

Statement of Minimal Technical Literacy for Incoming College Students

Preamble:

Entering the twenty-first century, higher education institutions recognize the dramatic shifts toward a technologically-oriented American society. While many people have embraced these changes, institutions have a responsibility to potential students to identify expectations given the fast pace of technological change. This leads the institutions participating in the FIPSE *Grant project Supporting Online Learners: A Statewide Approach to Quality Academic Support Services* coordinated by the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium to declare the following:

Statement:

All students entering their first year of college-level coursework should be minimally technologically literate. Institutions expect that incoming students will possess knowledge of the following basic skills and the ability to accomplish them. While additional technical literacy may aid a student, all students should have these basic skills prior to taking their first college-level course.

Basic Computer Skills

- Use a mouse to point, click, and double click

- Type

- Open a software application

- Exit a software application

- Access a CD-ROM

- Locate a saved file

- Use copy and paste

Basic Word Processing Skills

- Use the enter/return key to create a blank line

- Tab text to indent a line

- Apply basic formatting: bold, italics, and centering

- Save a file (including naming the file and locating where to save the file)

- Print a file

Basic Web Skills

- Go to a specified web address

- Click on a link

- Scroll through a webpage

- Use the Back button

- Perform a basic search in a search engine

- Identify search results

- Download and view a file from a webpage

- Print a webpage

Basic Email Skills

- Send an email message

- Attach a file to an email message

- Receive an email message

Secondary Statement:

Beyond the ability to perform these basic skills, incoming students should also be aware of the importance of the following:

- Avoid electronic plagiarism
- Cite electronic sources
- Avoid illegal electronic copying

Incoming students should also know that they have several sources of technological assistance available to them in addition to classes, including the built-in help in computer software, help from vendor websites, books and other resources available through the institution's library, assistance from staff at an institutional help desk or computer lab, and tutorials available through a learning center or online.

Supporting Rationale:

This statement of minimal technical literacy is based on the results of a survey of faculty and staff at 11 participating institutions. 541 responses were analyzed from Charter Oak State College, Capital Community College, Manchester Community College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, Northwestern Community College, Quinnipiac University, Sacred Heart University, Teikyo Post University, Three Rivers Community College, Tunxis Community College, and the University of Connecticut.

Items were included in the Statement when over 50% of the respondents felt that these skills were "required" for students entering their classes or entering the institution. The following table indicates the number of respondents who felt that a listed item was either "required" or "helpful."

Basic Computer Skills

Required	Helpful	Item
81.5%	13.6%	Use a mouse to point, click, and double click
78.3%	17.5%	Type
		Open a software application (determined to be included in using application items)
		Exit a software application (determined to be included in using application items)
51.8%	26.8%	Access a CD-ROM
70.8%	20.4%	Locate a saved file
51.5%	37.8%	Use copy and paste

Basic Word Processing Skills

Required	Helpful	Item
80.3%	13.5%	Use a word processing program
76.1%	13.7%	Create text reports or papers
		Use the enter/return key to create a blank line
		Tab text to indent a line
		Apply basic formatting: bold, italics, and centering
75.0%	16.9%	Save a file (including naming the file and locating where to save the file)
74.6%	17.6%	Print a file

Basic Web Skills

Required	Helpful	Item
78.2%	17.2%	Go to a specified web address
76.5%	19.0%	Use an Internet browser
		Click on a link
		Scroll through a webpage
		Use the Back button
67.6%	26.3%	Use a search engine
		Perform a basic search in a search engine
		Identify search results
55.1%	30.9%	Download and view a file from a webpage
58.7%	28.1%	Print a webpage

Basic Email Skills

Required	Helpful	Item
72.8%	20.7%	Send an email message
60.0%	29.5%	Attach a file to an email message
72.8%	20.7%	Receive an email message

The items in the Secondary Statement were identified by the Technological Literacy FIPSE Grant Committee, which included representatives of all 11 institutions. This group also defined the specific breakdown of broader skill categories such as “Use an Internet browser.”