CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE STUDENT
Adapted from the Illinois Online Network (http://illinois.online.uillinois.edu)

In general, the online student should possess the following qualities:

1. **Be open-minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process.**

   Students will be required to utilize their experiences and share it with their colleagues. The asynchronous form of communication eliminates the visual barriers that hinder some individuals in expressing themselves and also gives time to reflect on the information before responding. The online environment should be open and friendly.

2. **Be able to communicate through writing.**

   In an online classroom, nearly all communication is written, so it is critical that students feel comfortable in expressing themselves in writing. Assignments are uploaded or sent as attachments through email. This also requires students to be familiar with some word-processing applications.

3. **Be goal oriented, self-motivated and self-disciplined.**

   With the freedom and flexibility of the online environment comes responsibility. The online process takes a real commitment and discipline to keep up with the flow of the process. It helps a lot if students participate in the orientations that are set-up on the first day of the class. This also gives them an opportunity to see their professor face to face and also ask questions and satisfy any doubts that they may have. They could have questions that relate to the course in general, or if they can fit in an online class.

4. **Be willing to "speak up" if problems arise.**

   Many of the non-verbal communication mechanisms, such as body language, that instructors use in determining whether students are having problems (confusion, frustration, boredom, absence, etc.) are not possible in an online environment. If a student is experiencing difficulty on any level (either with the technology or with the course content), he or she must communicate this immediately by getting in touch with the instructor.

5. **Be willing and able to commit to 4 to 15 hours per week per course.**

   Online is not easier than the traditional educational process. In fact, many students will say it requires much more time and commitment.

6. **Be able to meet the minimum requirements for the program.**
The requirements for online are no less than that of any other quality educational program. The successful student will view online as a convenient way to receive their education – not an easier way. The minimum requirements also include the ability to surf through the internet using an internet browser, such as Internet Explorer, Netscape, Mozilla etc., and have access to the basic computer hardware and software. The communication medium is a computer, phone line, and modem; the student must have access to the necessary equipment.

7. **Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process.**

The learning process requires the student to make decisions based on facts as well as experience. Assimilating information and executing the right decisions requires critical thought; case analysis does this very effectively. This also helps in the ability to work independently.

8. **Be able to think ideas through before responding.**

Meaningful and quality input into the virtual classroom is an essential part of the learning process. Time is given in the process to allow for the careful consideration of responses. The testing and challenging of ideas is encouraged; you will not always be right, just be prepared to accept a challenge.

9. **Feel that high quality learning can take place without going to a traditional classroom.**

If the student feels that a traditional classroom is a prerequisite to learning, they may be more comfortable in the traditional classroom. Online is not for everybody. A student that wants to be on a traditional campus attending a traditional classroom is probably not going to be happy online. While the level of social interaction can be very high in the virtual classroom given that many barriers come down in the online format, it is not the same as living in a dorm on a campus. This should be made known. An online student is expected to:

- Participate in the virtual classroom 5-7 days a week
- Begin course activities within the first week of the course.
- Be able to work with others in completing projects
- Be able to use the technology properly
- Be able to meet the minimum standards as set forth by the institution
- Be able to complete assignments on time
- Enjoy communicating in writing.
- Knows how to and is able to work independently