

University of Toronto, School of the Environment's Distance Learning Student Handbook

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1. Getting Started

1.1 Overview of Programs

All Distance Education courses at the School of the Environment are offered fully online. We currently offers six non-degree certificate programs, consisting of four courses for completion of each certificate and six courses for the advanced certificate.

Certificates:

- Environmental Management
- Advanced Study in Environmental Management
- Renewable Energy
- GIS (Geographic Information Systems) for Environmental Management
- Advanced Study in GIS (Geographic Information Systems) for Environmental Management
- Water Resource Management
- Climate Change Policy and Practice

Detailed information for these programs is at the following site: <http://learn.environment.utoronto.ca/home/distance-education/programs.aspx>

Courses are typically offered during three sessions each academic year: fall, winter and spring. Please note that not all courses are offered in each session. Course are posted on the distance education website at this link:

<http://learn.environment.utoronto.ca/home/distance-education/course-schedulesdeadlines.aspx>

1.2 Admission Requirements

The School of the Environment recommends an undergraduate degree or a diploma as a prerequisite for acceptance into all certificate programs. It is acknowledged, however, that adult learners may have a suitable combination of education, experience and training which does not include a university degree. In this case, prospective students must be able to demonstrate that they have this relevant skill-set. For special consideration, please apply in writing to the Program Manager, Donna Nielsen (d.nielsen@utoronto.ca) and include a current resume along with your application.

1.3 Application Procedures

The online application process has been designed to be as straight forward as possible. The following steps describe the process. Please be sure to read through the instructions in full, before you set up your user account. You can also print the instructions and follow them as you go through the registration process.

Application Instructions

1. If you have not registered for an account, please do so at this link <https://dereg.environment.utoronto.ca/>.
2. After completing the initial registration, the next step is the application. The application is divided into two parts: 'Personal Information' and 'Academic History'. At this stage you can upload your supporting documentation, which is either a COPY of your transcript, degree or diploma. Please note that original documents are not required.

At any time, you can move between these two sections by clicking on the appropriate tab. Also, please note that you may return to the application process at any time and continue where you left off.

3. When your application is complete click on the third tab 'Review & Submit'.
4. When you submit your application, you will be prompted to pay a \$100 one-time application fee. Upon payment, your application will be reviewed. Applicants can expect to a response by email within 5 days, and typically within 48 hours.

N.B. Although you must apply to a program of study, you can take courses from any of the certificate programs. You can also choose to take one or more courses, or complete the relevant courses within a specific certificate program.

1.4 Course Registration - Adding Your Course

Once your application is accepted, you can log back into your account and select your course(s) for the upcoming term. To add your course for the upcoming term, please visit the 'Manage Courses' tab and click on the 'Add Courses' button. Please note: you must pay for your course(s) by the specified course date. That information, including important dates, such as your first day of class, is at this link:

<http://learn.environment.utoronto.ca/home/distance-education/course-schedulesdeadlines.aspx>

To make a payment, please visit the 'Financial Account' tab under 'User Account'.

N.B. If you are employed full time, it is not recommended that you take more than one course per term.

Students will be emailed course access information about one week before classes begins. Please check your course syllabus for textbook requirements - see your Program page to link to your online course syllabus:

<http://learn.environment.utoronto.ca/home/distance-education/programs.aspx>

1.5 Dates and Deadlines

2016 Course Schedules

2016	Course Dates	Reading Weeks	Application Opens	Last Date to Apply/Add/Pay for Course	Last Day to Drop
Winter	January 25 – April 17	February 15 – 19	October 6	January 10	February 7
		March 14 - 18			
Spring	May 16 - August 7	June 6 - 10	February 8	May 1	May 29
		July 11 - 15			
Fall	September 12 – December 4	October 3 – 7	May 24	August 29	September 26
		November 7 – 11			

2. Starting your Distance Education Course

2.1 Textbooks

Online courses at the School of the Environment include a complement of learning materials and resources. If required, textbooks requirements are included in the course description/syllabus on the website. **Please order your textbooks well in advance of your first day of class.** Textbooks are available for purchase from the University of Toronto Bookstore www.uoftbookstore.com or other locations, such as Chapters www.chapters.indigo.ca and Amazon www.Amazon.com.

2.2 Blackboard

Blackboard provides an integrated set of tools that allow instructors to develop and deliver courses online to students. Blackboard is a user-friendly e-learning education software system designed to allow instructors and students to share information. The instructor can create a quiz; add class notes, post grades, moderate the discussion forum, and so on. It also includes a variety of interactive tools such as discussion groups, live chat rooms and online assessments. Your instructor may use other interactive programs or software.

Step-by-step instructions to use the most common tools in Blackboard at the following link:

<http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>

Where can you get help?

Blackboard Orientation Video

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-Twf2g71jM>

Help Desk - helpdesk@utoronto.ca (UTORid account activation, email, password resets), or by phone at 416 978 HELP

Blackboard User Support - Portal Desk – portal.help@utoronto.ca

2.3 Activating your UTORid and Blackboard Account

Approximately one week prior to the start of your class, you will receive an email with your username, activation key for your UTORid account and Library card number. You must activate your UTORid account immediately and set a personal password in order to use the Blackboard online course system, University of Toronto library e-resources, and your email account.

You may re-use your UTORid if you register for another course at the School or with any other department at the University of Toronto. If you have previously attended the University of Toronto within the last 15 years, then you will already have a UTORid account.

The use of University information resources such as Blackboard or the U of T library e-resources is covered under the U of T's Policy on the Use of Information and Communication Technology <http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/policy/use.htm>. Failure to comply with this policy may result in revoking the user's account.

Activating Your UTORid Account

- 1) Open a web browser and go to <http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca>
- 2) Under "First Time Users", Click on "activate you UTORid account (all new students, faculty, and staff)"
- 3) Enter your UTORid username and Secret Activation Key and click on "Validate"
- 4) Please read the Terms and Conditions for Use and click on "I Accept" to continue
- 5) Enter a name for your UTORid email address. Follow the instructions on the page and click on "Email Name" to continue

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- 6) Under “Password”, choose a password for your UTORid. Follow the instructions under this section
- 7) Under “Email Name Directory Listing”, leave the checkbox UNCHECKED
- 8) Leave the rest of the default settings, and click on “Submit” to finish the activation

NOTE: Activation for Blackboard, Library e-resources, and email access will take approximately 48 hours for processing after registration. If after 48 hours you still cannot access any of these resources, please contact the UTORid help desk (See Contacts below).

2.4 Logging into Blackboard Online Course System

- 1) Open a web browser and go to <http://portal.utoronto.ca>
- 2) Login using your UTORid username and password
- 3) You will be directed to the main screen of Blackboard. For specific instructions on adding your online courses, accessing course features, etc., please refer to the Quick Tutorials section on your Main Screen, or click on the help icon at the top of the page. For course system support, email portal.help@utoronto.ca

2.5 Accessing U of T Library E-Resources

- 1) Open a web browser and go to <http://library.utoronto.ca>
- 2) Click on “E-Resources”
- 3) The Search page allows you search all e-resources available at U of T. Enter keywords for a search and click on “Search”
- 4) A page will prompt you for your library bar code number. You will find this in your registration email
- 5) In the PIN number box, enter in the last four characters of your UTORid (e.g.) If your UTORid is leaveyda, enter eyda)
- 6) For more specific help on using the e-resources section, click on the help icon in the bottom of the webpage

2.6 UTmail+ Email Account

- 1) Open a web browser and go to <http://mail.utoronto.ca> (you may need to enable pop-up windows on your browser)
- 2) Login using your UTORid username and password
- 3) For more information on using the UTmail+ system, please access in program help system or contact the UTORid help desk

NOTE: Email Account

Students are required to use their **utoronto.ca** email.

2.7 Technical Requirements

A computer with a stable Internet connection is required.

Courses run on Windows 95, 98, ME, 2000, XP or NT 4.0 or higher. They also run on a Macintosh OS 9.1 or higher.

Portal online offers a full listing of supported browsers for Blackboard. Please click on this link <http://portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/help-resources> and select 'Supported Browser'.

For GIS students:

In addition to Blackboard, GIS students are provided ESRI ArcGIS software at no additional cost.

You will need the following requirements (PC, preferred) to access the GIS server.

PC

- Pentium 4+ desktop or laptop computer (less than 5 years old). The system must run Windows XP, Vista or Windows 7/8 Home Basic, Home Premium or Ultimate Windows
- At least a 15" display
- A broadband Internet connection (ADSL, Cable Modem, or Fibre Optic connection). Wireless connections (802.11a/b/g or n) is acceptable, but may cause disconnections which will interrupt your work
- Internet Browser: Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher

Mac

- Operating system: Mac OSX 10.2 and above
- Processor: PC 166 MHz G3 266 MHz or higher or Intel processors, Core Duo 2.0GHz or higher
- Memory: 64 MB or higher
- Hard drive: 350 MB free or higher
- Installed Software: Remote Desktop Connection for Mac 2 (free download from <http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?displaylang=en&id=18140>)

3. Financial Information

3.1 Course Fees

\$900 per course and a **one-time** \$100 non-refundable application fee. To pay your course fee, please 'sign in' to your profile at <https://dereg.environment.utoronto.ca> and go to the 'Financial Account' tab under 'User Account'.

3.2 T2202A Tuition Education Certificate

The Tuition and Education Amounts Certificate (T2202A) reflects the calendar year (January 1- December 31) and provides information on the amount of eligible fees paid in the past year, and the number of months you attended for the purpose of your income tax return. The \$100 application fee is not an eligible fee for income tax purposes.

Your T2202A is available before the end of February from the **School of the Environment** in your account (ORS or online registration system under your 'User Account' tab at <https://dereg.environment.utoronto.ca>), **not the University of Toronto's registration system (ROSI)**. Please make sure your contact information, including your email address, is up to date.

For inquiries about your T2202A, please contact Donna Nielsen, Program Manager at d.nielsen@utoronto.ca.

3.3 Course Withdrawal and Refund Policy

In the event that a student must withdraw from a course, the following refund policy is in place:

- Students who withdraw from a course must do so in writing to the Program Manager, Donna Nielsen. d.nielsen@utoronto.ca
- If a student withdraws from the course prior to the first day of class, 100% of the tuition fee is refunded
- If a student withdraws within the first two weeks of the start of a course, 80% of the tuition fee will be refunded. Please note that timelines for withdrawing are based on regular business hours i.e. by **5 pm** eastern standard or Toronto time

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- If a student withdraws two weeks or more after the first day of class, 0% is refunded
- Once the course is removed from your account, the system will calculate your refund, if due, and a credit will remain on your file. If you prefer a refund, contact Donna Nielsen at d.nielsen@utoronto.ca.

Note on course withdrawals: It is the student's responsibility to contact the Instructor and the Program Manager (Donna Nielsen). Students who fail to contact the instructor and administrative office will receive a failing grade or FZ.

3.4 OSAP

Distance Education programs at the School of the Environment do not qualify for OSAP funding.

4. Policy and Procedures

4.1 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is one of the cornerstones of the University of Toronto. University policy on Academic Behavior is at the following link: <http://sites.utoronto.ca/academicintegrity/>.

According to Section B of the University of Toronto's Code of Behavior on Academic Matters, all students are expected to know and respect this policy.

Please note that it is an offence for students:

- To use someone else's ideas or words in their own work without acknowledging that those ideas/words are not their own with a citation and quotation marks, i.e. to commit plagiarism
- To include false, misleading or concocted citations in their work
- To obtain unauthorized assistance on any assignment
- To provide unauthorized assistance to another student; this includes showing another student completed work
- To submit their own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
- To falsify or alter any documentation required by the University; this includes, but is not limited to, doctor's notes
- To use or possess an unauthorized aid in any test or exam

There are other offences covered under the Code, but these are by far the most common. Please respect these rules and the values that they protect.

Please also see:

- Code of Behavior: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>
- "How Not to Plagiarize" Guide: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

4.2 Netiquette Policy

Students should note that the University's Code of Student Conduct also applies to all online communication that takes place within the course. Please see the University of Toronto Office of the Governing Council webpage on Code of Student Conduct under policies http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Governing_Council/Policies.htm#C. For the direct link to the Code of Conduct, please click [here](#).

Certain rules of netiquette are recommended for discussion forums:

- Students should always be courteous to other forum members
- Before creating a new topic thread, search to see if a similar topic already exists
- Contributors should follow standard grammar and spelling rules and avoid slang
- If the forum is categorized, strive to post in the correct section
- Contributors are asked to stay on topic
- Contributors should avoid double posting
- Contributors should avoid the use of all **CAPITAL LETTERS** in posts. ALL CAPS is considered "shouting" and causes readability issues
- Students are advised not to resurrect a former topic if nothing significant will be added
- Refrain from lashing back at a poorly behaving member or participating in a flame war; instead, notify your Instructor of the event as soon as possible
- When quoting a previous post, include the relevant portion of that post. Contributors are requested to keep in mind that their audience can likely still see the message they are quoting and can read it again if need be
- Subject lines are critical to proper etiquette. A subject line should include a few pertinent words summarizing the subject
- In your reply, make certain the subject line is still relevant to the reply
- If you want your message to be read, don't make it too long

See the following for more information: <http://www.portalinfo.utoronto.ca/content/information-students>.

4.3 Forum Etiquette

Please observe the following:

- In discussion forums, remember to think, discuss, and debate from a multitude of perspectives. Use language that is scholarly and professional
- Express yourself clearly, accurately, and in an intellectual rather than in a personal manner. Discussion forums are designed for students to ask questions and gain further knowledge. Remember to reason intelligently with the instructor and other students. Please feel free to express your view or interpretation based on your own experiences
- Keep in mind that course materials can be from a cross-section of disciplines and there may be jargon or language that is not familiar to you. Seek to understand the subtleties of these new terms to gain deeper understanding of the material presented. Please ask your instructor about concepts or terms that you do not understand
- Remember, if you have a question, it is likely someone else has the same question. Be conscious of the language you use when discussions include issues related to race, ethnicity, and gender. Be careful to avoid bigoted or exclusive language
- Students who express themselves inappropriately or attack others personally in the discussion forums will lose their points for participation, and possibly their privilege to continue the course

4.4 Religious Observances

In June 2005, the Governing Council of the University of Toronto developed a policy that stipulated that no examinations should be scheduled “on the first and second days of Rosh Hashanah or on Yom Kippur or on the first two days and the last two days of Passover.” This policy also states, “The first day of classes in the fall term in all teaching divisions should not be scheduled on the first and second days of Rosh Hashanah or on Yom Kippur”. This resolution is interpreted to apply to the first day of classes in any given course and not only to the first day of the fall term. While the Governing Council resolution makes no special provision for other Holy Days, it is most important that no student be seriously disadvantaged because of her or his religious observances.

For more information on the University’s policy, please see:

<http://www.vicereprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/guidelines/religiousobservances.htm>

4.5 Grade Scale

From: <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/undergraduate/transcripts/guide>

Distance Education Program Grade Scale	
Letter Grade	Numerical Scale of Marks
A +	90-100%
A	85-89%
A -	80-84%
B+	77-79%
B	73-76%
B-	70-72%
FZ	0-69%

4.6 Conflict Resolution

Purpose and Objective

The School of the Environment recognizes that despite the well-meaning efforts of students, administration and instructors alike, there may be occasions where a student feels that their work or person is evaluated or treated unfairly or inadequately.

The following guidelines are offered to assist students in the successful resolution of concerns related to their participation in the Environmental Distance Learning Programs at the School of the Environment.

The objective of the student grievance policy is to foster the fair and speedy resolution of disputes. The School of the Environment encourages students to present their concerns without fear of interference, discrimination or reprisal. As a guideline, a concern might include, but not be limited to:

- The unfair assessment of course work; e.g. contrary to the posted program syllabus
- An unfair refusal or failure of the instructor to make themselves available to assist a student with course work
- Unreasonable delays in the assessment of course work
- Inadequate course materials
- Inadequate teaching or deficient performance in online teaching environment

Procedure

- Your instructor should be first advised of your concern as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the semester
- If the concern is not resolved to the student's satisfaction, the student should contact the Manager, Professional Development Programs. The Manager will review the grievance with both instructor and student, and notify the student and instructor of the suggested resolution, within 5 days

4.7 Student Obligations

Students are expected to participate "in class" every week with a **minimum** participation of two times per week in the discussion forum. Participation is an important part of the overall mark and is evaluated on regular contributions to both asynchronous discussions (discussion forum) and synchronous (live chats) discussions, so do participate. The following rubric on the measure of quantity and quality of your participation in the discussion forum is used for evaluation.

Promptness and Initiative	Does not respond to most postings; rarely participates freely	Responds to most postings several days after initial discussion; limited initiative	Responds to most postings within a 24 hour period; requires occasional prompting to post	Consistently responds to postings in less than 24 hours; demonstrates good self-initiative
Delivery of Post	Utilizes poor spelling and grammar in most posts; posts appear "hasty"	Errors in spelling and grammar evidenced in several posts	Few grammatical or spelling errors are noted in posts	Consistently uses grammatically correct posts with rare misspellings
Relevance of Post	Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content; makes short or irrelevant remarks	Occasionally posts off topic; most posts are short in length and offer no further insight into the topic	Frequently posts topics that are related to discussion content; prompts further discussion of topic	Consistently posts topics related to discussion topic; cites additional references related to topic
Expression Within the Post	Does not express opinions or ideas clearly; no connection to topic	Unclear connection to topic evidenced in minimal expression of opinions or ideas	Opinions and ideas are stated clearly with occasional lack of connection to topic	Expresses opinions and ideas in a clear and concise manner with obvious connection to topic
Contribution to the Learning Community	Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops; seems indifferent	Occasionally makes meaningful reflection on group's efforts; marginal effort to become involved with group	Frequently attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely	Aware of needs of community; frequently attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic

4.8 Transcripts

The School issues transcript letters in lieu of transcripts. This letter will summarize a student's academic program, course(s) and grade(s). The Transcript letter form is found at [HERE](#) . The fee for transcripts is \$20.00 for each copy (effective March 17, 2010).

Questions?

Contact the Program Manager Donna Nielsen at
d.nielsen.utoronto.ca.



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