

# Distance Education

The Distance Education program at Southern Union allows students to choose quality, affordable courses that conveniently fit their lifestyle. Courses offered by distance education are the same quality as those taught traditionally in a classroom setting but offer flexible scheduling opportunities. Tuition and fees are equivalent to those for traditional courses, except for the addition of remote midterm and final exam proctoring fees required in all online, virtual, and some hybrid online courses.

Distance Education classes follow the same semester timelines as other courses. For your scheduling flexibility, Distance Education courses will be offered during the full term, mini-term 1 or 2, the 7-week term, or during 5-week terms 1, 2, or 3 as listed in the [Academic Calendar](#). The starting date of the course indicated on the online schedule denotes which term the course fits into.

Four primary forms of distance education courses are offered at Southern Union: Online, Hybrid Online, Virtual, and Videoconference.

- **Online:** Online courses are delivered asynchronously. There are no required face-to-face sessions within the course and no requirements for on-campus activity. Faculty interact with students through assignments, discussion posts, email, office hours, and other electronic/virtual means. Identity verification will be required using the college's approved verification process.
- **Hybrid Online:** Hybrid Online courses require a combination of online and in-person activities, with more than 50% of the course content requiring online interaction. Some elements will have specified days, times, and locations when attendance is expected. Identity verification will be required using the college's approved verification process.
- **Virtual:** Virtual courses are delivered synchronously to extend lectures and course activities to students remotely in real time. Virtual courses are held online at specific days and times and require students to use online conferencing tools to participate in learning activities. There are no requirements for on-campus activity. Identity verification will be required using the college's approved verification process.
- **Videoconference:** Videoconference courses meet at an approved instructional site equipped for remote video instruction. The instructor and students will interact via two-way video. Students are expected to attend class in the videoconference classroom on the days and times specified in the class schedule. Identity verification will be required using the college's approved verification process.

## Requirements for Enrolling in Distance Education Courses

**Technology Requirements:** Students enrolling in distance education courses should have access to a reliable off-campus computer running an updated operating system and capable of downloading any software applications necessary for completing their course. The computer must be equipped with a working webcam and microphone and be connected to high-speed Internet service. A list of required [technology](#) and [technical skills](#) for distance education students is on the Distance Education webpage at [www.suscc.edu](http://www.suscc.edu). The use of mobile devices for completing course requirements is not recommended and at times, may not be allowed.

**Eligibility to enroll:** Students enrolling in distance education courses must meet eligibility requirements for the course. Eligibility is determined based on prerequisite requirements for each course. These prerequisites can be found in the [online schedule](#) by clicking the course title and then the Course Description or Prerequisites link, or in the course description section of the Student Handbook & Catalog. Meeting with an [Academic Advisor](#) is highly recommended to obtain a plan for completing your program of study. Students may enroll in distance education courses in the same manner they enroll in other classes.

**Proctoring Fees:** Students enrolling in Distance Education courses will be tested using various proctoring solutions as determined by the instructor, department, or college. The midterm and final examinations for many Distance Education courses will be proctored by a live remote proctor. To cover the cost of the live proctor, a non-refundable fee is included with the tuition for courses requiring the services of a live proctor. Students will find a notification about these fees in the online schedule by clicking the course title and then the Fees link.

**Current, valid ID:** In addition to meeting the requirements to enroll in the course, distance education students must have a current, valid government-issued or SUSCC photo ID, access to a personal computer with reliable high-speed Internet service, and a webcam and microphone for use during test proctoring or other required class activities. By enrolling in a distance education course, students agree to provide a current, valid government-issued or SUSCC ID, an environmental scan, and a video recording while completing designated assignments.

**Course Pacing:** Distance education courses at Southern Union are not self-paced. Assignment deadlines are scheduled throughout the semester. By registering for a Distance Education course, you indicate that you understand the course is not self-paced and that assignment deadlines will not be extended.

## Canvas Learning Management System and Other Course Technologies

The Canvas Learning Management System is utilized for all Southern Union courses. Canvas is used entirely in the delivery of many distance education courses. In a traditional classroom, Canvas is used to supplement the classroom instruction and does not replace regularly scheduled class meetings. Students in any Southern Union course may be required to use Canvas and other forms of technology to complete course requirements.

Students may access the Canvas LMS through a link at [www.suscc.edu](http://www.suscc.edu) and use their SUSCC student email address and password to log in to Canvas. For more detailed login information, click on the [Online Services link](#) on the SU webpage. After registration, a link for each course in which the student is registered will appear in Canvas under the Courses link by the published first day of class for the semester. Access to those classes may not be possible until the first day of class for the specific term. Students are responsible for accessing Canvas courses on the published first day of class.

## Support Services

Every Southern Union campus has an open computer lab in the Learning Resource Center (library) with Internet access for students to use during operating hours. The College provides high-speed Wi-Fi service on each campus for students to connect their personal computers while completing coursework. In an emergency, a limited number of laptops are available for loan through the LRC. If you want to apply for a laptop loan, complete the [Student Technology Request form](#) available on Southern Union's website.

## Student Privacy and Security in Distance Education Courses

Southern Union State Community College informs students of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. This Act, with which the institution fully complies, was designed to protect the privacy of education records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal and formal hearings. Questions concerning the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act may be referred to the office of the Registrar.

**Secure Login to the LMS.** Upon enrollment in any college course at Southern Union, a student user account is created in the Canvas LMS. Each student uses their unique student email address and a default password to access the LMS. For further security of private information, students are advised to change the default password and not share this information with anyone. If a student experiences a problem accessing the Canvas LMS, they should email technical support at [support@suscc.edu](mailto:support@suscc.edu).

To protect the privacy of grades for students enrolled in distance education courses, the faculty will not publicly post any grades or personal information for any student. Grades must be posted securely, visible only by each individual student, in his/her password-protected student grade book.

To further protect students' privacy, all faculty must contact students using the secure communication system in the Canvas LMS or through the College provided email accounts for both faculty and students. Like any other password-protected email account, others cannot access or view the message history.

For more information about privacy and security in Distance Education, please refer to [www.suscc.edu](http://www.suscc.edu) and click on Programs of Study/ Distance Education, or contact the Distance Education office at (334) 745-6437, extension 5516 or 5378.

## Students Residing Outside of Alabama

Many states have regulations that require out-of-state institutions to gain authorization to offer distance education courses to students who reside in those states. To ensure that Southern Union meets these regulations, the college is a member of NC SARA ([www.nc-sara.org](http://www.nc-sara.org)). At this time, all of the United States, except California and some territories, have entered into a reciprocity agreement through NC-SARA. Students residing in a location that is not an NC-SARA member should contact the Distance Education department before enrolling in online classes.

## Professional Licensure Notice

Students who reside outside of Alabama and seek to obtain a professional licensure (for example: nursing, teaching, cosmetology, radiologic technology, etc.) in a different state should be aware that Southern Union cannot confirm whether a course or program of study meets requirements for professional licensure in that state. Therefore, the student should contact the appropriate state licensing board to determine whether Southern Union's course and/or program meets requirements for licensure in that state.