

# ATTENDANCE AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

All Students, both registered and on the waitlist, are expected to attend the first class meeting. Instructors may drop all registered and waitlisted students who do not attend the first day of class, and they are required to drop those who

stop attending prior to the census date for each class. They may also drop registered students who stop attending after census but before the final drop deadline for each class. Students are ultimately responsible for dropping their classes and withdrawing from the college, and should initiate and/or confirm the drop themselves to avoid improper fee assessments.

All students admitted to the colleges of the Ventura County Community College District are expected to attend classes regularly, both because continuity of attendance is necessary for the individual and group progress in any class, and because financial support of the college is dependent upon student attendance. Absence for any reason does not relieve the student from the responsibility of completing all class requirements.

Additionally, it is the student's responsibility to be aware of the attendance and absence policies of the instructor for each class in which they are enrolled at the beginning of the semester. When a student's absences exceed 1/9 of the total class, contact hours for the session (e.g. absence from the equivalent of two weeks of a regular semester-long class), the instructor may drop the student from the class and record a grade in accordance with the policy for dropping a course.

## Grading System and Practices

Work in all gradable courses shall be graded in accordance with the policies and provisions adopted by the Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD) Board of Trustees.

## Units of Credit

The Carnegie unit formula applies to all credit courses offered by the College, whether or not applicable to the associate degree. "One credit hour of community college work (one unit of credit) requires a minimum of 48 hours of lecture, study, or laboratory work at colleges operating on the semester system."

The colleges of the Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD) bases the semester unit on one lecture class period of 50 minutes each week of a minimum 16-week semester. For practical purposes, the following terms are synonymous: unit, semester unit, semester hour, credit, credit hour.

For purposes of sections dealing with standards for probation and dismissal, all units attempted means all units of credit for which the student was enrolled in any college or university, regardless of whether the student completed the courses or received any credit or grade.

## Distance Education

Ventura College provides access to education through the use of technology beyond the traditional patterns of campus-based education and programs. A variety of courses are offered fully online, partially online, or as face-to-face web-enhanced courses. Courses are taught by the same qualified instructors and follow the same curriculum and

standards as classroom-based courses. Distance Education courses provide flexibility in scheduling and are especially helpful to self-directed learners. It is recommended that students be comfortable with computers, particularly the internet, before taking an online or hybrid course. As 21st century learners, all students will likely have some level of interaction with technology as part of the educational experience at Ventura College.

## Drop Policy for Distance Education Courses

For Distance Education classes, specifically those that are fully online, the drop policies of the individual instructor (as stated in the course syllabus) may vary but are based upon the following:

- All students are expected to attend the online class regularly, for a minimum number of hours and/or to complete a minimum number of assignments or quizzes as determined by the instructor.
- Students enrolled in online classes must regularly log in and actively participate or they may be considered non-participatory and be dropped.
- Although it is the responsibility of the student to officially withdraw from a class, the instructor has the authority to drop a student for lack of active participation. The instructor is not required to notify the student after having provided students with the drop policy in the course syllabus.
- Specific assignments within an online course can act as attendance or student activity indicators. If the assignment or activity is not completed by a given date, then a student is considered inactive and may be dropped. Attendance assignments or student activity indicators will be determined by individual instructors.
- Attendance assignments or student activity indicators must be clearly defined in the course syllabus and fall into one of the following categories:
  - Any assignment given before the census or drop dates.
  - Assignments or activities indicating that the student has begun to participate in the online class.
  - Completion of assignments and activities by due dates.

## Regular Substantive Contact Policy

"Regular substantive contact" describes the minimum frequency of quality instructor-student interaction in a distance education class.

"Substantive interaction" between instructor and students is regular communication between the two parties. As in a face-to-face course, the instructor must be able to initiate and participate in student discussions or the equivalent in an online environment via a variety of modalities in the district provided Learning Management System (LMS). The instructor must regularly monitor and moderate any student assignments or activities in the online classroom in which students interact with each other. The instructor must be available to answer students' questions about both the material and the course itself in an efficient and timely manner. The instructor must also provide regular and timely feedback on, and assessment of, student work; for example, the instructor should respond to student emails within the instructor's stated availability contained in the syllabus; the instructor should provide feedback and/or grades on assignments within a week and/or within the instructor's stated availability contained in the syllabus. In the context of a Distance Education (DE) or partially online, the instructor must spend approximately as much time on these interactions as would be spent for a face-to-face course.

The modes that a DE instructor can use to create regular substantive contact are almost limitless but should be easily accessible for the students and, when in question, verifiable. Use of the district provided LMS provides both accessibility and verifiability. The district provided LMS and synchronous technologies includes: online chat (scheduled or unscheduled), telephone contact, video conferencing, virtual field trips, virtual meetings, or online presentation platforms such as ConferZoom; asynchronous technologies include email and other correspondence, discussion forums or boards, class announcements via a LMS homepage, websites, blogs, podcasts, voicemail, SMS/text messaging, or e-lectures. Neither of these lists is exhaustive, as there are always new student learning technologies available online at any given time. Any accessible medium (in compliance with Section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the CCCC Distance Learning Access Guidelines) is acceptable for facilitating regular substantive contact.

**Links to Regulations:**

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office – Distance Education Guidelines (<https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/What-we-do/Educational-Programs-and-Professional-Development/Distance-Education/>)

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office – Distance Education Access Guidelines for Students with Disabilities (<https://www.cccco.edu/About-Us/Chancellors-Office/Divisions/Educational-Services-and-Support/What-we-do/Educational-Programs-and-Professional-Development/Distance-Education/>)