

# Senior Citizens Going to College

## University Courses, Online Degree Programs and Education for Seniors

Info on college degree programs, university courses, online college degrees and courses, ideas for older adults to go to college, take classes, and be a student. ➔



Senior citizens and college? In one's older years, the idea of going to, or returning to, college can sound exciting and intimidating at the same time. Whether a community college, 4 year college, online college program, or university, however, senior citizens wishing to take college classes will be happy to hear they will not be the only older folk on campus.

### Older Adults Attending College Classes

More and more people over the traditional youthful college age are attending courses on campus according to the Senior Journal website. In an interview with a Washington state community college freshman (April 2008), the student said it is not unusual to see people over 40 or 50 or 60 years old in classes. An average in her particular first-year classes has been to have one to three older students in each class. Although the senior students may have a bit different social experience (since they may not have as many friends on campus, not being fresh out of high school), the freshman says the older adults are not seen as strange or treated differently. In fact, quite often, older students are rather popular. It all depends on personality and being willing to join into discussions and events. Remember that many instructors and campus staff are older as well.

### Online College Degree Programs and Courses

If going to classes on campus does not fit in with a senior's schedule or plans, there are other ways to learn. In most community college and university catalogs (or on websites), there are listings of courses offered online or as telecourses.

Each educational institution is different, but in general, online classes will have an active instructor for the class and a central website where students can sign in on their own schedule. Teachers and students post email-type messages, and receive and submit information and assignments through the website. Generally there is also a textbook assigned to the students.

While online classes lack the face to face interaction of a traditional classroom, an online course offers flexibility, allows students to work from home (which is perfect for the homebound), and lets one work at his or her own pace. This may also be a good option for those needing to keep costs down, as it may save parking fees and gasoline costs.

### Telecourse University Classes Good for Senior Citizens

Telecourses are sometimes offered via cable television, videotape (or DVD) rental or online. This is another good option with flexibility and may be better for those who are more visual learners. These classes are often recorded lectures with an instructor available for those needing help and perhaps to give out and grade assignments and tests.

Seeking an education, learning a new language, taking an art course, or learning about world history... whatever one studies stimulates the brain, opens the mind, and enriches one's life.