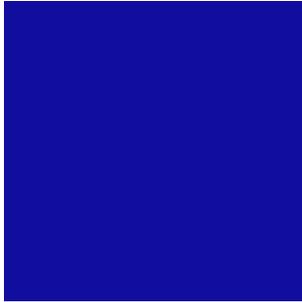
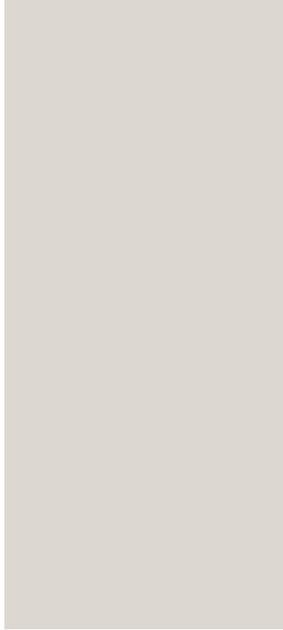
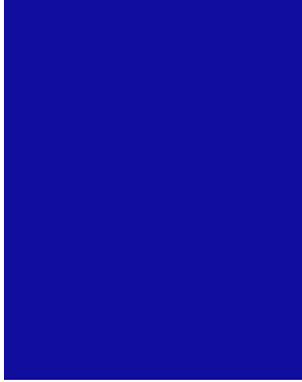




SOUTHERN UNION
STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
— Distance Education —



**STUDENT HANDBOOK
FOR ONLINE LEARNING**



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

Contents

Welcome	1
Purpose of Distance Education	1
Definitions of Course Delivery Types	1
Degrees and Certificates that can be earned online	1
Required Computer Skills and Technology	2
Canvas on Mobile Devices	4
Facts to Consider About Distance Education	5
General Information and Policies	6
How to Register for Online Classes	6
How to Complete Online Coursework	7
Electronic Security	8
Identity Confirmation	8
Academic Integrity	9
Attendance in Online Classes	9
Financial Aid Attendance Verification	10
Hardware/Software Requirements	10
Communication in Distance Education	11
Testing Policies in Distance Education	13
Student's Responsibilities in Distance Education	14
Student Services	15
College Policies	16
Privacy and Digital Security	18
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	19
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	19
Intellectual Property Rights and Copyright Policies	20

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 more than 175 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 transferability of Southern Union courses, make an [academic advising](#) appointment.

Definitions of Course Delivery Types

Distance education courses are classified as either online, virtual, or hybrid. The College has adopted the following definitions:

Online Course: The entirety of the course content is delivered electronically through the College's learning management system (LMS). There are no required on-campus meetings. Tests are proctored remotely using a variety of digital means, which may include a lockdown browser, use of monitoring with a webcam and microphone, and use of an online proctoring service for the final examination.

Virtual Course: Virtual courses are also delivered electronically through the College's learning management system. In addition, video conferencing software, such as Zoom, Canvas Conferences, or Google Meet, is used to allow students and instructors to hold class meetings virtually and in real time (synchronously). Attendance at class meetings is not optional. Tests are proctored remotely using a variety of digital means which may include a lockdown browser, use of monitoring with a webcam and microphone, and use of an online proctoring service for the final examination.

Hybrid/Blended Course: A hybrid course (also called a blended course) is a combination of an online and classroom-based course, with a majority of the course content being delivered electronically. Testing may be required on campus or proctored remotely using a variety of digital means. These may include a lockdown browser, use of monitoring with a webcam and microphone, and use of an online proctoring service for the final examination.

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 Education Short Certificate](#) that requires a minimum of 29 credit hours of coursework. Curriculum guides for these options are available at www.suscc.edu by clicking on the [Programs of Study](#) link. Other degree and certificate options may be partially completed through distance education.

Required Computer Skills and Technology

Technical Skills

If you enroll in a distance education course, you are responsible for having adequate computer skills to accomplish required tasks. Instructors do not have time to teach these skills within the course. If you do not possess the following skills, you may want to take a computer class to increase your computer knowledge before attempting a distance education class.

If you are registered for a distance education course, you must have a basic knowledge of computer operations and Internet use to be successful in that course. Here are some key skills required:

- Knowledge of computer terminology, such as browser, operating system, application, software, files, documents, icon, etc.
- Understanding of basic computer hardware and software, 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 software applications, such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel, email
 - Knowledge of copying and pasting, spell-checking, saving files in different formats
 - Uploading and downloading attachments
- Internet skills (connecting, accessing sites, using browsers)
- Ability to use online communication tools, such as email (create, send, receive, reply, print, send/receive 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

If you are taking distance education courses at SUSCC, you **MUST** have certain technologies available to access your course materials. You may use computers in the open computer labs in each campus library (LRC); however, access may be limited since computer availability is on a first-come basis during regular library operating hours. Therefore, it is **not** recommended that you rely solely on access to online content through the LRC. Additionally, some students may plan to use computers at their worksite, but should be aware that some classes may require the download of additional software that may not be allowed by your employer.



For online, virtual, or hybrid classes, you must have access to the following technology:

- Computer (phones and tablets are not recommended. Mobile applications are available for Canvas, but many features are not available for use with a mobile device.)

- Operational microphone and webcam (these can be combined or included with computer hardware such as in a laptop or all-in-one computer)
- Speakers or headphones for listening to audio and video content
- High-speed and reliable Internet connection
- Some courses require additional software, such as publisher tools, to be downloaded on your computer. This information and instructions will be stated in the course syllabus or the Canvas course modules. It is your responsibility to obtain the necessary software required for your classes.

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

Loss of Personal Computer Use

The College is not responsible for the possible loss of use of your personal computer through any mishap or misfortune. If such happens, you are required to alert your instructor, and seek alternative access to a reliable computer with an internet connection as soon as possible. Many instructors won't consider technology issues an excuse for missing activity deadlines. In almost every case, you have access to a variety of on-campus computer labs in Opelika, Wadley, and Valley for use with your distance education courses. You may also request to borrow a laptop from the College for the remainder of the semester.

Computer Loans

There are 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, you can 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 to ensure easy access to all of the course materials and resources, particularly large file sizes as with streaming video.



Why does Internet speed matter?

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

- Approximate speeds of common types of Internet Service:
 - Dial-up internet* - 56 bps (from phone company)
 - DSL internet - 768 kbps+ (from phone company)
 - Cable internet - 1,000-10,000+ kbps (from cable company)
- How can you determine your current Internet speed?
 - Visit www.bandwidthplace.com.

*Dial-up connections cannot load the 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 your 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. You may use the computers in the LRC for coursework in distance education classes (except to take proctored exams) within the LRC hours of operation.

Internet Browser Settings

SUSCC uses the Canvas Learning Management System (LMS). Canvas is built using web standards, so it runs on Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android, or any other device with an operating system that can run the latest compatible web browsers. For best performance in Canvas, use the most current major release of Chrome, Firefox, or Safari. Your computer operating system and preferred browser should be kept up to date with the latest recommended security updates and upgrades.



You can verify that the browser you are currently using is up to date by using the Canvas [browser checker tool](#). If you experience problems with your particular browser, check out the Canvas Guide, [What are the browser and computer requirements for Canvas?](#), or log into Canvas and click the Help button in the blue global navigation bar at the left of the window. You can choose to chat or call a Canvas support specialist for help. Be sure to update your computer operating system and browser and reboot your computer before engaging with a support specialist.

Canvas on Mobile Devices

You can access Canvas from any browser on your Android/iOS device. However, mobile browsers are not supported, and features may not function as expected compared to viewing Canvas in a fully supported desktop/laptop browser. Canvas offers limited support for native mobile browsers on tablet devices. For additional details, please reference the [limited-support mobile browser guidelines](#).

The [Canvas Student app](#) provides access to Canvas while on the go. Depending on your device, not all Canvas features may be available on the app at this time. View [Canvas Student mobile features](#) by version and device.

Screen Readers and Browsers

- Macintosh: [VoiceOver](#) (latest version for Safari on Macintosh and iOS mobile)
- PC: [JAWS](#) (latest version for Chrome/Firefox on Windows)
- PC: [NVDA](#) (latest version for Chrome/Firefox on Windows)
- Android: [Talkback](#) (latest version for Android mobile)

Other Required Components

Refer to the [Online Services](#) link on the SUSCC website for more information and links to download these free components.

- **Adobe Reader:** Adobe Reader software is the free global standard for viewing and printing PDF documents.
- **Respondus LockDown Browser™** is a free secured browser used solely for taking distance education exams and quizzes for courses at Southern Union. You must download the Respondus Lockdown Browser from the specific link provided for SUSCC, as each school has a unique link. If your instructor has chosen to require the Lockdown Browser for a quiz or exam, there will be a link to download it in your Canvas course. If you don't see the link, contact your instructor. You will need to install it one time on the computer you will use. Some instructors may also require the use of Respondus Monitor in addition to the Lockdown Browser. Monitor is not an additional

download. (If your instructor requires Monitor, you must have a webcam and mic installed on your computer.) Once the browser is installed, you simply open it from the desktop shortcut, log in to Canvas, and take your quiz.

Additional Notes:

- To test on an iPad, your instructor must enable iPads the Lockdown Browser separately in Canvas, so check with your instructor to see if testing on an iPad is allowed.
- Chromebooks **are not fully supported by the Lockdown Browser at this time**. Students may download the Respondus Lockdown Browser and use a Beta (preliminary) version for testing on a Chromebook, as long as your instructor enables that for each test.

Facts to Consider About Distance Education

Now that you know what technical skills and technology you should possess before considering enrolling in a distance education course, you need to be ready for the different style of learning that takes place through distance education. The requirements and time commitments for distance education courses are no less than that of any face-to-face course. Distance education is a flexible alternative that makes earning college credit possible for students who have difficulty attending on-campus courses.

The following are some common myths and facts about courses offered through distance education that you should consider:



- **Myth:** Distance education courses are easier than face-to-face courses.
 - **Fact:** Online, virtual or hybrid courses may be more difficult for some students because they require commitment and responsibility.
- **Myth:** Distance education courses at Southern Union are self-paced.
 - **Fact:** Students are required to complete assigned course work by the due dates indicated within the course.
- **Myth:** Distance education courses require no particular skills or knowledge of a computer.
 - **Fact:** You need to know basic computer skills to use the tools for online coursework and communication.
- **Myth:** A smartphone or tablet is sufficient to complete all coursework.
 - **Fact:** You 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:** You must be willing and able to commit your 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 you thoroughly read, comprehend, and follow directions for completing course requirements.

General Information and Policies

General Information

When you enroll in a distance education course at Southern Union State Community College, you 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, and harassment, etc.).

Admission/Readmission to the College

Now that you have determined you are ready to begin, or continue, your educational journey through distance education, the steps to apply for admission to the College are outlined on the [Admissions webpage](#). Admission must be completed prior to applying for financial aid and/or registering for courses. If you have previously attended Southern Union but have not been enrolled for six or more semesters, you must complete a brief readmission form in the [Student Portal](#).

Tuition Payment

Tuition payment is due at the time of registration to reserve your place in a course. Tuition for each online and virtual course will include an additional \$20 proctor fee for the final exam. Southern Union accepts payment in the form of cash, check, credit card (American Express excluded) and various forms of financial aid. Financial aid must be approved and awarded before schedules can be held. You should check your SU account balance before each semester begins to ensure tuition and fees have been completely paid, so you are not dropped because of an unpaid balance.

Financial Aid

If you expect to participate in a financial aid program, you should apply several weeks in advance of registration. The [financial aid webpage](#) has a wealth of information to assist you in seeking tuition assistance. Additionally, the financial aid office has a staff of experts to assist you during business hours.

How to Register for Distance Education Classes

Advising and Registration for First-Time SU Students

New students must be cleared by the Admissions Office and the Financial Aid Office before registering. Once cleared, you must register for your first semester at Southern Union with an academic advisor. New students may not register online. Dates for early and regular registration for new students are published in the [College Calendar](#) on the SU website. During those published dates and times, advisors will be available to assist with selecting classes appropriate for your major of study.

Advisors are located on each campus and are a great resource while enrolled at Southern Union. [Advisors](#) can guide you on a variety of topics, including: degree planning, transfer, careers and majors, etc. Making an appointment ensures that an advisor is available to address all your questions completely and thoroughly; however, walk-ins are welcome as well.

Online Registration for returning students

The online registration system allows currently enrolled and returning students to register online without the necessity of meeting with an advisor. Dates for registration are published in the [academic calendar](#). It is necessary to pay tuition at the time of registration so that your schedule will be held.

The registration process for distance education courses is the same as the process for traditional courses. Detailed steps are available on the website for [class registration](#). You can find a list of distance education courses offered in the Dynamic Class Schedule Lookup Utility (found at www.suscc.edu/current-students), by limiting the course selection to **online** or **hybrid**.

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 reliable high-speed Internet service, as well as a webcam and microphone for use during test proctoring or other required class activities.

How to Complete Distance Education Coursework

Distance education courses at SUSCC are delivered using the **Canvas 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 delivery of course content.

In order to find your distance education course(s), you will be required to [log in to Canvas](#). Each student will log in with their unique Southern Union email address and password (both are issued upon acceptance to the College).

Login Credentials for Canvas

The login format for Canvas is the same as your SUSCC student email:

USERNAME: Your first name initial + complete last name + two-digit birthday + @mail.suscc.edu
(example: jdoe15@mail.suscc.edu)

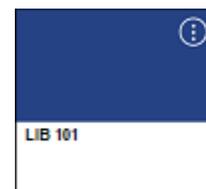
PASSWORD: !SUSCC + six-digit birthday (example: !SUSCC081501)

You may wish to save a shortcut to Canvas on your computer desktop, download the app* for your mobile device, or you can simply click on the Canvas link on the SUSCC homepage. It is important to remember to update your Profile information in Canvas. You can add any additional email addresses for your own notification purposes in the Settings link, but keep in mind that for security and privacy purposes all official communication between you and school personnel must be with your Southern Union email or the Canvas Inbox (which uses your SU email)

**Note: Canvas provides an application for use on mobile devices, but you should not try to fully complete an online course using a mobile device. Some functionality is lost when using mobile devices to access features of the Canvas LMS.*

Canvas Dashboard

Canvas refers to their home screen as your “Dashboard.” Once you successfully log in, you will find your current semester’s courses listed on your Dashboard. To find course materials, activities, and instructions for getting started on a course, click on the “Course Card” on the Dashboard for that course. If you have questions about course content and delivery, contact your instructor. The course instructor’s name and contact information will be on the “Front Page” of each course.



Other Learning Platforms

Although Canvas is the primary learning platform for distance education courses at the College, some online, hybrid, virtual, and traditional courses may additionally utilize publisher-provided course management systems such as Cengage MindTap, Pearson MyLab and Elsevier Evolve. Detailed instructions for use of any additional platforms should be included in your Canvas course. Support contact information will be provided by your instructor should you need technical support with publisher content.

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. You should consider these costs before registering for any course. You may visit the [Barnes & Noble Bookstore](#) through the “Current Students” link on the SUSCC website for textbook information and costs.

Student Email

Upon admission to the institution, you are issued a Google (Gmail) email account under the SUSCC domain. SUSCC student email is the official means of communication between you and anyone at the College. It is imperative that you check your student email frequently for important school and course information. Student email can be accessed through the Student Email link found on the College website. You’ll use the same login information to access your student email as that used to login to Canvas. For security purposes, you should not use other email accounts to communicate with college personnel.

SUSCC email credentials:

USERNAME: Your first name initial + complete last name + 2-digit birthday + @mail.suscc.edu
(example: jdoe15@mail.suscc.edu)

PASSWORD: !SUSCC + 6-digit birthday (example: !SUSCC081501)

Electronic Security

Course content delivered through electronic media (Canvas, SUSCC 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. 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

If you enroll in an online, virtual, or hybrid course, and receive credit for that course, you must be the same person who participates in the course. Course participation includes all course activities, assignments, and assessments. To ensure that this is the case, students enrolled in hybrid courses are

required to present valid photo identification (e.g. driver's license, College ID, military 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 may not participate in the activity. Additional technology-based identity authentication measures are required for online examinations through an online proctoring service.

Academic Integrity

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

You agree to:

- Complete all assignments and tests solely on your own, except where instructions indicate student cooperation is acceptable.
- Under no circumstances, except instructor permission, give other students access to your work.
- Properly acknowledge all external sources used in your work.
- Create one user account as required and only use created or assigned login credentials, passwords, access codes, etc., yourself.
- Refrain from activities that would dishonestly alter your grade or that of another student.
- 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 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 you 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.

Withdrawal from a Course

The course syllabus will clearly state whether the instructor utilizes Administrative Withdrawals. You may be administratively withdrawn from a course by Student Services if an instructor reports you as not attending class, based on a published number of class meetings or activities you missed during the semester. Whether an instructor uses this procedure may be determined individually by the instructor, or it may be by a departmental policy.

For official records (including financial aid), the last date of attendance, if you are administratively withdrawn from a distance education class, will be the last day you demonstrated active participation in the course. Administrative withdrawals may affect future financial aid awards. No refunds are awarded for administrative withdrawals.

If you officially withdraw yourself or are withdrawn from a course prior to Southern Union's published withdrawal date (refer to the current semester's calendar), you will receive a grade of "W" for that course.

Financial Aid Attendance Verification

At the beginning of each semester, instructors are required by the federal government to complete an Attendance Verification for enrolled students participating in certain tuition assistance programs. In a distance education context, you logging into an online class is not sufficient proof to demonstrate academic attendance. The instructor must document that you have participated in class, or were otherwise engaged in an academically related activity, in order to be considered as attending an online class.

If you are reported for non-attendance in a class, you will be withdrawn by the Financial Aid Office. This may affect any financial aid awards you have. You may ask the instructor for readmission to the course before the deadline date assigned by the Financial Aid Office. It is the decision of the instructor whether you will be allowed to be reinstated in the course. (See the Student Responsibilities in Distance Education section below.)

Hybrid Course Attendance

Check your class schedule closely for any required on-campus meeting(s). Any **hybrid** courses you are enrolled in may require you to attend weekly or occasional mandatory on-campus sessions. Hybrid courses may also require additional on-campus tests, labs, or other activities as indicated in the course syllabus. If you are enrolled in a hybrid course, you may also be required to complete an on-campus final exam/evaluation. If you cannot appear on campus for the final exam at the required time, 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.

Hardware/Software Requirements

Technical Support

The College is committed to providing you quality and timely technical support in your distance education classes.

If you experience technical problems in a distance education course hosted on the College's LMS, you should first consult the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) module posted on the Distance Education webpage found under the Programs of Study link at www.suscc.edu. Below are some of the more common technical issues and solutions for online students.

- Links that do not work
 - For links in your course that do not work or take you to the wrong webpage, contact the course instructor.
- Canvas login
 - If you experience problems logging into Canvas, you should email support@suscc.edu or call any campus and dial extension 5499, 5346, or 5489 during normal college business hours.
 - If you need your Canvas password reset, you should email support@suscc.edu.
- Quizzes using Respondus Lockdown Browser/Monitor
 - 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, you may be able to take quizzes using the Lockdown Browser on the computers in the

LRC during College operating hours. It is imperative that you not wait to take a test until the last few hours that your test is available, in case you have an unforeseen issue. Many instructors do not give extensions due to poor planning.

- Assignment submissions through 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 in Canvas.
- Publisher websites to which you have been directed within the course.
 - If you experience technical problems in an online course hosted on a publisher-provided course management system such as MyLab, MindTap, Launchpad, etc., your instructor may direct you to contact the publisher's technical support team first. You should follow the instructions for obtaining publisher technical support provided in the course modules and/or the course syllabus. If you seek assistance from such a source, you must keep the instructor informed during the process, in case the problem is not resolved immediately.
- Technical problems with the Canvas LMS.
 - If you experience problems with the Canvas LMS, you have 24/7 technical support available by clicking on the Help link in the blue navigation bar on the left side of the Canvas Dashboard. You may choose to enter a chat session with a support person or call the technical support number listed in the menu.
 - Canvas support cannot help you with login information or access to links or publisher content within the course. Email support@suscc.edu and provide your SUSCC email address and student ID number for password assistance.
- Final exams through ProctorU
 - For computer issues while setting up a ProctorU student account, click on the ProctorU link in the left navigation menu in your course, and chat with support using the Chatbot tool at the bottom of the screen. Search for your issue or type "Transfer" in the Chatbot message box to chat with a support person.
 - For problems that arise during the scheduled testing time, a ProctorU technician will work with you to try and resolve any problems that arise.
 - If you miss your test appointment, first contact ProctorU to find out if there is enough time to reschedule the test. If the deadline is near, the next person to contact is the course instructor. This should be done immediately to improve the likelihood of being allowed to test.

If these resources do not provide a solution to your problem, then you should contact your course instructor. If your course instructor is unable to help you resolve the issue, you should contact the College's Distance Education Department by email at support@suscc.edu or phone at extension 5516 or 5378. Be sure to stay in contact with your instructor throughout the support process.

Southern Union State Community College does not provide hardware support or repair. If enrolled in a distance education course, you are responsible for having a certain level of technical ability or locating outside help when experiencing issues with hardware, software, settings, and etc. on your 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

You should check the course syllabus 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 each course which reflect times they will respond to student communication without long delays. Outside of these availability hours, instructors should respond to you within 24 hours, with the exception of holidays, weekends or 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 your views to online discussion groups.

Here are a few do's and don'ts about online communication in your courses.

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 your instructor to know what to expect about your instructor's turnaround time for responding.
- Ask questions and engage in conversations as often as possible—feel free to contact the instructor according to their preferred method of contact.
- Be patient and respectful of others and the ideas and opinions they post online.
- Be courteous and precise.
- Always use your instructors' proper title: Dr., Mrs., Mr., Ms. Unless specifically invited, do not refer to them 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.
- When emailing your instructor, 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 for 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, and acronyms or terms that imply obscene, violent, or otherwise inappropriate things.
- Post copyrighted material without an appropriate citation. When in doubt, check with your 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 pictures 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, do not respond to it.

- Send an email to the entire class.

Discussion Board Posts

When posting on the Discussion Board in your online class, you should:

- Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of the course material.
- Take your posts seriously, and review and edit your posts before sending.
- 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." You should include why you agree 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, non-critical way.
- Do not make personal or insulting remarks.
- Proofread your posts carefully for errors before posting.

Note: Instructors will monitor student discussion posts in their classes and ensure that unsuitable posts are removed as soon as possible. If the inappropriate post is for a graded discussion, the student will receive a grade of 0.

Student Profiles

Your student profiles are a useful tool for promoting interaction with your classmates in distance education courses. You are encouraged to upload a suitable photo to your student profile in Canvas and/or email. Your 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 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 on-campus, as required by the instructor. A special internet browser, called the Respondus Lockdown Browser, may be required by your instructor for online tests. This browser "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 through the use of a webcam and mic. You can find more information about the [Lockdown Browser and Monitor](#) 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 classes do not require any on-campus meetings. All testing takes place online. The instructor may choose to use the [Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor](#) or publisher-provided software for testing during the semester.

The final exam in all online classes and most virtual classes will be proctored through a live online proctoring service. Currently Southern Union uses [ProctorU](#) for online testing. The nonrefundable cost of proctoring is charged at the time of course registration and paid by the student along with tuition. More information about testing with ProctorU is located on the ProctorU site, which can be accessed through a link within your Canvas course or www.proctoru.com. During the semester, your instructor will have you schedule a final exam appointment within a certain time period with ProctorU. At the time of your appointment, be prepared to present a government-issued photo identification to prove identity.

To take an exam with ProctorU, you are required to have a reliable high-speed internet connection, a working webcam with a microphone, and a private testing location. Testing cannot take place in a public location, such as a library or the SUSCC student center.

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

Student Responsibilities in Distance Education

1. As a student enrolled in a distance education course at Southern Union State Community College, you will be required to follow the same guidelines and policies that apply to students enrolled in traditional, face-to-face instructional courses.
2. You 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.
3. You should login to your distance education course(s) on the day classes begin for the semester so you don't miss important information or a deadline. You must log in to your course within the first week of the beginning course date and complete the assignment designated to verify attendance. If you fail to do so, the instructor will report you as not attending, and you will be dropped from the course.
4. You are responsible for the security of your login information to email, the student web portal (Banner), Canvas, and other electronic media used through the College which might contain your identifying information.
5. If you do not interact with a course for a period of three weeks (consecutive or not) in spring or fall semester, you may be administratively withdrawn from that course. For summer and mini-terms, this period is two weeks. See your instructor's policy for Administrative Withdrawal in your course syllabus for more information.
6. Drop/add dates for each semester are applicable to all Southern Union State Community College courses. Therefore, all refund and payment deadlines are applicable 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.
7. Courses that do not achieve minimum enrollment numbers, based on current administrative guidelines, will be removed (cancelled) from the listing of active course offerings. If this happens to a course you are enrolled in, you will be notified by phone and/or email. You are

- responsible for checking phone and email messages. You will have a limited time at the beginning of the semester to add a new course to replace the one that was cancelled.
8. You will be held to the requirements posted in the instructor's syllabus.
 9. All course complaints should first be discussed with the instructor. If the issue is not resolved at that level, you should request a conference with the department/division chairperson. As a last resort, the you 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 and College Catalog](#).
 10. Southern Union State Community College does not provide personal Internet access or computer use to distance education students. The College does maintain computer labs on each campus with internet access that you 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 your personal computer through any mishap or misfortune.
 11. You are afforded the same rights and services in distance education courses as offered by Southern Union State Community College to students enrolled in traditional, on-campus courses.
 12. For certain courses, additional software may be required to interact with the course. These additional requirements will be indicated in the course syllabus. Acquisition and installation of such software is your responsibility.
 13. You are responsible for maintaining up-to-date, effective virus protection software on your own computer. 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 which may occur during online course interactions.

Student Services

Access to Campus Facilities and Services

You 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 and Catalog](#), registration, library/research assistance, advising, financial aid, tutoring, and more.

Admissions

Southern Union State Community College has an open-door admissions policy to assure optimal higher educational opportunities. The College admits eligible applicants for the fall, spring, and summer semesters. Southern Union welcomes high school graduates, GED recipients, transfer or transient students from other colleges and universities, and former SU students. There are also opportunities for high school students who meet SU admissions requirements to enroll in college classes, concurrently with high school classes, to earn dual-enrollment or accelerated college credit.

The Application for General Admission to the College may be completed online, printed and filled out, picked up from the Admissions Office during business hours, or requested at the following address:

Southern Union State Community College Admissions Office
750 Roberts Street
Wadley, Alabama 36276

Directions for any of these methods can be found on the [Admissions Overview page](#) on the SUSCC website.

Student Records

All records at the College are retained in accordance with policies established by the Alabama Department of Archives and History and the Alabama State Board of Education.

You may obtain a copy of your SUSCC transcript by completing a transcript request form at any Southern Union Admissions/Records Office, by mailing or faxing a request to the Records office, or online through the [mySUSCC Student Portal](#). You may also print an unofficial transcript from the student portal. The Admissions and Records Office also provides letters of good standing, insurance verifications, midterm alerts, and other specialized certifications.

Financial Aid

The College provides financial aid to students of academic promise and financial need. Part-time employment, scholarships, grants, and loans assist students who have difficulty meeting the financial obligations of the College. All students applying for financial aid under any of the programs in which aid is awarded on a “need basis” must apply using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Southern Union State Community College institutional information form. Financial aid counseling is available on all campuses during business hours. Additional information, links, and forms are available on the College website.

College Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance policies for hybrid and virtual courses are the same as for traditional on-campus courses. If a distance education course includes scheduled in-class or virtual sessions, you are expected to attend each session, to arrive on time, and to remain for the entire class period.

You are required to complete course activities to be considered as participating in a distance education class. Just logging into Canvas or entering a course is never considered valid for attendance purposes.

Faculty will record attendance from the first day of the semester. Excessive absences, regardless of the reason or circumstance, may interfere with your ability to successfully complete the requirements of the course. In such cases, you should withdraw from the class before the last date to drop with a grade of “W”. See the [college calendar](#) on the SUSCC website for this date.

Withdrawal from class may affect eligibility for federal financial aid. You should contact the Financial Aid Office for information regarding eligibility.

Financial Aid and Attendance

If you are the recipient of Title IV funds, you must attend classes to receive aid. If you fail to attend classes for which you are enrolled, no financial aid will be awarded for those courses, and you will be administratively withdrawn or dropped from those classes not attended.

If you stop attending classes during the semester, you also may be reported for nonattendance and may be administratively withdrawn or dropped from those classes. A calculation will be performed at the time of withdrawal for all students who withdraw or are administratively withdrawn

from all of their classes prior to completion of 60% of the semester in order to determine return of Title IV funds

Make-up Policy

You are expected to adhere to the activity deadlines set by the instructor in each class. The instructor is not required to provide an opportunity for make-up work. The instructor's policies regarding make-up work should be clearly defined in the course syllabus.

Withdrawal from a Single Course

If you wish to drop a single course, you may do so online or by completing a "Drop/Add Form" from the Records Office. Prior to the deadline date specified in the college calendar as the last day to withdraw with a grade of "W," you will receive a grade of "W" for any course dropped.

Withdrawal after the date specified in the calendar is permitted only under extenuating circumstances and requires the approval of the appropriate instructional dean. After the withdrawal date, a grade of "W" is assigned if you are doing satisfactory work and approval is given. Otherwise, a grade of "F" is assigned. You may not drop a course in which a final grade has been earned prior to the published date to withdraw.

Withdrawal from the College

You may withdraw from the College online by logging into the Internet through the MySUSCC Student Portal or by obtaining a "Withdrawal Request Form" from the Admissions Office. Any withdrawal before the deadline specified in the calendar will result in a grade of "W" in all courses. After the date specified in the calendar, a grade of "W" (withdrawn, not failing) will be assigned, only if you are doing satisfactory work at the time of withdrawal and extenuating circumstances apply. A grade of "F" will be assigned if you are not doing passing work at the time of withdrawal or if you fail to follow the above procedure.

Administrative Withdrawal

You may be dropped (withdrawn) administratively from any course for failure to attend class when you have missed more than 20% of the total number of hours that the class meets. The number of absences resulting in administrative withdrawal may differ in programs that lead to board licensure or certification, but are clearly stated in the course syllabus. For online classes with no class meetings, you may be administratively withdrawn after three weeks of non-attendance in the fall and spring semesters or two weeks of non-attendance in the summer semester. Administrative withdrawal from class may affect eligibility for federal financial aid. You should contact the Financial Aid Office for more information. If you are administratively withdrawn from a class, you will also be withdrawn from all co-requisite classes, if any. See the [Student Handbook and Catalog](#) for more details.

Accessibility and Privacy Statements

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

Final Grade Reports/Midterm Alerts

At the close of each term, an individual report showing your scholastic record is accessible online in your mySUSCC account. You may access your final course grades by logging into the mySUSCC student web portal (Banner) using the secure login you were issued upon application

to the College. These grades are a part of your permanent record and will be recorded on your official transcript.

At the option of each instructor, midterm progress reports may be sent to students who are in danger of failing a course. Midterm alerts are distributed via the student's SUSCC email account.

Complaints & Grievances

Southern Union strives to resolve all complaints in an informal manner through discussion between the affected parties. You should first try to resolve your complaint with the staff or faculty member involved. If the situation is unresolved, you should next speak with the appropriate department chairperson, program director, or supervisor of the program. After that, an unresolved issue should be presented to the appropriate dean. If there is still no resolution to the issue, you may file a written complaint. Refer to the [Student Handbook and Catalog](#) for further instructions on this process.

Academic Grade Appeal Procedure

The College has established a grade appeal procedure to be used if you have a valid reason to believe that a grade you received for an examination, a written/oral presentation, a clinical, a lab, or a project is inaccurate. This procedure will be followed for all students whether enrolled in courses held on campus in a traditional classroom setting or courses that are delivered via distance learning formats. Additional details regarding academic grade appeals can be found in the Academic Policies section of the [Student Handbook and Catalog](#) on the college website.

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 and Catalog](#).

Privacy and Digital Security

Protecting the Privacy of Students Enrolled in Distance Education Courses

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

Secure Login and Password: Enter your unique Southern Union email and password to access the Canvas learning management system. This combination of user email and password identifies you to the system upon each visit. You accept responsibility for the security of your personal passwords and must not share them with anyone. Student information is protected and separated from other users within the Canvas learning/teaching environment and from outside intruders.

Unique Student Number: The College will issue you a unique student number, called your A-number. This number will be your unique identifier throughout your history at the SUSCC. Your A-number should be kept confidential.

Identification for On-Campus Sessions: A minimum of one or more mandatory on-campus sessions are required for hybrid courses. When attending these mandatory on-campus sessions, you are required to present valid photo identification (e.g. driver's license, College ID, military ID) in order to further protect your privacy and to confirm your identity for academic integrity purposes. If you cannot present such identification, you may not participate in the activity.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against any qualified person regardless of his or her disability. The College strives to create a welcoming environment and will work in good faith to meet the needs of all populations. All reasonable and appropriate accommodations for qualified disabled students, applicants, or employees, will be met unless to do so would present an undue hardship to the College. To request accommodations, students with disabilities should provide official documentation of the disability to the ADA Coordinator on their campus. The documentation should address the specific accommodation and should be dated within three years of the enrollment date. The ADA Coordinator will give the student appropriate paperwork for notifying their instructors of the desired accommodations. The student will be responsible for reviewing this paperwork with each instructor and agreeing on reasonable and appropriate accommodations on a course-by-course basis. Students should update their information with the ADA Coordinator on the courses for which they are seeking accommodations each semester.

ADA COORDINATORS

Mrs. Cydney Mathews
Opelika Campus
(334) 745-6437 x5488

Mrs. Carol Howell
Wadley Campus
(256) 395-2211 x5151

Ms. Robin Brown
Valley Campus
(334) 756-4151 x5204

FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT OF 1974 (FERPA)

Under the Federal Family Educational and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, Southern Union State Community College may disclose certain student information as "directory information." Directory information includes the names, addresses, telephone numbers, dates of birth, and major fields of study of students, as well as information about students' participation in officially recognized activities and sports, the weight and height of members of athletic teams, the dates of attendance by students, degrees and awards received, and the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by a respective student. If any student has an objection to any of the aforementioned information being released during any given term or academic year, the student should notify the Registrar through written communication. Notification of Student rights under FERPA - FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records.

These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and to review the student's education records.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records to ensure that they are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy or other rights.
3. The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

4. The right to file with the U.S. Department of Education a complaint concerning alleged failures by Southern Union State Community College to comply with the requirements of FERPA.
5. The right to obtain a copy of Southern Union State Community College's student records policy, which is available at the Records Office.

Intellectual Property Rights and Copyright Policies

Introduction and Definitions

Southern Union State Community College recognizes and values creativity and innovation as part of the teaching and learning process. Similarly, the College recognizes the importance of new knowledge generated within the College and wishes to encourage the transfer of this knowledge to the private sector for the public good. At the same time, as a publicly funded institution, the College must be a good steward of the public resources provided to it, and must safeguard against the use of public funds for private gain. This policy addresses the rights to, interest in, and protection and transfer of Intellectual Property created by the College's faculty, staff and students.

For purposes of this policy: "Intellectual Property" means inventions, discoveries, innovations and copyrightable works.

"Invention" means a tangible or intangible discovery, whether or not reduced to practice, and tangible research products, whether or not patentable or copyrightable. Such research products include, but are not limited to, computer programs, integrated circuit designs, industrial designs, databases, technical drawings, equipment, biological materials and other technical creations.

"Copyrightable Works" mean original works of authorship fixed in tangible media of expression.

Ownership of any Intellectual Property created by a student enrolled at the College, such as written compositions, musical scores, scriptures, sculptures, paintings, photographs, films, videotapes and computer software, shall be vested in the student unless the student has been employed by the College to create the Intellectual Property. Any works created by students using College resources belong to the College.

Use of Intellectual Property: Submitted Work as Part of Course Requirements

1. When a student submits work as a course requirement, the student retains ownership of the work, but ownership of the physical or electronic document shall be vested in the College. The College is granted a perpetual, royalty-free license by the submitting student to make copies of the work for administrative and educational purposes.
2. The College and its faculty, staff, and students recognize that some Intellectual Property may arise or be developed by students from interaction with the instructor and other students. Under those circumstances, the Intellectual Property may not be the exclusive property of the student.
3. When a student's work has been accepted for publication by a journal or a publisher, absent an agreement to the contrary, the work becomes the property of the publisher.

Use of Intellectual Property: Computer Programs

When a program is developed for a course project or assignment by a student, ownership is retained by the student, with the College having a perpetual and royalty-free license to make and distribute copies to faculty, staff, and students for administrative and educational purposes.

Compensation for Creation of Intellectual Property

The College does not compensate students for intellectual property of any kind developed as part of the creator's normal course assignments.

Copyright Issues

Intellectual Property rights for Copyrightable Works are earned through ownership, which is established according to the rules set forth earlier in this policy. Students must comply with all federal copyright laws in the creation and use of intellectual property, whether such property is created for compensation, created or used as part of a course requirement, or created or used as part of normal employment duties. In particular, the College complies with Public Law 110-315 (the Higher Education Opportunity Act), which requires the institution to take measures to combat unauthorized distribution of copyrighted materials through illegal downloading or peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing of music, photographs, videos or other digitally stored information.

The U.S. Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) criminalizes such unlawful distribution, even when such distribution is unintentional.

Resolution of Disputes

All complaints regarding the ownership of Intellectual Property, its use, compensation for its development, and/or use of revenue derived from its sale shall be addressed through the College's standard Grievance and Appeal procedures as established in the Employee Handbook.