



trinity valley  
community college

Distance Learning Student Handbook

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# Distance Learning

Student Handbook



## Distance Learning Student Handbook

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### TVCC Distance Education Mission Statement

Trinity Valley Community College is a learning-centered college that provides quality academic, workforce, and community service programs to meet the educational needs of our students and the citizens of our service area. The TVCC Department of Distance Education is committed to advancing the quality of our online education to meet the standards of our courses delivered in a traditional, face-to-face manner.

### Advising for Distance Education Courses and/or TVCC Online Programs

Questions about admissions, registration, entrance requirements, degree planning, transfer issues, and career counseling can be answered by any TVCC Counselor or Guidance Associate. For specific information about “getting started” with TVCC or contact information to the TVCC Guidance Offices, visit the [TVCC Advisement Center](#) webpage. Academic advising for TVCC courses is done through the use of TVCC Faculty Advisors. For contact information about academic advising for TVCC online certificate or degree programs, visit the [TVCC Distance Education Online Degree](#) Page or [TVCC Distance Education Online Certificate](#) page or e-mail [onlineprograms@tvcc.edu](mailto:onlineprograms@tvcc.edu) for answers to your questions.

### Academic Appeals

A student has a right to appeal a grade that they believe was incorrectly posted or unfairly imposed. If satisfactory resolution of the matters is not achieved after consultation with the instructor, division chair, appropriate associate vice president of instruction or campus provost and vice president of instruction, a request for a formal hearing can be submitted in writing to the chairperson of the academic appeals committee. Though the academic appeals hearings are most commonly conducted on the TVCC Athens campus, special arrangements can be made for distance learning students who do not reside in the TVCC area. More specific details about the academic appeals process can be obtained in the TVCC Student Catalog.

### Authenticating the identity of students enrolled in Distance Education Courses

The TVCC Department of Distance Learning currently uses the Blackboard Learn 9.1 learning management system to manage all Distance Learning courses. Blackboard Learn 9.1 is also used throughout all of TVCC in support of hybrid courses. All blackboard classes are accessed through <https://ecourses.tvcc.edu> portal and require a unique user name and password to obtain access. Students will receive a password and account designation upon completing the course registration process. To maintain the privilege of using TVCC account designation to access their distance education courses, STUDENT acknowledges that he or she is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the password and account, and that he or she is fully responsible for all activities that occur under his or her password or account. STUDENT agrees to (a) immediately notify TVCC of any unauthorized use of his or her



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password or account or any other breach of security, and (b) ensure that he or she exits from his or her account at the end of each session. TVCC cannot and will not be liable for any loss or damage arising from the STUDENT's failure to comply with this Section.

The TVCC Department of Distance Learning supports and maintains the blackboard system. As outlined in the CR (Local) Information Technology Resources and Systems policy, the acceptable use of College District electronic resources includes the following:

Each student, employee, or guest with an information technology (IT) account shall be responsible for all use of the account. All accounts shall be for use by a single individual – the person for whom the account was approved. Sharing or loaning accounts shall be strictly prohibited. If users need to share microcomputer resident data, they shall utilize message-forwarding capabilities or shared directories on LAN servers.

An employee or student shall not share or give his or her assigned login or password information to anyone. To help prevent unauthorized parties from obtaining access to electronic communications, an approved user shall choose a password that is difficult to guess and is not a common word, personal detail, or reflection of the user's work activities. Numeric, alphabetic, and special characters shall be used in combination to increase the difficulty of intrusion.

The College District's IT resources shall not be used to impersonate another person or misrepresent authorization to act on behalf of others or the College District.

IT resources shall not be used to invade the privacy of others or make unauthorized use of a person's work. A user shall not attempt to read or copy files belonging to others or decrypt or translate encrypted material unless the files have deliberately been made accessible by the owner or appropriate authorization has been obtained.

***Furthermore, violations of this policy by a College District employee or student user shall be determined a violation of the student code of conduct and may result in loss of TVCC log in credentials and/or failing or removal from the course(s).***

### Computer Requirements for Distance Education Courses

Trinity Valley Community College uses the Blackboard 9.1 learning management system for distance education courses. A high speed internet connection is suggested for best results with the applications available within the e-Course system. To determine whether or not your computer software is sufficient for the e-Course system OR to locate free software downloads which might be needed in some of the TVCC distance learning courses, visit the [TVCC Distance Learning](#) website.

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### Distance Education Student Orientation

A Student Orientation to Distance Learning course has been prepared for anyone who might be interested in registering for a distance education course with Trinity Valley Community College. This course is accessible to “guests” of the e-course system. To visit the student orientation, visit the [TVCC e-Course log in page](#) and select the "Preview as guest" option. Once you are “in the e-Course system” as a guest, the **Student Orientation to Distance Learning** course appears under "My Courses" on the right side of the screen. Click the link "Student Orientation to Distance Learning". If you have any questions, please contact the Distance Learning department at (903) 675-6324 or email [ecourseshelp@tvcc.edu](mailto:ecourseshelp@tvcc.edu)

### Bookstore and Textbook Information

Textbook information for your distance education courses will be provided for you in your class syllabus. Textbook(s) and other required materials can be purchased online through the [TVCC bookstore website](#).

### Complaints and Grievances

The TVCC Department of Distance Learning does not supervise distance learning instructors nor does it make decisions regarding instructional matters. Issues or complaints against distance learning courses or instructors will be directed through the respective departmental chain: instructor, division chair, provost or associate vice president, vice president of instruction. Please consult the [TVCC Catalog](#) for detailed instructions on the TVCC grievance procedure.

### Course Grades and Transcript Access

Final grades for all of your TVCC courses will be available to you within one to two weeks after the end of the semester through the [TVCC Cardinal Connect System Access](#). You may also view your TVCC transcript as well as transcript(s) from other colleges that have been submitted to the TVCC Registrar’s Office through the [TVCC Cardinal Connect System](#).

### Disability Services

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



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### Distance Education Readiness

Online learning requires motivation, self-discipline, savvy computer skills, strong study habits, and effective time management. To determine your level of “readiness” for taking online courses, you can access an inventory called Smarter Measure. Smarter Measure provides you with an indication of the degree to which a distance learning environment will be a good fit for you. Visit the [TVCC Department of Distance Learning](#) website for access and log in instructions to Smarter Measure.

### Family Education Rights & Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA)

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

- Name
- Date and place of birth
- Current and permanent address
- Telephone listing
- Major and minor
- Current class schedule
- Number of hours enrolled current semester
- Classification
- Marital status
- E-mail address
- Degrees and awards received
- Dates of attendance
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- All previous educational agencies or institutions attended

### Financial Aid

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



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### Grades

Grades will be posted and available for students on the TVCC website, via the Cardinal Connect system within three days after the end of the semester. Grades are no longer mailed to students.

An Incomplete “I” is given when illness or other emergency prevents the student from completing the course. The grade of I is typically only given after the official college drop deadline. The incomplete grade should be removed during the next long semester by contacting the professor and satisfactorily completing the incomplete assignments. The grade of an “I” is calculated into the grade point average as “0” grade points.

The grade of D will not transfer to most senior colleges. The policy on the transfer of Ds varies with each senior college. Please check with the senior college you may attend for transferability guidelines.

Students will not be allowed to appeal grades recorded on permanent records after one year from the date the grade was recorded.

### Graduation from TVCC

During the final semester of your degree or certificate program with TVCC, a Graduation Application must be completed and filed with the Registrar’s Office in partial fulfillment of graduation requirements. Deadlines for “Application for Graduation” are published in the TVCC Academic Calendar. An “Application for Graduation” can be obtained and completed within the [TVCC Cardinal Connect System](#).

### Library Resources

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

### Netiquette

With the onset of the online education environment and online courses a new buzzword has evolved called, netiquette. Simply defined, it means etiquette on the Internet (or net). In an online course, you will be speaking through writing both to fellow students and instructors, so it is imperative to communicate well and professionally. Mostly, when speaking in an online course, the same rules apply for etiquette as in real-time. The golden rule of netiquette in an online class or environment is, do not do or say online what you would not do or say offline.

1. Be friendly, positive and self-reflective. When people cannot see you, and also do not know you, feelings can be hurt if you are not careful in how you express yourself. The old saying, think before you speak is important here. Think before you write. One word of advice is to not respond when you feel angry. Wait. Write it down somewhere and





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come back to it. When you do, you may find that you no longer feel the same way as you did when you wrote it, because you have had time to reflect about the situation. Last, if you still feel the need to be heard, then edit before you post, and write it in terms that are easily embraced. When you feel a critique is necessary, say it in a positive tone. Reread what you have written to be sure it is positive.

2. **Use proper language and titles.** *Do not use "text" slang* or even profane words in an online education environment, even if they are words you consider, "not so bad," as they will sound offensive to the reader. Do not refer to your professor as "Doc" or by his or her first name, unless it is acceptable with him or her to do so. Also, do not use caps lock when writing, as it insinuates yelling.
3. **Use effective communication.** This takes practice and thoughtful writing. Try to speak and write clearly at all times. Reread before you respond. Define and restate your words when necessary. Correct a misunderstanding right away. Be mindful of chosen words and joking.
4. **Professionalism.** Leave the characters like smiley faces, and instant message abbreviations out. Your friends may like it, but chances are, your professor will not. Save it for personal conversations or definitely ask for permission before using them. They may be interpreted as childish or too casual for the online education environment. Last, always say please and thank you.
5. **Ask for clarification.** If you are unsure of what was said, or the instructor's directive, or are trying to interpret a person's expressions, then ask again. Do not sit in silence either misunderstanding or feeling offended. A simple way to do this is to say (or write), "I did not understand...", always keeping the sense of the misunderstanding on yourself.

### Privacy of students enrolled in Distance Education Courses

The privacy of TVCC students enrolled in distance learning courses is protected in the same manner as those enrolled in traditionally delivered courses. As stated in FJ (local) Student Records Policy, a comprehensive system of storage has been developed which ensures that student records are accessed by authorized persons only, as outlined in the policy, and will be stored in a safe and secure manner.

### Refund Policy

Students who officially drop a class or withdraw from Trinity Valley Community College will have their tuition and mandatory fees refunded according to the schedule below. For more information please visit the [TVCC College Catalog](#) webpage:





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### Fall/Spring Semesters

Prior to the first day of class – 100% (a \$15.00 matriculation fee will be charged)

During the first fifteen class days – 70%

During the sixteenth through twentieth class days – 25%

After the twentieth class day – none

### Summer

Prior to the first day of class – 100% (a \$15.00 matriculation fee will be charged)

During the first five class days – 70%

During the sixth and seventh class days – 25%

After the seventh class day – none

## Registration for Distance Education Courses

Registration for Distance Education courses with Trinity Valley Community College will be conducted in the same manner as for traditional, face-to-face courses. While there are scheduled “walk-in” registration sessions at the TVCC campuses, students are encouraged to register ONLINE using the [TVCC Cardinal Connect System](#). To determine whether or not you are eligible to register for your Distance Education courses online, visit the [Registration FAQ page](#).

## Scholastic Dishonesty

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

## Student Code of Conduct

Students enrolled in distance education courses with Trinity Valley Community College are expected to abide by the TVCC Code of Student Conduct, outlined in the [TVCC Catalog](#). When interacting and communicating in a distance education course with the instructor and fellow classmates, students are expected to follow all guidelines outlined in the Code of Conduct. Students who violate these policies and guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to denial of access to distance learning courses, removal from the



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course, and/or suspension or withdrawal from Trinity Valley Community College. For tips on “netiquette” (etiquette on the internet), refer to the “Netiquette” section of this handbook.

### Student Disciplinary Procedures

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

### Syllabus Listings

To view course syllabi for every section of all TVCC courses, visit the [TVCC Schedule of Classes](#).

### Taking Proctored Exams

Exams for distance education courses may require a proctor. To take a proctored exam in your TVCC distance education course, you may visit any of the TVCC campuses. **NOTE: You MUST arrive at the TVCC testing centers at least 1 hour prior to closing (so that you are able to COMPLETE your testing before they close) with proper PHOTO identification.**

- **Testing in Athens** – All online testing at the Athens Campus will be administered at The Testing Center during TVCC business hours. Please check the [Testing Center Location And Hours](#) for scheduled closings. In the event that the testing center is closed, you can test at the Athens LRC during their [posted hours](#) of operation.
- **Testing in Kaufman** – All online testing at the Kaufman Campus will be administered at the Health Science Center Media Room HSC 125A. Please visit the [Kaufman Testing](#) webpage for hours of operation.
- **Testing in Palestine** – All online testing at the Palestine Campus will be administered at the Palestine Campus Library. Please visit the [Palestine Testing](#) webpage to determine their hours of operation.
- **Testing in Terrell** - All online testing at the Terrell Campus will be administered at the Test Proctoring Center, Room A101. Please visit the [Terrell Testing](#) webpage to determine their hours of operation.
- If you need to take your proctored exams at a facility other than TVCC, you must receive approval by your **instructor**. This approval should be secured **EARLY** in the semester so that arrangements can be made with the institution that is willing to proctor the exams. **Do NOT wait until the last day of the testing window to discuss this with your instructor.**

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### Tutoring Services

TVCC is committed to providing academic assistance to all students enrolled in TVCC courses. The Cardinal Success Center provides free scheduled and drop-in tutoring at all the TVCC campuses. Each campus provides an area where professional tutoring by faculty and staff is available along with computer-assisted learning. Professional tutors donate time weekly to assist students. For more information please visit the [Cardinal Success Center](#) webpage.

For the TVCC student who is unable to come to any of the campuses to receive the tutoring services described above, please visit the [Student Resource Page of the Department of Distance Learning](#) webpage (online academic resources section) for free online links that may provide academic assistance in a variety of subjects. Specific guidance within your online courses can also be obtained by requesting assistance from your instructor. Many instructors embed “virtual office hours” within their schedule to accommodate the online student who needs additional assistance.

### Withdrawal from Distance Education Courses

Withdrawal from distance education courses with Trinity Valley Community College must be initiated by the scheduled “drop date” published in the TVCC Calendar at any of the TVCC Guidance Offices. **While some instructors will initiate a drop for students not “attending” or participating in their courses, it is the STUDENT’S responsibility to officially withdraw from a course OR verify that their instructor has initiated a drop on their behalf.** For specific details on how to initiate a drop, visit the [TVCC Advisement Center](#) webpage. If you receive Financial Aid Title IV funds (Pell, FSEOG, and/or Student Loans), and you withdraw from TVCC, you may owe a refund to the Department of Education. If you have received Financial Aid, please contact the [TVCC Financial Aid Office](#) prior to withdrawing from any of your TVCC courses.