

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA COLLEGE

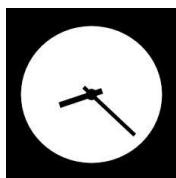
Online Academic Policies and Procedures Manual



General Policies & Procedures

This section will help you to understand the overall academic policies and procedures for online courses at Southwest Florida College.

Online Education at Southwest Florida College follows similar timelines and deadlines like the residential campus, but due to the 24/7 availability of the platform, there are certain policies and procedures each student must adhere to in order to be successful; this manual will cover these guidelines.



Timelines of a Term

Online courses will always have an early access period; the Thursday during the week prior to the official term start. This is a time for you to make sure you can access the platform, look over all the pre-term documentation, review the course to make sure it is right for you, and even get a head start on coursework.

The official term will start at 12:00 AM (midnight) the following Monday. The first week will end on Sunday at 11:59 PM. This gives you the flexibility to utilize any of the 168 hours during the week to complete your assignments. Due to this flexibility, online courses strictly adhere to these deadlines.

Midterm Exams become available during the Wednesday of Week 5 (at 12:00 AM), and will remain open until the Wednesday of Week 7 (at 11:59 PM), however, if the Midterm Exam is not completed by the Sunday (at 11:59 PM) of Week 6, your instructor has the right to place a zero (0) in the Gradebook until it is completed. At this point, the calculated grade will overwrite the zero (0) in the Gradebook.

Final Exams become available from the Friday of Week 9 (at 12:00 AM) to the final day of the term, which is the Friday (at 11:59 PM) of Week 11. If the Final Exam is not completed by that date, the course and term will close, and you will not be able to complete it for a grade. It will become a zero (0) in the Gradebook.

The end of the term will always be the Friday of Week 11 at 11:59 PM. You will want to have all coursework submitted prior to this date.



Assignment Due Dates

Distance Education are composed primarily of three (3) types of assignments; discussions, application assignments, and quizzes/exams. The courses are not limited to these, but they do make up the majority of graded assignments.

An initial discussion posting to the instructor's topic is always due on Wednesday at 11:59 PM. The remaining assignments (additional discussion postings, application assignments, and quizzes/exams) are due on Sunday at 11:59 PM. All assignments are considered due within the week they are assigned.

Failure to meet these deadlines will result in a zero (0) added to the Gradebook until it is turned in. Please see the section entitled "*Late Policy*" for specific information on any point reductions.

A Closer Look at Assignments



This section will provide a closer look at the three (3) most common assignment types and the criteria associated with them.

Weekly Discussions

The Discussion area is where classroom discussion occurs. Your instructor will post a question or questions and it is your responsibility to do two things:

1. You must post a response to your instructor by Wednesday at 11:59 PM of each week.
2. You must post a **MINIMUM** of 2 responses to your classmates by Sunday at 11:59 PM of each week.

Academic Discussion Boards are considered classroom participation. They must be completed within the weekly unit to receive credit for discussion responses.

Even though you are required to post a minimum of three responses to a topic within a week, if you are attempting to earn full credit for the assignment you will need to post more frequently and thoughtfully to each week's discussions.

Your responses should be written in proper English and they should express your opinion, based on researched fact, as fully as possible. Please do not treat the

Discussion as a chat room. Each response should focus on the topic that your instructor has provided.

Note: The discussion boards are designed with academic debates in mind. Students should treat the discussions as though they are in a classroom setting and the instructor has posed a question for them to answer. If you research a discussion question and post based on the materials you used, you must cite your sources within that posting.

WARNING: Failure to do this may cause a grade of zero to be given. Using someone else's work and not giving them credit is considered plagiarism.



Discussion Posting: Guide to a Good Main Post

A well written and thoughtful posting is usually around 7 -10 sentences long with 200 – 250 words, and it completely covers the topic that was presented while citing any sources used. Above is an example of a well written posting from a former online student.



Application Assignments

Application Assignments are usually, but not limited to, short papers (2 pages) that address a specific topic that your instructor has assigned.

Most instructors would like these papers written in APA style (Cover page, double-spaced, 1” margins, etc.), but you will have to read your individual instructor’s requirements in the Announcements or Syllabus section of the course.

You should create these application assignments in Microsoft Word on your computer, and save your assignments as a 97-2003 (.doc), even if you are using Word 2007, unless otherwise instructed. If you use a word processor other than Word (Example: Works or WordPerfect), you must save your files as ‘RTF’ files.

To do this, you just have to change your file type to Rich Text Format when you save the file.

Some courses may require other types of assignments for a weekly unit. Some of these assignments may be PowerPoint Presentations, Excel Spreadsheets, Access Databases, PDF forms to be filled out according to an academic discipline, etc.

NOTE: Microsoft Office is highly recommended while taking online courses at Southwest Florida College.



Quizzes/Exams

Quizzes will usually consist of true/false, multiple choice, fill-in-the blank, matching, short answer, or essay questions. Most instructors will provide an hour to take each quiz, and up to 3 hours for exams. You will only be able to access the quiz once; however, the specific parameters for your quiz (access period, time limit, etc.) will be at the top of the screen when you click on the quiz.

In addition, quizzes will become locked down at two times during the term. Weeks 1 through 5 quizzes will close-out on the Sunday of Week 5 at 11:59 PM. Quizzes for Weeks 6 through 10 will close-out at the end of Week 10 (Sunday at 11:59 PM).

NOTE: This does not include Midterm or Final Exams.

Course Specific Policies and Procedures

This section will help you understand the course and platform specific policies and procedures at Southwest Florida College.

Online Learning is self-directed learning; it requires a high level of responsibility, dedication and self-discipline on the part of the student. As an online learner, in this course you are responsible for your own work, your own progress, and your own grade. In order to succeed, you need to log in to the course regularly to check announcements, participate in discussions, and access course content. In order to be successful in the online environment you will need to adhere to the policies below:



Threaded Discussions

Participation in the threaded discussions weekly is a large percentage of your weekly grade. Lack of weekly participation will result in a grade of zero for the week. You must respond to the question for the week with that post in the 200-250 word range, which is between 7-10 sentences. In addition to answering the discussion questions, you must post two more responses to other students in each thread to by the end of the week, which is Sunday at midnight. Posting the minimum number of times does not guarantee the full 30 points for that week's discussion. Grading criteria is included within the grading rubric for discussions. In addition, your responses to discussion question or to other students cannot be a line or two of comments such as **"That is great."** Responses of that sort will not count towards any credit. Also, you will not receive participation points for chit-chat.

Netiquette

All students in online courses are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions, and chats. If your instructor deems any submission inappropriate or offensive, they will forward the message to the appropriate Program Manager and/or Administrator.

Academic Dishonesty

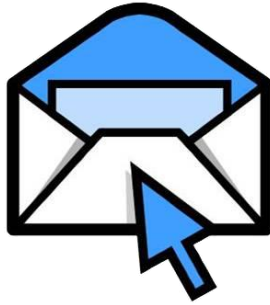
SWFC considers academic honesty to be one of its highest values. Students are expected to be the sole authors of their work. Use of another person's work or ideas must be accompanied by specific citations and references. Though not a comprehensive or exhaustive list, the following are some examples of dishonesty or unethical and unprofessional behavior:

- Plagiarism: Using another person's words, ideas, or results without giving proper credit to that person; giving the impression that it is your own work.
- Any form of cheating on examinations.
- Altering academic or clinical records.
- Falsifying information for any assignments.
- Submitting an assignment that was partially or wholly completed by another student.
- Copying work or written text from a student, the Internet, or any document without giving due credit to the source of the information.
- Submitting an assignment for more than one class without enhancing and refining the assignment, and without first receiving instructor permission.

In cases where previous assignments are allowed to be submitted for another class, it is your responsibility to enhance the assignment with additional research and to rewrite the material you already created. In essence, plagiarism is the theft of someone else's ideas and work. Whether a student copies verbatim or simply rephrases the ideas of another without properly acknowledging the source; it is still plagiarism. In the preparation of work submitted to meet course requirements, whether a draft or a final version of a paper or project, students must take great care to distinguish their own ideas and language from information derived from other sources. Sources include published primary and secondary materials, electronic media, and information and opinions gathered directly from other people.

A computer program, marketing plan, PowerPoint presentation, and other similar work produced to satisfy a course requirement are, like a paper, expected to be the original work of the student submitting it. Copying documentation from another student or from any other source without proper citation is a form of academic dishonesty, as is producing work substantially from the work of another. Students must assume that collaboration in the completion of written assignments is prohibited unless explicitly permitted by the instructor. Students must acknowledge any collaboration and its extent in all submitted course work. Students are subject to disciplinary action if they submit as their own work a paper purchased from a term paper company or downloaded from the Internet.

Communications and Technology Policies



General Email

When sending an email to your instructors and/or other members of the class, you must identify yourself fully by name and class, not just your email address. In the Subject Header of your email address, you must put the following: "Your last name/class name/subject or topic of the email." Following this simple procedure will save you time and energy, as your instructor will not have to reply asking for this information. Sending your e-mail from class does not send your name; it sends only your e-mail address.

Q/A

If you have general questions that pertain to any of your course's content, the proper etiquette is to submit your questions or concerns to the Q/A threaded discussion area.

Turning in your Work

You are required to submit all assignments, other than discussions, via the DropBox.

Dropbox

All formal research paper assignments must be saved in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx). If you cannot save your files in MS Word, then you can save them in rich text format (.rtf). Most word processing programs will allow you to save in Rich Text Format. Other types of assignments will provide you with directions in the course for specific file extension types. Instructions for submission to the Dropbox can be found in your *Online Technical Training Manual*.

Deadlines

Odd things happen in cyberspace - emails get lost, servers disconnect temporarily, and logins fail. Do not wait until the last minute to do your work. Allow time to meet deadlines. Reply, and check for replies on every email sent and received. You are responsible for getting the work to me in time.

Safeguards

Back up all your work on disk, CD, or jump drive. Consider also making a hard copy. If you experience computer difficulties, you are responsible for having saved your work.

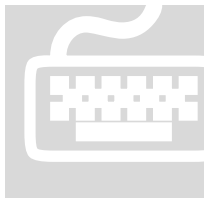
Technical Support

If you are experiencing technical problems like not being able to view a page, contact the Help Desk as you were instructed in your *Online Technical Training Manual*.

Grading and Late Policies

This section will help you understand how you will be evaluated online at Southwest Florida College.

Your grades are calculated in the Gradebook on a scale of 1000 points for the entire term. Students can view their grades at any time after their instructors have posted grades to each of the assignments for a given week, and this will reflect an accurate average up to that time.



Reminders

Here is a reminder about your responsibilities while taking online course(s) at Southwest Florida College. These have been covered previously in this manual, more in-depth, but it should be reviewed here as we begin to look at grading and the consequences of submitting assignments late.

1. Assignments are due by Sunday (11:59 PM) night of each unit week.
2. The discussion board will close at the end of each week (Sunday at 11:59 PM). After that time, it will no longer be accessible for students to receive credit for the assignment.
3. All other assignments, such as the application assignments and quizzes, are due by the end of the assigned week to receive full credit (This does not mean a perfect score).
4. If the assignments are not submitted on time, then you will receive a grade of zero (0) the week it is due. When and if the late work is submitted, you are required to notify the instructor via e-mail that the assignment has been submitted to the Dropbox for grading with late penalties (see late policy).
5. The final exam will be available during Week 9 (Friday at 12:00 AM), and will close at the end of the course, which is the Friday of Week 11 at 11:59 PM. There is no exception to this date. When the course closes, the exam will no longer be available.

6. Special circumstances that are out of your control, such as medical problems, will be taken into consideration if the instructor has been notified. Circumstances will be evaluated individually, and a plan of action will be determined based on individual circumstances.
7. The instructor has 5-7 days to correct all assignments. If you hand in an assignment late, you need to notify the instructor. Late penalties will apply to all late work. Assignments may be turned in early, but they may not be graded until the week they are due, and will receive the same grading criteria of 5-7 days from the due date, not the date submitted.
8. All research paper or essay-based application assignments have to be submitted in a Microsoft Word document following The APA format for writing college assignments unless a differing format is specified by your instructor. All APA submissions should be a minimum of 2 pages in length and double-spaced. Font should be either Times New Roman or Arial, and no greater than 12-point. Assignments that fail to meet the standard are subject to a deduction in points.
9. Assignments should not be submitted in the comment section of the Dropbox. Assignments placed in the comment section will not be graded and you will have the opportunity to re-submit in the proper format.

Online Late Policies

Most assignments are due by 11:59 PM on the Sunday of each week, but the policies below are applicable to assignments that are submitted late:

Discussions

Late policies are not applicable to Discussion assignments as they are considered CLASS PARTICIPATION and must be completed within the week in which they are assigned.

Application Assignments

Application Assignments must be submitted to the Dropbox no later than MIDNIGHT on SUNDAY to be considered for full credit, but the policies below will be applied to late submissions:

- 10% reduction each week the Application Assignment is late.
- All Application Assignments for Weeks 1-5 will not be accepted beyond the Sunday of Week 5.
- All Application Assignments for Weeks 6-10 will not be accepted beyond the Sunday of Week 10.

Late Grading Scale Example

Assignment due at the end of Week 1: Maximum points possible – 50 pts.

- **Week 1 Assignment turned in during or by the end of Week 2:** Base points possible: 50 pts. (-5) pts. deducted for tardiness, making the **maximum possible grade 45 pts.**
- **Week 1 Assignment turned in during or by the end of Week 3:** Base points possible: 50 pts. (-10) pts. deducted for tardiness, making the **maximum possible grade 40 pts.**
- **Week 1 Assignment turned in during or by the end of Week 4:** Base points possible: 50 pts. (-15) pts. deducted for tardiness, making the **maximum possible grade is 35 pts.**
- **Week 1 Assignment turned in during or by the end of Week 5:** Base points possible: 50 pts. (-20) pts. deducted for tardiness, making the **maximum possible grade is 30 pts.**
- **Week 1 Assignment turned in during Weeks 6-11:** Assignment not graded - **“0” pts.** entered in the Gradebook.

Quizzes

Quizzes should be submitted no later than MIDNIGHT on SUNDAY during the week in which they are assigned, but the policies below will be applied to late submissions:

- All Quizzes for **Weeks 1-5** will **NOT** be accepted beyond the Sunday of Week 5.
- All Quizzes for **Weeks 6-10** will **NOT** be accepted beyond the Sunday of Week 10.

Midterm Exams

Midterm Exams will remain open from the Wednesday of Week 5 through the Wednesday of Week 7 and must be completed within this time frame.

There is no late policy associated with this exam.

Midterm Projects

Some courses will include a Midterm Project as an alternative to a Midterm Exam. If your course includes a Midterm Project or Paper, it will be due by the Sunday of Week 6 and there is not an applicable late policy. All Midterm Projects or Papers must be submitted by the Sunday of Week 6 to be accepted for course credit.

Final Exams

Final Exams will remain open from the Friday of Week 9 through the Friday of Week 11 and must be completed within this time frame. There is no late policy associated with this exam.

Final Projects

Some courses will include a Final Project in addition to or as an alternative to a Final Exam. If your course includes a Final Project or Paper, it will be due by the Sunday of Week 10 and there is not an applicable late policy. All Final Projects or Papers must be submitted by the Sunday of Week 10 to be accepted for course credit.

Contact Information / Student Support

For issues relating to course content, assignments or deadlines, contact your instructor via the **'Email'** tab in the **'Tools'** navigation bar at the top of the screen or use the **'Q/A'**.

Any academic concerns that go beyond simple course content, please contact your program manager, or for online students, contact the Director of Education, **Mrs. Denise Mathey** at dmathey@swfc.edu.

For help with your online assignments, you can use the **ASC1000-0001 Academic Success Center** listed under **'Special Courses'** on the main **'Academics PSH'** tab (where you would access your courses).

For login (username or password) issues, please contact the Distance Education Staff at bhawthorne@swfc.edu, cschmitz@swfc.edu, and/or sfountain@swfc.edu.

Finally, if you have Student Email System issues, contact support@student.swfc.edu.