



VC Student Online Course Orientation Guide



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

If you are a new student at Vernon College, be sure to familiarize yourself with 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
- Figure out the computer requirements needed for VC online courses
- Log-in and get started with your online courses
- Navigate through your VC online courses
- Be a successful online student
- Follow Netiquette guidelines

Finally, at the end of this guide, you will be provided with both a set of Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) for online courses and a list of student service 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 will be found under the “Student Orientation” tab in your online course in Blackboard Learn. This online orientation guide will also be emailed to your VC student email account prior to the first day of classes. I hope the information included within this VC Student Online Course Orientation Guide will help you as you begin your online learning.

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 been issued a PIN number by the Admissions Office.** Usually, if you are able to log-in to My VC and have access to Campus Connect, then you should have an email account.

If you still do not find your name, then complete the online technical assistance form so we can find out what the problem is. [Technical Help form](#)

Still waiting on instructions from IT on breakdown of steps

Computer requirements needed for VC online courses

The following hardware are minimum specifications to work Blackboard Learn.

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

It is very important that you use a certified or compatible Web browser when viewing and working in Blackboard so that information and course tools display correctly. Use these tables to ensure your current browser is compatible.

Windows Web Browsers		
Browser	XP	Vista
IE 8	Compatible	Compatible
IE 7	Compatible	Certified
Firefox 3.5.x	Certified	Certified

Certified configurations are fully tested and supported. Compatible configurations are partially tested but should function properly.

Macintosh Web Browsers		
Browser	10.4	10.5
Safari 2	Compatible	Compatible
Safari 3	Certified	Certified
Firefox 3.0.x	Certified	Certified

Certified configurations are fully tested and supported. Compatible configurations are partially tested but should function properly.

- Firefox 1.5 and 2.0 are NOT supported for Blackboard Learn. Firefox 1.5 and 2.0 users need to upgrade to Firefox 3.0 to access the latest security patches and Mozilla support.
- Mac OS 10.3 is NOT supported for use with Blackboard Learn.

For more information concerning other browser considerations and browser plug-ins visit the Blackboard created Student Orientation [Course Overview](#) and scroll down to view these sections.

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), you should select “Blackboard”. 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.

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 fill out 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. However, instructors may enroll you in their online course(s) prior to the first day of class and still deny you access. As a result, when you log-in to Blackboard, you may see your course listed under the “My Courses” section but may 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 do have access to your online course, 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.

How do I navigate through my VC online courses?



Have you ever been lost on your first day of school and couldn't find your way? 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:

Here one 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, one 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:

Here 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. These are 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 find the information you need, contact your instructor and he or she will be happy to guide you.

How can I be a successful online student?

To be successful, you should be a self-starter and be able to work independently. You must be able to allocate the time required to do the activities. You must be able to read carefully and pay attention to detail. Don't wait until the last minute to start course activities because there is a great chance you will not be able to finish it. 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 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

What are Netiquette guidelines and how do I comply?

According to dictionary.com, [netiquette](#) is "the rules of etiquette that apply when communicating over computer networks, especially the internet".

Roxie will fill in here with what she has.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

To review a list of FAQs, please follow the link below.

http://www.vernoncollege.edu/Distance_Learning/dlintfaq.html

Student Service Resources