

BAKER UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL AND GRADUATE STUDIES

**ONLINE TEACHING
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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How do I apply to become an online instructor?

Baker University welcomes skilled professionals to teach in our accelerated adult-learning degree programs. The support of dynamic part-time faculty enables us to provide quality instruction that is relevant, current, and application-based, contribute to the development and competency of diverse students in the community, and deliver programs in expanding locations. We look for part-time faculty who have:

- Earned graduate degrees and professional credentials in their specialties
- Accumulated expertise, competency, and knowledge in their fields
- Enthusiasm, energy, and creativity for accelerated courses
- A desire to share, explore, and contribute to active student learning
- Strong interpersonal skills and a helpful, patient attitude when assisting all types of learners
- A willingness to enhance teaching skills through ongoing faculty development

Successful online applicants will demonstrate online management and facilitation skills and knowledge of our Learning Management System, Blackboard.

If you are not a current Baker faculty member and are interested in applying to teach online, please visit [instructor application](#) to fill out a Part Time Teaching Application. You may also contact us at [instruction and curriculum department](#) or call (913) 491-4432 if you have any questions. [Back](#)

I am currently a Baker faculty member. How do I become eligible to teach online?

The Instruction and Curriculum department at Baker offers training in teaching online. All online instructors must complete training before they are assigned to teach an online course. Email the [instruction and curriculum department](#) if you are interested in teaching online. [Back](#)

What are online classes like?

At Baker University, online courses are all asynchronous, meaning that they do not meet at a predetermined time. Online classes meet for week-long modules, and students will “go to class” by logging into Blackboard, Baker University’s Learning Management System. Through Blackboard, you manage all class assignments, including reading, research, and multimedia, and students take part in class discussions through online discussion boards. [Back](#)

How are online classes different from on ground classes?

Instructional success in an online course requires frequent visits to the course and active participation in the class. Communication with students whether it is via email, feedback on discussion boards or assignments is the key to effective instruction. In online classes you get to know students through their postings. [Back](#)



What can I expect in an asynchronous class?

Baker online classes are asynchronous. An asynchronous class allows students to access course materials at any time during the weekly modules. As an instructor, you will participate in threaded discussions with students by providing feedback, comments of clarification and encouragement as well as grading assignments.

What is Blackboard?

Blackboard is a Learning Management System that creates an online classroom setting in which instructors and students interact. It is a software application that allows faculty to make course content readily available to students. Baker University's online programs are all asynchronous, however, so students are never required to log in at a set time. A typical online course will require:

- Reading assignments
- Papers and projects
- Discussion of course concepts
- Tests
- Additional learning opportunities

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How is the curriculum placed online?

The curriculum for online business courses comes directly from the onground curriculum. Instruction and Curriculum staff members use the curriculum guides, faculty notes, texts, and other resources to adapt the course content and instructional strategies to fit an online format. Baker staff creates the course shells for instructors.

The curriculum for liberal arts courses is generated by the Liberal Arts department.

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Can I modify the course shell?

After you have been approved to teach online, you will be assigned your own course to teach. The first time you teach the course, you will need to teach the curriculum as it appears in the course shell without making modifications to the content. After you have successfully taught a course and become more familiar with Blackboard, you may modify the course shell with the assistance of Baker staff.

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Is training available for online faculty?

Yes, Baker regularly holds Blackboard workshops where faculty can learn about Blackboard and online instruction. These workshops occur several times during the year.

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What things can I do to supplement the curriculum in the course shell?

Baker encourages you to find resources and activities to supplement online learning. There are many tools at your disposal online, from multimedia clips to blogging, internet research options to inter-active tools. For some helpful suggestions on topic-specific resources, you can view these links:

- [Finance](#)
- [General Business](#)
- [International Business](#)
- [Legal Resources](#)
- [Marketing](#)
- [Technology Resources](#)
- [Online Library Tutorial](#)

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Can I give tests and quizzes in Blackboard?

Yes, you can set up timed or untimed tests and quizzes in Blackboard. Tests/quizzes can be set up using a wizard tool in Blackboard. Common formats like multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay questions are available. Assessments can be configured to appear on certain dates or at certain times to students, and you can grade the assessment directly in Blackboard.

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Where will my students be at in terms of Blackboard skills?

Students will come to class with a range of skills. While some may be quite advanced and comfortable with online learning, some students arrive with little online learning experience at all. Just like in onground courses, online students benefit from clear, concise explanations and course details.

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How much time will I need to devote to my online class?

Online courses require a similar level of effort to on ground courses. Instructors typically find the first online class is the most time intensive as you become familiar with Blackboard and the online environment. We recommend checking in to your course shell at least daily to see student work and participation. Keeping current in the course shell is a great way to keep in touch and stay ahead of the curve.

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How much feedback will I need to give in my online class?

Online classes require more in-depth feedback on assignments. Because written communication does not carry nuance in the same way face-to-face communication does, online feedback often requires more detail and specificity. We encourage faculty to send a personal e-mail to students with feedback immediately following the completion of the first week of class. This helps set a positive tone and establishes communication with students.

How does the workload compare between an online course and an onground course?

The workload tends to be more spaced-out in online courses. Students post discussion threads and assignments at a variety of times, so you might find that your grading requires less single-sitting time. As well, you do not have to devote a four-hour block to a single class-night; instead, it is best to allocate the instructional workload out over the week. [Back](#)

How do I learn more about Blackboard?

SPGS has developed a Faculty Blackboard Tutorial you can use to familiarize yourself with Blackboard. Access the [Faculty Blackboard Tutorial](#) for more in-depth information.

How do I login to Blackboard?

To login, visit [Blackboard](#). Click “User Login.”

Do copyright restrictions apply to the material in my Blackboard course shell?

Yes, they do. Please do not reproduce copyrighted material. In online classes, you can often supply a link to material; using this method, you allow the copyright holder to maintain control over the work while still making it available to students. If you have questions, please contact Instruction and Curriculum. [Back](#)

What do I do if I run into technology problems when I’m teaching my online course?

If you encounter problems with accessing Blackboard while teaching your class, please contact the HelpDesk at helpdesk@bakeru.edu or 913-491-4432 x4544. If can successfully login to Blackboard, but you have questions or problems with the content of the course shell you are using to teach a class, please contact Instruction and Curriculum at 913-491-4432.



What are the technical requirements to teach online?

You will need a current computer and access to the Internet to teach online classes for Baker University. Online tech support is also offered.

Here is a list of hardware and software you will need to teach online courses:

Operating System: Windows XP, with Service Pack 2, or Windows Vista (32-bit recommended for maximum software compatibility). You should have administrative rights to the computer used for online teaching. If you must use a computer over which you do not have administrative rights (such as a library computer or a workplace computer), you may experience difficulties with needed functions, such as installing plug-ins. MAC OS 10 or higher is supported, but there are some applications that may require the Windows OS. You should be prepared to run the Parallels Desktop and a Windows OS if you elect to use a MAC system.

Productivity Tools: You will need to acquire the Microsoft Office 2007 Professional for Windows package that includes Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Outlook.

Internet Access: ISP account for Internet access and email address. (See more on Internet connectivity specifications below.)

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Browser: Java-enabled internet browser:

Windows: Internet Explorer 6.0 or higher (Free download available at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/ie/default.msp>)

Windows: Mozilla Firefox 1.2 or higher (Free download available at <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/>)

MAC: Mozilla Firefox 1.3 or higher (Free download at <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/>)

NOTE: The AOL browser, Opera, and Safari browsers are NOT currently supported for online coursework. You may use AOL for your ISP, but should use either IE or Firefox with the versions listed above for a browser

Plug-ins: The following plug-ins are recommended for many of the resources available in your online courses:

[Adobe Flash Player](#)

[Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)

[Adobe Digital Editions](#)

NOTE: We recommend that you obtain the current version of Adobe Acrobat Reader as well as Adobe Digital Editions

[RealPlayer \(Basic\)](#)

[Apple QuickTime Player](#)

Additional plug-ins and/or downloads may be required for specific courses. The courses will include information for obtaining and installing the appropriate plug-ins.

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Computer Security (Windows): Anti-virus, firewall, anti-spyware

Recommended and supported:

- Symantec AntiVirus—will be provided free of charge. After you admitted and enrolled and have created a portal account at <https://mysmartermind.bakeru.edu/> you will be able to select a link that will download a current version of Symantec AntiVirus
- Windows Internet Connection Firewall
- [Windows Defender Anti-Spyware](#)

Minimum PC Specifications

Pentium 4 Processor or equivalent AMD with 512MB of RAM (1 GB recommended)

- 60GB Hard Disk space available after Operating System install
- One of the following: Ethernet connection and cable or DSL modem, wireless or satellite Internet, or 56K modem for Internet connection. (See recommendations on Internet connection below.)
- CD-RW/DVD-ROM drive - Note that some software may require a DVD drive for installation.
- Sound capabilities with speakers and/or headset and a microphone
- A Webcam may be required in some courses. Check with your academic advisor.

Computer specifications are reviewed and revised annually to accommodate changes in technology. While every attempt is made to ensure that these specifications satisfy all curricular needs for students completing a college course online, Baker reserves the right to require upgrades in the event of technology changes. Students will be given 90 days notice before such changes are implemented.

Note: Courseware cannot be accessed using Web TV. For questions regarding these requirements, please contact the Help Desk at 785-594-4562 [helpdesk](#).

NOTE: Students who need assistive technologies will have different computer and technology requirements. Please check with your Student Services counselor to determine the requirements for the specific technologies needed to support your coursework. [Back](#)

Internet Access

Internet access is required to participate in online components of your college courses online at Baker. An Internet Service Provider (ISP) will provide you with the software and access necessary to utilize the Internet in order of preference:

- Recommended: LAN, Cable, or DSL connection. Highly recommended for optimal student experience.
- 56K Dial-up connection. Many course components will have suboptimal performance when accessed through a 56K dial-up connection.
- Satellite and/or Wireless Internet connection. Satellite and wireless connections are not recommended. Performance may be suboptimal due to latency and signal instability.



If AOL is your ISP, you must use the Internet Explorer or Firefox browser, rather than the default AOL browser, to complete coursework in a college course online. Simply launch the appropriate browser after logging onto your AOL account.

If you connect to the Internet through your company, you may need to ensure that appropriate plug-ins and access rights are available to you. Check with your IT department to ensure that you may access course materials from your company's network.

Email Account

A valid email address, which is checked frequently, is required for participation in online coursework. All students are provided with an email address that we recommend you use. This will avoid issues with Spam blockers and other problems that may prevent you from receiving email from your instructors. It will also enable you to participate in special student offers that are available only to students with a ".edu" email address.

Plug-ins

All plug-ins needed to participate in online coursework are available free of charge. It is recommended that you review the list of plug-ins and install them prior to beginning your coursework.

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Computer and Internet Security

The ease and convenience of online education through the World Wide Web brings with it the need to ensure that our computers do not become targets for unwanted and often malicious attacks and intrusions by computer viruses and/or hackers. To prevent this, we recommend using an anti-virus package and a corporate or personal firewall.

Your computer is subject to virus attack whether you're surfing the Internet or getting information from floppy disks, CDs or a network. Email attachments are particularly vulnerable.

Symantec AntiVirus is one of the most popular and effective anti-virus programs on the market. This product offers the security of automatic protection against viruses, malicious ActiveX controls and Java applets and other dangerous code. This program also offers automatic retrieval of new anti virus definitions for updating. Since an anti-virus program is no better than its virus definitions, virus definitions should be updated regularly, preferably on a weekly basis. After you are enrolled and you have created a portal account Symantec AntiVirus is available for download through the Baker University [Faculty Portal](#).

Personal firewalls are another means to protect your computer from malicious activity when you are connected to the Internet. Windows comes with a built-in personal Firewall. It is recommended that you enable the Windows Internet Connection Firewall and learn how to use this application to protect your computer and network by limiting or preventing access to this computer from the Internet.

Buying a System?

If you are purchasing a new system, the following are recommended by Baker University. These specifications may provide you with a guideline for configuring your new system.

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Laptop

Operating system - Genuine Windows Vista® Business or Windows XP Professional (SP2)
Processor -

- Intel® Core™2 Duo Processor T7300 (2.0 GHz, 800 MHz FSB, 4MB L2 cache)
OR
AMD Turion™ 64 X2 Dual-Core Mobile Technology Processor, TL-64 (2.2 GHz, 2x512-KB L2 cache)
- Memory - 2 GB
- Hard drive - 120GB 5400rpm SATA Hard Drive
- Optical drive - DVD+/-RW SuperMulti DL Drive
- Video graphics - Mobile Intel® Graphics Media Accelerator X3100, up to 384 MB of shared memory
- Wireless LAN - Intel® PRO/Wireless 3945ABG Network Connection
- Battery - 6-cell (55 WHr) Lithium-Ion battery

Desktop

- Operating system - Genuine Windows XP Professional OS
- Processor - Intel® Core 2 Duo E6300 (1.86/1066/2M)
- Memory - 2GB PC2-5300 (DDR2-667)
- Hard drive - 80GB SATA 3.0Gb/s
- Optical drive - 16X DVD+/-RW Drive (LS/DL) - SATA
- Video/graphics - Integrated Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 3000
- Network card - Integrated Intel 82566DM Gigabit Network Connection
- Keyboard - USB Standard Keyboard
- Mouse - USB 2-Button Optical Scroll Mouse
- Power supply - dc7700 CMT chassis E-Star 3.0
- Monitor - 19-inch TFT Flat Panel Display w/ Contrast ratio - 500:1 Contrast Ratio

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