

Welcome to the Building Inspection Technician program.

Most of your course material will be delivered to you using an online Learning Management System called Blackboard. You will receive course information and practice exercises via Blackboard; you will submit your work to the course instructor and you will receive information about your grades, all through the Blackboard system.

Following is information on the skills and computer requirements you need for this program.

Basic Skills & Computer Requirements (For online courses using Blackboard for delivery)

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Required Skills:	Computer Needs:
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Overview [Index](#)

Students taking classes at Northern College, using Blackboard, are expected to have the following skills.

1. Using a Computer:

- Turn on a computer, its monitor and printer
- Start up programs & switch between programs to complete assigned tasks
- Move a mouse to specified screen areas and use it to activate commands, to display menus, and to move screen elements by dragging
- Use a mouse to open, close, resize displayed windows on screen
- Be familiar with and able to use a standard keyboard to enter text, delete text, and to move the cursor to required areas of a screen
- Know how to insert and remove floppy disks and CD-ROMs or DVDs
- Shut down a computer at the end of a session

2. Using Word Processing Software

- Use MS Word to create a new text file and save it to a selected disk
- Use mouse or keyboard commands to select, cut, or move text
- Use mouse or keyboard commands to reformat selected text
- Use a spelling check and recognize its limitations
- Retrieve an existing file, make changes, and save the modified file

- Print the document upon completion

3. Accessing the Internet

- Use a browser such as Internet Explorer to access the World Wide Web
- Enter an internet address to view a specific Web site
- Use a search engine to locate specific information on the Web
- Print information from Internet sources
- Save information from the Internet to disk
- Set bookmarks to save addresses requiring frequent revisits

4. Using email

- Have and know your own email address
- Send, receive, and reply to email messages
- Print/save email messages for future reference
- Understand privacy and etiquette issues regarding email

Mouse & Keyboarding

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Following are some fundamental mouse skills:

- Pointing and clicking
- Dragging the mouse to select text or screen elements
- Manipulate the cursor as needed

Keyboarding is an essential skill because most work in an online course involves written (text) material to be read or to be created by the student. Poor keyboarding skills can be a serious deficiency. Formal typing style and high speed typing are not essential; however, imagine using 'hunt-and-peck' with one finger to complete an online, time-limited exam. As an indicator of your typing skill level, type the following lines. You should be able to type the text below in within 90 seconds or less. Use MS Word on a computer to try out your speed.

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog. I quickly explained that many big jobs involve few hazards. Jack Farmer realized that big yellow quilts were expensive.

Study Skills, Reading Comprehension, Work Habits

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These 3 important skill sets have little to do with computers. Students who are good at these 3 skills usually learn best in online courses:

1. Study Skills

- Able to take notes based on textbook or printed class information
- Can anticipate types of questions and problems likely to be asked by professors
- Able to prepare study own guides for tests and projects

2. Reading Comprehension

- Able to select main ideas from each paragraph of text
- Write down unfamiliar words, concepts from a text

- Have difficulty understanding parts of texts or are they clear on 1st reading
- Re-read passages that seem important to facilitate remembering them
- Good command of the written, and spoken, English language is essential

3. Good Work Habits

- Set aside a quiet place for study and work – removed from distractions
- Work hard, alone – good self-discipline & self-motivation are necessary traits
- Able to wait several days for a response to a question
- Devote at least 6 hours a week for each 3-credit class

Internet Navigation

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In order to be successful in a Blackboard course it is advantageous to spend some time becoming familiar with use of the Internet – ‘surfing the net’. An Internet-use tutorial at this site might be helpful: <http://www.learnthenet.com/english/html/35dwld.htm>

Word Processing

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To be successful in an online course, keyboarding and word processing skills are essential. Students should be able to use word processing software to set font, font-size, text spacing, and the pagination in documents. If any of the skills are lacking, a course in word processing would be beneficial to an online student.

Saving Files

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It is frequently required (or at least useful) to save files from Internet research. This site provides some helpful information: <http://www.learnthenet.com/english/html/35dwld.htm>

Email

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Check out this site for information on how email works and how to manage email: <http://www.learnthenet.com/english/section/email.html>

Computer Needs – Hardware & Software

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Hardware with at least the following minimum requirements will be needed for success in online courses:

- A computer running Windows XP
- A CD-ROM drive
- A letter-quality printer
- Microsoft Word
- AutoCAD light – 2007 version
- An Internet connection – dial-up, DSL, or cable – from an Internet Service Provider; **OR** public Web access such as at a public library; **OR** the Northern College computer lab access (DSL or cable Internet connection is preferred over dial-up for better connection speed)
- Access to email – students at Northern College will have a free email account available for their use (instructions included with this documentation)
- Microsoft Internet Explorer version 6 or higher (or equivalent) – Firefox browser is not recommended
- The course information will indicate any additional requirements
- For collaboration tools such as the Chat Room to function correctly, Java must be installed and running on the computer

Computer Needs – Internet Browser

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Microsoft Internet Explorer (version 6 or higher) should be installed. Browsers can be downloaded, free, from the Internet. AOL's browser should **not** be used. For additional tutorial information on using Internet browsers consult this site: <http://www.ckls.org/~crippel/computerlab/tutorials/> set up by the Central Kansas Library System.

Computer Needs – Anti-Virus Software

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Online courses require that information in the form of files and messages be sent across computer networks. For this reason, it is essential to have anti-virus software installed on student computers. To be effective, virus software must be kept current. Two major anti-virus software companies are McAfee <http://www.mcafee.com/us/> and Symantec <http://www.symantec.com/index.htm> . Students are strongly urged to install and maintain anti-virus software on their computers. More information can be found at this site set up by the Central Kansas Library System: <http://www.ckls.org/~crippel/computerlab/tutorials/>

Computer Needs – email Software

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It is to the students' advantage to have an email account that can be checked from anywhere. Online students often do their work and projects in different locations and times – home, school, work, vacation – which means that a web-based email account is useful. Additional information is available at this site set up by the Central Kansas Library System: <http://www.ckls.org/~crippel/computerlab/tutorials/> . Northern College students will have access to a College student email system. (Instructions for access & use are included in this documentation.)

Glossary of Some Common Terms[Index](#)

Term	Meaning
Attachments	A file that is attached to an email or discussion board message
Bookmark	A 'marker' to allow easy return to a Web site
Browser	A program to interact with the Internet
Chat	Communication in real time with one or more other individuals via computer
Cut	To remove something from a document – can be text or clipart. The removed information is moved to a temporary storage area called a 'clipboard' so that it can be placed in another area of the document or into another document
Default	A preset value for some option in a computer or program
Discussion Board	A series of messages posted as conversation amongst users. May contain many 'threads', each covering a different topic. Similar to an online chat.
Download	Sending information to a computer from the Internet or from another computer
email	Electronic mail
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
Firewall	Protects a networked computer from damage by users who are not permitted to log into the system
GIF	Graphic Interchange Format – type of graphic image often used in Web pages
Home page	The starting, or main, page of a Web site
HTML	Hyper-Text Markup Language – the language with which Web pages are created
HTTP	Hyper Text Transfer Protocol – the protocol used for transferring files across the Web
Internet	Networks and computers throughout the world that are capable of transferring vast quantities of information
Internet Explorer	An example of a program – a browser – that allows users to view links and information on the Internet
IP	Internet Protocol – allows data to be transferred between systems over the Internet
IP Address	A code made up of 4 numbers, separated by periods that identifies a computer to the Internet – every computer requires an IP Address to connect to the Internet
ISP	Internet Service Provider

Java	A computer programming language – it is the language that was used to create Blackboard
JPG	Joint Photographic Experts Group – another type of graphic image often used in Web pages
Login	The user name or code that allows one to use a particular server or system
MB	Megabyte
Netiquette	Etiquette as applied to the Internet – do not do anything on line that will be annoying or frustrating to other users. Like the Golden Rule

Term	Meaning
Netscape	An example of a program – a browser – that allows users to view links and information on the Internet
OS	Operating System – the software that actually controls what happens in a computer – allocates memory, processes tasks, accesses disks and peripherals – it is the user interface to the computer
Paste	Copies a previously saved element from temporary storage into a new or the same document
Server	A computer with special service functions on a network – provides access to shared stored data
Upload	Sending information to the Internet or another computer from your computer
User	Someone who uses a computer
Web page	Documents written in HTML, translated by a browser
Web site	A collection of related, interlinked Web pages
WWW	World Wide Web