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### Fearful of going back to school? 3 reasons you can earn a degree online

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OUACHITA  
BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



NEWS

**Fearful of going back to school?  
3 reasons you can earn a degree online**



*By Jessica Qualls*

March 02, 2021

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at [newsbureau@obu.edu](mailto:newsbureau@obu.edu) or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. –Every year when fall begins, my family has a tradition of watching the 1998 classic, "You've Got Mail." (If you haven't seen it, prepare your heart for delightful Meg Ryan-Tom Hanks banter, autumnal New York scenes and dial-up internet nostalgia.) One of my favorite lines in the movie comes from main character Kathleen Kelly's bookkeeper, Bertie. When Kathleen chooses to make a major career change, Bertie calls her decision, "the brave thing to do," saying, "You are daring to imagine that you could have a different life!"

Like Kathleen, students working to earn a degree online are making the choice to envision a new future, and that can feel scary! But while it may take courage to make the jump to going back to school, it doesn't have to feel like leaping without a parachute.

Even though there are obstacles you may be facing as a returning student, here are three reasons you *can* do this!

Your life experience is an advantage. The longer it has been since studying, the greater the gap feels. Maybe it's been years, even decades, since you last attended classes. You may wonder if you can even still write an essay. [Researchers from LaneTerralever.com](http://LaneTerralever.com) note that non-traditional learners often possess a "confidence gap" compared to students who begin college right after high school.

While you might feel you are rusty in the world of academics, in reality, you possess real-world experience and the critical thinking skills that college demands, not to mention a seasoned perspective that can greatly contribute to class discussions!

Online programs offer a reduced price tag. Finances also can feel limiting when considering returning to school. You might wonder how you will manage your budget when adding course expenses, and if you're mid-life or retired you might hesitate to take out student loans.

One of the great benefits of online learning is the reduced price! Not only is the online tuition rate lower, but attending from home means cutting out costs you would have faced as a residential undergraduate – costs like room and board (and midnight Waffle House runs). Furthermore, there are federal, state and private aid options available to online learners. If you are a veteran, you and your dependents may be eligible for benefits through the Veterans Administration, as well.

Finding time for class is largely up to you. With a full life of juggling jobs, parenting and community responsibilities, you may worry how you will squeeze in the addition of online schooling. While adding school to your schedule is a big time commitment, one superpower nontraditional learners typically already possess is good time management. As an adult, you are a practiced multitasker!

Taking online classes often will allow you the flexibility to work at your own pace. Learning is asynchronous, which means no lectures to tune in to at a specific time, and you can choose how many courses you feel are manageable for you each term. Lastly, you will probably find that because you are working to earn a degree in an area that interests you, your coursework will be life-giving, and as such, it will enrich rather than detract from your day-to-day life.

Graduates of Ouachita Online, specifically, have shared that the high-quality academic experience and warm, personal environment their Ouachita professors created among their classmates helped smooth their transition back to formal learning.

And as someone considering going back to school yourself, you should know: Ouachita Online faculty and staff believe that you are not only more than capable of earning a degree, but you are also worth the investment.