

Online vs. In-Person Classes: What Are the Differences?

By DeVry University



If you've considered going back to school, you've likely wondered whether online courses or in-person classes are the better option, especially with a career and other personal or family commitments.

When it comes to evaluating online vs. in-person classes, there are several factors that you should consider: What are the advantages of both methods of learning? Do online classes cover the same material as in-person classes? Are there reasons why in-person classes may be better than online programs? To help guide your decision to go back to school and make your choice a little easier, we've rounded up the answers to these questions.

8 Advantages of Online Classes

When it comes to earning a degree, it's helpful to understand [how online classes work](#), as well as the potential advantages of online classes that might influence your decision. These can include:

- 1. Greater flexibility:** Because you can watch lectures or complete coursework whenever it's convenient for you, online classes can be more easily worked into your busy schedule.
- 2. More time for other responsibilities:** When your schedule is easier to manage, it leaves more time for your social life, family, friends and personal pursuits. It also leaves room for any important commitments you may have.
- 3. Customizable learning path to suit your needs.** Accelerate your experience by taking on more courses at a time or follow the course path and timing suggested by the university. Either way, your day-to-day online learning can be molded to your needs. Work through coursework at your own pace and personalize your experience based on your life and learning style.
- 4. No commute:** Online classes go where you go, so you never have to fight traffic on the way to campus to attend class.
- 5. Network with peers near and far:** Online classes have the potential to connect you with students from around the country, allowing you to build relationships with individuals outside of your local community.
- 6. Gain work-ready skills:** Most students continue working while attending online classes. That means you can apply your learnings almost immediately. Whether you're perfecting a hard skill like working with hands-on IoT tools or gaining soft skills such as improved communication or team leadership abilities, these are things that you can put into action at work while they're still fresh in your mind.
- 7. Get experience with the latest technology:** Many companies have gone digital and workers have, too. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics¹, on an average day 22.7 percent of full-time workers completed their work remotely. Online learning can

help prepare you to adapt to new situations and leverage a unique set of skills that can be applied in a variety of working situations.

- 8. Become more adaptable:** Technology changes quickly—which means digital literacy is always evolving, too. One of the most crucial benefits of online learning is that you learn to become more adaptable while navigating online classes; learning new programs and interfaces, troubleshooting digital problems and learning how to communicate online.

Advantages of In-Person Classes

For all the advantages of online classes, there are also many potential advantages to attending classes in-person. Here are a few of the reasons people prefer in-person classes for their degree or certificate program:

- **Fewer distractions:** You may have a difficult time focusing on school when you're studying remotely. Distractions like the internet, TV, phones and even family members can make it hard to study. In-person classes can be a chance to step away from these distractions and focus solely on learning.
- **More structure:** The routine of attending a class at the same time each week can be a helpful way to learn. Being in a classroom environment may also help you focus better to internalize concepts.
- **Face-time with peers and professors:** While online classes offer plenty of opportunities to connect with professors and classmates, you may prefer to learn face-to-face. In-person learning provides the chance to work directly with your classmates or ask your professor questions in the moment, instead of sending an email or posting a question on the class message board.

Do Online Classes Cover the Same Material as In-Person Classes?

Yes, online classes should cover the same material as an in-person option at the same school. This means that the degree you earn online will be identical to the one that you would have earned by taking in-person classes as well.

At DeVry, for example, all of our [online programs](#) cover the same curriculum as our on-campus programs. Online students also receive the same tools, resources and support as our campus-based students.

Are In-Person Classes Better than Online Classes?

No, in-person classes are not inherently better than online classes. What suits one person may not suit another, and vice versa. At the end of the day, what method of learning works better for you is a personal decision that considers your schedule, life commitments, learning style and preferences.

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Through an education partnership in conjunction with DeVry University, you may have access to education benefits in support of your professional and life goals. To learn about transferring qualifying credits, tuition rate savings and more, contact your benefits manager or HR department for more details.

¹<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/atus106.htm>

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