Distance Learning Screening Guidelines

**How do I know if someone is right for distance learning?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas to consider:</th>
<th>Screening</th>
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| **Academic Skills:** The student is comfortable with learning new information, especially through reading. | ☐ Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Adult Education approved assessment (i.e. TABE, CASAS, BEST, BEST Plus) places students in the following levels:  
- high intermediate ABE level or above in reading (and math if studying math at a distance)  
- low intermediate ESL or above for English language learners |
| **Goals:** The student has a clear goal, and the distance learning program will provide instruction to help the student reach his/her goals. | ☐ Agency goal setting forms and/or discussion during intake |
| **Motivation:** The student is self-motivated and able to schedule at least 5 hours per week for studying. | ☐ Student demonstrates responsibility with attending appointments or classes on time and/or asking for additional work outside of the classroom.  
☐ Student is able to verbalize the days of the week and times that will be set aside for distance learning. |
| **Independent Learning:** The student works well independently. Students should be comfortable communicating with a teacher and/or other students using the phone, email, mail, and online communication tools. | ☐ Student completes the online Distance Learning Orientation ([www.padistancelearning.org](http://www.padistancelearning.org))  
☐ Student is willing to communicate with the distance teacher on a weekly basis. |
| **Technology Skills (online learners):** The student is able to log onto websites, use a mouse to navigate a website, and email. | ☐ Student completes the online Distance Learning Orientation ([www.padistancelearning.org](http://www.padistancelearning.org)) |

**Additional Screening Tools (optional):**
- Use the Project IDEAL Distance Learning Intake Survey for reflection and discussion.  
- Have students complete an assignment at home and complete the Distance Learning Reflection Questions. Discuss the experience with the student.  
- Ask students to email you responses to questions to determine their interest, motivation, and computer skills.

**Distance Learning Project**
[www.padistancelearning.org](http://www.padistancelearning.org) • 717-248-4942 • dlong@tiu11.org
Intake Survey for Distance Students (2005)

People learn in different ways: what works well for one person might not work well for someone else. Your answers to these questions will help you and your teacher figure out if distance learning is a good choice for you.

For each question, choose only one (1) answer from the choices listed for that question.

When you have finished answering all the questions, give the survey to your instructor.

1. At home, I have a quiet place where I can study for this course:
   a. Rarely available
   b. Sometimes available
   c. Always available

2. I am someone who:
   a. Puts things off until the last minute
   b. Needs reminding to get things done on time
   c. Often gets things done ahead of time

3. When I think about all the things I do in a typical week (e.g., work, family, social activities, etc.), the amount of time I have each week for a distance learning class is:
   a. Less than 5 hours
   b. 5 - 9 hours
   c. 10 hours or more

4. In my daily life, there is a lot of routine (for example, getting kids to school, going to work, taking part in community or church activities):
   a. Not at all true
   b. Sometimes true
   c. Very true

5. I have access to the technology (VCR, computer, etc.) I will need for this course:
   a. I'm not sure where I will find the technology I need for the course
   b. Easily available, but not at my home
   c. At my home
6. When I am asked to use a computer:
   a. I put off using it until later
   b. I feel a little nervous, but use it anyway or find someone to show me how to use it
   c. I look forward to using it

7. Feeling that I am part of a class is:
   a. Very important to me
   b. Somewhat important to me
   c. Not particularly important to me

8. Discussions in a class are:
   a. Very useful to me. I almost always take part in class discussions
   b. Somewhat useful to me. I sometimes take part in class discussions
   c. Not very useful to me. I don't usually take part in class discussions

9. When an instructor hands out directions for an assignment, I prefer to:
   a. Have the directions explained to me
   b. Try to follow the directions on my own, then ask for help when I need it
   c. Figure out the instructions myself

10. When I have a reading assignment for class or for work, I think of my reading skills as:
    a. Lower than average. I usually need help to understand the text
    b. Average. I sometimes need help to understand the text
    c. Good. I usually understand the text without help

11. When I have a writing assignment for class or for work, I think of my writing skills as:
    a. Weak. I find it hard to express myself in writing
    b. Average. I can express myself fairly well in writing, but sometimes have difficulty
    c. Good. I am comfortable expressing myself in writing

12. Face-to-face interaction with my instructors and other students is:
    a. An essential part of my educational experience
    b. An important part of my educational experience, but not essential
    c. Not important to my educational experience

Print out this page. Then click on Next

Next >>
Intake Survey for Distance Students (2005)

A Few Questions About Who You Are

13. **Click on the button next to the state in which you live:**

- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Kentucky
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Missouri
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- Texas
- **Other (please specify)**

14. **People have different reasons for taking a distance learning course. For each reason listed below, click on Yes or No to indicate whether it is a reason why YOU want to take this course at a distance.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I live too far from any adult schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I need to take care of my family at the time classes are held at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I work at a job during the times classes are held at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can only study nights or weekends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't have transportation to get to classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have medical problems that make it hard for me to attend classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I learn better by myself, rather than in a group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't want anyone to know I am taking classes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like using computers and I thought this might be a good way to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't feel comfortable in a classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like studying alone</td>
<td></td>
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Distance Learning Reflection Questions

Is distance learning right for me?
After you have completed your distance learning activity, answer the following questions to see if distance learning is the best option for you. You can decide with your agency on the best way to reach your goals.

1. What did you like about activity?

2. What were some of the challenges?

3. How could you overcome any challenges that you listed in question #2?

4. What did you do if you were unsure of the information in the activity?

5. How did it feel to do a distance learning activity instead of being in a classroom with a teacher and other students?

Adapted from the GED Video Partners Orientation developed by the California Distance Learning Project.
Sample Distance Learning Questions to Gauge Interest and Suitability for Distance Learning

Below are sample questions you can email to a student to assess his/her interest and suitability for distance learning. These could also be used as part of the intake process.

**Academic Skills and Experience:**
- Have you ever taken adult education classes before?
- Why are you interested in distance learning classes?
- Why do you prefer distance learning classes to face-to-face classes?
- Would you still want to take face-to-face classes and distance learning classes?
- How would you make time to come to the agency and take a progress test every 30-60 hours of activity?

**Goals:**
- What would you like to be able to do after you finish your distance learning classes (for example: work, school)?
- What is your timeline for reaching this goal?

**Motivation:**
- How would you react if you had a problem with your studies and you couldn’t get immediate help?
- How would you react if family or work related problems made it difficult for you to follow your study plan?

**Independent Learning:**
- How will you find time to work on your distance learning studies for at least 5 hours a week?
- How do you feel about not seeing a teacher face-to-face, but talking with your teacher over the phone and using email?
- How will your family, friends, and/or co-workers help to support you with your studies?

**Technology Skills (online learners)**
- Do you have access to a reliable computer with a high speed internet connection?
- What would you do if your computer crashed, and you couldn’t use it anymore?
- What types of things do you like to do on your computer?

Adapted from AZ distance instructor, Elisabeth Goodwin