San Antonio College

Distance Learning Handbook

Contents

SAC Distance Education Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide San Antonio College students with quality instruction and student support services to help them reach their academic competencies, critical thinking skills, communication proficiency, and education/career goals.

Advising for Distance Education Courses and/or SAC Online Programs

Questions about admissions, registration, entrance requirements, degree planning, transfer issues, and career counseling can be answered by any SAC Counselor or Guidance Associate. For specific information about "getting started" with SAC or contact information to the SAC Guidance Offices, visit the SAC Guidance Services webpage. Academic advising for SAC courses is done through the use of SAC Faculty Advisors. For contact information about academic advising for SAC online certificate or degree programs, visit the SAC Distance Education Online Degree Page or SAC Distance Education Online Certificate page or e-mail dst-ACOL@alamo.edu for answers to your questions.

Academic Appeals

A student has a maximum of one (1) year from the end of the semester or term in which the final grade was issued to request a review of the grade or petition for a change of grade. The responsibility for determining all grades and for judging the quality of academic performance in a course rests with the instructor assigned to the course. A student who believes that the grade received is incorrect should schedule a conference with the instructor and provide supporting documentation to resolve the issue. Grade changes require the approval of the instructor and the respective department chair. When the instructor cannot be located in a timely manner by the student and the department chair, the student's grade appeal can be initiated with the department chair. Although appeals are typically conducted in person, distance education students may make alternative arrangements.

If students are not satisfied with an instructor's decision, they may initiate an Academic Grievance within five (5) days of the instructor's decision. See **Academic Grievance Procedure** in **District, State and Federal Regulations**.

Authenticating the identity of students enrolled in Distance Education Courses

San Antonio College currently uses the Instructure/Canvas learning management system to manage all Distance Learning courses. Canvas is also used in several hybrid and face-to-face courses that require use of technology. Courses taught using Canvas can be accessed through http://aces.alamo.edu learning portal and require a unique user name and password to obtain access. Students will receive a password and account designation upon completing the course registration process. According to the Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources Procedure (C.1.9.1 specifically pages 6-7), to maintain the privilege of using SAC account designation to access their distance learning courses, STUDENT must not defeat system security by "cracking" or guessing and applying the identification or password of another user. Since any account can serve as an entry point for theft, damage or unauthorized use, users shall protect the confidentiality of their personal identification codes and passwords (this

provision does not prohibit system administrators and other authorized personnel from using security scan programs within the scope of their authority). Furthermore, users shall not attempt to make any unauthorized changes to data or attempt to intercept or access data or communications intended for another. Students are fully responsible for all activities that occur under his or her password.

STUDENT agrees to (a) immediately notify SAC academic department of any unauthorized use of his or her password or account or any other breach of security, and (b) ensure that he or she exits from his or her account at the end of each session. San Antonio College cannot and will not be liable for any loss or damage arising from the STUDENT's failure to comply with the Appropriate Use of Information Technology Resources procedure.

Alamo Colleges further understands that it is no longer secure to use just a pin or password to protect course information. Alamo Colleges is currently is in the process of implementing a multifactor authentication process using behavioral biometric based authentication system – BioSig ID. Using this new system, students will be required authenticate and identify their presence by using behavioral biometrics, such as gestures/writing patterns.

Furthermore, violations of this policy by a student user shall be determined a violation of the student code of conduct and may result in loss of SAC log in credentials and other disciplinary actions.

Computer Requirements for Distance Education Courses

San Antonio College uses the Instructure/Canvas learning management system for distance learning courses. A high speed internet connection is suggested for best results with the content available within the Canvas system. To determine whether or not your computer software is sufficient for the Canvas system OR to locate additional resources which might be needed in some of the SAC distance learning courses, visit the SAC Distance Learning and Alamo Colleges eLearning Resources websites.

Distance Learning Student Orientation and Readiness

A Student Orientation to Distance Learning course has been prepared for anyone who might be interested in registering for a distance learning course at San Antonio College. This course is accessible to all students enrolled in Distance Learning courses. To visit the student orientation, access ACES, "My Courses" tab and select "OLRN – Student Orientation to Distance Learning course". If you have additional questions, please contact the Student Mega Lab unit, Office of Technology Services department at (210) 486-0160 or email sac-megalab@alamo.edu.

Online learning requires motivation, self-discipline, savvy computer skills, strong study habits, and effective time management. To determine your level of "readiness" for taking online courses, you can access an inventory called Smarter Measure. Smarter Measure provides you with an indication of the degree to which a distance learning environment will be a good fit for you. Visit the SAC Department of Distance Learning website and select the "Getting Started" section for additional information. You can also directly access http://sac.smartermeasure.com to get started.

Bookstore and Textbook Information

Textbook information for your distance education courses will be provided for you in your class syllabus. Textbook(s) and other required materials can be purchased from any retailer or rented. If a

book is listed, it is required. Be sure to check for the correct ISBN as listed in the syllabus. Some courses use open educational resources (OER), which will be embedded into the course materials or provided through links at no cost to you. Always consult with your professor if you are uncertain about what resources you need to purchase.

Complaints and Grievances

Issues or complaints against distance learning courses or instructors will be directed through the respective departmental chain: instructor, department chair, dean, vice president of Students and Academic Success. Please consult the SAC Catalog for detailed instructions on the SAC grievance procedure.

Course Grades and Transcript Access

Final grades for all of your SAC courses will be available to you within one week after the end of the semester through the Alamo Colleges ACES (Alamo Colleges Educational Services) Portal. Select the "Student" tab, "Web services" channel. Next select the "Student and Financial Aid" link. On the menu displayed, select "Student Record". To view the final grades, select the link that states "Final Grades".   For more information access the "How to Check Your Final Grades in ACES" eClip.

disAbility Services

Students enrolled in distance education courses with SAC who have a documented disability are entitled to equal opportunities. Reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a diagnosed physical and/or learning disability who have been admitted to SAC and requested accommodations will be considered. For detailed information about the Disability Services that are available at SAC, visit the Guidance Services website.

Family Education Rights & Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

In compliance with the Texas "Open Records" Act and the Buckley Amendment (Public Law 93-579), SAC will consider the following information to be "public or directory information" unless the individual student properly advises the registrar's office in writing that his/her name not be included or released as public information:

• Name
• Date and place of birth
• Current and permanent address
• Telephone listing
• Major and minor
• Current class schedule
• Number of hours enrolled current semester
• Classification
• Marital status
• E-mail address
• Degrees and awards received
• Dates of attendance

- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- All previous educational agencies or institutions attended

Financial Aid http://mysaccatalog.alamo.edu/content.php?catoid=91&navoid=3143

Students enrolled in distance education courses with SAC who are interested in applying for Financial Aid should begin the application process early to ensure that the process is complete prior to registration. **NOTE: The deadline to have ALL of your paperwork submitted to the SAC Financial Aid is as follows for each of the respective semesters: Fall – July 1st; Spring – November 1st; Summer – April 1st** Visit the SAC Financial Aid webpage for specific details on how to apply for Financial Aid.

Grades from http://mysaccatalog.alamo.edu/content.php?catoid=91&navoid=3145

Grading System

Course instructors establish grading policy in their respective syllabi. Permanent grades are recorded only at the end of each semester/session. The grades used are:

- A   (excellent/exceptional performance)
- B   (above average)
- C   (average)
- D   (below average/pass)
- F   (failure)
- I   (incomplete) *
- IP (in-progress) **
- NC (non-credit)
- W (withdrawal)
- WS (withdrawal, SB 1231)
- WX (withdrawal exemption, SB 1231)
- WM (military withdrawal)
- CR (non-traditional credit only)
- AU (audit)
- P   (pass)
- NR (not recorded)

*Incomplete Grades

The conditional grade of "I" may be issued to a student having a passing average on all completed coursework but for a justified reason, such as illness or death in the family or by providential hindrance, has been prevented from taking the final examination or completing other required coursework. The "I" becomes an "F" in one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the end of the term unless the student completes the balance of the coursework with a performance grade of "D" or higher. Re-enrollment in the course will not resolve the "I."

In-Progress Grades

A final grade of "IP" may be assigned to students in developmental courses who have not adequately mastered developmental course content during a given semester or term yet who, in the instructor's judgment, have the potential to successfully complete the coursework. Students must retake courses for which an "IP" grade has been recorded in order to have the IP replaced with a regular letter grade.

Midterm Grades

Faculty will post midterm grades to keep students informed of their progress. Midterm grades may be viewed online through ACES. Midterm grades are for informational purposes only and not final grades of record.

Grade Availability

At the end of the term, students for whom no final grade is posted by the faculty will have a grade of NR (Not Recorded) assigned. Students should follow up with their instructor or, should the instructor not be available, the department chair regarding questions about grades.

Grade Changes

See Academic Appeals section under Grade Changes

Graduation from SAC

During the final semester of your degree or certificate program with SAC, a Graduation Application must be completed and filed with the Registrar's Office in partial fulfillment of graduation requirements. Deadlines for "Application for Graduation" are published in the SAC Academic Calendar. An "Application for Graduation" can be obtained and completed within the SAC Admissions site.

Library Resources

Students enrolled in distance education courses with SAC are entitled to the same access to the SAC Library Resources that are available to all SAC students. Online card catalogs, research databases and video collections can be accessed at the SAC Learning Resource Center website.

Netiquette

Netiquette, simply defined, means etiquette on the Internet. In an online course, you will be speaking through writing both to fellow students and instructors. It is imperative to communicate well and professionally. The golden rule of netiquette in an online class or environment is, do not do or say online what you would not do or say offline.

1. Be friendly, positive and self-reflective. When people cannot see you, and do not know you, feelings can be hurt if you are not careful how you express yourself. Think before you write. Do not respond when you feel angry. Wait. Write it down somewhere and come back to it. When you do, you may find that you no longer feel the same way, after you have had time to reflect. If you still feel the need to be heard, then take time to reread and rewrite it in terms that are easily embraced. When you feel a critique is necessary, express yourself in a positive tone.

2. Use proper language and titles. Do not use "text" slang or even profane words in an online education environments they will likely sound offensive to the reader. Leave the characters like smiley faces, and instant message abbreviations out. They may be interpreted as childish or too casual for the online education environment. Do not refer to your professor as "Doc" or by his or her first name, unless it is acceptable with him or her to do so. Do not use caps lock when writing, as it insinuates yelling. Always say please and thank you.

3. Use effective communication. This takes practice and thoughtful writing. Try to speak and write clearly at all times. Reread before you respond. Define and restate your words when necessary. Correct a misunderstanding right away. Be mindful of chosen words and joking.

4. Ask for clarification. If you are unsure of what was said, or the instructor's directions, or are trying to interpret a person's expressions, then ask again. Do not sit in silence feeling confused or offended. A simple way to do this is to say (or write), "I did not understand...", always keeping the sense of the misunderstanding on yourself.

Privacy of students enrolled in Distance Education Courses

The privacy of SAC students enrolled in distance learning courses is protected in the same manner as those enrolled in traditionally delivered courses. A comprehensive system of storage has been developed which ensures that student records are accessed by authorized persons only, as outlined in the policy, and will be stored in a safe and secure manner.

Refund Policy

From SAC Catalog:

> Refunds for other non-standard length courses shall be made based on the Refund of Tuition table provided by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Refunds are dependent on students having paid more than the minimum required tuition and having paid their tuition in full. Students are responsible for reimbursements to companies or agencies that have financially assisted them with their tuition.

> Refunds for students on the Installment Plan will be applied to the balance due, as stated in the Installment Plan Contract. All academic calendar days are considered for refund purposes, not only the days the student attends class.

> No refund is possible after the designated deadline, except in extraordinary circumstances and if approved by the Alamo Colleges. **Tuition paid by a credit card will be refunded back to the credit card.**

> A request may be made to the college for a refund after the end of a semester. To be considered, a request for a refund must be made within one year, the same time frame for requesting a change of grade, and must include documented proof.

> Reasons for a refund after the semester has ended are as follows:

- Illness and/or hospitalization (student or immediate family member)
- Death (student or immediate family member)
- Extenuating circumstances, to include institutional error, with the approval of the VPSS

Actions to be taken by the college may vary based on the policies in effect on the date of the withdrawal.

Federal regulations governing financial aid programs require Student Financial Services to put into place policies and procedures that may impact whether or not a student is eligible for a refund as described above. (See **Financial Aid**)

NOTE: Students are responsible for verifying mailing address; refund checks will be mailed to the address the student provides. The first disbursement checks of the Fall and Spring semesters are mailed from the Alamo Colleges' district office. After two (2) weeks in the office, refund check disbursements will be picked up in the Business Office or mailed to the address the student provides.

Tuition Refund Schedule

Students officially dropping or withdrawing from courses at the Alamo Colleges will have their tuition calculated according to the following schedules:

Fall and Spring Semesters (16 Week Sessions)

100% Prior to the first class day* of semester
70% During class days* one (1) through fifteen (15)
25% During class days* sixteen (16) through twenty (20)
0 After the twentieth (20) class day*

Six Week Summer Sessions

100% Prior to the first class day* of semester
70% During class days* one (1) through five (5)
25% During class days* six (6) through seven (7)
0 After the seventh (7) class day*

Eight Week Summer Sessions and Flex Terms

100% Prior to the first class day***** of the semester
70% During class days***** one (1) through eight (8)
25% During class days***** nine (9) through ten (10)
0 After the tenth (10) class day*****

Open Entry/Open Exit

100% Prior to the first class day***** of the semester
70% During class days***** one (1) through eight (8)

25% During class days***** nine (9) through ten (10)
0 After the tenth (10) class day*****

* "Class day" is the State of Texas term of art referring to the calendar days that classes generally meet, i.e., Monday-Friday.

http://mysaccatalog.alamo.edu/content.php?catoid=91&navoid=3141

Registration for Distance Education Courses

Registration for Distance Education courses with San Antonio College will be conducted in the same manner as for traditional, face-to-face courses. While there are scheduled "walk-in" registration sessions at the SAC campuses, students are encouraged to register ONLINE using the Alamo Colleges ACES system. For additional information, visit the "Register for Classes" page or the Distance Learning FAQ page located on the Distance Learning website.

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. "Plagiarism" shall be defined as the appropriating, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own written work. "Collusion" shall be defined as the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work for fulfillment of course requirements. The student who engages in cheating, plagiarism, or collusion will receive the consequence(s) outlined in the course syllabus.

Student Code of Conduct

Students enrolled in distance education courses with San Antonio College are expected to abide by the SAC Code of Student Conduct, outlined in the SAC Catalog. When interacting and communicating in a distance education course with the instructor and fellow classmates, students are expected to follow all guidelines outlined in the Code of Conduct. Students who violate these policies and guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to denial of access to distance learning courses, removal from the course, and/or suspension or withdrawal from San Antonio College. For tips on "netiquette" (etiquette on the internet), refer to the "Netiquette" section of this handbook.

Student Disciplinary Procedures

Disciplinary action may be handled informally between the student and the vice president for student services if there is a mutual agreement to do so. This agreement will be documented in writing. If a discipline problem cannot be resolved on an informal basis, a formal disciplinary hearing may be requested. The Disciplinary Committee will hear the case as soon as administratively possible. Most commonly, the hearing will be conducted on the SAC campus. However, special arrangements may be made for distance learning students who do not reside in the SAC area. More specific details about the discipline hearing process can be obtained in the SAC Catalog.

Syllabus Listings

To view course syllabi for every section of all SAC courses, visit the SAC website and select the "Academics" link. On the displayed sub-menu, select Course Syllabi (eSyllabus & Concourse). Beginning Fall 2013, all course syllabi are posted under the Concourse Syllabus application. Select "Enter Concourse Syllabus" link to view a list of course syllabi. Use the "Search" option to quickly locate the desired course.

Proctoring Exams

Proctoring of distance education courses may be required; please check your syllabus and contact your instructor. To take a proctored exam in the Student Learning Assistance Center, a student must provide the following information to staff: an official government photo ID, course name and section, name of exam to be taken, and the instructor's name. NOTE: Proctoring hours may vary; please contact the S.L.A.C at (210) 486-0165 for the current hours of operation. If you do not reside in Bexar County, proctored exams may be taken at an approved facility. Contact your professor to discuss arrangements.

Tutoring Services

SAC is committed to providing academic assistance to all students enrolled in SAC courses.

Some of the locations which provide tutoring to SAC students:

Math Lab	486-0240	MCCH 123
SLAC Lab	486-0165	MLC 707
Writing Center	486-1433	GH 203
The Writer's Block	486-1616	GH 118

The Student Learning Assistance Center (SLAC) is located on the 7th floor of the Moody Learning Center on the SAC campus. Most SAC departments provide areas where professional tutoring by faculty and staff is available along with computer-assisted learning. Tutoring services are free. Qualified tutors are available to conduct individual and group tutoring sessions in English, math, history, government, science, general business, Spanish, economics, and accounting.

The Writing Center offers help to students in courses which require writing. Additionally, students can receive tutoring help on resumes, scholarship essays, or other personal projects.

For SAC students who are unable to come to campus to receive the tutoring services, the SAC Online tutoring website can provide academic assistance in a variety of subjects. Specific guidance within your online courses can also be obtained by requesting assistance from your instructor. Many instructors embed "virtual office hours" within their schedule to accommodate students who need additional assistance.

Withdrawal from Distance Education Courses

Withdrawal from distance education courses with San Antonio College must be initiated by the scheduled "drop date" published in the SAC Calendar at any of the SAC Guidance Offices. **While some instructors will initiate a drop for students not "attending" or participating in their courses, it is the STUDENT'S responsibility to officially withdraw from a course OR verify that**

their instructor has initiated a drop on their behalf. For specific details on how to initiate a drop, visit the SAC Guidance Services webpage. If you receive Financial Aid Title IV funds (Pell, FSEOG, and/or Student Loans), and you withdraw from SAC, you may owe a refund to the Department of Education. If you have received Financial Aid, please contact the SAC Financial Aid office prior to withdrawing from any of your SAC courses.

eClips for Online Students

ACES
How to Create a New Student
How to Log Into ACES
How to Get Your Banner ID Through ACES
Academic & Personal Calendar Online
ACES Email & ACES Personal Calendar
How to Check Your Final Grades in ACES

Advising
How to Get Online Advising

Canvas
Canvas @ Alamo Colleges
How to Set Up a Canvas Course Profile
Canvas: How to Take Quizzes
Canvas: How to Submit Assignments From the Assignment Button (Text Entry)
Canvas: How to Submit Assignments From a Course Module
Canvas: Access Your Canvas Course
Canvas: How to View Grades in Canvas
Canvas: How to Submit Assignments From the Assignment Button (File Upload)
Canvas: Tips For Students

Computer Management
How to Disable the Pop-Up Blocker
How to Defragment your Computer
How to Use Disk Utilities to Clean Up Your Windows OS
How to Clear Your Web Browser History, Cookies, and Temporary Files

Continuing Education
How to Create a Continuing Education Profile

Distance Learning Readiness

How to Access Smarter Measure

How to Access Online Library Resources From Home

How to Get Online Advising

How to get Online Tutoring Through the Writing Center

eSyllabus

How to View Your Course eSyllabus

Financial Aid

How to Access Your Financial Aid and Personal Information

How To Look Up Your Account Summary By Term

How to Set Up an Installment Plan

How to Verify the Status of a Refund

Help & Service Desks

Service Desk & Help Desk

Library

How to Access Online Library Resources From Home

Printing

How to Purchase and Use a GoPrint Card

How to Access GoPrint Online

Registration

How to Access the ACES Portal System and Look Up Courses

How to Register Online

How to Drop Classes

How to View Holds on Your Account

Virtual Tours of Walk-in Assistance

Virtual Tour - Mega Lab

Virtual Tour - OTS Service Center

Wireless Access

How to Logon to SAC Wi-Fi

Writing Center

How to get Online Tutoring Through the Writing Center

Technology Support Options

San Antonio College offers a variety of on-site and online technology services for online students enrolled in online courses. The Office of Technology Services helps students use computing and network resources available both at College and over the Internet. Support options include but are not limited to the following:

- **Helpdesk Support**
  - **24/7 Canvas Learning Management Support @ 210-485-0555**
  - **ACES & Other Applications Support @ 210-486-0777**
- **OTS Service Center**
  - **Walk-In Technical Assistance @ Moody Learning Center, Room 710.**
- **Student Mega Lab**
  - **Walk-In Open Computer Lab @ Moody Learning Center, Room 502.**
- **Free Technology Workshops**
  - **Student Mega Lab @ Moody Learning Center, Room 502.**
- **Wireless Access Internet Access throughout San Antonio College**
  - **http://www.alamo.edu/sac/wireless**
- **Equipment Checkout**
  - **Laptop Short Term Loans @ Moody Learning Center, Room 710**
- **Web Support Resources**
  - **http://www.alamo.edu/sac/ots**
  - **http://www.alamo.edu/sac/DistanceLearning/**
  - **http://alamo.edu/studentcanvas/**
- **eClips**   **Short video repository**
  - **http://www.alamo.edu/sac/ots/eClips**