



SOUTHERN UNION

STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

—— Distance Education ——

Southern Union State Community College
Distance Education Student Policy and Procedures Manual

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WELCOME

Thank you for considering Distance Education at Southern Union as a part of your educational plans. Rest assured that the online, hybrid, and virtual courses offered at Southern Union are the same in quality, are taught by instructors with the same academic qualifications, have the same learning outcomes and objectives, are equally transferable to other institutions, and are the same in credit hours and tuition cost as our traditional classes. The difference is in the delivery method.

PURPOSE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

Southern Union is committed to offering quality education that is affordable, accessible, equitable, and responsive to the diverse needs of its students. We meet this part of our college mission by offering courses that are conveniently available through online, virtual, and hybrid delivery. Southern Union now provides a great number of courses through distance education.

These courses are transferable to other accredited colleges and universities, exactly like the traditional classroom courses. If you are interested in finding out more about the transferability of Southern Union courses, make an [academic advising](#) appointment.

DEFINITIONS OF COURSE DELIVERY TYPES

Distance education courses are classified as either online, virtual, hybrid online, hybrid classroom, or videoconference. The Alabama Community College System (ACCS) has adopted the following definitions:

Online Course: Online courses are delivered asynchronously, which means there are no required face-to-face sessions within the course, and no requirements for on-campus activity. Faculty interact with students through assignments, discussion posts, email, virtual office hours, and other electronic/virtual means. Student identity verification will be required using the College's approved verification process.

Virtual Course: Virtual courses are delivered synchronously, which means there are required class meetings on specific days and times using an online video conferencing app like Zoom, to extend lectures and course activities to students remotely in real time. There are no requirements for on-campus activity. Student identity verification will be required using the College's approved verification process.

Hybrid Online Course: Hybrid Online courses require a combination of online and in-person activities, with more than 50% of the course content requiring online interaction. Some elements will have specified days, times, and locations when attendance is expected. Student identity verification will be required using the College's approved verification process.

Hybrid Classroom Course: Hybrid Classroom Courses require a combination of online and in-person activities, with 50% or less of the course content requiring online interaction. Some elements will have specified days, times, and locations when attendance is expected. Student identity verification will be required using the college's approved verification process.

Videoconference: Videoconference courses meet at an approved instructional site equipped for remote video instruction. The instructor and students will interact via two-way video. Students are expected to attend class in the videoconference classroom on the days and times specified in the class schedule. Student identity verification will be required using the College's approved verification process.

DEGREES AND CERTIFICATES THAT ARE AVAILABLE 100% ONLINE

At Southern Union, one degree and one short certificate may be earned entirely through distance education. These are the [Associate in Science Degree](#), a 60-64 credit hour associate degree consisting of general education core courses, and the [General Studies Short-Term Certificate](#), which requires a minimum of 27 credit hours of coursework. Curriculum guides for these options are available at www.suscc.edu by clicking on the **Programs** link at the top of the front page. Other degree and certificate options may be partially completed through distance education.

REQUIRED COMPUTER SKILLS AND TECHNOLOGY

Technical Skills Required

Students enrolled in a distance education course are responsible for having adequate computer skills to accomplish the required tasks. Instructors do not have time to teach these skills within the course. Students who do not possess the following skills will want to take a computer class to increase their computer knowledge before attempting a distance education class.

A basic knowledge of computer operations and Internet use is required to be successful in a distance education course. These are some key skills required:

- Knowledge of computer terminology, such as browser, operating system, application, software, files, documents, icon, etc.
- Knowledge of basic computer hardware and software functions, with the ability to perform computer operations, such as:
 - Using a keyboard and mouse
 - Managing files and folders (save, name, copy, move, backup, rename, delete, check properties)
 - Software installation, security, and virus protection
 - Using common software applications, such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and email
 - Knowledge of copying and pasting, spell-checking, and saving files in different formats
 - Uploading, downloading, and attaching files
- Ability to perform basic Internet skills, such as using a browser and accessing websites
- Ability to use online communication tools, such as email (create, send, receive, reply, print, insert/open attachments), discussion boards (read, search, post, reply, follow threads), chats, and messengers
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases
- Create online accounts



Technology Requirements

Students enrolling in distance education courses should have access to a reliable off-campus computer running an updated operating system and capable of downloading any software applications necessary for completing their course. The computer must be equipped with a working webcam and microphone and be connected to a reliable high-speed Internet service. A more complete list of required technology and technical skills for distance education students is on the Southern Union [Distance Education](#) webpage. The use of mobile devices for completing course requirements is not recommended and, at times, may not be allowed.

Students who cannot fulfill these requirements should not enroll in a distance education course (or, if already registered, should withdraw from the course during the drop/add period).

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Loss of Personal Computer Use

The College is not responsible for the possible loss of use of a student's personal computer through any mishap or misfortune. If a student's computer becomes inoperable during a semester, the student should immediately alert the course's instructor and seek alternative access to a reliable computer that meets distance education requirements as soon as possible. Many instructors won't consider technology issues an excuse for missing activity deadlines. In almost every case, students have access to a variety of oncampus computer labs in Opelika, Wadley, and Valley to complete activities in distance education courses. In an emergency, a student may request to borrow a laptop from the College for the remainder of a semester. This option is not available to students who are only taking online courses, as strictly online students cannot function at the college without a computer.

Computer Loans

There is a limited number of laptop computers available to currently enrolled students for semester-by-semester loan. To take advantage of Southern Union's laptop loan program, fill out and submit the [Student Technology Request](#) form on the SU website. Laptops are loaned on a first-come basis, as long as they are available.

Internet Connection Speed

A high-speed internet connection with speeds of 1.5 Mbps or higher is recommended for distance education courses. This ensures easy access to all of the course materials and resources. Streaming video is a good example of where a fast connection is necessary.



Why does Internet speed matter?

Many distance education courses make use of videos. Viewing a video is only possible if a certain amount of data is transferred to the student's computer in a timely manner. This data transfer speed is called "Internet speed."

Approximate download speeds of common types of Internet Service:

- Dial-up internet: 56 kbps (from the phone company)
- DSL internet: up to 140 Mbps (from the phone company)
- Cable internet: up to 500 Mbps (from the cable company)

Visit www.bandwidthplace.com to determine your computer's Internet speed.

Note: Dial-up connections cannot load data fast enough to play video at a normal rate. This causes the video to pause to let more data arrive. DSL and Cable connections are more than adequate to watch most online videos.

Southern Union State Community College provides high-speed wireless Internet access for student use in most buildings on campus. The College also maintains open computer labs with Internet access in the Learning Resource Center (LRC) on each campus. Students may use the computers in the LRC for coursework in distance education classes (except to take quizzes that require proctoring software) within the LRC hours of operation.

- **Myth:** Distance education courses at Southern Union are self-paced.
 ✓ **Fact:** Students are required to complete assigned coursework by the due dates indicated within the course.
- **Myth:** Distance education courses require no particular skills or knowledge of a computer.
 ✓ **Fact:** Students do need to have basic computer skills to use the tools for online coursework and communication.
- **Myth:** A smartphone or tablet is sufficient to complete all coursework.
 ✓ **Fact:** Students will need a computer (not a smartphone or tablet) that meets the basic technical requirements previously listed, as well as reliable internet access. Some computer programs used in online coursework are not supported on mobile devices and may not work correctly.
- **Myth:** Distance education students who do not have time to read the assignments or the ability to work online independently can just email lots of questions to the instructor.
 ✓ **Fact:** Instructors are available to answer questions, but cannot “teach” distance education students individually during office hours. Students must be able to follow directions and work independently, even without the benefit of face-to-face interaction with an instructor or peers, as in the case of a wholly online course.
- **Myth:** Distance education coursework can be completed in less time than that required for face-to-face courses.
 ✓ **Fact:** Students must be willing and able to commit their time – approximately 5-7 hours of work and study time per week, per course.
- **Myth:** Distance education courses do not require reading skills.
 ✓ **Fact:** Reading and comprehension (aside from motivation) are the most important skills required of an online student. Online coursework requires that students thoroughly read, comprehend, and follow directions for completing course requirements.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

General Information

When enrolled in a distance education course at Southern Union State Community College, students are expected to abide by the same guidelines that apply to traditional, face-to-face instructional courses. All policies that appear in the student code of conduct portion of the College’s [Student Handbook and Catalog](#), which is available in print form from the Admissions Office and in PDF format on the College website, apply to distance education (i.e., attendance, academic misconduct, plagiarism, cheating, harassment, etc.).

Other Policies and Information

Most of the policies and information for online students are the same as for traditional students. This information can be found on the Southern Union website. For information about admission/readmission, tuition, financial aid, etc., refer to the Southern Union website. Some specific pages on the SUSCC website that may be helpful are:

- [Academic Advising](#)
- [Admissions](#)
- [College Calendar](#) (Includes registration dates and times.)
- [Registration](#)
- [Elucian Experience](#) (Student portal to Canvas, email, and Banner)

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- [Financial Aid](#)

Enrollment Requirements

Enrollment requirements for distance education courses are the same as the requirements for traditional courses. In addition to meeting the requirements to enroll in the course, distance education students must also have access to a personal computer with a reliable high-speed Internet service, as well as a webcam and microphone for use during test proctoring or other required class activities. (**Note:** Do not plan to complete all activities in a distance education course with a cell phone or tablet.)

HOW TO COMPLETE DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSEWORK

Distance education courses at SUSCC are delivered using the **Canvas LMS** (Learning Management System) on the Internet. The College provides this educational platform for all courses, though traditional courses may not rely on it as heavily as online, hybrid, and virtual courses for the delivery of course content.

To participate in distance education courses, students will access their Canvas account from the [Ellucian Experience](#) portal, which is a central information hub with single sign-on that provides access to most school functions. Once logged in to Ellucian Experience, students will find links to access their Canvas, Banner, and student email accounts.

Canvas Dashboard

Canvas refers to their home screen as the “Dashboard.” Once successfully logged in, students will find links called “Course Cards” to each of their current semester’s courses on the Dashboard. To find materials, activities, and instructions for getting started on a specific course, click the course card on the Dashboard for that course. If the Dashboard view does not display course cards, change that by clicking the three vertical dots in the top right of the Canvas window and choosing “Card View”.



Questions about a course’s content and delivery can be answered by contacting the instructor. The instructor’s name and contact information will be on the “Front Page” of each course, which displays when the course card is clicked.

Other Education Management Software

Although Canvas is the primary learning platform for distance education courses at the College, some online, hybrid, virtual, and traditional courses may use additional applications, such as publisher-provided course management systems, test proctoring services, or AI detection software. Most of these will be integrated into Canvas, and detailed instructions for use of any additional software should be included in each Canvas course. Support contact information will be provided by the instructor in case technical support is needed for integrated applications.

Textbooks and/or Access Codes

As with traditional classes, most online, virtual, and hybrid courses require the purchase of textbooks and/or third-party access codes to facilitate instruction in the course. Students should consider these costs before registering for any course. Visit the Southern Union [Bookstore](#) (run by Barnes & Noble) for textbook information and costs.

ELECTRONIC SECURITY

Course content delivered through electronic media (Canvas, student email, etc.) is the foundation of distance education. Just as in traditional methods of communication, electronic messages may be intercepted or received by individuals other than the intended recipient. Southern Union State Community College works under the protection of secure passwords and firewalls. Therefore, it is extremely important that login information be kept secure. Students should always use their school-issued email address or the Canvas Inbox rather than a personal email address when emailing instructors or others at the College.

Messages intercepted or received by individuals other than the intended recipient are not the responsibility of SUSCC. Neither is the College responsible for any loss of data or hardware damage due to computer viruses transmitted through online course interactions.

IDENTITY CONFIRMATION

To receive college credit, a student enrolled in an online, virtual, or hybrid course must be the same person who participates in that course. Course participation includes all course activities, assignments, and assessments. To ensure this integrity, students enrolled in online and virtual courses will be required to take at least two proctored tests during a semester. For proctored tests, students are recorded as they test and are required to present valid photo identification (e.g., driver's license, College ID, military ID) to the camera before the test begins. Students enrolled in hybrid courses are required to present a valid photo ID when attending any on-campus meetings or while using test-proctoring software as required during the course. Any student who cannot present such identification will not be allowed to participate in the activity.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By registering in a distance education course, students commit to adhering to standards of integrity as they relate to their coursework, instructors, and fellow students. These standards include honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

Students agree to:

- Complete all assignments and tests solely on their own, except where instructions indicate student cooperation is acceptable.
- Under no circumstances, except with the instructor's permission, give other students access to their coursework.
- Properly acknowledge all external sources used in their work.
- Create one user account as required and only use the created or assigned login credentials, passwords, access codes, etc., themselves.
- Refrain from activities that would dishonestly alter their grade or that of another student.
- Use Artificial Intelligence software only with the instructor's permission.
- Comply with all standards of academic conduct in the Southern Union Student Handbook and Catalog.

Failure to comply with these standards may result in such academic penalties as are outlined in the Student Handbook and Catalog, which include failing an assignment, failing the course, and/or referral to the Associate Dean of Students.

ATTENDANCE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION CLASSES

Course Attendance

According to the College's attendance policy (see the College's [Student Handbook & Catalog](#)), students must demonstrate a minimum level of participation to receive college credit for a course.

Weekly participation is expected in all courses. Activities and assignments required for students to demonstrate active weekly participation are determined by the course instructor and are listed in the course syllabus and/or Canvas modules. These may include discussion forums, chat sessions, group projects, quizzes, homework, tutorials, or any other activity deemed important for accomplishing the course objectives.

Specific attendance requirements by distance education course type:

- **Online Course Attendance:** Classes labeled as “online” do not have required on-campus meetings or tests. All course content is provided in the Canvas LMS and/or integrated applications by the course instructor. Student participation is required to receive college credit. Participation is demonstrated by weekly activities indicated by the instructor and submitted in Canvas.
- **Hybrid Course Attendance:** Hybrid course participation will include periodic mandatory on-campus class sessions and online assignments. Students should check their class schedule in Canvas closely for any required on-campus meeting(s) as attendance will be recorded. On-campus tests, labs, or other activities as indicated in the course syllabus may be required. There will likely be an on-campus final exam. A student who cannot appear on campus for the final exam at the required time must contact the instructor a **minimum of three (3) weeks in advance** to request arrangements for an approved alternative session. Approval is determined by the importance of the excuse and at the instructor's discretion.
- **Virtual Course Attendance:** Virtual courses are a mixture of online class meetings using a video conferencing application (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet) at a weekly class time published in the registration materials and coursework submitted online in Canvas. Attendance during the scheduled class time is required. Check the schedule closely to be sure that the meeting times for the class do not interfere with other scheduled activities. There are no in-class meetings or activities.

FINANCIAL AID ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION

At the beginning of each semester, instructors are required by the federal government to complete an Attendance Verification for all students in each course. In a distance education context, a student logging into an online class is insufficient proof of academic attendance. At the end of the first week of class, instructors will document whether each student has participated in the class by completing a specific course-related activity. Any students who have not completed the attendance verification activity will be reported as not attending the class.

Students who are reported for non-attendance in a class will be withdrawn by the Financial Aid Office, whether they have a financial aid award or not. This may affect any financial aid awards a student may have. A student may ask the instructor for readmission to the dropped course before the deadline date assigned by the Financial Aid Office. It is the decision of the instructor whether the student will be allowed to be reinstated in the course.

SOFTWARE SUPPORT

The College is committed to providing students with quality and timely technical support in their distance education classes.

If you experience technical problems in a distance education course hosted on the College's LMS, first consult the Distance Education FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) page posted on the Distance Education webpage found by clicking the "Programs" tab on the College website (www.suscc.edu). Below are some of the more common technical issues and solutions for online students.

- **Course links that do not work:** For links in a course that do not work or link to the wrong document or webpage, contact the course instructor.
- **Canvas/Banner/Email login issues:** For problems logging into Ellucian Experience (where you'll find links to Canvas, Banner, and SU email), email support@suscc.edu or call any campus and dial extension 5499, 5346, or 5489 during normal college business hours.
- **Quizzes using test security software:** The first point of contact for a quiz issue is the course instructor. If you do not receive a response within 24 hours, email support@suscc.edu or call any campus and dial extension 5499, 5346, or 5489 during normal business hours. In an emergency situation, students may be able to take quizzes on the computers in the LRC on any campus during college operating hours. Call the LRC during operating hours to confirm this. (LRC extensions: Opelika – 5406/5407/5409, Valley – 5219, Wadley – 5130/5131/5132) It is imperative that students not wait to take a test until the last few hours before a test deadline, in case there is an unforeseen issue. Many instructors do not give extensions due to poor planning.
- **Assignment submissions in Canvas:** Contact the course instructor for an issue with an assignment. If the problem seems to be with Canvas, search the Canvas Guides, or contact Canvas 24/7 Support by clicking the **Help** button in the blue global navigation bar on the left side of the Canvas dashboard.
- **Publisher websites:** A student experiencing technical problems in online course material hosted on a publisher-provided course management system, such as MyLab, MindTap, Launchpad, etc., should contact their instructor. The instructor may direct the student to contact the publisher's technical support team. Follow the instructions for obtaining publisher technical support provided in the course modules and/or the course syllabus. When seeking assistance from a source other than the instructor, keep the instructor informed during the process, in case the problem is not resolved immediately.
- **Technical problems with the Canvas LMS:**
 - Students have access to 24/7 technical support for Canvas available by clicking on the **Help** link in the blue global navigation bar on the left side of the Canvas Dashboard. Canvas Help is available through a chat session or by calling the technical support number listed in the Help menu.
 - Canvas Support cannot help you with login information for Ellucian Experience or publisher content within a course. Email support@suscc.edu from your SUSCC email address and provide your student A-number for password assistance to Ellucian Experience. Contact support for a specific publisher to get help with accessing their content.

If these resources do not provide a solution to the problem, then contact the course's instructor. If the course instructor is unable to help resolve the issue, contact the College's Distance Education Department by email or phone. Be sure to update the instructor throughout the support process.

Distance Education Contact Information

Dafni Greene, Director of Distance Education: dgreene@suscc.edu, 334-745-6437 x5370

Nancy Bramlett, nbramlett@suscc.edu, ext. 334-745-6437 x5516

Beth Barks, bbarks@suscc.edu, 334-745-6437 x5378

Southern Union State Community College does not provide hardware support or repair. If enrolled in a distance education course, students are responsible for having a certain level of technical ability or locating outside help when experiencing issues with hardware, software installation, settings, etc., on their personal computer. A reliable computer and Internet connection are vital to success in distance education courses. The lack of such will not be an excuse for poor performance in a class.

COMMUNICATION IN DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

Students should check the syllabus provided in a Canvas course for instructor-specific policies regarding the timeline for responses to student communication (email, discussion posts, etc.) in distance education courses. Instructors will post office hours in the syllabus. These reflect the times they will respond to student communication without long delays. Outside of these availability hours, instructors should respond to you within 24 hours, except during holidays, weekends, and college closings. In those cases, instructors may not respond until classes resume.

Netiquette (Online Etiquette)

What does “netiquette” mean? The word netiquette is a combination of “net” (from “Internet”) and “etiquette”. It means respecting other users’ views and displaying common courtesy in email and when posting to online discussion groups.

Here are a few dos and don'ts related to online communication.

Do...

- Be prepared for some delays in response time, as "virtual" communication tends to be slower than "face-to-face" communication.
- Check the syllabus and course policies stated by the instructor to know what to expect about the instructor's turnaround time for responding.
- Engage in the provided discussion forums as often as possible. Ask questions and respond to questions in the provided discussion forums if the answers might benefit classmates.
- Contact the instructor according to their preferred method of contact in the course syllabus with anything personal or that would not be of interest to your classmates.
- Be patient and respectful of others and the ideas and opinions they post online.
- Be courteous and precise.
- Always use an instructor's proper title: Dr., Mrs., Mr., Ms. Unless specifically invited, do not refer to an instructor by first name.
- Use professional language and grammar as you would at a job. For example, the pronoun “I” should always be capitalized, and so should proper nouns, even though you may not do that when texting a friend.
- Refrain from personal abuse. You may politely express disagreement with what someone says, but don't call them names or threaten them with personal violence.
- Contact the instructor if you feel that you have received an inappropriate email within your online course.

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- When emailing an instructor, include a clear, descriptive subject line. Also, keep related emails in the same thread. Only begin a new email thread for a new topic. That way, you and your instructor can refer back to information earlier in your conversation without searching through previous emails.
- Proofread your message carefully for errors before sending it.

Don't...

- Use inappropriate language - this includes, but is not limited to, the use of profanity, sarcasm, insults, or terms that imply obscene, violent, or otherwise inappropriate subjects.
- Post copyrighted material without an appropriate citation. When in doubt, check with the instructor.
- Post inappropriate materials—for example, do not post pictures that are violent in nature, pictures of scantily clad or nude people, pictures of people with alcoholic beverages, or images of others without their knowledge or permission.
- Post in ALL CAPS, as this is perceived as shouting.
- Overuse emoticons.
- Use abbreviations or informal language and grammar, such as "I'll C U L8R" or "what time am i meeting u at southern union".
- Send heated messages, even if you are provoked. Likewise, if you should happen to receive a heated message, report it to the instructor. Do not respond to it.
- Send an email to the entire class.

Discussion Board Posts

When posting on the Discussion Board in an online class:

DO...

- Make posts that are on-topic and within the scope of the course material.
- Take your posts seriously. Review and edit your replies before posting them.
- Be as brief as possible while still making a thorough comment.
- Always give proper credit when referencing or quoting another source.
- Be sure to read all messages in a thread before replying.
- Don't repeat someone else's post without adding something of your own to it.
- Avoid short, generic replies such as "I agree." Always include why you agree and/or add to the previous point.
- Always be respectful of others' opinions, even when they differ from your own. Be open-minded.
- When you disagree with someone, you should express your differing opinion in a respectful, noncritical way.
- Do not make personal or insulting remarks.

Note: Instructors will monitor student discussion posts in their classes and ensure that unsuitable posts are removed as soon as possible. If an inappropriate post is for a graded discussion, the student will receive a grade of 0. The inappropriateness of a post is up to the instructor's discretion.

STUDENT PROFILES

Each user in Canvas has a Canvas Profile, which is useful for promoting interaction with classmates in distance education courses. Students are encouraged to upload a suitable photo to their student profile in Canvas and/or their college email. This photo must be a "yearbook" style image of only you (not a group photo). In other words, your photo should be a headshot with a plain background and contain no images

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of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, profanity, racial slurs, offensive slogans, or clothing that is excessively revealing. Instructors will monitor the profiles of students in their classes and ensure that unsuitable photos are removed as soon as possible.

TESTING POLICIES IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Hybrid classes

Hybrid classes require on-campus meetings and typically require some on-campus testing. Tests may be administered and taken either online or in class, as required by the instructor. Test proctoring software may be required by the instructor for online and/or classroom tests. This software “locks” the computer screen to prevent access to other websites during the testing process. An instructor may also require a recording of the examination process using a webcam and a microphone. Students can find more information about the test proctoring software used by Southern Union instructors on the SUSCC website.

Most hybrid classes require on-campus testing for the final exam. This may occur during a published meeting date or at a time and date announced during the semester. Please check the announcement closely and note the building and room where the exam will be held, as most staff will not be aware of the location of each test. Be prepared to present a photo ID for admission to the testing location.

Online and Virtual classes

Online and virtual classes do not require any on-campus meetings, and all testing takes place online.

At a minimum, the final exam and a mid-semester exam in all online classes and most virtual classes will be proctored using test proctoring software. This means that before beginning a test, the student will be required to show a government or school-issued picture ID to the camera on their computer. They will also be required to do a room scan with their computer to prove they don't have any materials that the teacher does not allow for the test. Details on what is and is not allowed for a test in a Canvas course can be found in the course syllabus or Canvas course modules. Students should contact the instructor before beginning a test if they have questions.

Each student and their computer screen will be videoed as they take any test with proctoring software, which is why a working camera and mic are required on the computer used to test. Tests taken with proctoring software will also require a private location for testing. There cannot be anyone else in the room, so testing in a public location, such as a library or the SUSCC student center, is not allowed.

As representatives of the College with a proctoring service or any third-party service, students are expected to be respectful and behave professionally. Unacceptable conduct includes inappropriate language. This and other offensive behaviors will result in the loss of the privilege of registering for distance education courses and other possible disciplinary actions.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

At Southern Union State Community College, students are afforded the same rights and services in distance education courses as offered to students enrolled in traditional, on-campus courses.

As a student enrolled in a distance education course at Southern Union State Community College, students are required to follow the same guidelines and policies that apply to students enrolled in traditional courses. These are found in the [Student Handbook and Catalog](#).

The responsibilities of students enrolled in distance education courses include:

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1. Students must always use their college-issued email address for all email communication with Southern Union personnel. For security purposes, personnel may not open or respond to personal email addresses.
2. Log in to your distance education course(s) on the day classes begin each semester so you don't miss important information or a deadline. Students **must** log in to their course(s) within the first week of the course start date and complete the assignment designated to verify attendance by the deadline specified in the assignment. If you fail to do so, the instructor will report you as not attending, and you will be dropped from the course. Check the course calendar in Canvas for the attendance verification deadline date.
3. Students are responsible for the security of their login credentials for email, the student web portal (Banner), Canvas, and other electronic media used through the College which might contain identifying information.
4. Students should never share personal information through digital communication, because email or social media messages may be easily intercepted or received by individuals other than the intended recipient.
5. Drop/add dates for each semester apply to all Southern Union State Community College courses. Therefore, all refund and payment deadlines apply to distance education courses and traditional courses alike. Refund policies can be found in the [Student Handbook and Catalog](#), and the class schedule in Banner.
6. During registration, courses that do not achieve minimum enrollment numbers, based on current administrative guidelines, will be removed (cancelled) from the schedule of active course offerings. If a course is cancelled, the students enrolled will be notified by phone and/or email. They will have a limited time at the beginning of the semester to add a new course to replace the one that was cancelled. Each student is responsible for checking phone and email messages from the College.
7. Students will be held to the requirements posted in the instructor's course syllabus and in Canvas modules for each course they take.
8. All course complaints should first be discussed with the instructor. If the issue is not resolved at that level, the student should request a conference with the department/division chairperson. As a last resort, the student may file a formal academic appeal by completing the appropriate form. Academic Appeal forms may be requested in any Instructional Dean's office. Additional details regarding complaints and appeals are located in the [Student Handbook & Catalog](#).
9. Southern Union State Community College does not provide Internet access or computer use to students when they are not on one of our campuses. The College maintains computer labs on each campus with internet access that students may use during posted hours of operation. The College also provides wireless Internet service in almost every building on each campus. However, the College does not hold any responsibility for interruptions in Internet or Wi-Fi service or the loss of use of a student's personal computer through any mishap or misfortune.
10. For certain courses, additional software may be required to interact with the course. These additional requirements will be indicated in the course syllabus. The acquisition and installation of such software is the responsibility of the student.
11. Students are responsible for maintaining up-to-date, effective virus protection software on their personal hardware. Although the College takes reasonable precautions to prevent transmission of harmful files, no computer network is impenetrable. Therefore, the College assumes no responsibility for loss of data or other damage resulting from the transmission of computer viruses that may occur during online course interactions.

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STUDENT SERVICES

Access to Campus Facilities and Services

Distance education students are entitled to use all on-campus facilities, such as libraries, bookstores, tutoring labs, and computer labs, with presentation of a valid [student ID](#). In addition, links on the College's website provide access to or information on all student resources and services, including the [Student Handbook & Catalog](#), registration, library/research assistance, advising, financial aid, tutoring, and more.

Admissions to Online/Hybrid/Virtual Courses

There are no restrictions on which students may sign up for online/hybrid/virtual courses. The exception to this is that each semester, students living in the dormitories in Wadley must sign up for at least 12 hours of in-class classes before they are eligible to sign up for online courses.

COLLEGE POLICIES

Make-up Policy

Students are expected to adhere to the activity deadlines set by the instructor in each class. Instructors are not required to provide opportunities for make-up work. An instructor's policies regarding make-up work should be clearly defined in the course syllabus.

Out-of-State Students

Southern Union has joined the [National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements](#) or NC-SARA. The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement is an agreement among member states, districts, and territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take distance education courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in a state other than their home state.

For additional policies, see the [Student Handbook & Catalog](#).

PRIVACY AND DIGITAL SECURITY

Privacy Statements for Canvas and Integrated Applications

Privacy Statements for each tool used in distance education where students are required to enter personal information to log in can be found on the [Login & Technical Support](#) page on the SUSCC website. Please email support@suscc.edu if you have difficulty locating these statements.

Policy for Protecting the Privacy of Students Enrolled in Distance Education Courses

FERPA: Southern Union State Community College protects the privacy of all students, including those enrolled in distance education courses/programs, through strict adherence to the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974](#) (FERPA). The official FERPA statement is available for students and public view in the [Student Handbook & Catalog](#).

Secure Login and Password: Each distance education faculty member and student will enter their unique SUSCC email and password to access the Canvas learning management system. This combination of the

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user's unique email and password identifies faculty members and students to the system upon each visit. All parties accept responsibility for the security of their personal passwords and must not share them with anyone. Student and faculty information is protected and separated from other users within the Canvas learning/teaching environment and from outside intruders.

The Distance Education Department considers all account login information, grades, and other student information confidential. For additional account security, users should change the default password in their Canvas account upon the first login. Passwords should be kept confidential to prevent unauthorized access to coursework. Forgotten passwords must be reset by contacting support@suscc.edu.

Additional Security of Online Coursework: Faculty members teaching online classes will promote the security of students' personal data and course grades by utilizing the course management system grade book that (1) contains only students enrolled through the Student Information System and (2) prohibits students from accessing other students' grades. Grades should not be posted in any manner that identifies students.

Many security features, such as those listed below, are provided within the course management system. Instructors are encouraged to utilize as many of these as necessary to ensure the safety, security, and integrity of student coursework.

- Question groups that randomize the selection of quiz questions for each student.
- Instructor-provided passwords for quizzes, tests, and other graded assignments.
- Time limits for quiz/test attempts.
- Automatic shuffling of questions and shuffling of multiple-choice responses between student quiz/test attempts.
- Browser security settings (lockdown browser), prohibiting access to other online sites and/or prohibiting printing during quizzes and tests.
- Limiting student access to quiz/test grades or to review of graded quizzes/tests until all submissions have been graded.
- Quiz/test item presentation options (one question per page, no returning to previous questions, etc.).
- Limiting the number of attempts per quiz/test.
- Time delays between subsequent attempts of quizzes or tests that allow multiple attempts

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against any qualified person regardless of disability. The College strives to create a welcoming environment and will work in good faith to meet the needs of all populations. For more information and how to contact the ADA coordinator on each campus, see the [Accessibility Services/ADA page](#) on the SUSCC website.