



Government of
Northwest Territories

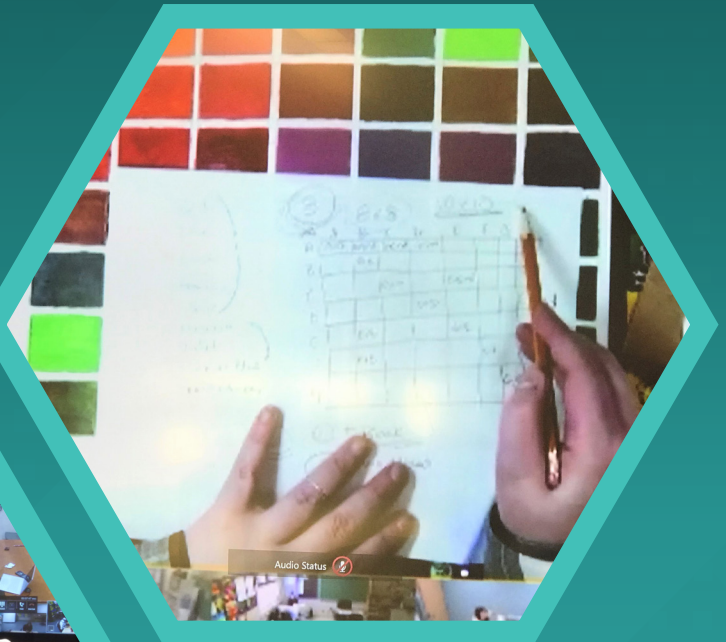
Northern Distance Learning (NDL)

A Guide for Students

OUR VISION

Students in small communities have access to equitable academic programming enabling them to:

- ▶ STAY IN THEIR HOME COMMUNITY
- ▶ MEET THE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL; AND
- ▶ PREPARE TO ENTER POST-SECONDARY PROGRAMS DIRECTLY FROM HIGH SCHOOL



WHAT IS NDL? IS IT FOR ME?

The Northern Distance Learning program is a way to participate in classes with a teacher from outside of your regular school and students from around the North. It gives you the opportunity to take courses that may not be offered at your local school. If you are thinking of attending college or university, and know that there are courses that you will need that are not currently offered at your school, then this program may be for you.

Achievement. Because the NDL courses are academically challenging, you have to have the right skill level and work habits in order to be successful in the program. This usually means that you would need to have at least 65% in any prerequisite course. For example, if you wanted to take Physics 20, then you would need to have at least 65% in Science 10. 65% is especially important if you are coming into -1 courses from -2 level courses.

Attendance. Another key to success is attendance. In order to take NDL courses, you have to show that you are a serious student and committed to being in class, on time, every day. In order to show this, we would look to see if you have at least 80% attendance in the year before you start.

This level of achievement and attendance must be maintained in order to remain in the program as well. That is because without these minimum standards, you may find it difficult to be successful due to the increased independence and agency required for NDL learning. The In-class Support Person (ISP) will schedule meetings with you and your parents/guardians to support you if you are struggling.

IN ACTION

Want to see NDL students and teachers in action?
Check out the NDL Facebook page:
<https://en-gb.facebook.com/Northern-Distance-Learning-NDL-186226671747040/>



BIG PICTURE OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES

Orientation to NDL

Learn more about NDL by completing the required 1st part of the NDL orientation in *Moodle* (the Learning Management System or *LMS*). This covers self-advocacy; taking responsibility for your learning; collaboration and support of other learners. In September you will take Part 2 of the Orientation which covers the technical knowledge you will need to participate regularly in the *Moodle*.

Career and program planning

Big Picture. In order to figure out what courses you need or want to take in NDL, you need to have a big picture idea of what your high school course selection schedule will look like. This process of thinking about your future career options and the educational paths that can take you there is called Career and Program Planning. There is someone

to help you do this – it may be a teacher, a guidance counsellor, or career and education advisor.

Use the NDL calendar. Not all courses are offered every year! Make sure you spend the time making a plan so that you can get the courses you need. This is part of taking responsibility for your learning, and is a step along the path to becoming a responsible adult.

Trip to a Post-secondary institution. There will be an opportunity to get first-hand experience seeing what it might be like to transition from high school to post-secondary studies through participating in the Post-secondary Bridging Trip. This program was piloted in 2019-2020. The program is intended for students approaching their last year of high school.

“NDL has helped me achieve the set goals in academic courses to set-me up for postsecondary. Without these courses, I wouldn’t have as broad opinions for future college courses.” - NDL Student

How to be successful

The goal of the NDL program is give you the opportunity to take the same kind of courses NWT students take in larger communities, and we want you to be successful in doing that! How can you do it? There are lots of tips in the orientation on how to be successful, but here are some key ones:

Speak up!

It may seem awkward at first, but try to actively participate in class. This includes talking! The more students talk, the more others will talk, and the more lively and deep your discussions and understandings will become.

Ask!

If you are not sure of the instructions, or need clarification, ask. If you need something explained or presented differently to help you understand better, ask for it. This is self-advocacy. If you are not comfortable asking the teacher in front of the whole class yet, ask the In-class Support Person (ISP). They are your support. They can find out from the teacher the details you need. If you have accommodations to support your learning, self-advocate and speak-up to ask for the supports you need.

Stay on track!

It is easy to stay organized in NDL, since all of your assignments are on the *Moodle* in a nice one-stop-shop. It is up to you to get the assignments done. If you are not sure how to do something, or where to find something, ask for help. The teacher and support person are there to help you.

Get help!

Use the tutorials. There is extra help available from your ISP. Use it even if you don't think you need it. You can also get in touch with your teacher directly with questions or concerns if you are comfortable doing so. Make sure to get help right away when you need it. Waiting may lead to getting further behind; we recommend seeking support right away.

Connect!

Get to know other students and support one another. Part of what makes NDL unique is that your classmates are from other Northern communities. This is a great chance to get to know other students from the NWT, and see how they think. This is a like a warm-up for post-secondary, where you will be meeting students from all over Canada and maybe the world. Take the time to get to know each other. You will have opportunities to work together on class assignments which can make for a much more diverse and interesting learning experience. The more you get to know your classmates, the better the support structure you create for yourself. Your classmates can help you get through challenges and be there to celebrate successes with you.

SUCCESS!

WHAT ARE SOME NDL SUCCESSES?

NDL is a new program for many NWT small communities. 257 students have taken 787 courses since 2014. 27 NDL graduates have attended post-secondary institutions since 2014. These NDL students are making their future plans come true! You are on track to join this group of students!



WILL NDL BE HARD?

NDL will be different from your regular classes. At first, you might find it harder. At first your grades might be lower than what you are used to seeing. There is a reason for this, and they will improve with persistence.

Students at post-secondary institutions often work outside of the regular class period to complete assignments and projects.

NDL is like that as well with courses that can be the hardest you have ever taken. However, you will find these courses so much easier if you also work outside the regular class period. Begin to start a new trend for yourself by doing your homework with the ISP after school, and making a time and place for yourself at home to study and prepare for the next day. This is you--investing in you!

Key Dates



COURSES

Northern Distance Learning
offers 19 different courses

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (10-1, 20-1, 30-1)
MATH (10C, 20-1, 30-1) • SCIENCE 10
SOCIAL STUDIES (10-1, 20-1, 30-1)
BIO (20, 30) • PHYSICS (20, 30)
CHEMISTRY (20, 30) • ART (10, 20, 30)

NOTE: Beginning in 2021-2022, NDL will be able to offer all 19 courses each year, eliminating multi-year cycles.

Care of Course Materials

When you register for an NDL class, you will get a laptop computer to use. It is called a Surface Pro. It is your responsibility to take care of your computer – it needs to be returned when you are done your course. It has a special pen that comes with it that allows you to write on the screen. If you lose your pen, it will cost \$100 to get a new one. Most students will have a textbook to support studies; some courses will have special equipment for science labs and art studies. Take good care of these resources so that your learning is not interrupted!

"I participated in NDL classes because it offered the courses that were required to get into a university program I was considering. I also believed that taking NDL courses would best prepare me for post-secondary education."

- NDL Student



"It helped me realize and solidify the notion to apply for and attend university as the next step in my life." - NDL Student

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

NDL has high expectations for you! But with high expectations, there must be good technology, academic, personal and mental health supports.

Many of you have lived in your community for many years and know what to expect from school each year when September comes around. But with NDL your school has become something different for you. You are now a 'distance learner' (NDL) as well as a 'brick and mortar learner' (local school). NDL planners have looked ahead to what kind of help or support you will need:

1. Support you as a learner. Perhaps the most important thing we want to know in NDL, is how you learn best. We can best support you by

- asking you to tell us how you learn best on the NDL application.
- self-advocating when you require help or support.
- asking you in the end-of-semester survey about your learning experience.

2. Support the feeling of having a teacher nearby.

Because you are used to having a teacher beside you as you learn, NDL provides

- live classes. NDL teachers teach you live at a scheduled time. They are on the screen looking at you and speaking to you as an individual person. This is not like taking an online course with no classmates where you seldom, if ever, meet your teacher."
- an In-class Support Person (ISP). Your ISP is in class to support your learning. Although you are in high school and quite independent, the ISP is there in the classroom for you as a partner in learning, figuring out with you what the teacher on the screen is expecting and helping you to know how to complete the work.
- ISP tutoring. ISPs will make time for you before heading home at the end of the day. Please inform the ISP, who can offer you a study period or tutor session right after school.
- after-class support from teachers. NDL teachers can be communicated with for support outside of class using the Moodle chat feature, or email.

3. Support post-secondary planning. One of NDL's goals is to support your preparation to enter a post-secondary program directly from high school. For this we have developed the "Post-secondary Bridging Experience" (PBE) to take Grade 11 students for a visit to a college/university in Western or Northern Canada. During COVID-19, PBE will likely be a virtual experience.

4. Support the technologies you will use as a post-secondary student. Learners in colleges and universities and adults at home use learning management systems (LMS) to see, do, and 'hand-in' their assignments. NDL does this as well with an LMS called Moodle. Your NDL teachers and ISP will regularly use this with you, helping you to be successful in your NDL courses and prepared for how post-secondary institutions conduct learning.



