



Vernon College Student
Online Course Orientation Guide
2011-2012



Welcome to online learning at Vernon College! The goal of this Student Online Orientation Guide is to provide you, the student, with specific information concerning both online instruction and courses at Vernon College.

If you are a new student at Vernon College, be sure to familiarize yourself with the Vernon College website www.vernoncollege.edu by navigating through the various links which will provide you with general information about the college and its services. This Student Online Orientation Guide is not meant to replace the general information found on the College's website, but instead provides detailed information on how to:

- Activate and access your VC student email account
- Determine the computer requirements needed for VC online courses
- Log-in and get started with your VC online courses
- Navigate through your VC online courses
- Familiarize yourself with Blackboard Learn
- Be a successful online student
- Follow Netiquette guidelines
- Locate the different Vernon College Student Support Services

Finally, at the end of this guide, you will be provided with both a set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for online courses and a list of student support services resources which you may need as you progress through your online learning.

Most importantly, during the first week of your online courses you will be required to complete an assessment which will test your understanding of the information presented in this document. The assessment is titled **“Student Orientation Assessment”** and can be found under the “Student Orientation” tab in your online course in Blackboard Learn. The guide will also be emailed to your VC student email account prior to the first day of classes. Instructional Services sincerely hopes the information included within this VC Student Online Course Orientation Guide will help you as you begin your online learning.

#1 Your first step prior to beginning your online course(s) is to activate and access your VC student email account. The steps to do this are described below.

How to Activate & Access Your VC Email Student Account?

As a Vernon College student, you have your own Vernon College email account hosted by Google. You cannot activate your VC student email account until you have registered for classes. Once you register for your classes, you can look up your email username and determine your password by reading the sections below.

What is my username?

To find your student email account username, follow the steps below.

- Follow the link below, fill out the form (all fields are required), and a tech support team member will respond to your request.
- [Username Request Form](#)

*It is important to note, Vernon College has assigned students a username and students cannot change this username.

What is my password?

Your temporary password to initially log-in to your VC student email account is:

- The first two letters of your first and last name along with the two-digit month and day of your date of birth.
- For example, if VC student Jane Smith's birth date is 09/01/1980, then her temporary password will be jasm0901 (all lowercase).

*Once you log-in for the first time, you are strongly encouraged to change your password to something you can remember. Also, if you happen to forget your password, complete the online [Request Password Reset Form](#).

#2 Computer requirements needed for VC online courses

The following hardware is minimum specifications to work Blackboard Learn.

The following hardware are minimum specifications to work Blackboard

PC or Macintosh with:

- Windows XP, or Vista; or MacOS X or later
- 1 G of free disk space recommended
- **Internet Connection**
- 56 K modem or higher
- Broadband

Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1 SP6 Updated on June 30, 2011

Certified: fully tested and supported.

Compatible: partially tested but should function properly.

Provisional: future technologies considered supported by Blackboard Support.

Unsupported: either impossible or not tested.

Microsoft® Windows® Operating System

	Internet Explorer ® 9	Internet Explorer 8	Firefox (Final Release Channel)	Firefox 3.6	Chrome (Stable Channel)
Windows ® XP (32-bit)	Unsupported	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
Windows Vista ® (32-bit)	Certified	Compatible	Certified	Compatible	Compatible
Windows Vista (64-bit)	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
Windows 7 (32-bit)	Certified	Compatible	Certified	Compatible	Certified
Windows 7 (64-bit)	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible

Apple® Mac OS® Operating System

	Safari® 5.0	Safari 4.0	Firefox (Final Release Channel)	Firefox 3.6	Chrome (Stable Channel)
Mac OS X 10.5 "Leopard®"	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible	Compatible
Mac OS X 10.6 "Snow Leopard®"	Certified	Compatible	Certified	Compatible	Certified

For more information concerning other browser considerations and browser plug-ins visit the Distance Education website for [Software Downloads](#) to view these sections.

#3 How to log-in and get started with your online courses?

Log-in Information:

Beginning at the homepage on the Vernon College website (www.vernoncollege.edu), select Online Course Login; This will take you to the *Blackboard Learn* log-in page, which is hosted outside the Vernon College website. Next, you will need to know your username and password to log-in.

Password Security:

A student must not disclose his/her password to any other person. Disclosure of a password may result in administrative withdrawal from Vernon College with forfeiture of tuition and fees.

Any student who is aware of a violation of password security must immediately notify either the instructor of the course or the Blackboard Administrator.

Username Information:

Your username is your Student ID number **without the dashes**. You can find your Student ID number on your tuition receipt or by logging in to Campus Connect using your SSN and PIN. Your Student ID will be clearly displayed in red on the first page in Campus Connect.

Password Information:

Your password is the last four digits of your Social Security number. If you have any problems logging-in, please complete and submit the [Help Form](#).

Getting Started with Your Online Course(s) Information:

You will not have access to any of the course content until the first scheduled day of classes.. (Note: instructors may enroll students prior to the first day of class, but access will not be given until the first scheduled class day.) As a result, when you log-in to Blackboard, you may see your course listed under the “My Courses” section but not be able to access it. Do not worry! Once again, you will have access to your course by the end of the first scheduled day of classes.

If you happen to have the ability to access your course prior to the first day, please be aware the instructor may not have the course ready and thus course information and content you find could be dated or from a previous semester.

Once you have access to your online course/s, you should begin every course by reading the *VC Student Online Course Orientation Guide*; which is the document you are currently reading. As stated before, this guide will be emailed to your VC student email account prior to the beginning of the semester.

#4 How do I navigate through my VC online courses?



Have you ever been lost on your first day of school? If so, your heart was probably racing the whole day and your nerves were most likely wrecked by the time you did find your way. Were you able to focus on your

learning that day? What about the next day? You probably had a difficult time getting back on task.

Feeling lost in Blackboard can have the same affect on your concentration. Being a successful online student requires knowing where to go for the information you need and activities you are to complete. This section will help you identify the major components of the VC Blackboard Learn Template and provide detailed instructions on how to navigate through the course environment. Each major component and the organization of the VC Blackboard Learn Template is described below.

Course Documents:

The heading where you will find all important course documents for the course. These documents may include but are not limited to: VC Course Syllabus, Course Outline, and Course Schedule or Calendar.

The VC Course Syllabus provides information such as the course description, course pre-requisites, and course learning outcomes. The Course Outline is an instructor created document which provides specific information and guidance regarding the course. Finally, the course schedule or calendar will communicate the due dates for each course activity or task.

Course Communication:

Under this heading, you will find links to the different forms of communication within the course. Communication in each course will vary, but the common communication tools one can find here include but are not limited to: Announcements, Course Q&A Forum, Email and/or Messages.

Course Content:

Course Content is where the instructor will post the content for the course. You will probably spend the bulk of your time in your online course in this section. While each instructor will organize their course content differently, there are three ways you will find your course organized as described below.

- *Topical Format:* If an instructor utilizes this format, the course content will be organized by topic (i.e. U.S. Constitution, Fractions, etc...)
- *Type Format:* Using this format, instructors will organize the course by activity (i.e. Assignments, Discussions, etc...)
- *Chronological Format:* Instructors may organize their course content by simple chronological order (i.e. Unit 1, Unit 2, Week 1, Week 2, etc...)

*If you find yourself struggling to locate the information you need, contact your instructor and he or she will be happy to guide you.

#5 How do I learn to use Blackboard Learn?

The creators of Blackboard Learn have created what they refer to as the “Blackboard Learn On Demand Learning Center” for students. You can visit the [Blackboard Learn On Demand Learning Center](http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm) for students to watch short 2 to 3 minute instructional interactive videos on (1) how to set your preferences & control your Blackboard Learn environment (2) stay organized and communicating and (3) work in your course. If you cannot get the hyperlink above to work, copy and paste the following URL into your internet browser:

- <http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm>

#6 How can I be a successful online student?

To be successful, you should be a self-starter and able to work independently. You must allocate the time required to do the activities. You must be able to read carefully and pay attention to detail. Do not wait until the last minute to start course activities because there is a great chance you will not be able to finish. If you run into a problem, it may take time to get help. In general, the online student should possess the following qualities:

- Be able to communicate through writing
- Be self-motivated and self-disciplined
- Be willing to "speak up" if problems arise
- Be willing and able to commit to 7 to 15 hours per week per course
- Be able to meet the minimum requirements for the course
- Have access to a computer and high speed Internet
- Participate in the virtual classroom 3-5 days a week
- Be able to work with others in completing projects
- Be willing to learn independently and/or in groups
- Be able to complete assignments on time

#7 What are Netiquette guidelines and how do I comply?

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 have your communication skills tested! You will be speaking through writing to fellow students and instructors, so it is imperative to communicate well and professionally. Mostly, when speaking in an online course or in any online environment for that matter, 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.*

Let us look at five important netiquette rules in an online course or education environment:

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 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. This is also true 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 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. It will insinuate yelling. That would hurt someone's feelings and possibly give an individual the wrong impression.

3- Use effective communication. This takes practice and thoughtful writing. Try to speak and write clearly at all times. Again, reread before you respond. Define and restate your words when necessary. Correct a misunderstanding right away. Chances are, if one person felt a certain way about what you said, then another may have as well. Likewise, be mindful of chosen words and joking. Let's say for example, I write, "get out!" This slang term can be interpreted in several ways, either positively or negatively.

4- Professionalism. Do not use characters like smiley faces, and instant message abbreviations. 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. Do not interrupt though; wait until there is a break in the conversation, or until the open interaction occurs. Your instructor will appreciate your responsiveness and maturity. A simple way to do this is to say (or write), "I did not understand...", always keeping the onus for the misunderstanding on yourself.

With these top five netiquette rules, you are on your way to online success!

Read more: <http://www.brighthub.com/education/online-learning/articles/26946.aspx#ixzz1IHn1OWm5>

#8 Academic Integrity Policy

Preamble. Vernon College is a comprehensive community college that promotes a culture of success for all who are a part of the institution. It is in this learning environment that the ethical growth and development of students can best be facilitated. The success of their experiences at Vernon College is contingent on the existence of an environment that requires adherence to a set of values that includes but is not limited to honesty, fairness, excellence, freedom, responsibility, achievement, civility, and community. Therefore, behaviors that contradict these ideals are unacceptable and will promote values that are in opposition to our mission and vision for the future. Academic integrity is the foundation of the respect and worth of our instructional efforts including the degrees and certificates we award.

Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty. All members of the college community have a responsibility to ensure academic integrity, and members of the instructional faculty are especially instrumental as academic integrity is based in the classroom whether real or virtual.

Members of the faculty have primary responsibility for:

1. communicating standards of academic honesty and scholastic expectations;
2. managing activities, assignments, and assessment so as to minimize opportunities for dishonesty;
3. approaching students who are suspected of misconduct and meeting with them privately in a civil and respectful manner;
4. establishing and following prescribed procedures for academic dishonesty;
5. protecting the identity of a student who reports an incident of academic misconduct.

Student Responsibilities. Students have a responsibility to behave in accordance with ethical standards that will build and sustain the trust of the faculty, the administration, and their peers and to follow the *Honor Code of Conduct* of Vernon College:

By virtue of being a student of Vernon College, I pledge to behave ethically by

- 1. following the standards of academic honesty and scholastic expectations;*
- 2. refraining from giving or receiving any unauthorized aid or engaging in collusion;*
- 3. refusing to take the work of others and submit it as my own;*
- 4. notifying the appropriate instructor and/or those in immediate authority of any incidents of suspected academic misconduct.*

Specific Violations of Academic Integrity. Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to the following:

Plagiarism and other forms of scholastic dishonesty are serious academic violations that will not be tolerated. Scholastic dishonesty encompasses, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and other acts designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student.

“Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

1. copying from another student’s work, e.g., test paper or assignment, or allowing another student to copy from one’s own without authority;
2. possessing any materials during a test that are not authorized by the instructor, such as class notes, specifically designed “crib notes,” calculators, electronic devices, etc.;

3. using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of a unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer programs;
4. collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
5. discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
6. divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or kept by the student.
7. substituting for another person or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take the course, to take a test, or to complete any course-related assignment;
8. registering for and taking a class for which the student does not have the formally required prerequisite classes or a written waiver from a Division Chair or Instructional Dean;
9. falsifying academic records, including, but not limited to, altering or assisting in the altering

“Plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means someone else’s work and then submitting that work for credit as if it were one’s own. It also includes the failure to properly document sources used in research.

“Collusion” includes, but it is not limited to, unauthorized collaboration with another person in the preparation of an academic assignment offered for credit.

Sanctions Related to Violations of Academic Integrity. The sanctions for academic dishonesty include but are not limited to:

1. a grade of zero on an exam or assignment;
2. an “F” in a course;
3. administrative withdrawal from a class with a possible recommendation of disciplinary sanctions.

Student Rights. See *Vernon College Student Handbook*.

#9 Student Support Services

You can find all the Vernon College student support service resources and contacts in the table below.

OFFICE	BUILDING/ROOM NUMBER	CONTACT PERSON	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL
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Admissions/Registrar

VER	Osborne Administration Building	Sarah Davenport	(940)552-6291 ext. 2205	sdavenport@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	100 Hallway	Rebecca Ashlock	(940)696-8752 ext. 3208	sdavenport@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Admissions▪ Registration▪ Add/Drop Form▪ Transcripts▪ Apply for Graduation			

Bookstore

VER	Colley Student Center (SUB)	Julie Lama	(940)552-6291 ext. 2281	jlama@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	RM 200	Kathy Barfield	(940)696-8752 ext. 3219	kbarfield@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Textbooks▪ Nursing Supplies (ID's, scrubs, etc)▪ Testing Supplies▪ VC Apparel			

Business Office

VER	Osborne Administration Building RM	Rhonda Knox	(940)552-6291 ext. 2303	rknox@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	100 Hallway	Ann Schultz	(940)696-8752 ext. 3215	aschultz@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Tuition & Fee Payments▪ FACTS (Online Payment) Information▪ Graduation Payments			

Continuing Education

All Campuses	CCC RM 1003	Connie Monteith	(940)696-8752 ext. 3213	cmonteith@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fast Paced CareersCustomized TrainingTest Prep CoursesPersonal Enrichment			

Counseling/Student Services

VER	Osborne Administration Building RM	JoAnn Sharp	(940)552-6291 ext. 2278	jsharp@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	RM 110	Clara Garza Jackie Polk	(940)696-8752 ext. 3209 ext. 3202	cgarza@vernoncollege.edu jpolk@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Course Schedule Advising (TSI Not Clear)Career PlanningPersonal CounselingDiscipline & Grievances			

Distance Education

All Campuses	Homepage: Distance Education, Internet Courses, High School Concurrent & Dual Credit			
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Financial Aid

VER	Osborne Administration Building	Melissa Elliott	(940)552-6291 ext. 2206	mjelliott@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	RM 110	Debbie Alexander	(940)696-8752 ext. 3203	dalexander@vernoncollege.edu

Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work Study Employment Loans, Grants Scholarships Hazelwood GI Bill Money 			
	NOTE: Students are assigned a financial aid processor based on the first letter of their last name. Please use Campus Connect to check your status before contacting your processor.	(A-G) Rosa Alaniz (H-Q) Nancy Arnold (R-Z) Mary Ann Noah	(940)552-6291 ext. 2279 (940)552-6291 ext. 2349 (940)552-6291 ext. 2208	ralaniz@vernoncollege.edu narnold@vernoncollege.edu mnoah@vernoncollege.edu

Health Clinic

VER	Sumner Applied Arts Center RM	Sue Wallace	(940)552-6291 ext. 2276	
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment of Injuries & Illnesses Health Promotion, Maintenance, & Education 	Hours: M-TH 8 AM – 10 AM		

Housing

VER	Student Residence Center	Tony Perez	(940)552-6291 ext. 2319	tperez@vernoncollege.edu
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Library

VER	Wright Library	Suzanne Butler	(940)552-6291 ext. 2222	librarian@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	RM 401	Stephen	(940)696-8752 ext.	librarian@vernoncollege.edu

STC		Stafford	3281	
	RM 215	Debbie Richard	(940)766-3369 ext. 3840	librarian@vernoncollege.edu
SLC	RM C101	Jonathan Dunn	(940)855-2203 ext. 4212	librarian@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research Assistance ▪ Off-Campus Access to Journal Articles & eBooks ▪ Online Assistance (Email, Live Chat) ▪ Free WiFi (Vernon, CCC) 			

PASS Center

VER	Wright Library RM 217	Bobbie White	(940)552-6291 ext. 2309	bwhite@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	RM	Angela Walker	(940)696-8752 ext. 3257	awalker@vernoncollege.edu
STC	RM	Debbie Richard	(940)766-3369 ext. 3840	drichard@vernoncollege.edu
SLC	RM	Jonathan Dunn	(940)855-2203 ext. 4210	jdunn@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tutoring ▪ Time Management ▪ Test Anxiety ▪ Test Taking ▪ New Beginnings 			

Security

VER	Osborne Administration Building	Chris Bell	(940)552-6291 ext. 2272	cbell@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	RM	Toney Sharp	(940)696-	tsharp@vernoncollege.edu

			8752 ext. 3207	
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Special Services/ADA

All Campuses	VER Wright Library RM 217	Deana Lehman	(940)552- 6291 ext. 2307	dlehman@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alternative Testing ▪ Special Accommodations ▪ ADA Services 			

Student Activities

VER	Colley Student Center (SUB)	Sjohonton Fanner	(940)552- 6291 ext. 2295	sfanner@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	RM 110	Jackie Polk	(940)696- 8752 ext. 3206	jpolk@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Campus Activities ▪ Clubs & Organizations 			

Testing Services

VER	Wright Library RM 213	Sharron Shelton	(940)552- 6291 ext. 2317	sshelton@vernoncollege.edu
CCC	RM 400	Sharron Shelton	(940)696- 8752 ext. 3278	sshelton@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Placement Testing (Accuplacer) ▪ CLEP, NET, GAP, TEAS ▪ Testing Center- Proctored Tests 			

Veterans Services

All Campuses	CCC RM 110	Debbie Alexander	(940)696- 8752 ext. 3203	dalexander@vernoncollege.edu
Services include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Enrollment Certification▪ Application Questions▪ Benefit Applications▪ Exemptions and Waivers			