



## **Frequently Asked Questions About Greenville County Schools' Virtual School Program**

- **What is the GCS Virtual program (GCVSP)?**

The GCS virtual school program (GCVSP) is a year-round program that consists of academic courses that GCS students take online via the Internet to earn credits toward a South Carolina high school diploma. GCVSP is not a school. GCS students can take one or two courses to supplement the curriculum they are taking at their assigned school. All classes are taught by experienced master teachers who are certified in their respective subject areas and have earned credentials in online instruction. Students are responsible for logging on to read class material, complete assignments, and to take quizzes. Most classes are semester-length. All require an exam at the end of the course. Each class has a published start and end date, and classes are not self-paced. GCVSP is a program of Greenville County Schools and does not award high school diplomas. Students must be enrolled in a brick/mortar school to participate.

Select Schools and Programs in Greenville County school district offer free GCVSP high school courses within their daily schedule. Contact your school counselor to learn whether the school or program participates in these virtual options.

- **How much does it cost to take an online class through the GCVSP?**

Please see your school counselor or you can visit the GCVS website and click on Payment Instructions. Online payment is available as well as payments mailed in via US Mail.

- **What type of student is typically successful in taking online courses?**

A successful student should be a self-starter, well organized and able to work alone without supervision. The student must be highly motivated, a proficient reader, and have good computer skills.

- **Who can participate?**

Any Greenville County Schools student enrolled in grades 7-12 that has the permission of the school counselor and principal can participate in the GCS Virtual Program. Students must be enrolled in a school in order to participate.

- **What type of classes are offered through GCVSP?**

GCVS offers many core courses and electives. See GCVS website for the most current listing. Most courses are offered in both CP and Honors levels. Several AP courses are also offered.

- **Does the Greenville County Virtual School Program (GCVSP) award high school diplomas?**

No. GCVSP is a program of Greenville County Schools that offers online courses for credit that are transferred to the students' physical (home) school upon completion of the class.

- **What type of hardware and software does the student need for GCVSP?**

Please review the computer requirements and recommendations listed on the GCVS website under Computer Requirements to ensure that your computer is capable of adequately handling an online course. Students are to

be aware that as a Google district, our virtual courses rely heavily on Google Applications to deliver and assess instruction. This means that students who take GCVSP virtual courses should have a Google account. In addition, students should know how to use Google Apps to some extent in order to turn in completed assignments and tests or be willing and open to learning. While the program will make every attempt to be flexible, activities and submission of work, outside of Google Apps, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**\*\*Some individual courses may require additional software.**

- **Will there be a teacher?**

Yes. Each class has its own online teacher who is experienced and certified in the subject area of the online course(s) he/she will teach, and is accessible to the student through various tools such as online chat, SKYPE, email and telephone. Online teachers also hold virtual office hours so students can contact them and receive dedicated help as needed.

- **Will there be tests?**

Yes. Each course has quizzes, projects, and assessments to complete. There will also be a final proctored exam at the end of each course (see your school counselor for information regarding exams).

- **Is there an exam?**

Yes, every course has an exam. Schools administer final exams for their own students who are taking virtual courses. Final exams cannot be taken at home unless the school allows the student to contract with the online proctoring service, ProctorU. Students should see their school counselor for details about final exams.

- **How are courses taught?**

Virtual courses are taught online using the LMS software that is easy to use, offering a lot of flexibility and options for students. Anywhere, anytime (24/7) that you can access the internet, you can log-on and learn. Teachers post materials and assignments for student completion, and communicate via chat rooms, email, phone, and discussion boards to answer questions. Students upload assignments and tests through the LMS. Since students have access 24/7, vacations and weekends are not a factor in virtual classes, i.e. class due dates continue uninterrupted.

The virtual courses are deadline driven, not self-paced. Units or modules are rolled out on a pre-determined schedule and students must upload assignments and complete activities on that schedule. Late penalties apply when assignments are submitted by the deadline.

- **What happens if I don't complete all the requirements for the course (including the final exam)?**

Any student who enrolls in a virtual course and does not complete all requirements for the course (including the final exam) within the allotted time frame will receive a grade that appropriately reflects his/her work. The online class grade is calculated into the student's overall grade point average.

Students have (10) days from the start of a semester or yearlong GCVSP class to drop the class without penalty. Students in quarter classes have 5 days. Students will receive a grade of WF (Withdrawn/Fail) and a failing grade if a class is dropped after the 10<sup>th</sup> day (or 5<sup>th</sup> day) from the course start date. Check GCVSP website calendar for drop deadline and drop procedures.

- **After submitting payment, when will the teacher contact me?**

Teachers send welcome emails which including the enrollment information to the GCS STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS that is input by the counselor at the time the online application is submitted. Those emails go out from the teacher by the class start date. The only email used is the GCS STUDENT EMAIL ADDRESS.

- **What happens if only a few students register for a class?**

Classes with low enrollment are cancelled and the school counselor is notified prior to the first day of class. Counselors are charged with notifying the students. If payment has been made, then refunds are given.

- **If I choose to mail in my payment, what happens if I forget to include the payment card from the counselor in the envelope with the fee?**

The fee will be sent back to the sender and the student will NOT be registered for the class.

- **How many classes can a student take?**

Fall /Spring – Two courses per term

Summer – One Core Course (English, math) or Two Non-Core Courses (all other subject areas) unless student is a senior

- **How do I find out more about online courses and how to enroll?**

Contact your school guidance counselor for information.