

Dear Northwest Vista College Student,

Welcome to Northwest Vista College! We are extremely excited that you have selected us for your educational needs, and we look forward to supporting your endeavors this semester. Whether you're taking traditional (face-to-face) classes, hybrid classes (partly online), or online classes, it's important that you know you are not alone in your education. Your faculty, staff, and fellow students all have a common goal—your success! Your Distance Learning and IT departments have created this file to help you navigate through your online and computer-related needs. It contains *lots* of useful information—so please save it or print it.

We look forward to a great semester and hope you do, too. Please let us know if there is anything else we can do to make your educational experience excellent. We're glad you've chosen NVC.

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Distance Learning Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/NVC-Distance-Learning/195872770480120>

Information & Communication Technologies (IT) Help Desk

210-486-4777

What software and hardware do you recommend for me to be a successful college student?

For the best possible learning experience while at NVC, here is a quick list of requirements and recommendations to ensure you have the needed computer tools to succeed. As a minimum, you should have, or have access to, the following:

1. **A desktop PC or laptop computer.** We recommend your operating system be Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 7 or 8, or the Mac equivalent.
2. You should have an **Office Suite** that includes a Word Processor, Spreadsheet, and Presentation software. Microsoft Office is recommended. With proof of enrollment, you can get the latest Office Suite and other Microsoft products at a discounted price at <http://alamo.onthehub.com>. There are also free alternatives such as OpenOffice available at <http://www.openoffice.org>. Make sure you choose an Office Suite that is compatible with Microsoft Office Suite 2007 or better.
3. You need a **web browser** (access to the Internet) on your Desktop PC or laptop to access tools for registration, financial aid and course materials. No matter which web browser you use (Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Safari) make sure you use the most recent

version and that your pop-up blocker settings will allow your courses to open. More info can be found [here](#).

4. If you do not have access to broadband internet at your home (for ex., you have dial-up), please plan to use student computers on campus or in other locations such as a Public Library.
5. If you plan to use your computer at work or one in a public library, be aware that there may be firewalls installed that prevent unrestricted access to the Internet.
6. Some online courses may require that you also use a website other than Canvas (usually one provided by the textbook publisher) that only allows specified browsers (normally Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox).
7. **Java.** This free program may be required to use some features of your online classes. If you are prompted to download Java, you can download the latest version [here](#).
8. If you are a **Mac** user, most newer Macs come with BootCamp that allows you to install Microsoft Windows on your Mac. To learn more about BootCamp and other options, click here: <http://www.apple.com/findouthow/mac/#windowsmac>.
9. **Anti-virus software** such as Symantec/Norton, McAfee, Kaspersky, Bit Defender, G-Data, Avira/AntiVir, etc. [PC World](#) magazine and [PCmag.com](#) review and recommend various programs.
10. **A removable device** (such as a flash drive) for storing your files.
11. **Speakers, headphones, or ear buds.**

Can I bring my laptop to campus? Where can I use it?

Students are welcome to bring laptop computers to campus. Our wireless network is available in most buildings and outdoors campus-wide.

Where can I go on campus to use a computer?

<p>Student Computer Lab</p> <p>Juniper Hall, Rm 106H (across from the library)</p> <p>210-486-4701 or 210-486-4702</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Mon – Thurs 7:30 am – 8:00 pm Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm</p>	<p>Computers for students: 100 Printers for students? YES, (must have GoPrint Account)</p> <p><u>Available resources:</u> PCs, laptops, Macs, iPads, scanners, printers, and copiers <u>Software:</u> Internet, Microsoft Office suite (Word, Excel, Power Point, Access & Publisher, Adobe Reader, AutoCAD, Reason & CS5, Finale Notepad, MS Visual Studio 2005 Pro, Interactive physiology, Cubase Essentials, & Adobe Creative Suite 5 Master Collection.</p> <p>http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/open-computer-lab/</p>
<p>Library</p>	<p>Computers for students: 70</p>

<p>Redbud Learning Center (1st floor)</p> <p>Circulation 210-486-4500 Computer Desk 210-486-4511 Reference 210-486-4513</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Mon – Thurs 7:30 am – 8:30 pm Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm Saturday 8:30 am – 2:30 pm</p>	<p>Printers for students? YES, (must have GoPrint Account)</p> <p><u>Available resources:</u> PCs, laptops, printers, copiers, online library catalog, NoodleTools, online databases, research guides, Information Literacy Modules, TexShare, research help, DVDs/CDs, course reserves, group study rooms, CyberCafé, interlibrary loan http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/lrc</p> <p>Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=490332465077#!/nvclibrary</p>
<p>College-Level Writing Center for English</p> <p>Juniper Hall, Rm 216</p> <p>210-486-4347</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Mon – Thurs 8:00 am – 9:00 pm Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm Saturday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm</p>	<p>Computers for students: 30 Printers for students? YES, (must have GoPrint Account)</p> <p>Provides students in regular English classes (1301 and higher) with a work space, computer access, and tutors for any help you need understanding and completing written assignments. jschulze@alamo.edu http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=490332465077 http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tutoring/cares/</p>
<p>Writing Across the Curriculum Lab</p> <p>Redbud Learning Center, Rm 205 (above library)</p> <p>210-486-4218</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Mon – Thurs 9:00 am – 7:00 pm Friday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm</p>	<p>Computers for students: 24 Printers for students? YES, (must have GoPrint Account)</p> <p>Provides assistance for developing and writing essays, research papers, and written assignments in all courses other than English courses. http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tutoring/writing/</p>
<p>Cooperative Learning Center for English and Reading</p> <p>Juniper Hall, Rm 229</p> <p>210-486-4334</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Mon – Thurs 9:00 am – 9:00 pm Friday & Saturday 9:00 am – 2:00 pm</p>	<p>Computers for students: 20 Printers for students? YES, (must have GoPrint Account)</p> <p>Here you will find a place where students in Developmental English classes may work individually or in groups with the aid of a tutor. Developmental level English classes require lab hours. http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tutoring/cares/</p>
<p>Advocacy Center</p> <p>Juniper Hall, Rm 308</p> <p>210-486-4252</p>	<p>Computers for students: 6 Printers for students? YES (limited)</p> <p>(This one is not primarily a computer lab.) Provides one-on-one tutoring and Drop Counseling for students in Developmental</p>

<p>210-486-4251</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Mon – Thurs 8:00 am – 7:00 pm Friday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm Saturday 9:00 am – 12:00 pm</p>	<p>English, Reading classes, and Math (0300-0303, 1314, 1324).</p> <p>http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tutoring/cares/</p>
<p>Math Lab for Cooperative Learning</p> <p>Juniper Hall, Rm 316</p> <p>210-486-4257</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Monday 8:00 am – 9:00 pm Tues, Wed, Thurs 7:00 am – 9:00 pm Friday 8:00 am – 5:30 pm Saturday 8:00 am – 2:30 pm</p>	<p>Computers for students: 5 Printers for students? NO</p> <p>(This one is not primarily a computer lab.) Provides workspace and tutoring for students in all levels of math.</p> <p>http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tutoring/math/cooperative/</p>
<p>Science Advocacy Center</p> <p>Live Oak Hall, Rm 230</p> <p>210-486-4109</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Mon – Thurs 8:00 am – 7:00 pm Friday 8:00 am – 4:00 pm</p>	<p>Computers for students: 5 Printers for students? NO</p> <p>(This one is not primarily a computer lab.) Provides workspace and tutoring for students in all types of science classes.</p> <p>http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tutoring/science/</p>
<p>The Reading Center for Developmental Reading</p> <p>Juniper Hall, Rm 110</p> <p>210-486-4615</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Monday –Thursday 9:00AM- 5:00PM</p>	<p>Computers for students: 19 Printers for students? YES, (must have GoPrint Account)</p> <p>(This one is not primarily a computer lab.) Students in Developmental Reading classes may work individually or in groups with the aid of a tutor. All Reading classes require lab hours.</p> <p>http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tutoring/cares/</p>
<p>Speech Lab</p> <p>Live Oak Hall, Rm 116</p> <p>210-486-4639</p> <p><u>Hours:</u> Mon & Wed 9:30 am – 4:30 pm Tues & Thurs 12:30 pm – 6:30 pm</p>	<p>Computers for students: 7 Printers for students? NO</p> <p>(This one is not primarily a computer lab.) The Speech Lab offers many services to students enrolled in a Speech class or any other class requiring an individual or group presentation.</p> <p>We can help in the lab beginning with researching your assignment, organizing and outlining your information and practicing delivering the presentation. We can also help with PowerPoint Presentations.</p> <p>Our services are FREE and available to all students. We do welcome walk-ins or you can schedule an appointment.</p> <p>http://www.alamo.edu/nvc/tutoring/speech/</p>

Note: All lab hours are subject to change.

I need to print something.

All students use the pre-paid Go Print system. More information is available in the Student Computer labs and the Library.

What is ACES? How do I log in?



ACES is the portal used by all Alamo Colleges students, staff, and faculty.

To access ACES, go the [NVC homepage](#) and click quick link on the top of the navigation purple bar “**login to ACES**”.

On the left, under the [password?](#)



Login box, click [How do I get a user name and Click Here.](#)

Last Name
Last 4 Digits of SSN

[How do I get a user name and password? Click Here](#)

Enter your last name, the last four digits of your SSN, and click Submit.

Near the bottom left, look for **Your ACES ID is:**. Underneath that you will see your User Name (ACES ID).

Your initial, default password will be THE FIRST TWO LETTERS OF YOUR LAST NAME IN CAPITAL LETTERS, FOLLOWED BY YOUR BIRTHDAY IN MMDDYY FORMAT. (For example, the password for Emily Ramirez, born on June 24, 1991, will be RA062491.)

Can I change my password?

Yes. You will automatically be prompted to change your password the first time you log in. You may also change your password at any time by clicking [My Account](#) near the upper left. Make it something you will easily remember, but be sure to make it a strong password. Your password must be between 8-20 characters long; it must contain at least one letter and one number, and it is case sensitive. Be sure to click Save Changes at the bottom when you're done.

What is a “strong” password?

This is a password that is not easily figured out by someone else. A strong password contains a variety of numbers, upper and lower case letters, and, when allowed, special characters. Weak passwords are common or easy to crack. Examples of **weak** passwords are the following:

- 🔒 password (the most common password in the world)
- 🔒 your name, even if repeated
- 🔒 your user name
- 🔒 your student ID #, driver's license #, or SSN
- 🔒 your pet's name
- 🔒 your child's name and/or birthday
- 🔒 your own name, child's name, or pet's name spelled backwards
- 🔒 your child's name + "mom" or "dad" (ex., TylersDad)
- 🔒 your own birthday or the birthday of a close family member
- 🔒 letmein
- 🔒 the name of the street you live on or your house number
- 🔒 anything "everyone knows" about you (ex., Tennis Lover)
- 🔒 sequential numbers or letters (ex., 12345678 or ABCDEFGH)
- 🔒 repeated numbers/letters (ex., 2222222 or PPPPPPPP or 123123123)
- 🔒 patterns on the keyboard (ex., qwerty)

Sometimes you can create a strong password that is "coded" in a way that makes sense only to you. For example, let's say you vacationed on South Padre Island. You could use "O2BinSPI" which, to you, means, "Oh, to be in South Padre Island!" Or, let's say your little brother hates green beans. Your password could be "JrH8sGBs." Some more hints for creating strong passwords can be found [here](#) (a very clever little video) and [here](#).

What if I can't get into ACES?

Please call Support Central at **210-485-0555** or the NVC Help Desk at **210-486-4777** for assistance.

What kind of assistance do Support Central and the Help Desk provide?

Please call the Help Desk if you need any of the following:

- ① Anything to do with ACES
- ① Passwords
- ① Access to Student & Financial web services
- ① Alamo.edu email reset or access
- ① Am I registered?
- ① Problems with pop-up blockers, anti-virus software, firewalls, anti-spyware software, etc.
- ① Questions about hardware/software compatibility
- ① Mac compatibility issues. Another place to try is the [Apple Support Center](#).

Why should I use ACES?

As a Northwest Vista College student, you will have access to most of your student needs through ACES. Here are some of the services available in ACES:

Registration
Scholarships
News & Events

Free email
Catalog
Online payment plans

Transcripts
Library link
Directory

Financial Aid
Calendar
and much more!

How can I get in touch with an instructor?

After you log into ACES, click the My Courses tab. In the middle of the page, you will see a list of the courses you're taking along with a link to each instructor's email.

How can I find phone numbers, email, and office locations for other NVC faculty and staff?

On the NVC homepage, click Faculty & Staff. Then, choose the Directory on the left side for a list organized by departments and areas.


Here are some other helpful phone numbers:

Helpful Numbers

EMERGENCY: 210.485.0911

Access/Disability Services	210.486.4466
Admissions/Enrollment	210.486.4700
Assessment/TASP	210.486.4346
Bookstore	210.706.9291
Bursar	210.486.4200
Career Services	210.486.4126
Courtesy Patrol	210.486.4019
Continuing Education	210.486.4415
Financial Services	210.486.4600
General Information	210.486.4000
Group Advising	210.486.4000
Job Readiness	210.486.4126
Library	210.486.4500
Police Dispatch	210.485.0099
Service Learning	210.486.4220
Special Services	210.486.4449
Student Activities	210.486.4005
Transcripts	210.486.4150
Transfer Services	210.486.4126
Undecided Majors	210.486.4126
Weather Line	210.485.0189

How can I find an email address for another student?

In ACES, click the  E-mail link. Click New, Mail Message, and click the To: box. In the search box, type in the person's last name or first name and click Find. Highlight the correct person, and click To at the bottom.

If the student is a current classmate, you can also locate him/her by clicking the My Courses tab and then the name of the course. From the course homepage, select E-mail from the left menu, and find the person's name in the list. Check the box next to their name, and click Send E-Mail.

Why should I use the ACES (Alamo.edu) email? I already have another email account.

Here are the top 10 reasons:

- Your Alamo email is free.
- It gives you a professional email address to use on résumés and job applications.
- Your Alamo email has excellent filters to prevent most spam and unsolicited mail from outside the Alamo Colleges.
- Your instructors will use your Alamo email to contact you.
- Student Activities, campus events, and important announcements such as campus closures will be sent to you in your Alamo email.
- Financial aid check availability and payment deadlines will be sent to you in your Alamo email.
- You can easily contact other students.
- Your Alamo email account allows large file attachments and has a large amount of memory (storage).
- Your Alamo email, contacts, and calendar can be linked to most smart phones.
- It links you with every other student, faculty, and staff member in all of the Alamo Colleges.

My instructor is using Canvas. How do I log in?

1. First, log into ACES using the instructions above.
2. Click on the My Courses tab.
3. Be sure to select the current semester from the drop-down menu under Schedule.
4. Click on your course name. Your course homepage should automatically open!

I'm using a Mac for my online courses, and I'm experiencing some problems. Who can I contact?

Support Central (**210-485-0555**) can usually help you resolve most computer issues, no matter what type of problems you're having. Please call while you are in front of your computer. Another place to try is the [Apple Support Center](http://www.apple.com/support/) (<http://www.apple.com/support/>).

I'm taking an online class this semester. What should I know or expect?

First, let's clear up a misconception: Online classes are *not* easier or less time-consuming than face-to-face courses. In fact, you should plan to commit at least as much time to each online course as you would to a traditional, face-to-face course. This includes the time you would spend in the classroom plus time spent studying, researching, writing papers, taking exams, and so on.

I'm not sure if I would do well in an online class. Is there any way to tell?

We suggest you take the [SmarterMeasure](#) assessment (formerly the Readiness for Education at a Distance Indicator or [READ!](#)) for a personalized, *confidential* evaluation of your own strengths and weaknesses as they relate to distance learning.

Username: accnorthwest

Password: learning

Here are some of the most important considerations for online students:

Good time management.

Make a schedule and be prepared to stick to it. Be specific about the days and times you will devote to your online class. Make sure you plan your work schedule, other class requirements, and personal obligations around your scheduled online time.

Find a good time and space.

You may find that working from home is difficult, especially if others do not respect the fact that you are “in school” when you’re working on your online class. Turn off distractions such as the TV and phone, ask others to refrain from disturbing you, and make your online class a high priority. It’s far too easy to try to watch a favorite program, answer calls and texts, care for kids and pets, and so on, when you should be doing your online coursework. If you plan to do your coursework while you are at work, consider staying an hour after your shift or working on your class during your lunch break. No matter when and where you choose to work on your online course, remember this: *Self-discipline is key!*

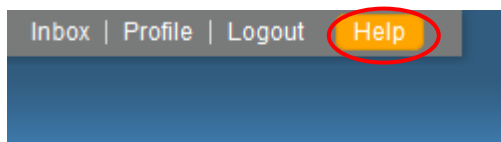
Stay in touch with your instructor.

In a traditional class, it’s easy to raise your hand to ask a question or to talk with the instructor before or after class. Also, in the classroom, the instructor can see *you* and read your nonverbal expressions. In an online class, it’s very difficult for the instructor to know if you’re confused, if you have a question, if you need an extension on an assignment, or if you don’t understand the material. You must take the initiative to call your instructor, use the general discussion boards, or email your instructor whenever you need assistance.

Keep your computer equipment in good working order.

Too often, online students fall behind when their Internet connection is weak or discontinued, or when they have trouble with tools, programs, or hardware. Make sure you know what you will need at the beginning of the course, and then have two plans—a primary plan and a backup plan—for how you will be able to accomplish the course requirements. Remember that computers are available on campus Monday through Saturday, and that any computer with Internet access will allow you into your online class.

Where else can I get help?



✓ You can also call the Help Desk at **210-485-0555**.

✓ In Canvas, you can click the [Help](#) icon on the top right corner of the page help topics such as Search the Canvas Guides, Report a Problem (via web, chat, or phone) or Ask Your Instructor a Question.

Can I access my online course from my Smart Phone or other handheld device?

Using your Internet browser, log into your online course through ACES. Not all functions are available through a hand-held device; for example, you will probably not be able to upload and submit assignments. However, you will be able to access your course homepage, check messages, participate in discussions, and so on.

If you have an iOS or Android device, you may also download the Canvas Mobile App to your smart phone. Here are the guidelines to [download the Canvas Mobile App](#).

I'm taking an online Math course. What do I need to know?

The Math department does NOT use ACES or Canvas for their classes. It is very important that you do not assume your online math class is like all their other online classes. Math uses Course Compass.

- **What is Course Compass?**

Course compass is a website (www.coursecompass.com) used by all online math students for coursework and to communicate with their instructors.

- **How do I log on?**

Students will need to attend the REQUIRED 2 hour orientation which takes place the Friday before classes start OR the Saturday before classes start. At this orientation you will be given instructions on how to get logged into their math class. Students who do not attend this orientation are usually dropped from the course.

- **Where do I get my password?**

Again, all this information is covered at the orientation.

- **How much does it cost?**

The materials for the math internet courses range in price from \$80-\$120. The materials depend on the class and the instructor.

- **How do I access my class?**

Once orientation is completed, you will go to www.coursecompass.com to access the class.

- **What if I can't make the orientation?**

You need to contact your instructor prior to the orientation and make arrangements with the instructor. You can look up your instructor using your class schedule or you may contact the math department at 210-486-4287.

- **Are there on campus exams?**

Normally, math internet classes require 2 face-to-face on-campus exams. So you will need to plan on being at NVC for these. Instructors usually let students know the exam dates/times at the beginning of the semester.

- **What if I live out of town?**

You will need to coordinate with your instructor. Usually a testing center can be found in your location and a proctored exam can be arranged.

- **I still need more information.**

Contact the Internet Math Coordinator: Robert DiGiovanni at **210-486-4308** or **210-273-1098**.

I'm taking an online language (Spanish) course. What do I need to know?

Online language classes use My Language Lab. Here is some information:

<http://www.mylanguagelabs.com/learn-about/what-is.html>.

Here is information on how to register: <http://www.mylanguagelabs.com/support/student-support.html#getting-started>

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Distance Learning Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/NVC-Distance-Learning/195872770480120>

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