



Government of
Northwest Territories

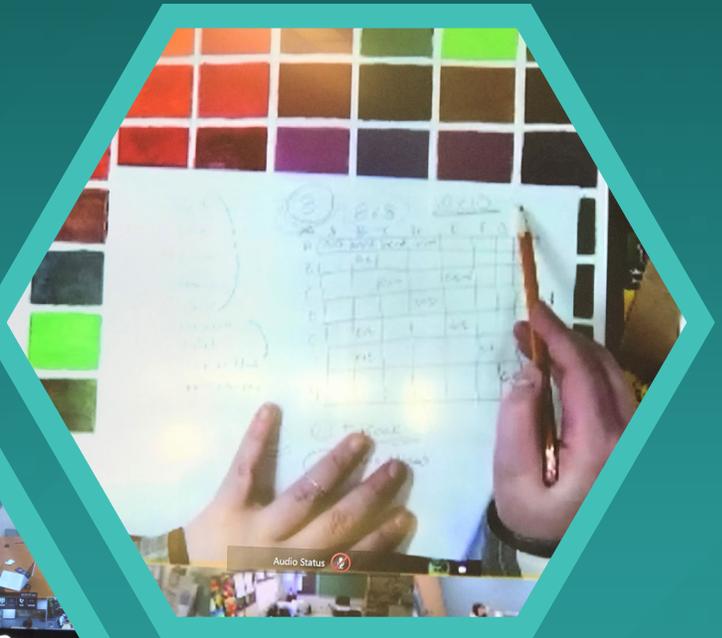
Northern Distance Learning (NDL)

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?

Northern Distance Learning is a program where students take higher-level academic courses in live, online classes with other groups of students from across the Northwest Territories (NWT). NDL classrooms include an In-class Support Person (ISP) who assists the live teacher on the screen, which makes it a similar learning experience to a student's regular classrooms. This experience of being a part-time online student prepares you for post-secondary learning.

Achievement. Because NDL courses are academically challenging, you need the right skill level and work habits to be successful in the program. This usually means 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. It is especially important to have this average grade if you are coming into -1 courses from -2 level courses.

Attendance. Another key to success is attendance. To take NDL courses, you have to show that you are a serious student and committed to being in class, on time, every day. NDL will need to confirm that 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. Without these minimum standards, you may find it difficult to be successful. NDL requires that you have more independence in your learning. If you are struggling, the In-class Support Person (ISP) will schedule meetings with you and your parents/guardians to support you.

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/>



"One thing that really stuck out to me [during her university year of learning under COVID conditions] was how well NDL prepared me for this because that's pretty much how I attended high school - was watching a virtual lecture and then completing independent assessments. I would say if you are in NDL right now, and in Grade 12, and you're kind of apprehensive about going to university because of COVID-19, I will say that it does prepare you pretty well." - Laney Beaulieu



BIG PICTURE OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES

Orientation to NDL

During the first few days of each new semester, you will receive an NDL orientation that includes how to use the *Moodle* (Learning Management System or *LMS*) and discuss important matters, such as self-advocacy; taking responsibility for your learning; collaboration and support of other learners.

Career and program planning

Big Picture. 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 should be someone to help you do this - it may be a teacher, ISP a principal, guidance counsellor, or career and education advisor.

Course Registration and Change form (CRC). Each year after you are enrolled in NDL, your principal will provide a CRC form showing the courses you chose. If you change your mind about any of those courses, use the CRC to "Add" or "Drop" courses. It will need 3 signatures: yours, your parent/guardian's, and your principal's.

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 Experience Trip (PBE). The first PBE was a trip to Calgary in 2019. In 2021, PBE was a virtual event over a three-day period. 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 post-secondary. 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 to offer you the opportunity to take the same kind of courses that students in larger NWT communities take, and we want you to be successful! 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! Speaking up will encourage other students to talk, and the more lively and deep your discussions, the more you'll all understand.

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 get the details you need from the teacher.

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!

When you need help, make sure to get it right away, as waiting may lead to you getting behind in your work. Use the tutorials. The In-class Support Person is available for extra help. 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.

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 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 through challenges and be there to celebrate successes with you.

SUCCESS!

NDL is a new program for many small NWT communities. Since 2014, **299** students have taken **1,019** courses, and **42** NDL graduates have attended post-secondary schools. These NDL students are making their future plans come true - and you are on track to join them!



WILL NDL BE HARD?

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

Students at post-secondary schools often work outside of the regular class period to complete assignments and projects, and NDL is similar. The courses may 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. Start a new routine 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 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: NDL offers all 19 courses each year, eliminating the practice of only offering some courses every two or three years.

Care of Course Materials

When you register for an NDL class, you will get a Surface Pro to use. It is your responsibility to take care of your computer – it needs to be returned when you are done your course. It comes with a special pen that allows you to write on the screen. 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!

"It's a pretty good program, this NDL course. I get to interact with other people, discuss the topics and joke around with the other students. I wouldn't change it, it's working pretty well and I'm learning. Just gotta keep handing in the assignments and doing the work." - NDL student



"NDL 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 know what to expect from your community school when September rolls around, but with NDL your school has become something different. You are now a 'distance learner' (NDL) and you attend a local 'brick and mortar' school. NDL planners have prepared for what kind of help or support you will need.

1. You as a learner. Perhaps the most important thing NDL wants to know, is how you learn best. We can support you by asking you:

- how you learn best on the NDL application.
- to self-advocate when you need help or support.
- about your learning experience in the end-of-semester survey.

2. Having help 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. 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 in the classroom as a partner in learning, helping you figure out what the teacher on the screen is expecting and how to complete the work.
- *ISP tutoring.* ISPs will make time for you after class, before heading home. The ISP can offer you a study period or tutoring session right after school.
- *After-class support from teachers.* You can communicate with NDL teachers for support outside of class using the *Moodle* chat feature, or email.

3. 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. Because of COVID-19 restrictions, PBE has expanded to include an annual virtual experience.

4. Technologies you will use as a post-secondary student. Learners in college and university use learning management systems (LMS) to see, do, and 'hand-in' their assignments. NDL does this as well with the LMS *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 schools conduct learning.

