MASTER REMOTE WORK PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

RURAL ONLINE INITIATIVE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to the Master Remote Work Professional online certificate course. This is a blended course, combining online work with interactive workshops. This educational program is designed to equip course participants with the tools and skills needed to transition from on-site work into a virtual remote work career.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The Master Remote Work Professional certificate course consists of nine core modules delivered in a self-paced, online format, integrated with interactive virtual workshops hosted via video conference. Participation in the workshops and learning modules alternate, based on the following schedule:

1 Interactive Workshop #1
- Introduction to the Rural Online Initiative
- Cohort introductions
- Educational tool training (Slack, Canvas, and Zoom)

2 Online Learning #1
- **Module 1:** Work Day
- **Module 2:** Communication
- **Module 3:** Workflow

3 Interactive Workshop #2
- Review content of Modules 1-3
- Discuss and apply content of Modules 1-3

4 Online Learning #2
- **Module 4:** Productivity & Time Management
- **Module 5:** Teamwork
- **Module 6:** Compliance

5 Interactive Workshop #3
- Review content of Modules 4-6
- Discuss and apply content of Modules 4-6

6 Online Learning #3
- **Module 7:** Critical Thinking
- **Module 8:** Virtual Careers
- **Module 9:** Remote Job Development

7 Interactive Workshop #4
- Review content of Modules 7-9
- Discuss and apply content of Modules 7-9
- Overview of remaining phases of the ROI program

The Rural Online Initiative hosts the course at a standard pace of one workshop per week (resulting in the completion of the certification portion of the ROI program in one month), or in an accelerated version with two workshops per week (with a total certification duration of 2 weeks).

ONLINE LEARNING

This educational program is designed to equip workers with the tools and skills they need to transition from on-site work into a virtual career. **The program consists of nine core modules with the following objectives:**

- **Module 1: Work Day**
  - **Summary:** Learn about the components of an average day in the life of a remote worker, including mobile office, flexible schedule, and equipment.
  - **Objectives:** Computer, webcam, and audio are set up with a professional background. Meeting and schedule are successfully coordinated and added to calendar.

- **Module 2: Communication**
  - **Summary:** Discuss the unique strategies and requirements of virtual communication, including styles, tools, and empathy.
  - **Objectives:** Messages are professional, clear, and accurate. Agenda and report are detailed and complete. Actively participated in meeting by contributing often.

- **Module 3: Workflow**
  - **Summary:** Understand the processes of task management, including projects, delegation, goals, and tracking.
  - **Objectives:** Project management tool successfully set up . Project includes discrete tasks, timeline, dependent tasks, and participants. Can update project regularly.

- **Module 4: Productivity & Time Management**
  - **Summary:** Evaluate the strategies for effective independent personal management, including productivity, motivation, and scheduling.
  - **Objectives:** Tracks time including detailed information. Daily priorities match task/project/team priorities. Schedule shows effective time management.

- **Module 5: Teams**
  - **Summary:** Learn about how teamwork occurs in a virtual work environment, including trust, project collaboration, and "netiquette."
  - **Objectives:** All phases of team collaboration are completed and collaborative task is finished. Participated actively and facilitated others' involvement.

- **Module 6: Compliance**
  - **Summary:** Discuss the legal precautions of working online, including information security, risk prevention, and office compliance.
  - **Objectives:** Password manager installed. Security checklist is complete and accurate. Can identify common security risks.

- **Module 7: Critical Thinking**
  - **Summary:** Understand how to problem solve autonomously, including finding resources for solutions, earning trust, and filtering information.
  - **Objectives:** List of resources are credible. Solution steps are clearly and accurately outlined. Resolution is succinctly summarized.

- **Module 8: Virtual Careers**
  - **Summary:** Evaluate and prepare for virtual career options, including personal branding, virtual job search processes, and remote industry options.
  - **Objectives:** Format for portfolio is clear; work portfolio is complete; work portfolio has been successfully shared and reviewed.

- **Module 9: Remote Job Development**
  - **Summary:** Design the remote career of your choice and prepare a proposal for your Program Coordinator.
  - **Objectives:** Program outcomes for all modules have been reviewed and evaluated; agenda for meeting with Program Coordinator is clear and complete.

A full course rubric can be viewed here.

The online courses are hosted by Utah State University and facilitated using Canvas, USU's learning management system.

INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS

The program includes four live, interactive workshops, hosted via video call using Zoom, a free video conferencing software. Workshops provide an opportunity for students to discuss career goals and review content from the modules in a virtual environment that mimics a real remote team.

Due to the virtual hosting of the workshops, you can attend the workshops from any location with Internet access. Each course typically hosts workshops on Thursdays, with two meeting time options for students to choose from: 1-2 p.m. OR 6-7 p.m. U.S. mountain time (3-4 p.m. or 8-9 p.m. ET).

Participation in all four workshops is mandatory for this course. The workshop schedule for each cohort is posted in the course description prior to enrollment. If you are not able to participate in any of the workshops, please enroll in a different section of the course that is compatible with your schedule.

PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Participation in the **Master Remote Work Professional** online certificate course is supervised by one of three program coordinators, based on where you live in the state. The program coordinators will help guide you through the Canvas course, share hosting responsibilities for the workshops, and provide mentoring and resources to help you successfully prepare for remote work and freelancing.

PROGRAM COHORT

The coordinators will also assign you to a cohort group of other students who are taking the course. You will practice using collaborative tools like **Slack** with others in your cohort group to practice and develop effective remote work communication skills.

PROGRAM RESULTS

Throughout the course, the assignments and modules you complete are designed to prepare you for a virtual career by producing results applicable in the virtual business world, including:

- Designing a digital work portfolio
- Mapping a career development plan
- Coordinating a virtual meeting
- Preparing a cloud-based agenda and meeting report
- Strategizing a project and workflow plan
- Using a problem-solving checklist

The following is a list of remote-friendly tools that are integral in distributed company operations that students are introduced to during the certification:

- Time Zone Conversion (i.e., World Time Buddy)
- Internet Speed Test (i.e., Speedtest)
- Email (i.e., Gmail)
- Chat & Messaging (i.e., Slack)
- Video call (i.e., Skype)
- Project Management (i.e., Trello)
- Spreadsheets (i.e., Google Sheets)
- Calendar (i.e., Google Calendar)
- Time Tracking (i.e., Harvest)
- File Sharing (i.e., Dropbox)
- Video conference (i.e., Zoom)
- VPN (i.e., Windscribe)
- Password manage (i.e., LastPass)
- Help function (i.e., Google Drive Support)
- Research (i.e., Google Search)
- Professional Networking (i.e., LinkedIn)
- Website Development (i.e., Wix)
- Freelancer Markets (i.e., Upwork)
- Education Platforms (i.e., Skillshare, Pluralsight)
- Virtual Job Board (i.e., FlexJobs)

In addition to hard skills, participants are also trained on the soft skills that are vital to success when working autonomously and with long-distance teams, such as:

- Written communication
- Verbal communication
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Time management

- Accountability
- Flexibility
- Attention to detail
- Knowledge management
- Risk management

- Collaboration
- Goal setting
- Emotional intelligence
- Organization

Upon graduation, each student will be presented with a certification of completion to add to their work portfolio, and will then be supported by Rural Online Initiative program coordinators as students start to develop the virtual career of their choice.

CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Although the Master Remote Work Professional certification program is a non-credit course, periodic online assessments are used to confirm and measure learning. The online assessments can be repeated if you need to improve a score on a particular element. To successfully complete the course and earn the certificate, you will need to do the following:

1. Complete all of the modules, including any assignments contained within each module.
2. Pass each assessment with a minimum score of 80 percent.
3. Attend four interactive workshops.

Upon successful completion of all requirements, you will be presented with a Certificate of Completion to add to your work portfolio. You will also be supported by Rural Online Initiative program coordinators as move forward through the Rural Online Initiative program and start to develop the virtual career of your choice.