

Virtual Education Option

If you would like to have a consultation with an education specialist regarding the virtual-education options, please contact the education specialist by emailing the office for your location.

Americas: NDSP.Education.Americas@am.dodea.edu

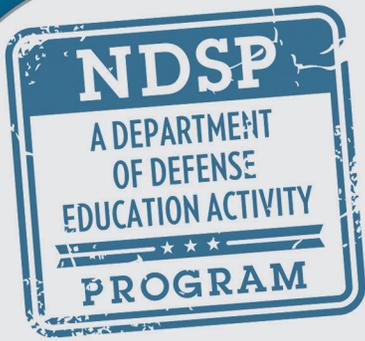
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Students eligible for support for education in overseas locations where there are no schools operated by the Department of Defense may select virtual learning as their education option. Virtual education applies to programs that are accredited and provide a consistent curriculum designed to meet institutional and/or graduation requirements. Instruction is provided by certified teachers; instruction should also include real-time instruction or instructional support

Key Information about Virtual Learning:

- **Student Work Habits:** Successful virtual learning requires the student to be self-disciplined, have good study habits, ability to work independently with little supervision, and demonstrate strong organizational skills.
- **Self-Paced Programs:** In this option, a student may have the opportunity to start a course and complete it at his/her own pace. This allows a student to complete a course earlier than required or may provide additional time needed. These options are often also described as personalized learning or competency-based programs. A self-paced curriculum may allow for a student to complete fewer courses in a more compact time frame. For example a student may take three courses each semester rather than take six courses per semester for the entire school year.
- **Scheduled Programs:** These programs are designed for students to complete coursework within a specific timeframe with defined start and end dates. They are often designed to simulate the semester or year-long schedule in traditional settings to support student-content, student-teacher and student-student interaction. Students are required to meet deadlines for assignments and assessments. There may be little flexibility for extended time.
- **Teacher availability:** Some virtual programs require a certain amount of class time in a real-time setting. Others may have face-time or phone conference requirements with the teacher. Some include teacher interaction only through written communication.
- **Time zone difference:** Consideration of location of student and teacher within time zones should be considered. This is especially important if a student is participating in coursework from an overseas location. What time of day/night will the student need to be online for time with the teacher if real-time interaction or support is needed?
- **Technology requirements:** A reliable computer that meets the requirements of the selected online program, stable internet service in location and a telephone with international calling capability is necessary at a minimum. Some programs may have bandwidth or modem requirements to support interactive media or other features within the course.
- **Home support:** Each student should have a dedicated workspace for all school related activities. A schedule of time to participate in coursework online and off-line to complete assignments or projects, time devoted to each subject, should be established. Strong parental involvement is critical to student success as is student willingness to participate in a virtual program. Some programs may require a designated facilitator or proctor to administer and/or monitor assessments or other activities such as lab assignments.



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- **School support:** In addition to the teacher, does the selected school have a counselor or instructional support? Does the school or program provide all of the curriculum, textbooks, outside readings or other materials needed for student success?
- **School quality:** Is the school accredited? Is the curriculum aligned with national standards and appropriate to the student's academic and career goals? Is the program sanctioned by NCAA National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for students seeking athletic scholarships?
- **For diploma earning students:** Parents are strongly encouraged to research requirements for potential college or military Service branch of interest to determine if the earned diploma will meet academic and career goals. Some college, university or Service branches may have additional requirements or may not recognize some institutional diplomas as meeting standards for entrance into their programs.

Traits of Successful Virtual Students:

- Log into the courses routinely and devote the needed time to meet course requirements.
- Establish a schedule to include time online, independent study and work on projects to meet coursework requirements.
- Utilize independent time management skills. Maintain a schedule or calendar of due dates and assessment dates. Plan time on tasks accordingly.
- Establish a work location dedicated to classwork that is equipped with needed materials and supplies.
- Be proactive and self-directed. Initiate requests for teacher assistance as they occur.
- Be patient. There may be a delay in response from a teacher due to time zone differences. Schedule a specific time to "meet" with the teacher if specific assistance is needed.
- Maintain necessary technology equipment and internet access.
- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of computer skills and online communication such as email, web conferencing, instant messaging, word processing, internet research, use of eBooks and downloads for subject-matter material.