



Spring 2015 Student Handbook

This handbook is effective for the Spring 2015 semester. Students are responsible for reading and abiding by the policies set forth in this handbook.

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All references to a school day in this handbook are based on the Georgia Virtual School academic calendar available at <http://www.gavirtualschool.org/CourseInfo/ImportantDates.aspx> and not the calendar of any other school.

Enrollment Policies

Refund Policy

Fall and Spring Semesters

During the fall and spring semesters, students are eligible for a refund during the first thirteen school days of the session start date. See Spring 2015 refund deadlines below:

18 week: January 21, 2015_____

16 week: February 5, 2015

14 week: February 15, 2015

12 week: March 5, 2015

To get a refund, the student must withdraw from a course while eligible for a refund. For state funded seats, students must withdraw within thirteen school days of the session start date in

order to be eligible to enroll in another course that same semester. The registration period must still be open in order for the student to enroll in another course. State funded seats are limited, so a withdrawal from one state funded enrollment does not guarantee another state funded enrollment.

To withdraw from a course, students should go to the enrollments page and request withdrawal. The facilitator must then approve the withdrawal. If a student is eligible for a refund, the withdrawal process will automatically initiate a refund. There is a \$25 processing fee subtracted from the refund amount. Students who have had course access for more than thirteen school days are not eligible for a refund.

Transfer students are eligible for a refund the first three school days where the student has been given access to the GaVS class.

Note that if a student moves from one course to another that is not grounds for a refund. If a request is made to move a student from a full unit AB course to a half credit A or B course, no partial refund will be issued nor will any partial credit carry over to subsequent semesters.

Summer Semester

During the summer semester, students are eligible for a refund during the first three school days of the session signed up for.

To withdraw from a course, students should go to the enrollments page and request withdrawal. The facilitator does not need to approve the withdrawal during the summer semester. If a student is eligible for a refund, the withdrawal process will automatically initiate a refund. There is a \$25 processing fee subtracted from the refund amount. Students who have had course access for more than three school days are not eligible for a refund.

Note that if a student moves from one course to another that is not grounds for a refund. If a request is made to move a student from a full unit AB course to a half credit A or B course, no partial refund will be issued nor will any partial credit carry over to subsequent semesters.

Withdrawal Policy

To withdraw from a course, students should go to the enrollments page and request withdrawal. The facilitator must then approve or deny the withdrawal if the course is taken during the school day. If the course is taken during the school day, the local school determines if the student can be withdrawn from the course. Students can be withdrawn at any point in the semester except during the last five school days in the fall and spring semester. In the summer, students can withdraw until the final exam window begins. The deadline to request a withdrawal for Spring 2015 is May 1. Public and private school students must get approval from their local school prior

to withdrawing from a GaVS course if taken during the school day.

Switching Sessions

Students are permitted to switch sessions one time in a semester. Students already working in a course must contact their instructor to inquire about a session change. Students who have not yet begun working in a course should contact their facilitator for a session change.

If a student is not oriented by the required date for the session he/she selected, the student will automatically be moved to the subsequent session start. A student who has not oriented by the last session start (12 week fall and spring semesters and 5 week in summer), will automatically be enrolled in the course. The student must request a withdrawal should he/she no longer wish to be enrolled in the GaVS course. The standard refund policy applies. The current semester timeline can be found [here](#).

Transfer Policy

Students may transfer to GaVS from another school beginning 5 weeks into fall and spring semesters. There are no transfers the last three weeks of a semester or during summer semester. To initiate a transfer, the facilitator must contact his/her assigned support team member. The transfer request must include a transcript from the previous school. The transfer paperwork must include a reason for withdrawal. Transfers that occur in weeks 5-7 of the GaVS semester must have a grade of 50% or higher to be approved. Those below 50% will be denied. Transfer that occur in weeks 8-15 of the GaVS semester must have a grade of 60% or higher in order to be approved. Those below 60% will be denied.

Students have ten school days from withdrawal at the previous school to be fully enrolled at GaVS. No transfer student will be accepted with more than a ten school day enrollment gap even if the transfer process began within the ten school day window.

Transfer students are eligible for a refund the first three school days where the student has been given access to the GaVS class. The last day to transfer for Spring 2015 is Friday, April 17.

Eligibility Requirements

Students must meet their local public or private school's enrollment requirements prior to being approved for a GaVS course. The local school will approve GaVS courses once the student is enrolled at the school.

Home school students who are 21 years of age and under may utilize GaVS for one or more courses as part of their program of study. GaVS does not award credit for courses, so the parent serving at the educator will be responsible for transcribing GaVS course grades onto the official home school grade report.

Attendance Verification for Drivers License

GaVS does not issue attendance verification records for students. Public and private school students can maintain documentation from their local school. Home school students can find the information needed for a drivers license at

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Pages/Home-Schools.aspx>.

NCAA Grade Requests

GaVS courses that are approved by the NCAA are located on the GaVS course offerings pages on www.gavirtualschool.org. The NCAA requires an official grade report be sent directly from GaVS to them for prospective student athletes. Should a GaVS student be seeking eligibility from the NCAA, the student should request an official GaVS grade report be sent directly to the NCAA eligibility center. Students can find the request form here:

http://www.gavirtualschool.org/Portals/2/PDFs/Request_for_Official_Grade_Records.pdf

Student Orientation Course

Students must either complete a student orientation course (SOC) or opt out of SOC prior to beginning course work. Access to SOC will be given one month prior to the start of a semester. Those who opt out of SOC are still responsible for the content covered. Some local school districts may require the SOC be completed and not allow the opt-out option. Check with your facilitator to ensure that you are permitted to opt-out. The opt out option will not necessarily be available every semester. The typical student should allot two to three hours to complete SOC. Students who have not completed SOC by the last start date of the semester will get moved to their courses during the week of the last start date.

Digital Citizenship

Students have access to the Digital Citizenship modules containing guidelines for being a responsible digital citizen. These modules are located on the learning management system (Desire2Learn) banner under the Digital Community drop down. The four modules include:

Digital Citizenship, Respect, Connect, and Protect. While completing the Student Orientation course, students will sign off acknowledging access and agree to follow all guidelines contained and referenced in the Digital Citizenship modules.

Student Expectations

Time Expectations

How much time should I plan to spend on my course?

You are expected to login and participate in your online course on a DAILY basis.

Fall/Spring semester: Students completing the 18 week course should plan to spend at least 60 to 90 minutes per weekday (5 to 8 hours per week) for a half unit (A or B) course or 90 to 120 minutes per weekday (7 to 10 hours per week) for a 1 unit (AB or block) course. Time required to complete work increases if the student enrolls in a 16, 14 or 12 week course.

Summer semester: Students completing the 6 week course should plan to spend at least three to five hours per weekday (15 to 25 hours per week) for a half unit (A or B) course or six to eight hours per weekday (30 to 40 hours per week) for a 1 unit (AB or block) course. Time required to complete work increases if the student enrolls in a 5 week course.

Please note: You may not be logged in to the course the entire time, but you need to plan on your work taking that much time. You may be able to complete some of your work offline, but you do need access to your computer and the internet every day Monday through Friday. Allow more time if you are not comfortable using a computer.

Teachers, facilitators, and parents can keep up with your attendance in class through the User Progress feature. It tracks the days and times you log in, as well as which sections you are working on and when you are working on them.

Keeping Up With Assignments and Due Dates

The course schedule provides a list of due dates for all assignments for the semester. The course schedule can be found within the course syllabus located in the Course Information widget on the course homepage. Print a copy of the course schedule and use it as a guide as you complete and submit assignments.

You may, by all means, work ahead. Your teacher will grade your work in a timely manner and

you can receive feedback well before the due date.

Make-up Work

If you know you are going to be absent, go ahead and do your work ahead of time. Student work is due every day during Summer Semester and bi-weekly during Fall and Spring semesters. When a student has an excused absence of more than three days, such as a doctor's visit, the teacher must be notified in writing and given a copy of any documentation within ten school days during fall and spring and within three school days during summer. If the teacher is not notified in writing and given documentation within the time allowed, the student will not be permitted to make up missed work. If the makeup work request is approved by GaVS administration, the teacher will provide a new deadline and a list of makeup work that can be submitted for full credit. If a request is approved during the final weeks of school, approved makeup work must be submitted prior to taking the final exam and final exams must be taken on the dates as noted in the course pacing schedule. We cannot allow makeup work extensions past the last day of GaVS classes, and final exams must be taken on the dates as noted in the course pacing schedule.

Late Work Policy

Technical difficulties are not an excuse for assignments to be late. Students must have computer access to complete GaVS work. It is the student's responsibility to secure backup computer options when technical difficulties arise. Many public libraries offer computers with internet access. Additionally, GaVS courses can be accessed on a variety of mobile devices so it may be that a mobile device could be used to complete some coursework when there are computer problems.

Sometimes students submit a file that the teacher is not able to open. When that occurs, the teacher will leave feedback notifying the student, and a zero will be entered into the gradebook. The student then has up to five school days to submit a readable version of the file without penalty. Students are expected to submit all subsequent assignments in a properly formatted file type. Five school days after the teacher has notified the student of the file issue, the standard late policies apply.

When a student switches to a shorter schedule, any assignments that have been completed cannot be resubmitted. Any zeros already entered on the old schedule not yet due on the shorter schedule can be replaced.

If a student is suspended from the local school, GaVS course access remains open. Unless a student is directed otherwise by the local school, he or she may continue working in the GaVS course while suspended at the local school. Note that under no circumstance is a school

suspension grounds for an extension under the GaVS late policy.

*If you are a special education student and would like GaVS to consider making accommodations for you, please email a copy of your IEP or 504 plan to Sarah Newman at snewman@doe.k12.ga.us or fax a copy to 770-357-3704. If you do not have a copy, please contact your facilitator.

Summer Semester:

Please be aware of the pacing guide and due dates for all assignments. Extensions past the last day of school will NOT be granted. All work for a summer school course is due the day assigned by midnight EST. For the first weekday an assignment is late, 25% will be deducted; for the second day late, 50% will be deducted. After 2 school days, a grade of 0 will be given.

At the end of the semester, all class work must be submitted prior to the time period the final exam is available. Thus, if final exams begin Thursday of the last week of school, all other assignments except the final exam must be submitted by Wednesday of the last week of school.

Summer late work policy example: David turns in an assignment at 3:15 pm on Sunday. He scores a 7.5 out of 10 on the assignment. David will lose 2.5 points on this assignment ($10 * .25$) and the score recorded in the grade book is 5/10. A note should be made in the grade book detailing the late work deduction.

Fall and Spring Semester:

Please be aware of the pacing guide and due dates for all assignments. Extensions past the last day of school will NOT be granted. Student work is due bi-weekly on Fridays at midnight EST. Check course schedules for specific due dates. Work turned in after the deadline on the course schedule will be accepted within 1 week with a late penalty assessed. Late penalty begins on Saturday and is deducted at a rate of 10% of the assignment value per school day. Work submitted on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday is considered 1 day late.

At the end of the semester, all class work must be submitted prior to the time period the final exam is available. Thus, if final exams begin Wednesday of the last week of school, all other assignments except the final exam must be submitted by Tuesday of the last week of school.

Fall & Spring late work policy example: David turns in an assignment at 3:15 pm on Sunday. He scores a 7 out of 15 on the assignment. David will lose 1.5 points on this assignment ($15 * .10$) and the score recorded in the grade book is 5.5/15. A note should be made in the grade book detailing the late work deduction.

Special Education Accommodations

If you are a special education student and would like GaVS to consider making

accommodations for you, please email a copy of your IEP or 504 Plan to Sarah Newman at snewman@doe.k12.ga.us or fax to 770-357-3704. If you do not have a copy, please contact your facilitator.

School Break Policy

Students should stay on the GaVS schedule that they choose upon entering their course. Even if the local school breaks do not coincide with the GaVS break, students must meet the assignment due dates. Students should communicate their school breaks with their teacher as soon as possible and if necessary discuss with their instructor how to get ahead.

Student Code of Conduct

Students in a "virtual building" need to follow certain rules. As a Georgia Virtual School student, you must conduct yourself with the highest standards of honesty.

Any attempt to cheat, plagiarize, falsify information, or receive credit for work you did not do will be considered dishonest behavior and will be dealt with accordingly by the instructor, facilitator, and the Georgia Virtual School Program administration. Unless your teacher expressly states otherwise, all work must be original and entirely the student's own work without any outside help, which includes other students, parents, textbooks, internet or any other outside source. Assignments that require documentation and/or references must adhere to guidelines presented by the teacher. When in doubt, clarify with your teacher before beginning an assignment or submitting it.

The following are examples of some, but not all, acts that are considered dishonest behavior:

- Plagiarism (representing another person's ideas, words, expressions, or data in writing or presentation without properly acknowledging the source).
- Submitting work through the use of another person's password/login is considered dishonest behavior. Student logins/passwords are confidential information that should not be shared with others. Any assignments, work, or projects posted while using another student's login will be considered plagiarism. Allowing another person, even a family member, to use your login and submit work on your behalf is also considered to be dishonest behavior.
- Working on a lab report with one or more students, sharing documents related to a lab report, or submitting the same lab report which was submitted by another student you worked with to perform the lab experiments in your school or home. NOTE: While it is acceptable for student to work together in small groups while performing lab experiments and collecting data, the final lab report that is submitted for graded credit should be each

student's independent work.

- Cheating (intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized material, assistance, or study aids in any academic work). The use of online translators or any other type of assistance on graded assignments i.e. dropbox assignments, quizzes, and tests is considered cheating, UNLESS expressly allowed by your teacher. Cheating includes copying another student's work and submitting it as your own or sharing your work with another student. Be sure to get your teacher's permission before working with a classmate on an assignment.
- Performing work or taking an examination for another student.
- Submitting your own work from another course or previous semester and presenting it as work that was completed for the current course.
- Falsification and/or misrepresentation of data (submitting made up data or sources).
- Computer crimes (damaging computer programs, hacking, constructing viruses, introducing viruses into a system, copying programs, misuse of pager or email, etc.)
Accessing, sending, creating or posting material or communication that is:
 - Damaging;
 - Abusive;
 - Obscene, lewd, profane, offensive, indecent, sexually explicit, or pornographic;
 - Threatening or demeaning to another person; or
 - Harassing and/or bullying.

Academic dishonesty and the sending/creating/posting of any inappropriate material will result in one or more of the following actions:

- Loss of grade points
- Disciplinary action via local school in accordance with local school or district policy
- Removal from the course
- Failure to receive credit for the course
- Loss of eligibility to take future Georgia Virtual School courses.

Academic honesty is very important to your success as an online learner.

Expulsion Notification

Any student who is expelled from a local school must notify Georgia Virtual School. To notify, email the Supervisor of Student Support, Margaret Thomas, at mthomas@doe.k12.ga.us with the student name, school name where the expulsion occurred, and the timeframe of the expulsion.

Student Records

GaVS does not issue attendance verification records for students. Public and private school students can maintain documentation from their local school. Home school students have this

reported by the parent to the Ga Department of Education annually, so that record is the attendance verification for the home school student.

Mobile Policy

Mobile devices including things like cell phones and tablet computers offer the ability to let students communicate with teachers and classmates, view online courses, attend online meetings and more. With this increased access come some additional risks that students should also be aware of.

When using a mobile device that has a data plan, be aware of the data usage rates. Rich multimedia like video will utilize large amounts of data so if you have a limited amount of data allowed on your data plan, you should monitor usage. Additionally, if you allow people to have access to your cell phone number, they may send text messages and additional charges can apply there. For those wanting the ability to send and receive text messages while still keeping your personal cell phone number secure, there are free online services like Google Voice that allow users to send and receive text messages without linking to your cell phone.

Desire2Learn, the learning management system of Georgia Virtual Learning, has a mobile optimized version of its sites. You do not need to do anything to access them, just login as usual on a mobile device and it will provide a simplified version of course pages that loads more quickly and is easier to view on smaller, mobile devices. Additionally, online meetings held using Adobe Connect can often be accessed on mobile devices.

It is important to note acceptable and unacceptable behavior while using mobile devices. You should not send any message or view any site on a mobile device that you would not want displayed publicly. You should not send any content from your computer or mobile device that could be perceived as crude, pornographic, or illegal including any copyright infringement. The tone of language used should be the same as you would use when speaking to someone face-to-face. The same student code of conduct governing communication inside of a Georgia Virtual Learning classroom environment also applies to any communications using mobile devices.

For your own safety, whether on a computer or mobile device, only interact with people you actually know. Strangers may not be representing themselves accurately. You should never agree to meet someone that you have met online nor should you share any personal information with them such as your address or phone number. If you feel threatened or bullied in any way while using your mobile device, report it to your teacher immediately. Your teacher can help get the needed resources to stop the problem.

Harassment Reporting

If you are being harassed in your online course environment, it is important to report it immediately to your teacher. Harassment comes in many forms including the following:

- Spam (unsolicited email not pertaining to the course)
- Threatening communications
- Offensive communications or any other kind of communication that makes a student feel uncomfortable.

Software and Course Materials

Online coursework may contain material used in compliance with U.S. Copyright Law. Under the law, materials may not be downloaded, saved, revised, copied, or distributed without permission. These materials are to be used for course instruction only, and are limited to the duration of this course. You may only download or print materials at the direction of your course instructor.

Some courses require additional software or course materials. If you are enrolled in one of these courses, you were required to sign-off on a software release during registration and we will be mailing you the items you will need. At the conclusion of the semester, you will be prompted to mail any given materials back to Georgia Virtual School.

Grades are typically reported five school days after the semester ends. Students who fail to return or pay for materials will not have their grades released until materials are returned or paid for. Failure to return or pay for course materials is grounds to block students from taking future courses with Georgia Virtual School. Students unable to return or pay for missing course materials should contact their facilitator.

Therefore, remember:

Return all of your Georgia Virtual School software/materials in a timely manner to ensure that your grade is sent promptly at the end of the course and you are not charged any extra fees. A self-addressed stamped envelope is sent with the materials and should be used to return them. In the event a student does not have the return envelope, the student can use his or her own packing material. Be sure to include the following information:

- 1) First and Last Name
- 2) Name of the Course and Term
- 3) All of the materials that were originally included in the envelope, i.e. Watch, Strap, USB, etc.

4) A tracking number from USPS, UPS, or FedEx. The student can return the materials by any means but they must include the tracking number on the outside of the envelope.

5) Mail to:

Attn: Missy Smith
Georgia Department of Education
Office of Technology Services
1954 Twin Towers East
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Use of Copyrighted Materials

All materials in the courses are copyrighted and provided for use exclusively by enrolled students. Enrolled students may print or photocopy material from the website for their own use. Distribution of course materials to others is expressly prohibited unless expressly noted. Unauthorized copying or distribution may result in revoked access to course(s).

Course Tuition

It is expected that course tuition will be paid upon request by Georgia Virtual School. If payment issues are not resolved within ten business days, students may be removed from their courses and prevented from future course access in subsequent semesters.

Testing Requirements

Most courses have quizzes and tests with each module. Each teacher determines what resources students can use on these assessments. Students should not assume that any materials can be used on these quizzes and test. Teachers will grant students special permission if resources such as calculators, search engines, and notes can be used when taking assessments. It is considered academic dishonesty to use resources that have not been approved by the teacher.

Each course will either have a final exam or a state required Georgia Milestone End of Course assessment worth 15% or 20% of your final course grade. The weight of the Georgia Milestone End of Course assessment is selected by the facilitator based upon whether the student entered the 9th grade before or after July 1, 2011. All final exams are worth 20% of the final average. Final exams will be taken online. Your school or GA Virtual instructor will notify you of proctoring requirements, if any.

Students enrolled in a Georgia Virtual School course are responsible for taking any standardized tests associated with their online courses. These tests may include Advanced Placement exams or Georgia Milestone End of Course (EOC) assessments.

Summer semester students may not take final exams early. Students can select either the 5 or 6 week schedule to accommodate for camps and vacations, but exams must be taken on the scheduled date.

Georgia Milestones End of Course (EOC) Assessments

Georgia Milestones End of Course (EOC) assessments (formerly known as End of Course Tests or EOCTs) are required by the state of Georgia in some courses. Public school students enrolled in and/or receiving credit for one of these courses, regardless of grade level, are required to take the Georgia Milestone assessment upon completion of the course. This includes middle school students completing a course associated with a Georgia Milestones EOC assessment, regardless of whether they are receiving high school credit. The results of the EOC assessments will serve as the final exam in each course, contributing to the student's final course grade. Students enrolling into a public school from non-accredited programs are required to take and pass the Georgia Milestones EOC assessment prior to receiving credit for the course. The courses that require the Georgia Milestone EOC assessments are as follows:

9th Lit/Comp
American Lit/Comp
Biology
Physical Science
Accelerated CCGPS Coordinate Algebra/Analytic Geometry A
Accelerated CCGPS Analytic Geometry B/Advanced Algebra
CCGPS Coordinate Algebra
CCGPS Analytic Geometry
Economics
US History

There are other courses that do not require the Georgia Milestones EOC assessment but that students can take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment in lieu of the final exam. Those courses include:

AP Macroeconomics
AP Microeconomics
AP Biology
AP US History

AP English Language and Composition

Public school students in the above AP courses may elect to take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment because students must take all Georgia Milestone EOC assessments prior to graduating from a Georgia public high school. It is assumed that students in AP courses are not taking the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment unless the facilitator notifies GaVS otherwise. For public school students enrolled in courses who may choose to take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment, the facilitator will receive an email during the semester with information on how to notify GaVS of that intent. (Refer to the handbook section titled AP Courses Georgia Milestone EOC Assessment Policy.)

Upon completion of the 2nd semester (B or AB course) of the above listed courses, public school students are required to complete a Georgia Milestone End of Course assessment. Beginning with summer semester 2014, public school students will take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment at their local school. Public school students should contact their facilitator to determine when their school's next Georgia Milestone EOC assessment administration date will be held. If public school students enrolled in a Georgia Milestone EOC course have not taken the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment or the facilitator has not reported the score to GaVS, the pre-final course average will not be released. GaVS only releases final course grades. Private, home school, and out of state students will be expected to take a final exam in place of the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment.

For public school students who entered ninth grade for the first time before July 1, 2011, the numeric score on the EOC assessment counts as 15% of the student's final numeric grade in the course. For public school students who entered ninth grade on or after July 1, 2011, the numeric score on the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment counts as 20% of the student's final grade in the course. (State Board Rule 160-4-2-.13)

A Georgia Milestone EOC assessment grade may only count in one course. For example, a student who takes the US History Georgia Milestone EOC assessment may not count that Georgia Milestone EOC assessment grade in both a US History course and also an AP US History course. Also if a student is taking the course a second time, the first Georgia Milestone EOC assessment score cannot be counted as the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment grade.

Non-public and out of state students are not required to take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment. Instead, those students will take a final exam inside the course. However, be aware that if a non-public or out of state student transfers from a non-accredited program to a Georgia public high school, all Georgia Milestone EOC assessments must be taken and passed to receive credit for the course and meet graduation requirements.

For the 2014-2015 school year, the State Board has issued a waiver for the Georgia Milestones End of Course assessments which will require the assessments to be taken for graduation requirements, but the assessments will **not** count 20% of the course average. All students

enrolled in GaVS courses where a Milestone EOC assessment is required will be given a final exam.

Communication

Georgia Virtual School has an acceptable use policy students must abide by while using our communication tools. The full policy is available [here](#) as well as in the Student Orientation Course and the student dashboard immediately after logging in. Georgia Virtual School will send out information to students, parents, and facilitators at the local school using the phone numbers and email addresses provided. Therefore, it is important that this information be up to date. If the school website experiences a major problem, you will be notified both by email and phone through an automated system. Additionally, teachers will call and email to provide progress updates throughout the semester.

Email

Upon the creation of your Georgia Virtual School account, you are assigned an email address, `username@gavirtualschool.org`

Using your Georgia Virtual School email account is essential since it is the primary form of communication you will use with your instructor and classmates.

This email may be used for Georgia Virtual School class business only. You will not be able to receive from or send to outside email addresses from this account.

If you need to contact your facilitator, you should use his/her school email address and your personal email account.

Check your Georgia Virtual email daily for new information and instructor communication. You can check your Georgia Virtual email anytime by clicking the Mail Icon on the bottom navigation bar.

Identify yourself within all emails (first and last name). Do not use just your email name. Emails should have the subject line filled in with the appropriate topic. If you have a problem or emergency, please title your email appropriately, so the instructor can easily prioritize emails.

Add your instructor's email to your address book, so it is accurate and readily available.

Respond to instructor emails within two days during the fall and spring and one day during the summer. Failure to do so may result in a loss of the right to dispute a grade or revise the assignment to which the instructor was referring.

You will have access to your GaVS email each semester that you are enrolled with the program. When a semester ends and you have not enrolled for a course the following semester, you will lose GaVS email access three weeks into the subsequent semester.

****Anything you say using a Georgia Virtual School communication tool should be something that would be appropriate to say aloud in a classroom.****

There are a few countries that do not have access to our email system. If you will be in any of the following countries while taking your course, please email your teacher(s) and notify them:

- China
- Cuba
- Iran
- North Korea
- Sudan
- Syria

Your teacher will need to be given another email address for you so be sure to provide one that you will have access to while in one of these countries.

Pager

The Pager is a handy, easy-to-use tool that can be used to supplement email and phone communication. The Pager can be found by clicking on the Envelope Icon in the top right corner of the screen on the navigation bar and click the link "Go to Pager".

Instructors are not always online to answer your pages. The best way to contact your instructor is through email. However, if you page someone who is offline, he/she will receive the page the next time he/she logs in.

Pager history is an open record and may be used for class purposes only. Instructors and Georgia Virtual School staff can read all of your pages. Make sure that your language is appropriate. Misuse of the pager is a violation of the Code of Conduct. You may face disciplinary action at your local school or Georgia Virtual School for any communication violation.

Course News

Instructors will post important information on the News board of the course. News items are located on the left of the course home page.

Check news items daily for important course updates.

Read and review news periodically so that you do not forget about any "old" news. You may have to click on the Show All link at the bottom of the News column as all of the news items may not be visible.

If you have any questions about the news items be sure to contact your instructor immediately.

Teacher Response Time

Email Response Time:

Teachers check their email daily, Monday through Friday, and will respond to you within one school day.

Do not expect your teacher to respond during the weekend or on listed Georgia Virtual School holidays. In the event that you do not receive a reply, please email him/her once more.

If you do not receive a response after two attempts and 48 hours, call your teacher.

Phone Response Time:

Teachers check their phone voicemails daily, Monday through Friday, and will respond to you within one school day.

Do not expect your teacher to respond during the weekend or on listed Georgia Virtual School holidays.

If you do not receive a response, please phone your teacher once more. The teacher's contact information can be found in the Teacher Information widget on the course homepage or the course syllabus. If no phone response within 48 hours, please contact your facilitator immediately.

Grade Response Time:

Please allow a turnaround time of three school days after submitting an assignment during fall and spring semesters and one school day during summer semester; although you will often receive your grade sooner. For major projects, teachers may indicate a longer turnaround time for grading. Teachers will notify students when additional time is required to assess assignments such as projects.

You are encouraged to work ahead in your course. If you do so, your teacher will still grade your assignments within three school days.

Keep the turnaround time in mind when planning your schedule so that you can turn in assignments and still allow time for feedback.

Student Absences

If there is an illness or any unexpected event that would prevent you from doing your work, or if an emergency occurs and you cannot log in to your class, contact your instructor immediately.

These situations will be assessed by the instructor on an individual basis, and he/she may possibly make alternate arrangements for you to submit your work.

No matter what reason you may have for submitting an assignment late, contact your instructor as soon as possible!

Bereavement Policy

When a student experiences the death of a close family member or friend, the teacher should be notified. Additionally, some type of documentation should be sent to the teacher such as a bulletin from the funeral, a newspaper obituary, or a death certificate. Once the teacher has received the documentation, the teacher and student, with the Department Coordinator's approval, will arrange an appropriate extension of time to complete any impacted assignments. If the teacher is not notified in writing and given documentation within ten school days, the student will not be permitted to make up missed work.

Administrative Withdrawals

Students enrolled in Georgia Virtual School courses are expected to login each school day and complete assignments according to the assignment deadlines provided in each course. A student with a failing average who also fails to submit an assignment for ten consecutive school days may be withdrawn by the school administration. Once a student is identified as eligible for

an administrative withdrawal, the student, parent, and facilitator will be notified via email of the pending withdrawal. To prevent withdrawal, the student must submit a graded assignment within five school days of the notification of pending withdrawal. Students who are withdrawn by the school administration outside of the refund window are not eligible for a refund.

Accessing and Turning in Assignments

Determining due dates for course assignments:

Log into your course.

Look for the Course Information Widget located on the right of the homepage.

Look at the syllabi posted. Each contains a course session which details the start date, assignments, and due dates.

Note: You may, by all means, work ahead.

Tip: Print course syllabus and keep it located near your computer at all times. The Course Syllabus will outline the course rules and procedures and the Course Schedule located within the syllabus will detail when assignments are due and how to turn them in.

Getting to your Assignments

One of the advantages to online learning is that all of your assignments have been created ahead of time and are available within the course. There are no surprises; because you have a course schedule, you know exactly when each assignment is due.

Submitting Assignments

Save all assignments that are completed and submitted to your instructor, just in case. Always save a copy of what you submit either on a flash drive, or on your computer's hard drive. If there are ever technical issues, you have the assignments ready to submit again if needed.

The most common way to turn in assignments is through the Dropbox. This link is located under ASSESSMENTS on the Navigation Bar near the top of the screen. The Dropbox is where your teacher will locate, review, grade and provide feedback on your assignments. Therefore, be sure you look for your graded work here, too! Larger files may not fit in the dropbox. If you need to submit a large file that will not fit in the dropbox, check with your teacher to see how to best submit the assignment. Upon successfully submitting a file to the dropbox, you will receive an email notification in your GaVS email account.

There are two other locations you may use to complete course work. They are Discussions and Quizzes. Both are located under ASSESSMENTS in the navigation bar as well. These locations are for discussions and quizzes only and not for submitting assignments. Note: A teacher may ask you to turn in your assignments a different way (i.e. through email, fax, etc.). Ultimately, it is your responsibility to follow the directions concerning turning in assignments that your instructor gives you.

Many times links to discussions and quizzes are located within the content items of the course. As noted in the previous topic, you also have a direct link to enter both Discussions and Quizzes. Remember, these links are located under ASSESSMENTS on the navigation bar near the top of the page.

Note: Be sure you are ready to take your quiz or test when you enter it. Many quizzes and tests can be only entered into and taken once; many are timed. If you experience technical difficulties and cannot complete your test, contact your instructor immediately. Be sure you have enough time to complete the test before you begin.

Keeping Track of Your Progress

Grades

Assignment grades and course averages can be accessed through the course grade book. To access the grade book, click on the Grades tab located under ASSESSMENTS in the navigation bar. All grades will be kept current by your online instructor. If you have any questions about your grades, average, or course progress, contact your instructor immediately.

There are three types of assignments that may be submitted:

Dropbox Items: After you submit your assignment using the dropbox and your teacher has graded the assignment, you can go back to the dropbox, click on the assignment and view your grade and teacher feedback. You may also click on the Grades link located under ASSESSMENTS in the navigation bar, and then click on the assignment to view your grade and teacher feedback.

Tests/Quizzes: If you have completed a test or quiz, you may check your grade by clicking on the Quiz link located under ASSESSMENTS in the navigation bar. At times the grade that appears under the Quiz link will not be accurate, especially right after you take the test or quiz. This might happen if you have an essay to write as a part of the test. If you are confused about whether or not your instructor needs to adjust a test grade, just ask.

Discussions: You may check your discussion grade by clicking on the Grades link located under ASSESSMENTS in the navigation bar.

End of the Semester: At the end of the semester, to view your final grade for the course, login to the GaVS website (www.gavirtualschool.org) and click on the link "My grades". Your facilitator will also access your grades using their login. If students enrolled in a Georgia Milestone EOC course have not taken the Georgia Milestone EOC or the facilitator has not reported the score to GaVS, the pre-final course average will not be released. GaVS only releases final course grades.

Final Grades: End of semester grade reports will be generated approximately one week following the end of the session. Remember that Georgia Virtual School does not award credit, but provides numerical final grades to the facilitator to transcribe to the student's official school transcript. The State Board of Education Rule 160-8-1.01 requires that schools transcribe the grade assigned by Georgia Virtual School.

Home School Students: You will be able to view and print your grade report from your GaVS account at the conclusion of the course.

Grade book

Your teacher will maintain your grades online. To access your grades, click the Grades link located under ASSESSMENTS on the navigation bar. Plan to check your grades daily and report any problems to your teacher immediately. Remember that you, your instructor and your facilitator can keep up with your progress in the course by checking your User Progress throughout the course. This tool identifies the items in the course you have completed.

Important Note: Your grade will not automatically change after you complete a task. Your teacher will need to release the grade to you after he/she grades the task. Make sure you check your grades daily to get the most accurate grade.

Checklist

Another good way to check on your progress is to use the Checklist tool in the course. This will help ensure that you do not miss any items that need to be graded. You can find this tool under COURSE MATERIALS in the navigation bar. It is helpful to click the checklist and print out the list of your assignments! But use your course schedule to ensure you complete the required assignments.

Note: This is a good way to keep up with your progress and stay organized!

Resources and Support

Instructor

Your online Instructor is your first point of contact. The instructor is there to guide you through the content of the course, provide timely feedback on your assignments and course progress, and provide necessary remedial or enrichment activities. If you have questions concerning course content, course policies and procedures, or your progress, your instructor is the person to ask.

Your instructor will provide you with detailed contact information on how to get in touch with him or her via email or telephone. You can find this information in the Course Information Widget and the course syllabus.

When should I contact my instructor?

I don't understand how to complete or submit an assignment.

I need extra help with a topic in the course.

I have a question about my grades.

I don't know when an assignment is due.

I am having trouble viewing or accessing course content (a link, video, audio, etc...).

I am sick and can't do my work.

I see (what appears to be) an error in the course.

Facilitator

Your Facilitator may be a teacher, counselor, media specialist, or administrator at your school who works with your online instructor and provides you with face-to-face support. Your facilitator approves your registration for a course and may provide you with necessary technical and academic guidance and resources. Your facilitator is also responsible for coordinating required tests associated with your course and acts as a liaison between you and the Georgia Virtual School Program. If you have questions concerning on-site resources, course navigation, testing, course credit, or communication, your facilitator is the person to ask. Your facilitator will also be able to help you if you are having trouble contacting your teacher.

Your facilitator should contact you shortly after you are enrolled. You can also view your facilitator's contact information when you log in at the main GaVS website. Use the link in the Links box to the right to access the main website. It is particularly important in the summer session to find out who to contact if your facilitator is not available.

When should I contact my facilitator?

I think I might be in the wrong course or session.

I don't know how to contact my instructor.

I don't know how to submit work (attach a file).

I need access to a computer to do my course work.

I need a graphing calculator for this course.

Home School Students: You are provided with a Georgia Virtual School facilitator. Find your home school facilitator by using the map [HERE](#). Then email the facilitator at first initial last name @gavirtualschool.org (i.e. georgia.pagel@gavirtualschool.org).

Media Center

The media center is located under RESOURCES in the Navigation bar.

All Georgia Virtual School students have access to the resources provided through the media center. Resources include: educational databases, newspapers, journals, magazines, encyclopedias and much more! Utilize these databases when conducting research for Georgia Virtual School (or if you just want to find out about something that interests you). Our Georgia Virtual School GALILEO password is also available on the media center homepage. The password changes several times each year.

In the media center you will find subject-specific websites for math, science, language arts, social studies, etc. For example, in the subject area of language arts there are websites that provide online books, grammar websites, or homework help. In the subject area of math, there are websites for algebra, geometry, printing graph paper, help with your calculator, and homework help.

The media center also provides study tips and End-of-Course-Test practice questions as well as search engines that direct you to academic publications such as Google Scholar. If you need help with a project, you can contact our Georgia Virtual School media specialist directly via the link at the bottom of the media center page.

Guidance Center

The counseling team may be contacted by using the email link on the guidance center home page.

Contact the Georgia Virtual School Counselor if your school's Guidance Office doesn't have the information you need. For example, graduation requirements, choosing a college, career

planning, time and stress management, financial aid, or assistance with personal issues.

The Georgia Virtual School Guidance Department is located under RESOURCES in the Navigation bar. Check the guidance department webpage periodically for college planning resources, financial aid links and much more! Georgia Virtual School counselors periodically offer online sessions for you and/or your parents and those will be posted on the Georgia Virtual School website as well.

Synchronous Learning Position Statement

We believe synchronous learning is important because it provides students the full benefits of our highly qualified instructors. The synchronous interaction provides immediate instructor and student feedback, reduces the feeling of isolation, fosters a sense of community with the learners, and offers a forum for student collaboration. By incorporating live and interactive learning opportunities in the online environment, teachers are leveraging synchronous learning to enhance learning and promote student engagement.

Our synchronous sessions should be personalized for the individual learner's needs. We feel it is important to allow the teacher flexibility to determine what should be covered, what students should be targeted, and when the sessions should be held to reach these students. We encourage teachers to create engaging lessons to meet the needs of all learners. We advocate the use of the tools available in the synchronous platform to promote active engagement, social learning, and continuous feedback. Teachers should be creative and hold sessions that accommodate the different learning levels (high, average, and low). The synchronous classroom can be an equalizer for students of all abilities.

GaVS courses offer opportunities for students to meet online at the same time with the teacher of the course. These synchronous sessions are provided using web-based conferencing tool Adobe Connect.

Synchronous online meetings allow you and your classmates to meet online with your instructor for question and answer sessions, further instruction, or to practice speaking if you take a world language class.

Adobe Connect can also be used to provide online meetings. You may check your computer for required software needed by Adobe Connect at the following website:

http://na3cps.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm or by using the

Adobe Connect Checklist:

<https://students.ga.desire2learn.com/d2l/lor/viewer/view.d2l?ou=1798&lolid=4189>.

Preparing for Class

Software Requirements

Georgia Virtual School courses can be completed using a variety of modern computers and software. Click [HERE](#) for the most up-to-date technical requirements for all GaVS courses. Specific courses may require additional software. The requirements for each course are noted in the course catalog and in the course itself. Any additional software will be free of charge and provided to you or you will receive directions on how to obtain it.

Grade Appeal Policy

When disagreements or misunderstandings arise between a Georgia Virtual School teacher and students, parents, and/or facilitator, the parties involved should first communicate with each other to attempt to resolve differences. If a resolution is not reached, the final grade reported can be appealed. The appeal should be submitted no later than ten school days into the next semester based on the Georgia Virtual School instructional calendar.

A parent, legal guardian or facilitator must submit appeals. To appeal a grade, the parent, guardian or facilitator should send an email to instruction@gavirtualschool.org. This email should state that the grade is being formally appealed. Then the email should describe, in as much detail as possible, the specific reasons the reported grade is inaccurate. References to particular assignments that may have the incorrect grade reported can prove helpful. Additionally, any relevant documents such as email correspondence should be included. The sender of the appeal will receive a response within one business day acknowledging the receipt of the appeal. Upon the conclusion of the investigation, the person who filed the appeal will receive notice of the findings.

Grades from a previous semester that are appealed more than ten school days into the subsequent semester will not be investigated. Once a course closes, students, parents, and facilitators no longer have access to any material or assignments in the course. Courses will not be reopened for an appeal.

Advanced Placement

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are available during the fall and spring semesters only. While most courses offer 12, 14, 16, and 18 week schedules, AP courses do not have a 12 week option. Due to the increased rigor and time requirements inherent in AP courses, students are strongly encouraged to work on either the 16 or 18 week schedule. Students taking an Advanced Placement (AP) course with Georgia Virtual School should use our school code with the AP test for proper reporting. Our school code is 000033.

Homeschool students taking an AP course must make their own arrangements to take the AP test. One option we recommend is Independent Center Studies at Johnson Ferry in Marietta, GA. The College Board offers additional testing information for homeschool students at <http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/ap/scores/prepare/homeschool>.

Course Specific Policies

AP Courses Georgia Milestone End of Course (EOC) Assessment Policy

The AP Biology, US History, Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and Language courses are designed to be taken by students after the successful completion of a first course in the respective area. However, some schools allow students to enroll in these AP courses without meeting all the recommended pre-requisites suggested by the College Board. The Georgia Milestone End-of-Course (EOC) assessments (formally known as EOCT) must be taken to graduate from a Georgia public high school. The tests are typically taken as a part of their corresponding non-AP courses. Public school students who take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment as a part of the AP course will have the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment count as the final exam. All other students will take the AP final exam. A Georgia Milestone EOC assessment score from a previous semester cannot be used for a grade in a current course, nor can the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment score be used in an AP course if it is also being counted for a grade in another course.

Those enrolled in both AP Microeconomics and AP Macroeconomics during the same semester take the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment in whatever course they are taking at their local school. If both courses are taken through GaVS, then the Georgia Milestone EOC assessment will be taken in AP Macroeconomics and the final exam in AP Microeconomics unless the student notifies the teacher via email.

First Aid & Safety Certification

The First Aid & Safety course follows the guidelines and standards set forth by the American Red Cross and American Heart Association for first aid and CPR. Students will provide evidence of knowledge and skills acquisition through a variety of technology based projects in each unit of study. However, completion of this course does not lead to certification. Students are encouraged to attend a First Aid/CPR/AED certification class, including the hands on skills assessment, conducted by the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association as a follow up. However, certification is not a requirement for successful completion of this First Aid and Safety course.

ADAP Certification

Students who take Health through Georgia Virtual School are eligible to take eADAP. Georgia Virtual School does not register students for this online assessment. Students must register and complete the online assessment on their own.

Students should follow the steps below to complete eADAP certification.

1. Visit <https://online.dds.ga.gov/eadap/studentIndex.aspx>
2. Create an account.
3. Complete the ADAP assessment.
4. Print the completion certificate.
5. Take the certificate to the Department of Driver Services when attempting to obtain a Georgia driver's license.

Student Organizations

FBLA

Eligibility

Students in FBLA must be in 9-12th grade and enrolled in at least one course in the current semester with Georgia Virtual School. A certified business education teacher at GaVS will be designated the primary advisor for FBLA. It is the responsibility of the primary advisor to verify

student eligibility each semester and keep documentation of the check. Students may only participate in one FBLA chapter. Therefore, if the local school the student is enrolled in has an FBLA chapter, the primary FBLA advisor of that school must sign a release form permitting the student to participate in the GaVS FBLA instead. The GaVS FBLA primary advisor will compile a list of which schools in the state have FBLA and compare that to the schools each of the FBLA students attend. If an out-of-state student's local school has an FBLA chapter, the student cannot be in the GAVS chapter.

Competitions

Students compete regionally based on their home address. Those with an out of state address will compete based on our school address in Atlanta. The total number of students competing for GaVS cannot exceed the amount any other school could have at a region competition, even if the GaVS students are distributed amongst a number of regional competitions. Events requiring a test should be taken at a school with FBLA that agrees to allow our student to test and is closest to the student. The primary advisor will make arrangements for each student who requires a testing location.

Supervision

Students attending a FBLA event must have a parent or guardian attend with them. The parent or guardian must register as an advisor/chaperone for the student. The parent is responsible for all travel costs for the family and remains in supervision of the student. At no point does the GaVS FBLA primary advisor assume liability or supervision for any students.

Officer Elections

Call for nominations with online form, self-nomination is fine. Nominees create media describing their qualifications and desire for office. Nominee media is sent to members to review. Members vote with online poll or survey in a way that ensures one vote per person. Second vote is used to break ties. The primary advisor breaks tie after second vote.