

Distance Education Programs

Handbook for Students



COLLEGE OF THE
ALBEMARLE



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General Information

Welcome to College of The Albemarle (COA)! Carefully read the material presented in this handbook. The handbook was designed to provide students with information specific to Distance Education (DE) including:

- how to determine online learning readiness
- what is required to enroll in a fully online class
- student rights and responsibilities
- computer requirements and technical assistance
- where to find student services resources online and onsite
- information about proctored exams

DE is an option for students who wish to study and learn in a time and place that best fits their own schedule. Many students have schedules or challenges that do not fit with the traditional on-campus course offerings, and DE provides a viable avenue to a quality education. DE is ideal for students who want to get an education, but do not live near one of the COA campuses. DE at COA also offers quality and convenience for today's hectic lifestyle.

Distance Education Programs at COA seeks to support and assess the development and delivery of DE courses in an effort to ensure quality programming that reflects continuous review and improvement. The DE courses meet quality standards set forth for traditional on-campus programs and carry out the mission of the college.

Distance Education Course Definitions

Online Courses

College curriculum or continuing education course in which 100% of the instruction is delivered via the Internet/online using a Learning Management System (LMS). Courses may have proctored testing, but instruction is delivered completely online. Online students are able to participate from geographically remote locations without the need to come to campus.

Hybrid Courses

College curriculum or continuing education course in which greater than 50% but less than 100% of instruction is delivered when the student and the instructor are separated by distance. Check the course schedules in MyService to determine if and when the hybrid course will meet on campus.

Blended Courses

College curriculum or continuing education course in which less than or equal to 50% of instruction is delivered when the student and the instructor are separated by distance. Check the course schedules in MyService to determine when the blended course will meet on campus.

Web Conferencing

Courses taught live at a scheduled time using an online web conferencing platform where attendance is required. Students will need access to a microphone, webcam, and high-speed internet.

Registration Readiness

COA Entrance Requirements

COA entrance requirements for DE courses are essentially the same as the requirements for traditional courses. COA has an open-door admissions policy and welcomes anyone who wants to benefit from postsecondary education, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability.

Contact an Advisor

There are COA [advisors](#) at all four of our campuses ready to help students navigate their education experience. Advisor can help with registration, selecting a major, and/or with [career planning/services](#). Student should contact their advisor any time they need assistance.

Distance Education Course Enrollment Requirements

Students who are considering enrollment in an online class should complete an assessment to determine their preparedness and likelihood of success in using this method of learning. An Online Learning Readiness Assessment is available on DEP's [Online Learning Readiness Quiz](#) website.

All students admitted to COA also have access to and are recommended to complete "COA 101 - myCourses for Students" at orientation. myCourses is COA's LMS. New students will have access to myCourses one week before the start of their class.

To access COA 101, log in to [myCourses](#) with the same username and password created when you activated your COA accounts (See Computer Readiness and Assistance section below). Once logged in, you will see at a minimum and have access to the following:

- COA 101 - myCourses for Students
- ASC – Academic Support Center

Note: Due to audit requirements, all other classes will not be visible until the first day of classes, starting at 12:15am, at which time you will be able to view your current semester classes.

Computer Readiness and Assistance

COA Account Activation

The primary method of identification is COA's secure One Identity Password Manager to ensure securely managed accounts across COA campuses. In accordance with NCCCS standards, each registered COA student is assigned a unique username and ID. The User ID is generated by the College's Ellucian Colleague system. COA students receive their unique Username, Student ID, and first-time login instructions by email from Student Services upon application, entrance, and enrollment to the College.

Our curriculum and non-degree seeking adult students (Not CCP) also receive their student ID and username by US mail to their primary address on file if mailed either a:

1. Missing Document Letter; and/or
2. Application Complete Letter

New students must then activate their account through the [Password Manager System](#) by providing their unique COA Username, Student ID number, and their date of birth. During this process they are required to set their own password. The College's LMS (myCourses), student email, and the student information portal (MyService) are all password-protected and require secure accessed using this unique username and password. For security purposes, COA has no record of the student's password.

A student has the option to change or reset their password in one of two of the following ways:

1. The primary method a student can use to reset a password is by using an automated self-service password reset process. The password self-service process, [Password Manager](#), is operated by COA's Ellucian Colleague system and a link can be found on COA's [Student Resources](#) web page. The password self-service process requires the student to input their Username, student ID, and date of birth. They are then required to set a new password.
2. If the student needs a new password and is unable to use the password self-service system because they have forgotten their username or student ID, he or she is directed to the Registrar's office for identification verification. Once the verification process is complete and if necessary, the Registrar's

office will notify COA's Management Information Systems (MIS) Help Desk, and an MIS technician will help guide the student through the password self-service process.

In either case and for security purposes, COA has no record of the student's password after the reset. Additional security measures include: Microelectronics Center of North Carolina (MCNC) does an extensive Network Audit/Health Assessment for all 58 Community Colleges every 3-4 years; COA's MIS department checks COA's Firepower logs for anomalies at least once a week; and COA's Firewall provides URL Filtering, Malware Protection and IPS security measures. Malware Protection is updated daily.

Internet Access and Hardware/Software Requirements

DE students must have access to a personal computer with Internet service (see [Technology FAQ](#) for recommended minimum computer requirements) and maintain a working COA email account. Upon admission to COA, each student is issued a COA email account that can be accessed through the [Gmail](#) website.

Office 365 - FREE

Some courses require Microsoft Office applications are used. All COA students have access to [Office 365](#) (online) or can download Office 2016 for free using your COA student account. Be aware – Office 2016 is for Personal Computers (PCs) and is not identical to Office 2016 for Macs. There is currently no office version available for Chromebooks, however, Office 365 online can be used.

Technical Assistance

Visit our Management Information Services (MIS) [Technology FAQ](#) website to answer questions regarding technical issues such as your COA email account or access to free Office 365. Visiting our [Distance Education](#) website and our [Distance Education FAQ](#) page to answer questions regarding myCourses or accessing myCourses. For additional assistance in any of the above instances, submit a [help desk support ticket](#).

Student's Rights and Responsibilities

At the beginning of the semester, it is important to orient yourself to important information about the College by reading the [Student Code of Conduct & Academic Integrity Handbook](#), as well as the current [Academic Catalog](#). Every student is responsible for observing the rules and regulations for the College as published in these documents. These publications are available for review on the [College of The Albemarle](#) (COA) website by clicking on "Student Resources" near the top of the webpage and then clicking "Student Handbook" or "Academic Catalogs" in the menu on the left side of the webpage.

Attendance Policy (Enrollment Verification Assignment)

Enrollment is established when a student submits a digital quiz/assignment within the first 10% percent of the term. Students will see a deadline date for the enrollment verification assignment in their course. When a student has missed this deadline, he or she may be withdrawn from the course. Refer to the syllabus in each class for the attendance policy. (See also COA's [Policy 3-12 Student Attendance](#).)

DE courses have the same learning objectives as traditional seated classes. Therefore, DE students complete examinations, assignments, and homework/class participation, same as their traditional class counterparts using the internet in place of most, if not all face-to-face meetings. Curriculum students who miss more than 10 percent of the total contact hours in a course may be withdrawn from that course. Students are encouraged to communicate with instructors on a regular basis as well. (See COA's [Policy 3-12 Student Attendance](#).)

Some programs may follow a more rigid attendance policy due to regulations set by accrediting boards, state, and federal licensing agencies. These attendance policies will be explained in the handbook for that particular program.

Holidays, Breaks, Weekends, and Inclement Weather

DE faculty members have the flexibility of scheduling due dates and deadlines as appropriate. In addition to the college's policy on inclement weather, all instructors will clearly indicate their individual policy concerning inclement weather in their course syllabus. If you miss class time, your instructor will notify you and inform you of the make-up days, times, or assignments.

With respect to hybrid/blended courses, if bad weather forces the college to close, the course will not meet on campus. Announcements will be made on all major radio and TV stations in our area and posted to the College's website. Students can sign-up for our emergency alerts by going to the COA's main website, click the Student Resources link, and click the "[Alert System](#)" link."

Consumer Information

Various information regarding COA's Financial Assistance, the Institution, Student Right-to-Know-Act, Campus Security and Safety, and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act can be accessed on the [Consumer Information](#) website.

Netiquette

Netiquette (net + etiquette) is the code of proper conduct applied to virtual online interactions. Please keep in mind the following 10 essential netiquette guidelines listed below.

1. **Avoid ALL CAPS.** Do not type in ALL CAPS! If you do, it will look like you are screaming.
2. **Avoid Sarcasm.** Do not write anything that sounds angry or sarcastic even as a joke, because without hearing your tone of voice, your peers might not realize you are joking.
3. **Write clearly and concisely.** Use full sentences, including proper grammar and spelling. In other words, avoid "TextSpeak" and shortcuts unless requested.
4. **Check Grammar and Spelling.** Run a grammar and spell check before posting or emailing anything – always a good practice.
5. **Be Polite.** Remember to say "please" and "thank you" when soliciting help from your classmates and teachers.
6. **Respect Opinions.** Always respect the opinion of your classmates and teachers. If you feel the need to disagree, do so respectfully and acknowledge the valid points in your classmate's argument.
7. **Think before you Type.** If you are comfortable standing up in front of a classroom and saying your message, then your message is most likely okay to share as a post or in an email.
8. **Avoid plagiarism.** Always express yourself using your own words. When using someone else's words to help describe or support your point, be sure to use quotation marks and cite your source. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism, please see the website at [Plagiarism.org](#). Resource to create a citation: [Citation Machine](#).
9. **Email Properly.** Always remember when emailing your instructor to include the following items:
 - In the subject line, type the purpose of the message and include the course ID (e.g., ACA-122-IN13). Instructors often teach multiple courses and multiple sections of the same course. Note: Some spam filters block messages with blank subjects.
 - At the bottom of your message, type your signature (e.g., your name and phone number) to inform your instructor you are sending the message.
10. **Create Drafts.** When composing long messages, emails, or discussion responses, you may want to draft them offline first to avoid any possibility of losing your work. You may also take advantage of spelling and grammar checkers when drafting offline and using a software application such as Microsoft Word.

CyberBullying

Cyber-Bullying or Bullying is a systematic intentional behavior that takes many forms, including but not limited to, repeated unwanted physical, verbal or written acts which are hostile or offensive, targeted at an individual or

groups and creates an intimidating and/or threatening environment which produces a risk of psychological and/or physical harm. Cyber-Bullying (use of electronic or digital technology), Cyber Stalking, or Bullying of any kind is not tolerated at COA. Please see [COA's Student Code of Conduct & Academic Integrity Handbook for additional information \(specifically Section C. Code of Conduct Expectations\)](#).

Verifying Online Student Identity

Students are responsible for providing their complete and true identity information in any identification verification process. Additionally, College 3-18 Policy for Responsible Use of Technology Resources and Student Code of Conduct (both are available to print and are on COA's website) prohibits users from sharing their password with someone else or allowing others to use their account. COA's [3-18 Policy for Responsible Use of Technology Resources](#) and [3-40 Distance Education Policy, Section III, Identity and Privacy](#) establishes COA's commitment to implement the North Carolina Institutional Information Processing System (NCIIPS) IT Security Standard (IT Standard). These standards are designed to ensure that only authorized users shall be granted access to COA information systems including COA's LMS platform. COA utilizes myCourses as its web-based LMS platform for hosting distance learning courses. myCourses is used for all online, blended, hybrid, and web conferencing courses. Faculty uses myCourses to post course lectures, handouts, and other file resources, as well as to deliver secure student communications, give exams, and post grades. myCourses is also used by students for collaborating in assignments.

COA's instructors may request authentication of any assignment and/or review the myCourses log for the assignment submission. If there is a question regarding the submission of coursework or participation in coursework, the student will be advised of the terms of COA's Academic Integrity Expectations that are available online in Section C of the [Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity Handbook](#).

Student Resources

Online Support Services

DE Students have many academic resources available to them online 24 hours per day, seven days per week. [Online Academic Resources](#) include:

Online Tutoring (available 24/7) via Tutor.com

Tutors are available via audio and chat, and appointments can be spontaneous or scheduled. Written assignments can also be "dropped off" for review. Tutor.com provides help with writing, mathematics, reading, science, business, Spanish, nursing, allied health, and computers and technology. The Tutor.com link can be found in any of your myCourses classes to access online tutoring.

Virtual Math & Writing Center via Academic Support Center

Free tutoring is available through the Academic Support Center and to all COA students currently enrolled in curriculum courses. The Math and Writing Centers have drop-in hours via [Academic Support Center's virtual office](#). See the [Academic Support Center](#) myCourses website for specific days and hours of operation.

Online Guides and Libraries

Access is by proxy server, so your COA email log on is all that is required for off-campus access. In the event that our proxy server is not working – submit a [help desk ticket](#), email coa_libraryservices@albemarle.edu, or visit the [Library's Virtual Office](#) for additional log on information. Some of the more popular resources include:

- [Online Library Guides](#) – Topic-specific research guides developed by the library staff to help find the resources needed for class assignments.

- **NC Live** – access to collections of summaries, citations, and full-text articles from hundreds of newspapers, magazines, academic journals and other sources.
- **Gale Literary Sources** – offers full-text, digital editions of several Gale literary criticism series.
- **Nursing and Allied Health Programs Library Resources** – that includes Stat!Ref medical references, A.D.A.M. Interactive Anatomy and Software for Nurses.

Face-to-Face (Onsite) Support Services

Student Success and Enrollment Management (SSEM)

Includes [Academic Advising](#), [Disability Support Services](#), [Financial Aid](#), [Veterans Affairs](#), etc.

Math & Writing Center (Academic Support Center)

Free tutoring is available on all campuses through the Academic Support Center and to all COA students currently enrolled in curriculum courses. The Math and Writing Centers are located on the COA-Elizabeth City campus and have drop-in hours. See the [Academic Support Center](#) myCourses website for specific days and hours of operation for each site and center.

Computer Labs

Open computer labs provide computers for academic studies and research, and staffed by support personnel to assist students. COA computer labs are available at the Dare, Edenton-Chowan, and Elizabeth City campuses. See the [Computer Labs](#) website for hours of operation and on-campus locations.

Library

There is a Library or Library resources available at each of the COA four campuses. See the [Library](#) website for addresses, hours of operation, and contact information.

Testing Centers

COA Testing Centers are located at the Currituck, Dare, Edenton-Chowan, and Elizabeth City campuses and are available to all student needing proctored exams. All student must provide valid photo ID upon taking an exam.

Proctored Exams

The use of proctored exams is at the discretion of the instructor; therefore, some DE courses may require proctored exams. A proctored exam is one overseen by an impartial individual, called a proctor, who monitors a student during the exam. The proctor ensures the security and integrity of the exam. All proctored exams and their due dates will be indicated in the course syllabus.

According to COA's [Policy 3-27 Proctoring and Examination Security](#), Internet students who live outside of COA's service area and are unable to utilize one of the campus Testing Centers can make arrangements for an off-site proctor. It is the responsibility of the students to schedule their exams with an off-site proctor and get prior approval from their Instructor and Director of Distance Education Programs. Acceptable proctors include:

- School principal or administrator
- School counselor or certified librarian
- Military education
- Test administrator at a testing office

A relative, no matter what their position, may not serve as a proctor. Please be advised that proctors may charge a fee to supervise the exam. Any charge will be the responsibility of the student. A student can often identify an acceptable proctor by visiting their local library or community college and inquiring about proctors in the area.

Instructors may also require students to use specific software programs to further enhance test security. Students will be notified of these requirements at the start of the class and in the course syllabus.

Contact Information for Distance Education Programs

The Office of Distance Education Programs is located on COA's Elizabeth City campus, B Building, Room B217 or B223, and email is coa_de@albemarle.edu.

- Director | 252-335-0821, ext. 2380
- Instructional Developer | 252-335-0821, ext. 2268