Online Seminary
Essential Information for Priesthood Leaders

Online seminary is a new addition to the existing daily, released-time, and home-study seminary classes. Online seminary is not intended to replace established daily or released-time classes. Preference should be given to classes where students meet daily face-to-face. The stake president, in counsel with the Seminaries and Institutes of Religion coordinator, decides which type of seminary classes to offer and who may participate in those different classes.

What should priesthood leaders consider before offering online seminary?

Online seminary classes should be considered in situations where students cannot meet each week-day because of distance or other limiting factors. Priesthood leaders should consider the number of students available and the distance students must travel, as well as security, availability of technology, and local economic conditions. Online seminary is preferred to home-study classes when students and teachers have daily access to a computer with a high-speed Internet connection.

What is online seminary?

Online seminary provides a daily seminary experience that helps the students learn the doctrines and principles of the gospel as found in the scriptures and the words of the prophets. Each week there are four days of online lessons, where students study the scriptures, participate in online learning experiences, and interact with their teacher and the other students in their class. An online lesson usually lasts between 30–45 minutes. In addition, the teacher and all the students meet together for one class each week.

What is the online seminary experience like for the students?

Students receive credit for the four days of online lessons by completing all of the assigned activities for the day. Students complete these four online lessons on the assigned weekdays following their own schedule; they do not need to complete the lessons at the same time as other students. The teacher will open and close the availability of the lessons online to help the students stay caught up and learn together as a class. Also, the students must be present at the weekly class to receive credit for attendance. The minimum credit requirements for each term are *both*: (1) attendance at 75 percent of the weekly classes and (2) daily completion of 75 percent of the online lessons.

What are the requirements for students to participate in online seminary?

- Daily access to a computer with high-speed Internet (greater than 400 kbps, dial-up Internet is not sufficient) for 30-45 minutes

- LDS account and email address

- Weekly attendance at a live class either face-to-face or virtually

- Download and use necessary software

- Signed seminary registration form noting the Internet and online use policy

What is the role of the teacher in online seminary?

Online teachers log in daily to their online seminary class to study the lesson materials along with the

students, review students' work, participate in class discussions and respond to questions. Teachers also track daily attendance, complete lessons, and open and close the availability of lessons to help each student have a daily seminary experience. Online teachers will complete a three-week online seminary teacher training course. They need to receive the calling well in advance in order to participate in this course

What should priesthood leaders consider before calling an online seminary teacher?

- Does the teacher have a firm testimony of the Savior and the Restoration of the gospel?

- Are they worthy of a temple recommend

- Do they love the youth and interact well with them?

- Does the person have basic computer skills, including the use of email, sending and receiving attachments, and website navigation?

- Does the person have daily access to a computer with high-speed Internet? (greater than 400 kbps, dial-up Internet is not sufficient). They will need to download software to perform their teaching functions.

- Is the person outgoing enough to reach out to the students they do not physically see?

- Are they in a position with family, health, and work obligations where they could spend the time needed to serve as an online seminary teacher? (The online teacher should not have any additional callings.)

How should the weekly class be managed?

The weekly class meeting should include all of the students at one time, rather than small groups. If it is not possible to physically meet face-to-face, approved web conferencing tools should be used for the class to meet together. The weekly class should be similar to a daily seminary class.

What is the recommended size for an online seminary class?

The recommended size is 7–15 students per class. It is important that the online class feel like a regular seminary class, which is very difficult to do if only a few students are participating. Leaders should consider combining smaller classes with other ward or stake units until there are sufficient numbers to create an online seminary class. Classes are most successful when they have 10 active students participating. The S&I coordinator will work with the priesthood leaders in multiple stakes of those involved who feel it would be beneficial to combine students into one class. A ward or stake could have more than one online class if they had a sufficient number of students.

What are the benefits of online seminary?

Online seminary requires rigorous, consistent effort on the part of the students. While it does require extra effort, online students who commit to and participate in their online seminary class have reported wonderful opportunities to learn from the scriptures and by the Spirit.

- No matter if they are shy or outgoing, all students can participate equally in an online seminary class because each can take the time they need to carefully craft their responses.

- Online seminary helps bring remote students, who otherwise would be in a home-study class or not in any seminary experience at all, together to create a feeling of a seminary class where students feel known and valued by their teacher and other students.

- Teachers and students have noted that comments in online seminary can be deep and reflective.

- Online seminary activities allow for one-on-one student and teacher interaction, creating the possibility for meaningful and individualized instruction.

- Credit for online seminary is based on meaningful participation rather than just physical presence in a class.

For further information or clarification, contact your local S&I representative.