



What do you appreciate most about online education?

The ability to be able to do school work while traveling for work. It allowed me to access classes that would either be put on hold or canceled due to deployments or TDYs.

How has your experience been in contacting teachers, counselors and other school staff through online media?

It's as easy as a simple email or phone call with immediate follow-up from staff and faculty.

What aspects of online education would you like to see improved, and how?

Some classes required certain computer programs that I was unable to access because of being deployed and in addition, having limited access to certain programs because of deployment. I would like to say "hats off" to the professors of these courses as they not only worked with me to make sure I learned what I needed to, they also understood my problem (being deployed) and worked with me because of my situation.

What did you look for when selecting an online program?

I looked for a program that flowed with my career in the Army. As a First Sergeant and Human Resources Manager, this education was a necessity.

Daniel K. Staggs has been in the Air Force for eight years and is currently assigned to DET 1 10 ASOS Ft Knox, Ky. Staggs received his BA in Social and Criminal Justice from Ashford University in December 2010. He deployed three times while continuing his education.

Did your enrollment experience involve on-base counseling from on base career advancement counselors or other professional advisors? If so, please describe how that experience enhanced your enrollment experience?

I spoke with a counselor on base and the counselor was helpful in providing me the information to what classes I needed and what would work best for me. Finding the right school that would "fit" my expectations was my decision and I decided to enroll with Ashford University.

What advice would you give to someone interested in pursuing online education but was new to the process?

Give it a chance. It can seem overwhelming at first, but once you get the hang of it and set a schedule to follow for the class, you will see that it isn't any different than being in the traditional setting.

What did you look for when selecting an online program?

What do you wish you had looked for or asked?

The first thing I was looking for was the degree programs that were offered and what university worked well with the military and understood the professional lifestyle military service members have. It was important for me to select a university that was willing to work with these expectations.

How many times did you deploy while taking classes? How was that experience? Did time differences hurt, enhance, or not make a difference in your education experience?

I was deployed three times while taking classes. The time difference was nice

because it allowed me to work ahead and not even know it. It did make things difficult when we were on missions and I did not have access to the Internet, but working ahead and communicating with the professor about why I was away alleviated most, if not all, concerns.

Is your degree something that will help you in your military career, or is it more for your civilian career?

It will help in my military career, as I am now applying for Officer Training School to further my career in the military.

Have the recent changes in the GI Bill helped you? If so, in what ways?

The New GI Bill has made it easier to get payment for classes and allowed the university to submit the forms and receive the payment for the classes on time. This helped me out a lot, especially while I was deployed and didn't have the extra time to deal with that process.

Please tell us anything else about your distance learning experience that might be helpful for our readers who are already enrolled or are thinking of enrolling in a continuing education course.

Online education is a great way to complete your degree. It has everything that the traditional university has from the library to the bookstore, but you never have to leave home. And when you have to go somewhere, school can go with you. It may seem overwhelming at first, but it doesn't take long to get the hang of it and get caught up in a very rewarding educational experience. ●