flash 8 or higher; these are freely downloaded from Adobe: http://www.adobe.com/downloads
Quicktime:	Quicktime 7 or better, free download from the Apple website: www.apple.com/downloads
Java:	Environment 1.5 or newer, download from: http://www.java.com
Modem:	High Speed Cable / DSL recommended
Printer:	Graphics-capable printer (inkjet or laser)
Monitor:	Minimum Specifications: 15-inch, SVGA, 1024 x 768 minimum screen resolution, 16 bit color (thousands of colors). Recommended Specifications: SVGA, 1024 x 768 minimum screen resolution, 24 or 32 bit colour
Microphone:	Onboard or USB microphone / headset (for courses that use Collaborate)

Mac Specifications

Operating System:	Macintosh OS X 10.3.9 or later
Processor:	1 GHz PowerPC G4 minimum, 2 GHz Core 2 Duo recommended
Memory:	512 MB RAM minimum, 2 GB Recommended
Hard Drive Space:	1 GB free disk space
Browser:	Safari, Chrome, or Firefox
Email:	Students must use their StFX email address (provided by TSG)
Plug-ins:	Flash 8 or higher; if you do not already have the latest version of the Flash plug-in, go to the Adobe website and follow instructions: http://www.adobe.com/downloads
Quicktime:	Quicktime 7 or better, free download from the Apple website: www.apple.com/downloads
Java:	Latest Macintosh OS X Java updates
Modem:	High Speed Cable / DSL recommended
Printer:	Graphics-capable printer (inkjet or laser)
Monitor:	Minimum Specifications: 15-inch, SVGA, 1024 x 768 minimum screen resolution, 16 bit colour (thousands of colours). Recommended: SVGA, 1024 x 768 min. screen resolution, 24 or 32 bit colour
Microphone:	Onboard or USB microphone / headset (For courses that use Collaborate)

Technical Start-Up

If you are taking a course like this for the first time, see pages 15-17, **Getting Started**.

Technical Assistance

If you run into any technical problems related to your StFX e-mail or passwords, contact our technical support team: cdesupport@stfx.ca or the program office: inds@stfx.ca

Assistance is available:

Day/Time
Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
In the first two weeks of the course, assistance is also available from 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Monday to Friday
All times given are in Atlantic time

If you require help at a time not listed above, e-mail cdesupport@stfx.ca and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

Textbooks

There is no one assigned text book for the INDS courses. Instead, course authors have chosen a variety of readings from many authors on the course topics. These readings are provided with the lessons on Moodle.

Library Services

Extended Library Services

Check the Library Services for Distance and Continuing Education students:

http://sites.stfx.ca/library/distance_education. Contact names and numbers are provided on the website.

The Writing Centre

The StFX Writing Centre is a resource that provides all StFX students with the assistance they need to improve their writing skills and upgrade their marks. Students taking a distance or off-campus course can fax or e-mail assignments or term papers for feedback. Students should allow 1–2 weeks for the Writing Centre to evaluate assignments or term papers and provide feedback.

The Writing Centre can help students:

- plan and organize research material
- develop a thesis statement and organize ideas
- substantiate ideas with evidence
- document sources (MLA, APA)

Phone: (902) 867-5221; Fax: (902) 867-5380; E-mail: writingc@stfx.ca

Web Site: <http://www.sites.stfx.ca/writingcentre/>

Academic Standards/Regulations

General Statement

Online distance education courses meet the same high standards of curriculum development and instruction as on-campus courses.

Academic regulations outlined in this manual summarize information contained in the university's Academic Calendar. In some instances, regulations have been adapted to fit the requirements and constraints of online study. In cases of dispute or misunderstanding, the Academic Calendar serves as the official reference.

Assignments

Specific directions for assignments are provided by the instructor on Moodle regarding requirements, submission date, and to whom assignments should be submitted.

At the discretion of the instructor, unexplained late assignments may be declined.

Evaluation

These non-credit courses are graded on a 'Complete/Incomplete' basis. Numerical grades are not assigned.

Academic Misconduct

StFX students are assumed to possess academic integrity. However, it is important to be aware of the penalties for plagiarism or the use of unauthorized aids when writing assignments or examinations.

The following procedures govern suspected cases of cheating and plagiarism:

Plagiarism is considered the most serious academic offense that can occur in a university. Defined as the theft of intellectual property, it entails the **unreferenced** quotation of statistics, scientific experiments, website content, and material from books, academic journals, or a professor's lecture. Contrary to what many students imagine, plagiarism is remarkably easy to detect. Accordingly, material that you use for your course assignments must be properly referenced. If a student plagiarizes an assignment or cheats on an exam, he/she will be given an automatic mark of zero, and will be reported by letter to the Registrar at St. Francis Xavier University. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of such academic offences as plagiarism, cheating, tampering, and falsification under section 3.9 of the Academic Calendar, **Offenses against Academic Integrity**.

- A student summary of the university policy is available at the following website: http://www.sites.stfx.ca/registrars_office/academic_integrity
- The library resource webpage on plagiarism defines plagiarism and gives links to resources that may help you to avoid plagiarism: http://library.stfx.ca/help/writing_citing.php

Registration/Fees/Withdrawal

Registration

Registration for students taking online programs is on a course-by-course basis.

Call the Program Office for registration information and current tuition fees. See front page for contact information.

Fees

Fees are payable with registration by cheque or money order or bank transfer (not online bank payment), **payable to StFX University**. Course information such as ID numbers, passwords, etc., cannot be issued until a minimum payment of \$150 toward tuition is received. Payment plans for tuition can be set up through the Program Office. Call to make arrangements.

The university's Business Office will generate receipts for **income tax purposes** for students in February/March for the previous year. You will be given a username and PIN to print these forms from the MesAmis system accessed from the StFX homepage.

Withdrawals/Refunds

A student withdrawing from studies should immediately notify the Program Office in writing or phone the program office. See front page for contact information. Notification to the instructor does not constitute official withdrawal. Refunds can only be made from the date that we receive notice of withdrawal. Refunds are prorated based on the date formal notification is received.

Withdrawal Policy

- Participants who withdraw within 3 weeks of the start of the course will receive a full refund minus a \$150 Administration Fee
- Participants who withdraw after week 3 of the course are not eligible for a refund



University Contacts

Most inquiries can be handled by the Program Office. In some cases, however, you may be referred to another university office.

Program Office

See Front page for contact information.

Continuing & Distance Education Department
St. Francis Xavier University
PO Box 5000, Antigonish
Nova Scotia B2G 2W5

We are located on 2nd Floor, MacDonald Hall, 2175 Varsity Drive, StFX Campus. Go to <http://www.stfx.ca/map/> for a campus map.

Other Contacts

University Switchboard	(902) 863-3300
Campus Store	(902) 867-3344
Technical Support	cdesupport@stfx.ca
Writing Centre	(902) 867-5221

Whatever Things are True

The StFX motto is “Whatever things are true.” StFX does not limit this meaning to academic concerns, but cares about the whole person. Integrity, dignity, and respect for the worth of each individual are the vital foundation of any search for truth.

Quaecumque Sunt Vera, "Whatever things are true," is from St. Paul’s letter to the Philippians (4:8).

The verse continues "...whatever things are honest, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think of these things."

Welcome!

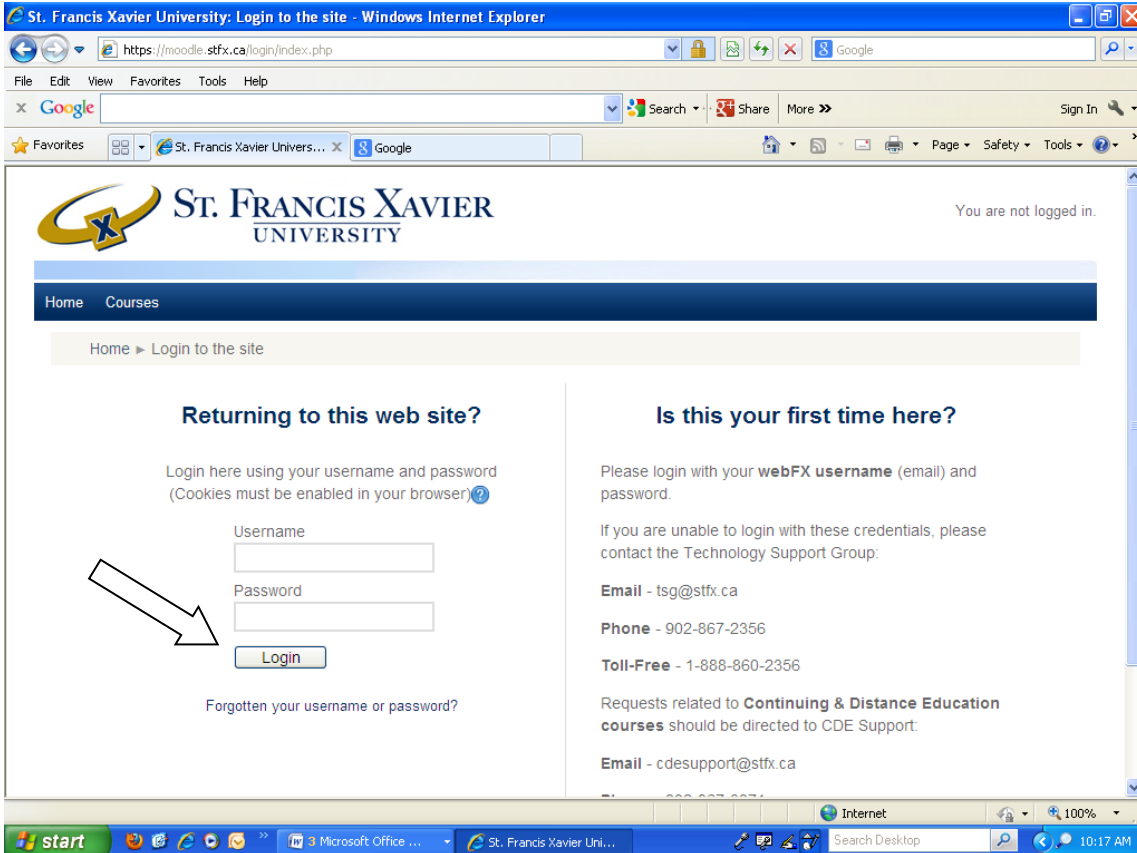
We have made every effort to ensure that this Moodle based course is easy to use, and at the same time full-featured enough to provide all the benefits of the multimedia environment.

This document offers a guide to the Moodle learning management system and how it works.

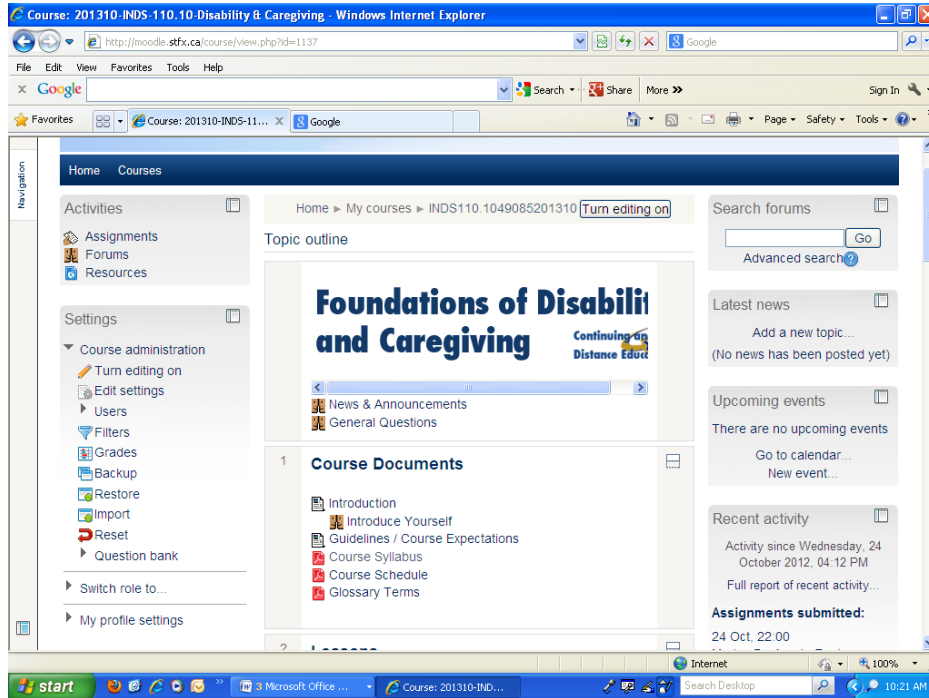
Additional questions or problems can be referred to the Program Office or Technical Support.

Getting Started

Log onto Moodle as soon as possible after receiving your log in information and become familiar with the format. Once you open your web browser, log onto Moodle using the URL <https://moodle.stfx.ca/login/index.php>. From the welcome screen, enter your username and password assigned at the beginning of the course (**these are the same for your StFX email account and Moodle log in**). Click “Login”



Once you have logged in you will see a Welcome page that lists your online courses. Click on the course title (i.e. INDS 110) and the next screen contains the **Main Menu** and the starting point for accessing the course activities:



The welcome screen always opens to the announcements. Check this section frequently for updates and information from the instructor.



Take some time to familiarize yourself with Moodle by scrolling down and clicking on the various tabs. The documents in these tabs can be printed or read from the screen.

In the **Course Documents** list, you will find the course syllabus, introduction, lessons, assignment instructions, required readings, etc. Access these files by clicking on the name of the file that you want to open (i.e., Lesson 1.1). The document will open in a new window.

Course Schedule

The Study Schedule at the end of the Syllabus lets participants know which lesson they should be working on in a particular week as well as due dates for assignments. Keep a copy at hand for quick reference.

Lessons and Required Readings

The lessons (lecture notes) and required readings for each week are provided in printable PDF files. Click on the underlined words (i.e., LESSON 1.1) to access the file. Lessons can also be saved to your computer's hard drive for future reference.

Assignments

The general assignment instructions and specific details for each assignment are provided in this section. Due dates are given in the Course Syllabus. Submit your assignment directly to the instructor using the submit feature in the Assignment section of Moodle. This feature allows you to select your saved file from your hard drive and send directly to the instructor. Assignments can also be emailed to your instructor with a copy to the program office (inds@stfx.ca).

Discussion Board

To receive a pass in the course **you are required to participate in online discussions**. You can make your post using the reply button on the right side of the screen when reading someone else's posting or by using the "Add a new discussion topic" at the top of the week's discussion forum.

KEEP IN MIND THAT everything posted to Moodle can be read by the entire class. If you want to speak to the course instructor confidentially, use email to contact him or her.

Appendix A

Studying: Some Basic Tips

Budget approximately **10-12 hours a week**. Some lessons will demand more time, some less. Take time to reflect, journal and participate in the online discussion.

Use your support network. Don't hesitate to call your instructor or the Program Office if you still feel discouraged or feel that you need help.

Basic Work Tips

Follow a schedule for when and where you study. Make family and friends aware of this schedule to cut down on interruptions. Ask for their support.

Find a quiet place where you can concentrate, away from external noises and distractions.

Set limits as to how much you want or need to accomplish at a particular sitting.

Take notes and journal as you proceed through readings and lesson activities. Summarize, consolidate, reduce, underline.

Ask questions! Contact your instructor if you want clarification on any course content.

Talk to your family about the implications of going back to school. If you have children, you can use your study habits as a model. Explain why you are taking "all this extra time." Get them interested.

Appendix B

Writing Papers

In distance education (online) courses, evaluation relies on the quality of your written work. **Carefully prepare any written assignments with attention to style and appearance as well as content.**

Procedures

When you access the course, **check the assignment requirements** in order to anticipate and plan. Requirements will vary from course to course, but expect to submit one or two written/typed exercises for each course. Assignment pages will specify the topic, length, and deadline for submission.

When you have written the assignment, send it to **your instructor** and **Program Office** (as specified in the information). **When sending an assignment, be sure to save a copy for yourself, in the event that it gets lost.**

At the discretion of the instructor, unexplained late assignments may be refused. It is your responsibility to explain any circumstances that prevent you from submitting an assignment on time. A written explanation should be emailed to your instructor as soon as possible with a copy to the program office.

Graded assignments are normally emailed to participants. Every effort will be made to get results to participants within 10 days of the assignment due date.

When you receive the graded assignment, **read and reflect on any feedback** that is given. If you have any questions or uncertainties, contact your instructor.

Important!

Technical Requirements: APA Format

Use standard letter size 8 1/2 x 11 format.

Type each page with a 1-inch margin on all sides.

Number pages (top right corner).

Submissions are to be typewritten and double-spaced.

Provide a cover page. On the page center, include assignment title, your name, student ID#, and course name.

Appendix C

Basic Writing Tips

Whether you are writing a short report, an essay on a specific question, or a major paper:

Work from an outline.

Start by listing everything you think should go into your paper: topics, sub-topics, questions to be answered, important ideas, facts, and quotations. These don't have to be in any particular order. Put the list aside for a few hours, or overnight. Then look at it again and arrange the material in a way that develops and illustrates the main point.

Write your outline in point form, with appropriate headings and sub-headings. This outline will channel your writing of the first draft, help you to structure paragraphs, and prevent you from going off on tangents.

Gather missing information. Before beginning a first draft, have at hand any essential information that you plan to include in the body of the paper (specific facts, quotations, and definitions). This may involve reviewing your journal notes for the course.

Write a complete rough draft. Do this rapidly and spontaneously, while adhering to your outline. Don't worry about finer points of style. Concentrate on communicating your ideas as clearly and directly as possible. Once you have finished the draft, review it and make appropriate corrections.

Check for coherence. The parts of your paper should relate in a logical, easy-to-follow way (a preliminary outline will help you do this). Do you have a clear opening statement in which the purpose of the paper is evident? Does ensuing material support or develop the opening point? Does each paragraph itself present and develop a single idea? Are the individual sentences grammatically correct? Do headings help or confuse the reader?

Check for concreteness. Do you back up your main points and other generalizations with **specific** evidence (quotations, facts, explanations, illustrations, and examples)? Carefully chosen details clarify meaning, strengthen the points you are trying to get across, and lend credibility.

Check for clarity and readability. Use words and sentences that are simple and direct. Avoid jargon or specialized terms unless they are the best way to communicate the meaning you have in mind. Avoid long words when simpler ones will do (e.g., "cause" instead of "determinant," "use" instead of "utilize"). Wordiness and jargon often occur when the writer is trying to impress the instructor.

Use "active" rather than "passive" verbs in sentence construction. Passive constructions (a common flaw in undergraduate writing) deflate the energy of what you have to say. It was reported by the Association.... is a **passive** construction. The Association reported.... is **active**.

Vary the length of sentences, but remember that shorter sentences usually communicate meaning more effectively than longer ones.

Explain new words, technical terms, or special definitions. This can be done by placing an explanation in parentheses.

Remove all “padding”: irrelevant information, unnecessary repetition of ideas, trite phrases (such as “in this day and age,” “as it were” and “few and far between”), unnecessary adverbial qualifiers (such as “somewhat,” “rather” and “quite”), excessive use of the first-person (e.g., “in my considered opinion”), or phrases that can be reduced or eliminated altogether (such as “at the present point in time,” “in view of the fact that,” “as a result of” and “the reason is because”).

Be straightforward and to the point. Go over your first draft to weed out all unnecessary words and phrases. You will be surprised at how this type of editing sharpens meaning and enhances readability.

Check for technical consistency and accuracy. Be consistent in your use of quotation marks, abbreviations, headings, citation of sources, spelling, and punctuation.

Write a final draft. Once you have edited the paper, prepare the final draft. Remember that a visually clear and attractive paper (typewritten) helps to create a receptive reader. Proofread the document for any minor errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar (if possible, have a friend or colleague proofread).

The **StFX Writing Centre** staff provides help with assignments for all StFX students who request assistance (both on campus and distance students). Their contact information is provided on their website: http://www.mystfx.ca/resources/writingcentre/FAQs_Distance.htm.