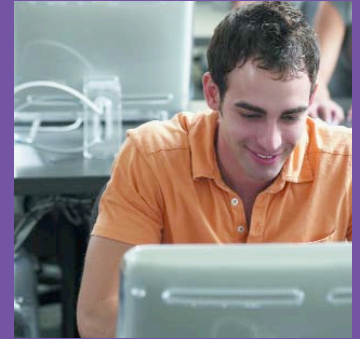


Back to School



HIGH SCHOOL SEEMS LIKE CENTURIES AGO. You always wanted to go to college but life interrupted your plans with family or financial circumstances. Or you may have completed your bachelor's degree, but never got around to earning that MBA your boss told you would really make your career skyrocket. You want to continue your higher education, but quitting work to go to school full time is simply out of the question. Don't give up; continuing education courses are being offered at a variety of times (including evenings and weekends) at a college near you – or you can take your course work online in a virtual classroom.

How do you get started? Begin by considering the educational goal you want to pursue; will your courses be taken for personal growth or professional gain? That answer will give you a head start on the plan of action you will want to follow. Then research colleges offering certification and/or degrees in your area of interest. Don't completely limit your search to local colleges; today most of the higher learning institutions offer online (virtual) classroom studies. Decide which institution offers the best curriculum to meet your goals but don't overlook two important factors when making your selection: is the institution accredited and does it have a respectable reputation?

After you have narrowed your college search, go ahead and apply. Remember to read everything carefully and meet all of the deadlines. Once you have been accepted, your initial excitement may be followed by a flood of fear. You may begin to stress out big-time. How are you going to pay for

college? How will you find the time to work full-time, take classes, do your homework and have some sort of a life? Well, you can forget the “have some sort of a life” part for a while, but in the long term, there should be little doubt your life will get better. In other words, it's time to make education your priority. You can do it.

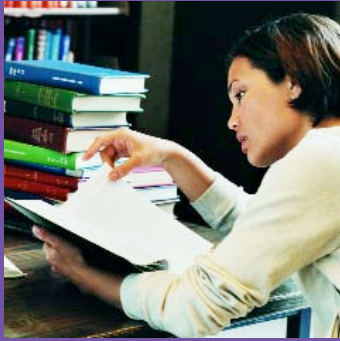
Lower Stress One Step at a Time

Figure out your finances; how are you going to pay for your coursework? Some companies offer employees matching funds and/or scholarships. Do you have an existing bank or credit union that would be willing to provide funds for continuing education? Again, check online resources for educational funding; there are many.

Ask for help; your network of family and friends may be able to help out with your children or some of your day-to-day errands so you can spend time on your coursework and homework. It's surprising how supportive others can be when they learn you are trying to continue your education and improve your life.

Manage your life. The better organized you are, the more smoothly your work/study lifestyle will flow. Set up an organizational chart so you and your loved ones will know when you are (or aren't) available. PS. Don't wait to the last minute to do your homework – you're not a kid anymore.

Enjoy your success. Take pride in your achievements and continue to broaden your education.



Learning from a Distance

Distance learning has grown tremendously to benefit students looking to get advanced degrees and certification for new skills at the office. No longer do you have to sit in a hard, wooden classroom chair as a professor offers up his knowledge. Now you can cozy up at home and listen in on the instructor's lecture via interactive video conferencing to live, streaming video footage. Don't get too casual, though; students in many programs have headphones, microphones and video cameras so they can see, be seen, and participate in classroom discussions.

Following are a few of the numerous web sources providing information and links to colleges (traditional and virtual) that offer continuing studies degree programs and certificate courses:

www.Collegeprofiles.com

www.Distancelearningprofiles.com

www.Educationcenteronline.org

www.Excelsior.edu

www.50states.com/college

www.Find.online-university.info

www.Gotocollege.co-dosomething.com

www.NYcolleges.com

www.Suny.edu