



Online and Distance Learning Student Handbook

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A Letter from the Associate Dean of Distance Learning

Welcome to Distance Learning at Sussex County Community College!

Learning online minimizes barriers for students by allowing them to attend class without coming to campus. Online courses often fit into busy schedules, as they save travel time and reduce obligations around class meeting dates.

You will notice that online learning is quite different from in-classroom learning, but we strive to ensure we meet the needs of all of our diverse students by offering online services that are comparable to our traditional services here on campus.

Taking an online course can be challenging and time-consuming. However, you will find that the faculty and staff here at the College are here to help you succeed. Our moderate class sizes allow for more individualized attention from instructors, so you will always feel like more than just a number.



If you have any questions about Distance Learning here at Sussex County Community College, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cory Homer'.

Cory Homer, M.A.
Associate Dean of Distance Learning
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Newton, New Jersey 07860
(973) 300-2116
chomer@sussex.edu

Getting Started

Important things to know about taking online courses:

- Online courses are designed to offer all instruction and traditional course interactions in an online environment via a learning management system.
- Online courses provide students the benefit of independent learning and a more flexible schedule. However, please remember that many online courses have strict deadlines on certain assignments. Information regarding deadlines and the course structure can be found in the course syllabus!
- Registering for an online course is not the “easy route” for your education. It’s true that online courses offer the flexibility to learn in your own time and space, but that doesn’t change the amount of work you will have to complete!
- It is a reasonable expectation in the online environment that some online courses may require the downloading and installing of certain software.
- Students enrolled in traditional courses usually have a consistent schedule to follow each week, with in-class instruction followed by out-of-class assignments. For online courses, students may have to find their own methods to stay on top of their work.
- Reliable, consistent access to a computer with internet connection is a necessary for success in an online course.
- Plan to set aside about five hours of study time a week for each online course. Some courses, especially ones where you may need tutoring, can require up to seven hours of study time per week. If you plan to enroll in two courses, be prepared to put aside 10 to 14 hours of study time each week.
- Online courses may not be a good fit for every student.

Are you ready to take an online course?

As mentioned above, there are a number of different factors that will affect the success of your online course experience. Please utilize one of these free resources to see if online learning is right for you!

- <http://www.unc.edu/tlim/ser/>
- <http://onlinelearning.utoronto.ca/is-online-learning-for-me/>
- <https://www.csustan.edu/academics/online-programs/online-readiness-self-assessment>

Etiquette Guidelines for Online Courses

Personal Courtesy

1. Begin each posting with a greeting stating the person's name (Hello Kerry, or Hello Dr. Reed), and closing with your name on its own line. This raises the tone of the correspondence so that there is a level of respect, regardless of the content. It also clearly delineates the beginning and end of messages in a thread containing many postings.

2. For e-mail, identify yourself and the subject of your e-mail message. Be sure to include the course number and section, the assignment, and your name in the heading.

Example: ENGL 101- ON Jane Smith Question about Week Two

Example: ENGL 101- ON Jane Smith Paper Two attached

3. Write to the whole group through the discussion forum. Use e-mail to send a private message.

4. Use paragraph breaks in your discussion postings and follow guidelines for how much to write. Your classmates will greatly appreciate your respect for their time.

5. Make sure your postings are clear and logical. It is possible to write a paragraph that contains no errors in grammar or spelling, but still makes no sense at all. Doing so in the classroom wastes time and reflects badly on you.

6. Be aware of the effect that your choice of words and typestyle may have. For example, if you use bold type or all capitals, will people think you are shouting at them or simply emphasizing a point? Be careful with words or phrases that can stereotype people, and remain professional when responding to ideas with which you feel strongly. Use emoticons and abbreviations sparingly; they are often misunderstood and relay vague ideas. It is better to find clear words for your thoughts.

7. Avoid satire or sarcasm. Few people can successfully write humor and satire. A probable and perhaps lasting misunderstanding is not worth an unlikely and passing chuckle.

8. If your message is designed to vent strong feelings, write it, but do not send it until you have slept on it overnight.

9. As the reader, give the author the benefit of the doubt. If something seems hostile or offensive, before you leap to that conclusion, ask for clarification. Practice patience and courtesy.

10. When a misunderstanding occurs, acknowledge when you have been unclear, apologize, say what you meant more clearly, and put it behind you.

11. Use "please" and "thank you". The power of these simple signs of respect and caring cannot be overstated.

12. Practice random acts of kindness. Think of what you can say (without being obsequious), that would brighten the recipient's day. It simply makes for a better experience for everyone, and as a bonus you may find that people pay better attention to what you have to say.

13. Above all, remain polite and professional at all times. Don't use offensive language, and don't be confrontational for the sake of confrontation. Treat all class members with respect and courtesy, and ask yourself, "Would I say this if we were sitting in a face-to-face classroom?" If the answer is no, rewrite and reread.

Academic Integrity

14. Provide citations for quoted materials or others' ideas, just as would be done in hard copy.

15. Do not forward personal notes or messages to others unless you are certain the content is appropriate and you have obtained permission from the author.

Electronic Use of Information

16. Never write anything you wouldn't want to see publicly printed; computer messages cannot be assumed to be private.

17. Since anything you write online can be (and may be) forwarded to others, do not disclose trade secrets or company-confidential information as part of a course.

18. Delete old e-mail messages; they take up valuable storage space.

Adopted from University of Maryland's University Guidelines for Netiquette

My.Sussex Portal

The My.Sussex Portal allows SCCC faculty, staff, and students to access the information and password-protected resources that they need in one central place.

Before you are able to access the My.Sussex Portal, you must first be issued a Sussex County Community College ID and password.

Accessing the Portal

Access your portal [here](#).

Enter your issued Sussex County Community College ID and password to login to your customized My.Sussex portal, then click on the tabs that appear across the top banner.

The screenshot shows the My.Sussex Portal interface. At the top is a dark blue banner with the 'my.sussex STUDENT PORTAL' logo on the left, the 'Sussex County COMMUNITY COLLEGE' logo in the center, and a login section on the right with fields for 'User Name:' and 'Password:', a 'Login' button, and a link 'I forgot my password'. Below the banner, a breadcrumb trail reads 'You are here: Announcements'. The main content area is divided into a left sidebar and a main panel. The sidebar contains a 'My Portal' section with links like 'Announcements', 'Apply for Admission', 'Visiting Students', 'Request Information', 'Course Schedules', and 'CNED New Students'. Below this is a 'Quick Links' section with links for 'Course Schedule', 'SCCC Main College Site', 'Community Education', 'Payment and Billing', 'Student Email', 'Rave Emergency Alert', and 'WebStudy Online Courses'. The main panel has a 'My Portal' heading with a 'Printer Friendly' icon. It features a 'Current Announcements' section with 'IMPORTANT REGISTRATION INFORMATION' stating that fall semester begins September 6th and enrollment is open now. It provides details for Summer Session I (May 23 to July 11) and Summer Session II (July 12 to August 22), noting that Summer Session II tuition has increased. A 'Payment Plan' section states that payment is due August 5th unless you sign up for a convenient payment plan. Below this is a 'New Features' section titled 'New Payment and Billing Features', explaining that the Bursar's Office has enhanced the online payment and billing (CASHNet) website. At the bottom of the main panel is a 'Welcome to the SCCC Portal' section with instructions on how to login and links for 'Apply for Admission', 'Request Information', and 'Courses Scheduled'.

My.Sussex Portal Resources

My.Sussex is your own college portal to:

- View your grades
- Print your unofficial SCCC transcripts
- Check your GPA
- Search for classes and print your schedule
- View and pay your bill
- Click on the My.sussex icon. Your username (SCCC Student ID) and temporary password were provided when you first registered.
- Change your password as soon as possible.
- Click the Personal Info link and then the Password Tab.

Forget your password? Enter your Student ID as your username and click the “I forgot my password” Tab. A new password will be sent to your email account.

Accessing Sussex Email

SCCC has a Google-powered student email domain: <http://mail.student.sussex.edu>

Username

Your username is based on your first initial and last name. **For example:** John Doe would be *jdoe@student.sussex.edu*

New Students

New Students will receive a New Student Welcome Letter with a temporary password and should contact IT Services if any assistance is needed.

Returning Students

If you previously had an @**stu.sussex.edu** email, you can log into your new @**student.sussex.edu** at <http://mail.student.sussex.edu> using your firstinitiallastname and your **My.Sussex Portal password**. If you are having trouble logging in, contact IT Services.

Contact IT Services for assistance:

SCCC IT Hotline: 973-300-2333

Email: ITService@sussex.edu



Canvas Learning Management System

In the summer of 2017, SCCC changed to the Canvas Learning Management System to organize and deliver course content in many of our online and hybrid courses. Even if you are not taking an online or hybrid course, you will find that many of the professors in your face-to-face courses use the Canvas system as well.

If you have questions about the content of your course, please contact your professor as soon as possible. Your professor's information is available in the course syllabus in your Canvas course.

Your professors are here to help you succeed. Please contact them with any questions you may have throughout the semester. Additionally, you can access [free tutoring](#) in math, science, and English by contacting the SCCC Learning Center.

If you have trouble using Canvas: (logging on, submitting an assignment, responding to a forum post, submitting a test, or some other technical issue), contact Canvas Support at 1 (844) 864-5305, or email support@instructure.com. You could also search for the information in the Canvas Guides, found here: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>.

How to Access Canvas

You can access the Canvas LMS by visiting <https://sussexccc.instructure.com>, or by going to the www.sussex.edu website and clicking on “Canvas Login” on the left side of the page.

Your Username and Password are the same as the credentials used to access your My.Sussex Portal.

If you are unable to login, please send an email to canvashelp@sussex.edu from your sussex.edu email with the following information:

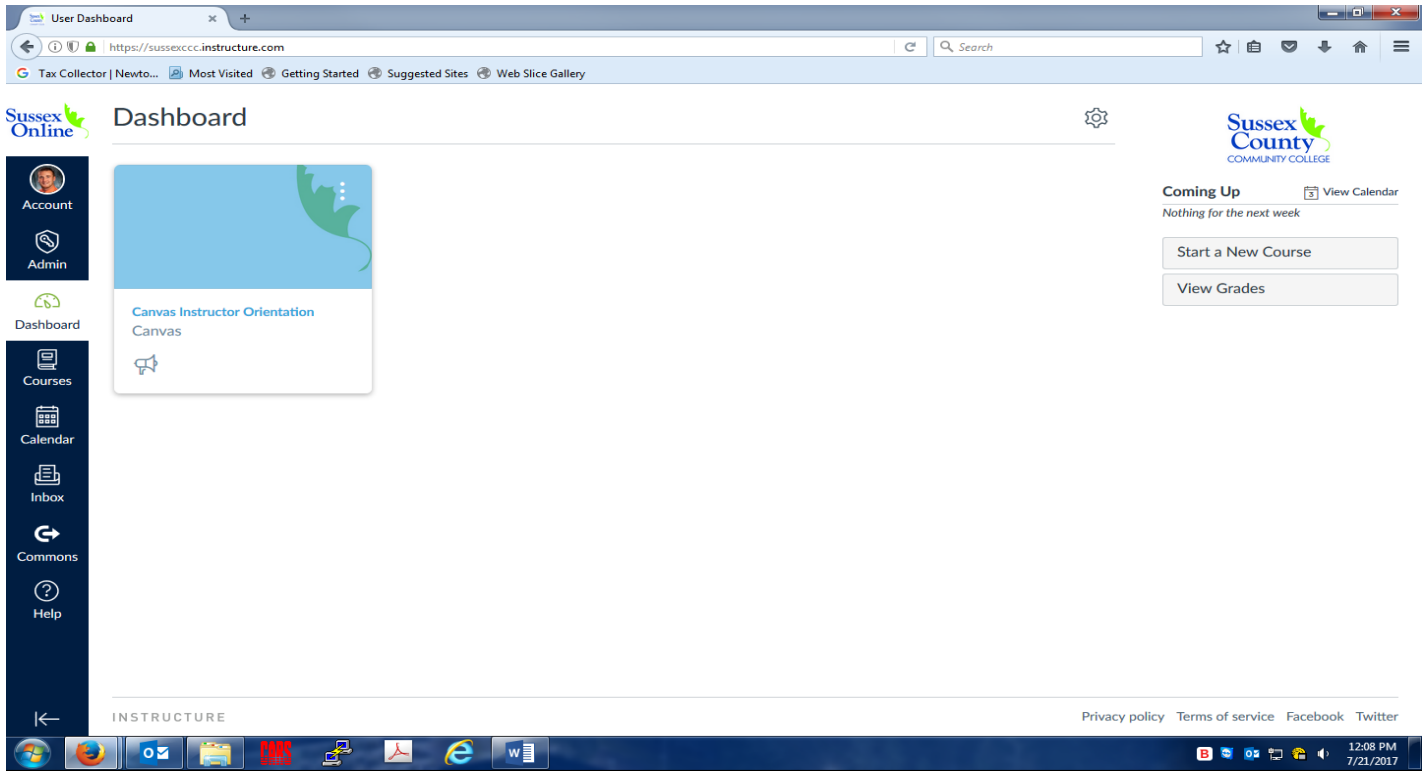
- Your first name and last name; and
- Your course code and name.

Brief Introduction to Canvas

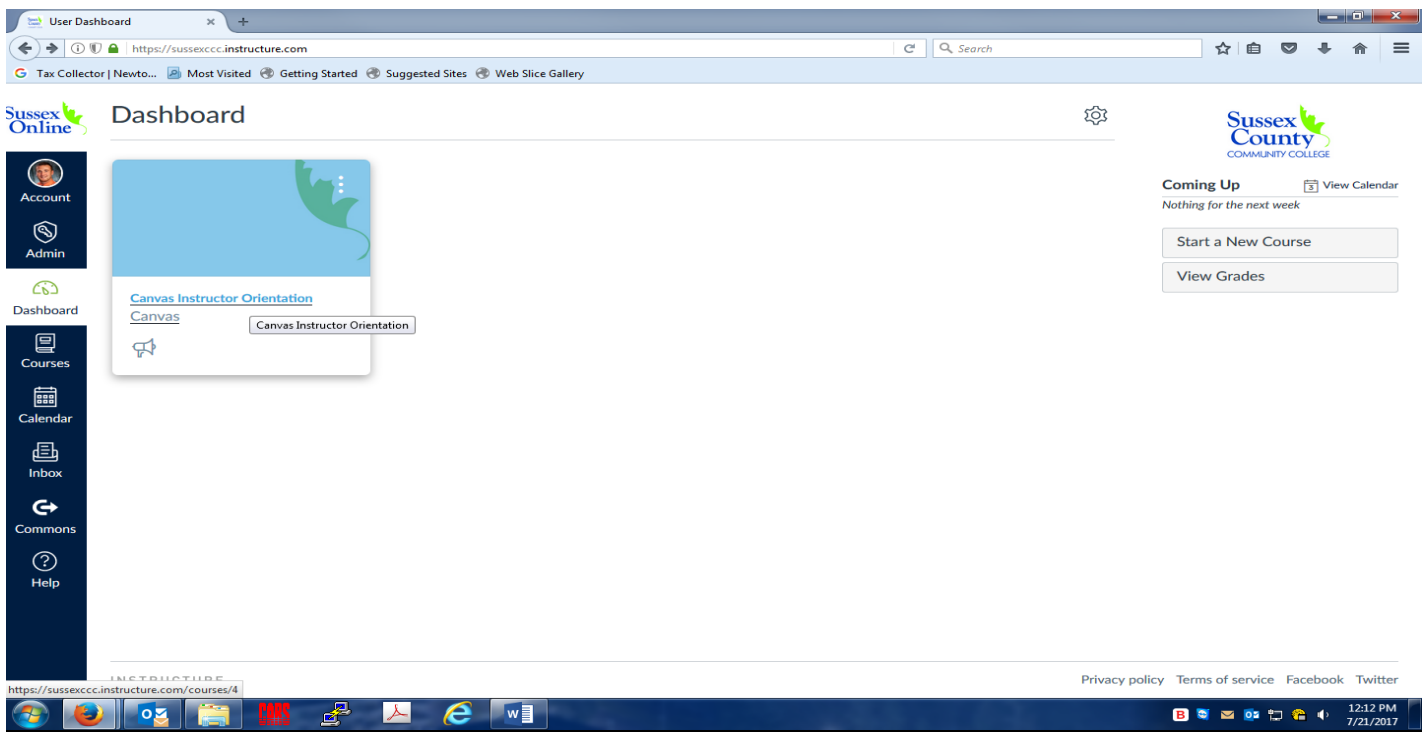
You can access a Canvas student orientation video by visiting:
<https://community.canvaslms.com/videos/1124>

After you have logged in...

After you've successfully logged into Canvas, the first page you will see is your Dashboard that will show all of your currently active courses in Canvas.



You can access each course by clicking on the tile of the specific course.



After you are in the individual course, there will be instructions on how to proceed!

Canvas Terminology

Announcements- Announcements is a communication tool that allows instructors to post announcements for all users in a course. Announcements can be created in courses and groups.. Instructors can allow students to reply to announcements.

[Learn more about Announcements here!](#)

Assignments- An assignment is any activity assessment that is created by the instructor. Assignments can include Assignments, Discussions, and Quizzes. Some assignments are submitted for no grade.

[Learn more about Assignments here!](#)

Calendar- The Calendar is a communication tool that shows users all of the events and assignments in their courses and groups all in one place. You can export a calendar feed for use on other calendar applications.

[Click here to learn more about the Calendar!](#)

Conversations/Inbox- Conversation is the messaging tool used instead of email to communicate with a course, a group, an individual student, or a group of students. You can communicate with other people in your course at any time.

[Click here to learn more about Conversations!](#)

Dashboard- The Dashboard is a panel of content that acts as the Canvas default landing page and provides an overview of all Canvas activity for a user. The Dashboard shows all courses and groups, recent activity, to-do items, upcoming assignments, and recent feedback. It's typically the first screen you see when your first log in to Canvas. Click the Dashboard button on the left sidebar to go to your dashboard.

[Click here to learn more about the Dashboard!](#)

Discussions- Discussions is a forum designed to facilitate informal communication between students in a course. Discussions can also be created as assignments for grading purposes. Students can also respond to informal and graded discussions in the context of a group. All Discussions content is public and all course students can view and reply to a discussion.

[Click here to learn more about Discussions!](#)

Groups- Groups are like a smaller version of your course and are used as a collaborative tool where students can work together on group projects and assignments. They enable you to separate students into smaller course units. Groups can be created for students or by students to enable efficient collaboration.

[Click here to learn more about Guides!](#)

Guides- Guides have been developed by the Canvas Community to assist in learning all of the Canvas terminology and navigation.

[Click here to view Student Guides](#)

Help- the Help feature is part of Global Navigation and helps users get help in Canvas at any time. It is available on every page on Canvas as the final icon in the Global Navigation menu.

[Click here to learn more about the Help feature!](#)

Modules- Modules are used to organize course content by weeks, units, or a different organizational structure. Modules essentially create a one-directional linear flow of what students should do in a course.

[Click here to learn more about Modules!](#)

Notifications- Canvas can automatically send students important information, including grade, discussion, and activity updates, via email, SMS (i.e., text message), and even social media accounts like Twitter and Facebook. Students can adjust their Notification Preferences via the Settings link to fit his or her needs. This is highly recommended to ensure that you are kept up to date on everything happening in your courses based on your settings!

[Click here to learn how to set your notification preferences!](#)

Syllabus- The Syllabus in Canvas makes it easy for your professor to communicate exactly what will be required throughout the course in chronological order.

[Click here to learn more about the Syllabus!](#)

Technology Support and Requirements

This is a list of basic computer requirements to use Canvas. It is always recommended to use the most up-to-date versions. Canvas will still run with the minimum specifications, but you may experience slower loading times. Canvas and its hosting infrastructure are designed for maximum compatibility and minimal requirements.

Screen Size

Canvas is best viewed at a minimum of 800x600, which is the average size of a notebook computer. If you want to view Canvas on a device with a smaller screen, we recommend using the Canvas mobile app.

Operating Systems

- Windows 7 and newer (users on Windows 10 need to download the [Windows 10 Anniversary Update](#) to submit Canvas assignments)
- Mac OSX 10.6 and newer
- Linux - chromeOS

Mobile Operating System Native App Support

- iOS 7 and newer (versions vary by device)
- Android 4.2 and newer

Computer Speed and Processor

- Use a computer 5 years old or newer when possible
- 1GB of RAM
- 2GHz processor

Internet Speed

- Along with compatibility and web standards, Canvas has been carefully crafted to accommodate low bandwidth environments.
- Minimum of 512kbps

Screen Readers

- Macintosh: [VoiceOver](#) (latest version for Safari)
- PC: [JAWS](#) (latest version for Internet Explorer)
- PC: [NVDA](#) (latest version for Firefox)

Academic Support Services

Ordering Textbooks

There are many different ways you can order textbooks for your online courses. The quickest and easiest way to order your books is through the [Sussex County Community College Bookstore](#). At the SCCC Bookstore, you will have the ability to search and order all course materials.

You can contact the SCCC Bookstore directly by calling (973) 300-2380 or by sending a message to the SCCC Bookstore on the [website](#).

Library Services

General library resources can be found on the [SCCC Library Website](#). You can access the library online by following the information below or through your individual Canvas courses.

Proctor/Testing Information

In order to maintain academic integrity, some courses may require students to take tests, quizzes, and other assessments in the presence of a proctor, in a professional setting, not in a private home. If your course has this requirement, it will be clearly stated in the syllabus.

There are two options that students can use for test proctoring. The first of these options is to complete and submit a SCCC Proctor Request Form, which can be found on the [SCCC Testing Center Webpage](#). The second option is to schedule an appointment with the SCCC Testing Center by calling (973) 300-2155. For proctored testing by appointment, please visit the SCCC Testing Center Webpage for available times and dates.

Student Support Services

Advisement Center

The Student Advisement Center provides a supportive and professional environment that promotes the exploration and development of individual strengths to encourage academic success and personal growth. Take advantage of the knowledge and resources you'll find at the Advisement Center to learn about courses, degree options, requirements for programs and concentrations, and learning resources at the College. In addition, counselors are also available for career planning and transfer opportunities.

The Advisement Center is dedicated to furthering the educational mission of Sussex County Community College by assisting students in their academic success. To speak with an advisor, call 973-300-2207 or [email an advisor](#) using your College-issued email.

Registering for Courses

Students can register for courses online during the registration period in the My.Sussex Portal by choosing "Student", choosing "Registration", and then choosing the term.

Steps to ONLINE REGISTRATION

Log into your my.student portal
my.sussex.edu
Username: Your Student ID
Password:

Choose the
Student tab

Choose
Registration

Choose
Add/Drop
Select the term you
are registering for.

Dropping and Adding Classes

Courses may be added during the first 5 days of the fall and spring semesters and dropped within the first 10 days of the fall and spring semesters. Students must complete an official Add/Drop Form and submit this form to the Registrar's Office by returning it to the Registrar's Office on campus, faxing it to the Registrar's Office at 973-579-5226, or by mailing it to: Registrar's Office, Sussex County Community College One College Hill Road Newton, NJ 07860.

Dropped courses are removed from the transcript and thus do not count toward enrollment, deferrals, health insurance and athletic eligibility.

Drop/Add days are pro-rated for sessions less than a full Fall or Spring semester.

Students who neglect to follow official procedures and who stop attending classes will be assigned the grade of "FN" at the end of the semester or term. To avoid unnecessary costs and penalties, students are advised to discuss all Drop/Add Procedures with their advisor or with a Counselor. Students may withdraw from a class during the published withdrawal period but withdrawal procedures must be strictly followed. No refunds are available past the posted refund policy deadline. Students receiving financial aid must stop in the Financial Aid Office to determine if the drop/withdrawal will have any effect on the financial aid.

Refund Policy-Tuition and Fees

Students who withdraw from classes in which they have been officially registered, either offered by SCCC or one of its contracting institutions, shall be eligible for a refund. For fall and spring semesters, withdrawal in writing prior to the first day of the second week (see SCCC Academic Calendar for exact date) will incur a 100% refund and/or cancellation of charges. Withdrawal in writing prior to the first day of the third week (see SCCC Academic Calendar for exact date) will incur 50% refund of tuition only. Students will be responsible for payment of the remaining 50% of tuition and all fees.

No refund will be given for withdrawal in writing after the last day of the third week (see SCCC Academic Calendar for exact date). For summer and winter sessions, please see the SCCC Academic Calendar for refund dates.

Refund Policy- Medical Withdrawal

Students who withdraw from all classes due to severe medical circumstances may qualify for a 50% tuition credit (fees not included) or a 50% cancellation of tuition debt (fees not included).

Financial Aid students should contact the Office of Financial Aid at 973-330-2225 to review the impact on their aid.

Financial Aid

For information about Financial Aid, please visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#). Once on the webpage, students will discover how to apply for Financial Aid, review the Financial Aid Reference Guide, and find other forms related to Financial Aid.

Paying the Bill

For information on how students can pay their tuition online and review important calendar dates related to billing and refunds, please visit the [Bursar's Office webpage](#).

Related Policies and Procedures

Academic Integrity

Students are required to perform all of the work specified by the faculty and are responsible for the content and integrity of all academic work submitted, such as papers, reports, and examinations.

Examples of violations of the “Rule of Academic Integrity” include:

- Knowingly representing the work of others as his or her own;
- Using or obtaining unauthorized assistance in any academic work;
- Receiving or giving assistance to another student during an academic test;
- Possessing, buying, selling, and/or buying material in a matter not authorized by the instructor;
- Acting as a substitute for another person during an academic test; and
- Attempting to influence or change one’s academic record inappropriately.

Attendance in an Online Course Policy

For purposes of Federal Title IV student financial assistance, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) requires institutions to be able to demonstrate that federal aid recipients established eligibility for federal aid by participating in academic related activities for all enrolled course work.

It is the position of the United States Department of Education, as well as Sussex County Community College, that attendance in an online course is constituted by the student participating in the class, and/or engaging in an academically-related activity.

Academically-related activities in an online course at Sussex County Community College include, but are not limited to:

- submitting an academic assignment;
- participating in an examination;
- participating in an online discussion about academic matters; and/or
- initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.

Academically-related activities do not include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as logging into an online class without active participation.

Disabilities Assistance

Students who require accommodations in order to pursue their higher education goals need to make an appointment with the advisor to the Disabilities Assistance Program (973-300-2153). It is the student’s responsibility to provide current and comprehensive documentation that would warrant such accommodation. The need to provide documentation applies to both academic and facilities accommodations.

Information pertaining to an individual’s disabilities is considered *strictly confidential*. For that reason, students interested in seeking accommodations must be aware that it is their responsibility to inform their faculty of their personal needs in terms of either academic or

facilities arrangements. The advisor to the Disabilities Assistance Program's role is to coordinate and mediate, when necessary, between the faculty or staff member and student only after disclosure of a disability has been made by the student to that faculty or staff member.

Grade Appeals

Educational institutions have the responsibility for evaluating students by standards and a grading system which is publicized and known to instructors and students. The responsibility for determining the final grade of each student rests with the faculty member who has the responsibility for teaching the course in which the student is responsible for demonstrating the learning which results in a final grade.

A student who feels that the final grade he/she received in the course is unfair, is entitled to a grade appeal. Any student pursuing a grade appeal must follow the procedure outlined below. Grade appeals not following this procedure are not eligible for review. The steps in the grade appeal procedure are as follows:

Step One: The student must understand the policy and complete the appropriate form stating the exact nature of the appeal within two weeks from the end of the semester.

Step Two: The instructor must read the appeal, meet with the student, and either grant or deny the student's request. Students who are dissatisfied with this step may advance to Step Three.

Step Three (a): If the professor is an adjunct or part-time instructor, the Department Chair must hear the appeal and attempt to resolve the problem. If no solution is reached, the appeal may be forwarded to the appropriate Academic Dean whose decision is final.

or

Step Three (b): If the professor is a full-time instructor, the appropriate Academic Dean must hear the appeal and attempt to resolve the problem. The decision of the Academic Dean is considered final.

Grievances

Step One: At this level, a student is strongly encouraged to talk to his/her instructor and present the concern(s). It is important that the student clearly communicates his/her concerns directly so that the problem can be addressed at this step. Students who are dissatisfied with this step may proceed to step two.

Step Two: If a resolution of the grievance cannot be reached in step one, the grievance will be presented to an appropriate College administrator, who will hear the student's grievance and talk to other parties who may be involved. Students who are dissatisfied with this step may proceed to step three.

Step Three: If a resolution of the grievance cannot be reached in step two, then the grievance will be presented in writing to the Chief Academic Officer. The Chief Academic Officer will hear the student's grievance and talk to other parties who may be involved. The decision of the Chief Academic Officer will be presented to the student and be considered final.