Online and Distance Learning
Student Handbook
2016-2017 Academic Year

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A Letter from the Director of Distance Learning

Welcome to Distance Learning at Sussex County Community College!

Learning online minimizes barriers for students by allowing them to attend class without coming to campus. Online courses often fit into busy schedules, as they save travel time and reduce obligations around class meeting dates.

You will notice that online learning is quite different from in-classroom learning, but we strive to ensure we meet the needs of all of our diverse students by offering online services that are comparable to our traditional services here on campus.

Taking an online course can be challenging and time-consuming. However, you will find that the faculty and staff here at the College are here to help you succeed. Our moderate class sizes allow for more individualized attention from instructors, so you will always feel like more than just a number.

If you have any questions about Distance Learning here at Sussex County Community College, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

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Getting Started

Important things to know about taking online courses:

- Online courses are designed to offer all instruction and traditional course interactions in an online environment via a learning management system.

- Online courses provide students the benefit of independent learning and a more flexible schedule.

- Registering for an online course is not the “easy route” for your education. It’s true that online courses offer the flexibility to learn in your own time and space, but that doesn’t change the amount of work you will have to complete!

- In order to be successful in online courses, it is essential to have the self-discipline required of independent learning.

- Students enrolled in traditional courses usually have a consistent schedule to follow each week, with in-class instruction followed by out-of-class assignments. For online courses, students may have to find their own methods to stay on top of their work.

- Reliable and consistent access to a computer is necessary for success in an online course.

- Plan to set aside about five hours of study time a week for each online course. Some courses, especially ones where you may need tutoring, can require up to seven hours of study time per week. If you plan to enroll in two courses, be prepared to put aside 10 to 14 hours of study time each week.

- Online courses may not be a good fit for every student.

Are you ready to take an online course?

As mentioned above, there are a number of different factors that will affect the success of your online course experience. Visit http://sussex.edu/online to find out if online learning is right for you.
Etiquette Guidelines for Online Courses

Personal Courtesy

1. Begin each posting with a greeting stating the person's name (Hello Kerry, or Hello Dr. Reed), and closing with your name on its own line. This raises the tone of the correspondence so that there is a level of respect, regardless of the content. It also clearly delineates the beginning and end of messages in a thread containing many postings.

2. For e-mail, identify yourself and the subject of your e-mail message. Be sure to include the course number and section, the assignment, and your name in the heading.

Example: ENGL 101- ON Jane Smith Question about Week Two
Example: ENGL 101- ON Jane Smith Paper Two attached

3. Write to the whole group through the discussion forum. Use e-mail to send a private message.

4. Use paragraph breaks in your discussion postings and follow guidelines for how much to write. Your classmates will greatly appreciate your respect for their time.

5. Make sure your postings are clear and logical. It is possible to write a paragraph that contains no errors in grammar or spelling, but still makes no sense at all. Doing so in the classroom wastes time and reflects badly on you.

6. Be aware of the effect that your choice of words and typestyle may have. For example, if you use bold type or all capitals, will people think you are shouting at them or simply emphasizing a point? Be careful with words or phrases that can stereotype people, and remain professional when responding to ideas with which you feel strongly. Use emoticons and abbreviations sparingly: They are often misunderstood and relay vague ideas. It is better to find clear words for your thoughts.

7. Avoid satire or sarcasm. Few people can successfully write humor and satire. A probable and perhaps lasting misunderstanding is not worth an unlikely and passing chuckle.

8. If your message is designed to vent strong feelings, write it, but do not send it until you have slept on it overnight.

9. As the reader, give the author the benefit of the doubt. If something seems hostile or offensive, before you leap to that conclusion, ask for clarification. Practice patience and courtesy.

10. When a misunderstanding occurs, acknowledge when you have been unclear, apologize, say what you meant more clearly, and put it behind you.

11. Use "please" and "thank you". The power of these simple signs of respect and caring cannot be overstated.
12. Practice random acts of kindness. Think of what you can say (without being obsequious), that would brighten the recipient's day. It simply makes for a better experience for everyone, and as a bonus you may find that people pay better attention to what you have to say.

13. Above all, remain polite and professional at all times. Don't use offensive language, and don't be confrontational for the sake of confrontation. Treat all class members with respect and courtesy, and ask yourself, "Would I say this if we were sitting in a face-to-face classroom?" If the answer is no, rewrite and reread.

**Academic Integrity**

14. Provide citations for quoted materials or others' ideas, just as would be done in hard copy.

15. Do not forward personal notes or messages to others unless you are certain the content is appropriate and you have obtained permission from the author.

**Electronic Use of Information**

16. Never write anything you wouldn't want to see publicly printed; computer messages cannot be assumed to be private.

17. Since anything you write online can be (and may be) forwarded to others, do not disclose trade secrets or company-confidential information as part of a course.

18. Delete old e-mail messages; they take up valuable storage space.

*Adopted from University of Maryland’s University Guidelines*

[http://polaris.umuc.edu/de/faculty/rmf/#netiquette](http://polaris.umuc.edu/de/faculty/rmf/#netiquette)
Technology Support and Requirements

For successful completion of online courses at SCCC, we recommend that students have Internet access via DSL or equivalent broadband connectivity.

Traditional dial-up Internet services do not provide adequate support for the many technologies used within the program.

Please click here for computer requirements for WebStudy.

Getting Started

The following software and procedures are necessary for the courses to run smoothly. Please complete the following:

1. Download the latest version of Acrobat Reader.
2. Download or upgrade to the latest version of Java.
3. Download Adobe Flash Player.
5. Download VLC Media Player.

To access your courses, please log into WebStudy.

Pop Up Blockers

Pop-up blockers must be turned off when using WebStudy. You will receive an error message every time you log in if your computer’s pop-up blockers are not disengaged.

Other Issues

Students registered in distance learning courses may contact the Distance Learning Help Desk for assistance. Please, email webstudyhelp@sussex.edu or contact WebStudy directly.
My.Sussex Portal

The My.Sussex Portal allows SCCC faculty, staff, and students to access the information and password-protected resources that they need in one central place.

Before you are able to access the My.Sussex Portal, you must first be issued a Sussex County Community College ID and password.

Accessing the Portal

Access your portal here.

Enter your issued Sussex County Community College ID and password to login to your customized My.sussex portal, then click on the tabs that appear across the top banner.

My.Sussex Portal Resources

My.sussex is your own college portal to:

- View your grades
- Print your unofficial SCCC transcripts
- Check your GPA
- Search for classes and print your schedule
- View and Pay your bill
• Click on the My.sussex icon. Your username (SCCC Student ID) and temporary password were provided when you first registered.
• Change your password as soon as possible.
• Click the Personal Info link and then the Password Tab.

Forget your password? Enter your Student ID as your username and click the “I forgot my password” Tab. A new password will be sent to your email account.

**Accessing Sussex Email**

**SCCC has a Google-powered student email domain:** [http://mail.student.sussex.edu](http://mail.student.sussex.edu)

**Username**
Your username is based on your first initial and last name. **For example:** John Doe would be jdoe@student.sussex.edu

**New Students**
New Students will receive a New Student Welcome Letter with a temporary password and should contact IT Services if any assistance is needed.

**Returning Students**
If you previously had an @stu.sussex.edu email, you can log into your new @student.sussex.edu at [http://mail.student.sussex.edu](http://mail.student.sussex.edu) using your firstinitiallastname and your My.Sussex Portal password. If you are having trouble logging in, contact IT Services.

**Contact IT Services for assistance:**

SCCC IT Hotline: 973-300-2333
Email: ITService@sussex.edu
WebStudy

WebStudy is Sussex County Community College’s current learning management system, and is used to offer all of the online courses.

Accessing WebStudy

You can access the WebStudy platform by visiting www.sussex.webstudy.com, or going to the www.sussex.edu website and clicking on “WebStudy Login” on the left side of the page.

Make sure that your browser will accept cookies and that “pop-up blocker” is disabled.

Your Username and Password are the same as the credentials used to access your My.Sussex Portal.

If you are unable to login, please send an email to webstudyhelp@sussex.edu from your school issued email with the following information:

- Your first name and last name
- Your course code and name

Introduction to WebStudy

Welcome Page - Students can see at-a-glance if they have new and unread e-mails, unread forums, what assignments are due and when, any graded work ready for them to view, and Instructor's comments.
Tabs along the top of the screen will appear in every course.

**WebStorium** are resources that anyone can access from WebStudy. **Mail** is an e-mail that can only be used in WebStudy. You can use this to communicate with other classmates and your instructor. **Personal** is how you would go in to change your password or personal information in WebStudy. **Calendar** will show you assignments and exams if the instructor has put dates due on these resources.

You will be able to access your courses on the start date that is listed in your My.Sussex Portal. Some instructors may open their courses in advance of the start date, however if your courses do not appear on the first day of class, please contact webstudy@sussex.edu or call (973) 300-2116.

Your courses will appear on the right side of the welcome page under “Your Courses”. Your instructor will provide specific instructions about the features they are using for their course.

Additional information about WebStudy can be found in the [WebStudy Success Strategies!](#)
Academic Support Services

Ordering Textbooks

There are many different ways you can order textbooks for your online courses. The quickest and easiest way to order your books is through the Sussex County Community College Bookstore. At the SCCC Bookstore, you will have the ability to search and order all course materials.

You can contact the SCCC Bookstore directly by calling (973) 300-2380, or by sending a message to the SCCC Bookstore on the website.

Library Services

General library resources can be found on the SCCC Library Website. You can access the library online by following the information below.

Accessing the SCCC Library On-line

Access the SCCC library online by entering the bar code numbers on your Student ID card.

If you have lost or misplaced your Student ID card contact the Library to obtain your barcode number. You can reach the Library at 973-300-2162.

If you never obtained an SCCC Student ID card you will need to “create” a 14 digit barcode to access the SCCC library remote databases. Follow the directions below to “create” a barcode.

If you have a 6 digit Student ID number:

- Add the numbers 27582003 to the beginning of your Student ID number.

Example: Student ID # 123456 becomes barcode #: 27582003123456

If you have 5 digit Student ID number:

- Add the numbers 275820030 to the beginning of your Student ID number

Example: Student ID number 12345 becomes barcode #: 27582003012345
Proctor/Testing Information

In order to maintain academic integrity, some courses may require students to take tests, quizzes and other assessments in the presence of a proctor, in a professional setting, not in a private home. If your course has this requirement, it will be clearly stated in the syllabus.

There are two options that students can use for test proctoring. The first of these options is to complete and submit a SCCC Proctor Request Form, which can be found on the SCCC Testing Center Webpage. The second option is to schedule an appointment with the SCCC Testing Center by calling (973) 300-2155. For proctored testing by appointment, the following days and times are available:

- Tuesdays: 1:00pm to 3:00pm;
- Wednesdays: 3:00pm to 5:00pm; and
- Thursdays: 6 to 8 pm.
Student Support Services

Advisement Center

The Student Advisement Center provides a supportive and professional environment promoting the exploration and development of individual strengths that encourage academic success and personal growth. Take advantage of the knowledge and resources you’ll find at the Advisement Center to learn about courses, degree options, requirements for programs and concentrations, and learning resources at the College. In addition, counselors are also available for career planning and transfer opportunities.

The Advisement Center is dedicated to furthering the educational mission of Sussex County Community College by assisting students in their academic success. To speak with an advisor, call 973-300-2207 or email an advisor using your College-issued email.

Registering for Courses

Students can register for courses online during the registration period in the My.Sussex Portal by choosing “Student”, choosing “Registration”, and then choosing the term.
Dropping and Adding Classes

Courses may be added during the first 5 days of the fall and spring semesters and dropped within the first 10 days of the fall and spring semesters. Students must complete an official Add/Drop Form and submit this form to the Registrar’s Office by returning it to the Registrar’s Office on campus, faxing it to the Registrar’s Office at 973-579-5226, or by mailing it to: Registrar’s Office, Sussex County Community College One College Hill Road Newton, NJ 07860.

Dropped courses are removed from the transcript and thus do not count toward enrollment, deferrals, health insurance and athletic eligibility.

Drop/Add days are pro-rated for sessions less than a full Fall or Spring semester.

Students who neglect to follow official procedures and who stop attending classes will be assigned the grade of “FN” at the end of the semester or term. To avoid unnecessary costs and penalties, students are advised to discuss all Drop/Add Procedures with their advisor or with a Counselor. Students may withdraw from a class during the published withdrawal period but withdrawal procedures must be strictly followed. No refunds are available past the posed refund policy deadline. Students receiving financial aid must stop in the Financial Aid Office to determine if the drop/withdrawal will have any effect on the financial aid.

Refund Policy-Tuition and Fees

Students who withdraw from classes in which they have been officially registered, either offered by SCCC or one of its contracting institutions, shall be eligible for a refund. For fall and spring semesters, withdrawal in writing prior to the first day of the second week (see SCCC Academic Calendar for exact date) will incur a 100% refund and/or cancellation of charges. Withdrawal in writing prior to the first day of the third week (see SCCC Academic Calendar for exact date) will incur 50% refund of tuition only. Students will be responsible for payment of the remaining 50% of tuition and all fees.

No refund will be given for withdrawal in writing after the last day of the third week (see SCCC Academic Calendar for exact date). For summer and winter sessions, please see the SCCC Academic Calendar for refund dates.

Refund Policy- Medical Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from all classes due to severe medical circumstances may qualify for a 50% tuition credit (fees not included), or a 50% cancellation of tuition debt (fees not included).

Financial Aid students should contact the Office of Financial Aid at 973-330-2225 to review the impact on their aid.
Financial Aid

For information about Financial Aid, please visit the Financial Aid Office webpage. Once on the webpage, students will discover how to apply for Financial Aid, review the Financial Aid Reference Guide, and find other forms related to Financial Aid.

Paying the Bill

For information on how students can pay their tuition online and review important calendar dates related to billing and refunds, please visit the Bursar’s Office webpage.
Related Policies and Procedures

Academic Integrity

Students are required to perform all of the work specified by the faculty and are responsible for the content and integrity of all academic work submitted, such as papers, reports, and examinations.

Examples of violations of the “Rule of Academic Integrity” include:

- Knowingly representing the work of others as his or her own;
- Using or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic work;
- Receiving or giving assistance to another student during an academic test;
- Possessing, buying, selling, and/or buying material in a matter not authorized by the instructor;
- Acting as a substitute for another person during an academic test; and
- Attempting to influence or change one’s academic record inappropriately.

Attendance in an Online Course Policy

For purposes of Federal Title IV student financial assistance, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) requires institutions to be able to demonstrate that federal aid recipients established eligibility for federal aid by participating in academic related activities for all enrolled course work.

It is the position of the United States Department of Education, as well as Sussex County Community College, that attendance in an online course is constituted by the student participating in the class, and/or engaging in an academically-related activity.

Academically-related activities in an online course at Sussex County Community College include, but are not limited to:
  - submitting an academic assignment;
  - participating in an examination;
  - participating in an online discussion about academic matters; and/or
  - initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically-related activities do not include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as logging into an online class without active participation.

Disabilities Assistance

Students who require accommodations in order to pursue their higher education goals need to make an appointment with the advisor to the Disabilities Assistance Program (973-300-2153). It is the student’s responsibility to provide current and comprehensive documentation that would warrant such accommodation. The need to provide documentation applies to both academic and facilities accommodations.
Information pertaining to an individual’s disabilities is considered strictly confidential. For that reason, students interested in seeking accommodations must be aware that it is their responsibility to inform their faculty of their personal needs in terms of either academic or facilities arrangements. The advisor to the Disabilities Assistance Program’s role is to coordinate and mediate, when necessary, between the faculty or staff member and student only after disclosure of a disability has been made by the student to that faculty or staff member.

**Grade Appeals**

Educational institutions have the responsibility for evaluating students by standards and a grading system which is publicized and known to instructors and students. The responsibility for determining the final grade of each student rests with the faculty member who has the responsibility for teaching the course in which the student is responsible for demonstrating the learning which results in a final grade.

A student who feels that the final grade he/she received in the course is unfair, is entitled to a grade appeal. Any student pursuing a grade appeal must follow the procedure outlined below. Grade appeals not following this procedure are not eligible for review. The steps in the grade appeal procedure are as follows:

**Step One:** The student must understand the policy and complete the appropriate form stating the exact nature of the appeal within two weeks from the end of the semester.

**Step Two:** The instructor must read the appeal, meet with the student, and either grant or deny the student’s request. Students who are dissatisfied with this step may advance to Step Three.

**Step Three (a):** If the professor is an adjunct or part-time instructor, the Department Chair must hear the appeal and attempt to resolve the problem. If no solution is reached, the appeal may be forwarded to the appropriate Academic Dean whose decision is final.

or

**Step Three (b):** If the professor is a full-time instructor, the appropriate Academic Dean must hear the appeal and attempt to resolve the problem. The decision of the Academic Dean is considered final.

**Grievances**

**Step One:** At this level, a student is strongly encouraged to talk to his/her instructor and present the concern(s). It is important that the student clearly communicates his/her concerns directly so that the problem can be addressed at this step. Students who are dissatisfied with this step may proceed to step two.

**Step Two:** If a resolution of the grievance cannot be reached in step one, the grievance will be presented to an appropriate College administrator, who will hear the student’s grievance and talk to other parties who may be involved. Students who are dissatisfied with this step may proceed to step three.
Step Three: If a resolution of the grievance cannot be reached in step two, then the grievance will be presented in writing to the Chief Academic Officer. The Chief Academic Officer will hear the student’s grievance and talk to other parties who may be involved. The decision of the Chief Academic Officer will be presented to the student and be considered final.