

Ensuring Integrity and Consistency of the Academic Experience

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Section 1: Purpose

The purpose of this policy and its corresponding procedures is to provide a comparable student experience for each student taking credit-bearing courses, with access to the same variety of support services and quality education, regardless of course location or modality. Specific consideration is given to students taking courses remote from the main campus, either through distance education or through courses offered at an off-campus instructional site.

Section 2: Scope

- 2.1 Virginia Peninsula Community College (the College) is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students, regardless of program, faculty, geographic location, or course delivery mode. The College will ensure that all students have access to the instruction, support, and resources they need to succeed.
- 2.2 Distance education warrants specific consideration due to the differences between distance and traditional, in-person education. Specific consideration is also given to the ability of the College to effectively offer courses at remote, off-campus instructional sites.
- 2.3 This policy and corresponding procedures govern how the College ensures the students have equitable access to high-quality education that meets the same academic rigor, standards, and learning outcomes regardless of course location or instructional modality. These policy and procedures also govern how students are provided with comparable support, resources, and services to foster success, have their privacy protected, and that students who register in distance education are the same students who complete the courses. Finally, this policy and corresponding procedures address the considerations, planning, resources, and evaluation of off-campus instructional sites.

Section 3: Definitions

3.1 Distance Education

SACSCOC defines distance education as "A formal educational process in which the majority (50% or more) of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place." Distance education at VPCC may be delivered as synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid, hyflex, or some other combination of distance and in-person delivery. Distance education at VPCC is delivered online, over the internet, through the College's Learning Management System.

3.1.1 Synchronous

Course Instruction that occurs primarily but not limited to web- conferencing tools at a set time.

3.1.2 Asynchronous

No face-to-face meeting; 100% of course content is web-based delivered.

3.1.3 Hybrid

At least 50% of the content and course interactions are delivered electronically.

3.1.4 Hyflex

A flexible student-centered model of class delivery where students choose to attend in-class, online synchronous, or asynchronous content delivery.

3.2 Dual Enrollment

A student who is co-enrolled at the College while simultaneously completing their high school diploma, as governed by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) policy 6.6.

3.3 Faculty

All instructors of students taking credit-bearing coursework.

3.4 Off-Campus

Off-campus instructional sites refer to locations away from the main campuses where the institution offers educational programs. These sites must adhere to SACSCOC accreditation standards to ensure consistency with the institution's mission and educational quality.

Section 4: Process

4.1 Integrity and Consistency of Academic Courses

VPCC's unwavering commitment to providing students with a high-quality educational experience across all instructional formats and locations is the cornerstone of this policy. It outlines the rigorous measures taken to ensure that students, regardless of their learning format or location, receive an education of the highest standard.

- 4.1.1 All courses, regardless of course location or modality, must adhere to the same course objectives, student learning outcomes, and assessment criteria outlined in the official course of study. All faculty shall follow established courses of study, developed collaboratively, to develop their syllabi, ensuring that course materials, activities, and assessments align with VPCC's academic standards. This standardization ensures consistent content delivery, regardless of course location or modality, while still allowing flexibility and academic freedom in instructional methods.
- 4.1.2 All faculty are expected to participate regularly in professional development, as required in the Teaching Faculty Development, Evaluation, Reward and Recognition Plan or in the Adjunct and Dual Enrollment Faculty Growth and Development Plan. Topics may include, but are not limited to, discipline-specific content, online pedagogy, best teaching practices, use of the established Learning Management System, effective communication, student engagement techniques, inclusive teaching practices, and classroom technology.
- 4.1.3 The Academic Deans or their designee are responsible for ensuring consistent instruction for all students by periodically evaluating full-time and adjunct faculty in accordance with the Full-time Teaching Faculty Development and Evaluation, Plan, and the Adjunct and Dual Enrollment Faculty Growth and Development Plan. This process includes reviewing student evaluations, which provide valuable feedback on the effectiveness of instruction and contribute to maintaining high teaching standards and consistent educational quality across the College.
- 4.1.4 All faculty, regardless of location or modality of instruction, shall participate in Program Outcome Assessment, General Education Outcome Assessment, and Program Review, as appropriate to their teaching responsibilities. Assignments or other assessments of student learning shall be assessed from a variety of locations and modalities to ensure consistency.

4.2 Student Access to Support Services

- 4.2.1 The College offers a wide range of student support programs, services, and activities that align with the College's mission and foster student learning and overall development. Resources, programs, services, and activities shall be consistent and available to all students regardless of location or modality of their courses.
- 4.2.2 Information about student services, programs, and activities, and how to access these services, programs, and activities, shall be provided regularly to all students, across a variety of media to keep all students reasonably informed.
- 4.2.3 Students, regardless of location or modality, shall be able to obtain information about college programs, services, and activities with options for real-time, face-to-face, and/or remote interactions with college staff and faculty.

4.3 Protecting Student Privacy

- 4.3.1 All student ID numbers and personally identifiable information (PII), regardless of course location or modality, are classified as sensitive and secured through stringent access controls.

- 4.3.2 Access to student information will be limited to the individual student and to authorized personnel who demonstrate a legitimate need to know.
- 4.3.3 All faculty and staff shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The College will ensure students are informed of their rights regarding record inspection and release, with processes outlined on the College website and during orientation.
- 4.3.4 Faculty and staff shall receive information regarding professional development on FERPA and associated practices and procedures for handling student information and protecting student privacy.

4.4 Additional Course Fees

Any additional fees and/or line items to student's account, other than tuition, standard college fees, course books, and supplies, will be published in the course description field of the student information system (SIS) prior to student registration for the subsequent term. The academic deans will ensure any changes to additional fees are published in the course description prior to the registration term. Faculty will ensure course fees are included in their syllabi.

4.5 Methods for Confirming Student Identity

College staff and faculty shall, to the best of their ability, confirm that all students who register for a distance course are the same students who participate in, complete the course, and receive credit for the course. Student's identities shall be verified using identity verification, secure logins, multifactor authentication, and faculty monitoring.

- 4.5.1 In accordance with VCCS practice, all new student applicants, prior to applying for admission shall verify their identity through standard VCCS identify verification practice. Upon completion of the application for admission, all students will be assigned a unique username and will be prompted to create a secure password. Students shall keep passwords confidential and maintain responsible security practices in the selection and use of passwords per the VCCS Information Security Standard. Each student shall set up and use multi-factor authentication (MFA).
- 4.5.2 With these credentials, all students, regardless of location or modality, gain access to the MyVPCC portal where they can access many services, including Peoplesoft Student Information System (SIS), the College Learning Management System (LMS), and student Email.
- 4.5.3 Each student is provided an official email address upon completion of their application for admission. Students must use their student email for all official communications with faculty and staff at the College.
- 4.5.4 The Peoplesoft SIS is the official database for all colleges in the VCCS system and houses the official student records. Students will access their records, transcripts, course schedules, and other information through the Peoplesoft SIS. Students can register for classes and complete other administrative processes through the Peoplesoft SIS.

- 4.5.5 The College's LMS allows institutions to manage learning, engage students in courses, and it is where distance learning students participate in and complete their courses to receive credit. All credit courses at VPCC will use the LMS to provide course syllabi, grading, and course communication. Some courses use an external LMS to provide course content. The external LMS shall be linked through the College's LMS.
- 4.5.6 While other tools and software may be utilized by students, faculty, and staff to conduct college and instructional business, the official tools and software referenced above will be used for official purposes as described.
- 4.5.7 All students are required to possess a Virginia Peninsula Community College or government-issued identification containing both the person's legal name and photograph and shall present their identification documentation when requested by any member of the College faculty and staff.
- 4.5.8 Faculty and staff are responsible for evaluating academic integrity and verifying students' identities when assessing coursework and reporting the results of student learning assessments. This role is crucial to maintaining the integrity of the College's educational programs.
- 4.5.9 The College offers professional development and instructional resources to support faculty in creating assessments aligned with best practices in online education and utilizing the tools provided by the College. Faculty are encouraged to design assignments and assessments that discourage cheating. Software tools will be provided to faculty to assist in promoting academic integrity.

4.6 Dual Enrollment and Off-Campus Instructional Sites

- 4.6.1 Dual enrollment courses and courses taught at off-campus instructional sites must adhere to all standards and requirements of this policy, regardless of location or course modality.
- 4.6.2 The Vice President of Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring that all off-campus instructional sites offering college credit courses are providing a consistent and quality academic experience in accordance with this policy and must approve all new off-campus instructional sites.

Section 5: References

- 6.1 [SACSCOC Distance Education and Correspondence Courses Policy](#)
- 6.2 [SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation \(2024\) Resource Manual, Standard 10.6](#)
- 6.3 [SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation \(2024\) Resource Manual, Standard 14.3](#)
- 6.4 [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\) Regulations](#)
- 6.5 [Virginia Community College System \(VCCS\) policy 6.6 Dual Enrollment for High School Students](#)

Section 6: Schedule for Reviews

The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for reviewing this policy and its associated procedures annually, to ensure continued compliance with SACSCOC standards, VCCS policy, and institutional goals.

Section 7: Effective Date and Approval

This policy, version 2 of 2, becomes effective upon approval by College President, Dr. Towuanna Porter Brannon on March 10, 2026.

Section 8: Review and Revision History

Version	Date	Description of Change	Reviewed by	Approved by
1	02/11/2025	Initial draft proposed by Vice President for Academic Affairs Kerry Ragno.	College Council, College Support Staff Association, Council of Mid-Level Managers, Faculty Senate, VPCC Executive Cabinet	Dr. Towuanna Porter Brannon, College President
2	03/10/2026	Administrative updates proposed by Vice President for Academic Affairs Kerry Ragno.	VPCC Executive Cabinet	Dr. Towuanna Porter Brannon, College President
3	08/28/2026	Administrative updates completed by Chief of Staff Ada Badgley to follow the updated Policy and Procedure Templates approved as part of the 801.01 Policy on Policies effective 08.11.26.		Dr. Towuanna Porter Brannon, College President