ACCESS

Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, & Students Statewide

DISTANCE LEARNING

Policy Manual for

TEACHERS

ACCESS DISTANCE LEARNING
POLICY MANUAL FOR TEACHERS

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PREFACE

Welcome to the world of distance learning with ACCESS (Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, and Students Statewide). With a vision for providing equal access to high quality instruction and a wide range of course options, ACCESS is having a positive impact on students throughout Alabama. We are pleased that you have chosen to join the select group of teachers who share this vision and are willing to work with us to make the goals of ACCESS a reality.

Even though you may be bringing years of teaching experience to this new endeavor, you will undoubtedly find yourself learning new skills and becoming more proficient in the use of multimedia resources and a wide range of instructional methodologies. It may take time for you to become comfortable with the learning management system and the skills needed to deliver Web-based instruction (WBI) and/or videoconferencing instruction (VCI). This is natural, but you will find that the support provided by your regional support center, teacher mentors, and Alabama Department of Education (SD) staff will enable you to become proficient in the distance learning environment.

In addition to specifying the requirements of a distance learning teacher, this manual also provides information regarding ACCESS policies for students. You should review all policies, become familiar with requirements, and follow all procedures that are applicable to you and your classes. We trust you will find this information useful as you help us take the 21st Century Classroom to all Alabama students.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, and GUIDELINES for TEACHERS

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Teachers who interact with students via distance learning – WBI and/or VCI – to deliver instruction must meet background check requirements, have classroom experience in the content area being taught, be certified in Alabama, and be highly qualified in the content area being taught or be faculty members of an institution of higher education accredited by an agency identified in the *Alabama Administrative Code*. These include the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and other organizations approved by the Alabama State Board of Education. These teachers must possess expertise in the specific content area and must have participated in in-service education, sponsored by the providing institution, pertaining to instructional methodology and technical aspects of online course delivery. ACCESS teachers will ordinarily have five years of experience in Alabama, but, in some circumstances, extraordinary accomplishments of an interested teacher could allow the experience requirement to be waived.

Pre-training requirements for all new ACCESS teachers include a completed application; a letter of recommendation from the teacher's school administrator; successful completion of the online, preservice training module; and an interview with the regional support center director or designee. Applicants who satisfactorily complete these requirements are eligible to attend training. Invitations to attend training sessions are extended, however, only when course needs require the hiring of additional teachers. ACCESS extends no guarantee of employment to prospective teachers, even to those who complete the entire five-step application process.

ACCESS teachers are expected to be proficient in the use of the learning management system, VCI equipment, and other resources as identified and needed for successful course delivery. Teachers who teach an Advanced Placement (AP) course for ACCESS must have participated in AP training for that course and have a minimum of one year experience teaching the course. Teachers teaching a VCI AP course must have received prior authorization for their AP course syllabus from the College Board.

BLENDED COURSE DELIVERY

Even though all ACCESS courses are scheduled as primarily VCI or WBI courses, teachers must ensure that all courses are delivered via a blended model. Each course must have some real-time components (Web conferencing, VCI, etc.) and provide students with experience in the use of a learning management system.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Teachers must participate in three days of professional development provided by ACCESS Distance Learning that includes training in instructional methodologies and technical aspects of WBI and VCI course delivery. This training will be conducted by one of the three regional support centers selected to support the ACCESS program and must be completed prior to the beginning of initial teaching responsibilities.

Teachers who attend training will receive as compensation either a travel payment, based on the number of miles traveled to the training sessions, or a fixed rate stipend as determined by training dates. Teachers attending training during regular school days/hours will receive a travel check based on mileage and per diem at state rates. Teachers

who attend training during non-school hours (e.g. summer, weekends, any non-contract or non-salaried hours/days), however, will receive a fixed rate stipend of $100 per day.

Teachers are also expected to participate in required ongoing professional development activities in specific aspects of course delivery, as needed and scheduled by the regional support center serving each area of the state and/or the Alabama Department of Education. This training may be conducted face-to-face, virtually, or through the use of Web conferencing software. Training modules include tutorials, learning management system user manuals, teacher discussion boards, resources, instructional videos, and various other teacher tools and resources. Additional WBI professional development and training opportunities are available in CAST (Connecting ACCESS Staff and Teachers).

ACCESS teachers employed for the entire school year (two terms/semesters) will be required to complete six (6) different professional development modules. Teachers hired for only one term/semester will be required to complete three (3) modules during term of employment and three (3) additional modules during any subsequent term of employment until all six (6) of the required modules have been completed. Teachers must complete two (2) additional modules per year if ACCESS employment is continued. Required and elective professional development modules are listed in the CAST area of the learning management system.

TEACHER MENTORING

Teachers new to ACCESS distance learning will be assigned a mentor and will be required to participate in the ACCESS Teacher Mentoring Program. The mentoring program is under the direction and supervision of the regional support centers. The mentoring program for each teacher will remain in effect for a minimum of two consecutive school terms/semesters. Timelines may be extended at the discretion of regional support center staff.

Protégés/new teachers are expected to participate in bi-weekly training sessions for a period of three months and then once per month thereafter until completion of the program; participate in additional required training provided by regional support centers via Web conferencing, telephone, WBI course shells, and other instructional resources; and complete a program evaluation survey.

Experienced teachers who are selected as peer leaders/mentors will be responsible for providing training as required by ACCESS and regional support centers, establishing training schedules, maintaining activity logs for protégés, and completing program evaluation surveys. Compensation for selected peer leaders/mentors will be provided by the regional support centers at the established rate.

FACULTY MEETINGS

Faculty meetings will be held by each ACCESS Distance Learning regional support center on a regular basis. These meetings will be announced in advance and will usually be conducted via Web conferencing software. ACCESS teachers are expected to participate in these faculty meetings, just as they do within the traditional school environment.

PRESERVICE TEACHERS

Preservice teachers under the supervision of an ACCESS VCI teacher at a local school will not be assigned or given responsibility for an ACCESS VCI class. During the VCI class period, other arrangements must be made for the preservice teacher to teach in a traditional classroom. Exception: if other arrangements cannot be made during the ten (10) consecutive days of preservice teaching required by colleges and universities, the preservice teacher will be permitted to teach only during the required period of time, and only if the certified and highly qualified VCI teacher approves lesson plans in advance and remains in the classroom during the entire class period.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

It is extremely important that student communications be monitored. If potentially dangerous student communication is discovered after school hours or on weekends, the regional support center should be contacted immediately.

If a support center staff member cannot be reached, the Alabama Safe School Hotline may be called at 1-888-SAV-KIDS (1-888-728-5437) for assistance. The State of Alabama Attorney General's Office implemented this toll-free hotline as a way for students and adults to alert officials anonymously about information and tips regarding potential emergencies. Calls to this number go directly to the Attorney General's office and an immediate response is given. If warranted, the calls are then referred to law enforcement.

EXAM EXEMPTION PROCEDURES

Students taking ACCESS Distance Learning courses will follow the semester/final exam exemption policies of their home schools. The school administrator or designee will make the final determination concerning student exemptions.

The following timeline is suggested:
- The school administrator, facilitator, or other designee will notify the e-teacher of the date and time of the school's semester or final examination schedule approximately seven (7) days prior to the administration of the ACCESS course exam.
- The teacher will complete the grading of all current student assignments, exams, quizzes, etc., so that an accurate and up-to-date report of grades is available in the learning management system at least five (5) days before the scheduled exam.
- Four (4) days before the scheduled term examination, under the direction of the local classroom facilitator, students will print, sign,

and date their current grades from the course grades area in the learning management system. **The grade percentage at the time of printing will be the grade percentage used to determine exam exemption.** Please note that students may be responsible for additional assignments or may be allowed to submit assignments that are late between the time of exemption determinations (4 days prior) and the term exam; therefore, in some situations, grades may change.
- Facilitators will provide the printed copies of students' grades to the school administrator or designee. Upon receipt of the printed copies of students' grades, the school administrator (designee) will notify the students and their e-teachers of the exemption status of each student on an Exam Exemption Form. The Exam Exemption Form may be found on the ACCESS website (http://accessdl.state.al.us) under the Resources tab. Completed forms (without students' grades) should be faxed or e-mailed to e-teachers and support center prior to the day the school would like to schedule an ACCESS course exam.
- If a student fails to take the semester exam and was not exempt, the local school counselor, school administrator, or facilitator should immediately contact the e-teacher or regional support center staff to assist the student in rescheduling the exam as soon as possible [see also Work in Progress (WIP) policy].

GRADE REPORTING

ACCESS teachers are required to grade all assignments in a timely manner and enter numeric grades within the learning management system so that schools receive student grades in accordance with established ACCESS timelines. Grades for all students within the same class/section must be calculated using the same number of possible points per term to ensure consistency and equality. Support centers will supply teachers with specific information regarding grade reporting, procedures

to be followed, and deadlines for receipt of grades. To ensure confidentiality, grades are not to be transmitted through the use of facsimile (fax) or e-mail. ACCESS teachers should set up their grade books using the SDE grade book setup document as a guide. The SDE grades setup document can be found in the Content section of CAST (Connecting ACCESS Staff and Teachers).

Grades from an ACCESS VCI course section will be calculated following the policies of the sending teacher's school. The sending teacher will provide a copy of the grading policies and course syllabus to students and receiving schools at the beginning of the term in which a course is delivered.

All students in a WBI course section will be graded using the same grading scheme. The teacher will communicate the grading scheme and pacing schedule to the receiving schools and students via the learning management system at the beginning of the term in which a course is delivered.

Each ACCESS one-credit course is divided into two semesters or terms. Student grades are cumulative for each individual semester/term.

Numerical grades shall be assigned by the online teacher and accepted by the participating high school. Honor points, weighting, and other special considerations will be made, when appropriate, at the discretion of the local school administration [290-3-1-.02 (13) (d) 2 (f)].

At the end of each term/semester, numerical grades will be provided to students' schools for placement on official school records and distribution to students and parents or legal guardians in accordance with local policies. The local school may average the two semester/term grades if a course grade is needed.

WORK IN PROGRESS GRADES (WIP)

Students may be assigned a work in progress (WIP) grade upon the request of a school administrator or counselor. This request should be sent to the support center director. Students granted WIP status may continue working in a course, and teachers are expected to continue teaching the student. The removal of the WIP grade and close of the course for the student will follow LEA policies.

Before a teacher can post a zero for a semester/term exam or series of graded activities, the teacher must contact the school administrator (designee) and support center director for verification of one of the following:
1. Student was not exempt.
2. Student earned the zero(s).
3. Student is still working on the course and the school is requesting that a WIP be assigned.

COMMUNICATION

Teachers are expected to initiate and maintain regular contact with facilitators and students regarding student progress. It is the responsibility of the teacher to notify support center staff before the official drop date of any enrolled students who have never logged on, or of any students having sporadic logins or periods of inactivity. It is also the responsibility of the teacher to make on-site classroom facilitators and support center staff aware, in a timely manner, of any other period of course inactivity by students throughout the entire course.

WBI teachers are expected to log on to the learning management system at least once each school day throughout any term in which they are assigned a course to, at a minimum, respond to student e-mails, provide feedback on activities, grade assignments, monitor student participation, and create and post timely announcements. Teachers must monitor student log-in times and

discuss any areas of concern or irregularities with the facilitator, school administrator or designee. News items and events must also be posted to keep students on pace and facilitators well informed of course activity and assignments. WBI teachers will preview all activities, links, and quizzes in the learning management system before assigning them to students.

The teacher should report instances of students not being provided required textbooks or appropriate working technology to the support center staff in a timely manner.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND COPYRIGHT

Online content developed by ACCESS Distance Learning is the intellectual property of ACCESS Distance Learning. Intellectual property rights of online content developed by other parties that contract with ACCESS Distance Learning for distribution may belong to those parties, as specified in contractual agreements. To protect the integrity of the content and to preserve the rights of the parties funding the content development, only authorized persons are permitted to copy, print, or view the online content. With the exception of course descriptions and other materials released by ACCESS Distance Learning, the online course content may not be published, reproduced, discussed, or in any way distributed to or by other parties without the express permission of ACCESS Distance Learning.

No compensation or payment will be made to teachers for use of instructional materials submitted to the learning management system unless specifically addressed through contractual negotiations, as in "works made for hire," as defined in U. S. copyright law. If ACCESS Distance Learning contributes to the creation of a work, including such resources as facilities, equipment, software, or other assistance, ACCESS Distance Learning reserves the right to use and redistribute the work.

By uploading, posting, providing, or submitting original instructional materials to the learning management system, teachers grant ACCESS Distance Learning and all ACCESS teachers who are enrolled in the learning management system permission to use, copy, print, post, and transmit within the learning management system said submission(s) for instructional purposes. Non-educational or commercial use of another teacher's submission(s) is strictly prohibited.

By uploading, posting, providing, or submitting materials to the learning management system, teachers warrant that they own or control all rights to the materials, have obtained the necessary permission(s) to use the materials, or are permitted to use the materials under the guidelines of the TEACH Act and/or Fair Use. If copyrighted materials are found to be illegally posted in the learning management system, the teacher will be notified, and the material will be immediately removed from the learning management system by ACCESS Distance Learning.

TEACHER WORKLOAD

In order to maintain quality instruction, the number of one-credit student enrollments taught by an ACCESS teacher should not exceed forty (40) per academic year, excluding summer school. Any exceptions will be considered on an individual basis by support center and SDE staff.

CONTINUED EMPLOYMENT

ACCESS extends no guarantee of continuous employment. Teaching assignments are based on course needs and estimated course enrollments per term and therefore cannot be guaranteed.

PAY SCALES

Teacher pay will be tied to the number of participating students on the active roster at the end of the official drop date for each semester, trimester, and term. Prior to the drop date, teachers will report all inactive students to support center staff. Teachers will only be paid for course delivery to active, participating students (even if the teacher failed to report inactive students) in accordance with the Pay Scale. The Pay Timeline is determined by the individual support center.

Teacher contracts for one-credit courses will be set up in such a way that the teachers are under contract to teach the entire course, but the pay will be determined by the number of participating students in the class at the end of the drop period for each semester. Stipends to school systems sending VCI courses will be determined in the same manner. Though some

students may drop at the end of the first semester, others may add the course for the second semester due to transfers and other legitimate reasons.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Teachers will receive a list of students with disabilities who have either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan from their regional support center at the beginning of each term. This information should be kept confidential, and teachers must ensure that they meet all teacher responsibilities as outlined in these documents.

The following information is included in the Policy Manual for Students and outlines steps to be followed in the registration and instruction of special needs students in ACCESS Courses.
1. Prior to registration for an ACCESS course,

PAY SCALE

DELIVERY METHOD	TEACHER STATUS	E-TEACHER (PER STUDENT PER HALF CREDIT)
1. A. WBI taught outside regular school day (not counted as part of teacher's regular class load)	Employed by local school system	$150
B. Blended course not counted as part of teacher's regular class load	Employed by local school system	$150
2. WBI taught outside regular school day	Retired or not currently employed by local school system (May be employed by college or university)	$150
3. A. VCI taught as part of teacher's instructional duties (LEA assignment)	Employed by local school system	$ 75
B. Blended course taught as part of teacher's instructional duties (LEA assignment)	Employed by local school system	$ 75
4. VCI course taught during regular school day at support center	Retired or not currently employed by local school system (May be employed by college or university)	$150
5. VCI, WBI, blended courses delivered to students within teacher's local school system	Employed by local school system	None

Notes: (1) ACCESS pays the employer's portion of benefits for teachers (excluding insurance).

the counselor shall contact the student's case manager for a review of the educational needs of the student based on the requirements of the IEP or the 504 Plan.

2. If a distance learning course is determined to be appropriate for the student based on the IEP or 504 Plan, and the student takes such a course during the implementation period of the IEP or 504 Plan, the local school will be responsible for providing any supplementary aids and services as required in the IEP or 504 Plan that are not supported within the WBI or VCI environment and to maintain communication with the ACCESS teacher.

3. Counselors will work with the Special Education case manager to ensure that the IEP or 504 Plan is made available to the ACCESS teacher and support center director. The ACCESS teacher must be informed of his or her responsibilities for implementing the IEP or 504 Plan.

4. If an ACCESS course is taken by a student receiving special education services during the summer, or any time period not covered by the IEP, neither the local school nor ACCESS will be responsible for providing supplemental aids and services.

5. The ACCESS teacher and support center will maintain confidentiality with all personally identifiable educational records received by storing such records in a secure environment. At the end of the term, any personally identifiable educational records received by the ACCESS teacher or support center director will be shredded.

GENERAL POLICIES

CLASS SIZE LIMITS

Class size regulations shall be the same as for courses not taught via distance learning. ACCESS seeks to maintain a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:29 or 750 student contacts per week. In VCI classes, this includes students in both the sending and receiving sites. This guideline is designed to ensure that each teacher is able to respond adequately to student work and individual needs.

EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKS

Any ACCESS, support center, or school employee affiliated with the ACCESS Distance Learning program who has access to students must be fingerprinted and pass a background check as required by the Alabama Department of Education. This applies to employees with direct and unsupervised access and to employees with indirect access (such as helpdesk and other support center staff). Support center directors will maintain appropriate documentation for all their ACCESS employees. The Alabama Department of Education ACCESS office will maintain documentation for SDE ACCESS staff.

EXCEPTIONS

Unusual circumstances may warrant exceptions to certain regulations outlined in these guidelines. Exceptions generally will apply to individual students rather than to program requirements. Any exceptions will be subject to usual procedures for exemption through State Superintendent of Education approval.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

All grievances and/or disputes from students or parents will follow the LEA policies, state and federal laws, and the *Alabama Administrative Code*.

POLICIES FOR STUDENTS

NETIQUETTE/ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (AUP)

General Regulations

Internet access is required for students enrolled in ACCESS Distance Learning courses taught by both Web-based instruction (WBI) and videoconferencing instruction (VCI). The Internet and other online resources provided by ACCESS Distance Learning are intended to be used to support the instructional program and further student learning. ACCESS retains the right to monitor all classes, computer usage, and files for compliance with regulations and/or procedures.

Acceptable Use Agreement

Online learning resources, including the Internet, are to be used in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner in accordance with the mission of ACCESS Distance Learning. ACCESS cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information or the appropriateness of any material on the Internet. Therefore, a local AUP, signed by both the student and his or her parent or guardian, must be on file with the local school. This agreement shall specify user (student) responsibilities and shall indemnify the local school and the ACCESS program from any damages. By signing, the parent or guardian understands that ACCESS Distance Learning is not responsible for materials acquired by the student on the Internet, for violations of copyright, users' mistakes or negligence, or any costs incurred by the user.

User Obligations and Responsibilities

The use of e-mail is essential for communication between teachers and students. Students must use computers appropriately, agree to all rules of etiquette established by ACCESS, and sign a statement acknowledging their understanding and

acceptance of these rules. These will include the following:

- Students will use ACCESS Distance Learning and its resources only for purposes related to education. Commercial, political, and/or personal use unrelated to an educational purpose is strictly prohibited.
- Students will use computers with consideration and respect. They are prohibited from accessing, posting, submitting, publishing, or displaying harmful matter or material that is obscene, threatening, disruptive, or sexually explicit; that could be construed as harassment, disparagement, or cyber bullying of others (based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, or political beliefs); or that is intended to annoy, harass, intimidate, disrupt the operation of the program, or interfere with the rights of other students or ACCESS staff.
- Vandalism will result in the cancellation of user privileges. Vandalism includes the intentional uploading, downloading, or creating of computer viruses and/or any malicious attempt to harm or destroy materials, data, or equipment.
- Students will give credit to others whose work is used. Neither Internet content nor the work of WBI or VCI classmates will be cut, copied, or plagiarized. Students will abide by all copyright rules and regulations.
- Students will consider the social consequences of work completed and any programs written in conjunction with classroom assignments.
- Students will communicate via e-mail cautiously and with discretion. ACCESS Distance Learning reserves the right to monitor any online communication(s) for improper use. Electronic communications and downloaded material, including files deleted from a user's account, may be monitored or read by ACCESS officials or their designees. Student responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
  – Refrain from including information in e-mail messages that is not appropriate for printing or discussion in a public setting. Privacy cannot be assured in e-mail communications.
  – Send no unsolicited e-mail to distance learning classmates. All e-mail communication among classmates must be course related.
  – Protect the confidentiality of other users' mail or files. Students will not read the mail or files of others and shall not attempt to interfere with another user's ability to send or receive electronic mail, nor shall they attempt to delete, copy, modify, or forge the mail of others.
  – Keep personal account numbers, home addresses, and telephone numbers private and protect and keep secret any passwords issued for course access.
  – Report any communications that are inappropriate or which make them feel uncomfortable to the classroom teacher, facilitator, or other local school officials. Students should exercise caution in supplying information requested in e-mail communications, especially when such e-mails are from adults who ask for personal information, attempt to schedule meetings, or encourage personal contact.
- Students will accept responsibility for any charges incurred for phone usage, line costs, or usage fees incurred as a result of using the Internet for any purpose other than that required as a part of the course taken. ACCESS will assume no responsibility for such charges.
- The use of ACCESS Distance Learning resources is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in cancellation of those privileges. Students who fail to abide by ACCESS Distance Learning policies shall be subject to disciplinary action, revocation of the user account, and legal action as deemed appropriate.
- Students will abide by all local, state, and federal laws and policies related to Internet usage. ACCESS administrators will cooperate fully with local, state, and federal officials in the investigation of illegal activities conducted through the use of the Internet.

Students suspected of violating the Netiquette/Acceptable Use Policy will be notified of the suspected violation and given an opportunity to respond. If violations are confirmed, students may be removed from the course, assigned a failing grade, and subjected to other disciplinary and/or legal consequences as determined by local school policies and local, state, or federal authorities.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF ACCESS RESOURCES

All content and resources, digital and otherwise, provided through the ACCESS Distance Learning Program will be used in adherence to copyright laws and restrictions. Such materials include, but are not limited to, commercial software, copyrighted materials, and/or materials protected by trade secret.

Use of ACCESS resources in an inappropriate manner may result in legal action where appropriate based on local, state, and/or federal law.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Students will be responsible for their own behavior, will properly handle and use all classroom equipment, and will show respect for others in the classroom. Students will:
• Be attentive.
• Actively participate in the learning experience.
• Complete all assigned homework, projects, and assessments on time.
• Have zero tolerance for academic dishonesty.
• Follow all rules established by ACCESS, the school, and the delivery teacher.

In the event the actions of students cause harm to other students or ACCESS staff, the school administrator has the right and responsibility to discipline offenders. If a situation occurs where disciplinary action is required, the local school administration will follow local school board

policies as applicable. In most instances, the local school administration and ACCESS Support Center staff will jointly determine appropriate consequences, including the possible removal of a student's ACCESS privileges.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

ACCESS Distance Learning students must sign a commitment form attesting to academic integrity. A copy of this form is provided on the last page of the student policy manual. If a student fails to abide by these policies, the student may be removed from the course, assigned a failing grade, and subject to other consequences as determined by the local school system administrators.

All ACCESS Distance Learning teachers utilize a variety of technologies to check student work for authenticity. If an instructor confirms that a student has plagiarized work in any manner or used resources not permitted by the instructor, the student will be subject to consequences determined by the local school system.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Students will be required to create a unique password that provides access to their WBI courses. Protecting the confidentiality of the password is the responsibility of the student.

ACCESS will not publish or display the names of students, their images, or their coursework on its Web site, in videos, or in publications without the consent of the students and their parents (guardians).

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), ACCESS will allow access to student records only to those authorized. Authorized personnel include SDE staff, school system and local school professional

staff (principal or designee, teacher, facilitator, counselor), support center administrative staff, and others with a legitimate educational or legal interest in students' records.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

To enroll in an ACCESS Distance Learning course, students must meet one of the following criteria:
• Be currently enrolled in Grades 8-12 in an Alabama public high school.
• Be a special education student in a state correctional facility and registered with an Alabama public high school.

The SDE reserves the right to deny enrollment to students who have been expelled from previous courses due to misconduct or failure to abide by academic integrity or Internet acceptable use policies.

PREREQUISITES

Schools will ensure that students meet the prerequisite requirements for a distance learning course prior to enrolling a student into a course. Students not meeting the requirements will not be enrolled.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students shall complete all scheduled tests and labs requiring supervision during a regular class scheduled within the normal school day, except for related research/homework. The normal school day shall include night school, summer school, and other scheduled extended day periods as approved by the local school.

All ACCESS courses shall have an adult facilitator approved by the local school who has completed ACCESS professional development in online methodology and technical aspects of WBI and VCI instruction and who serves as a

liaison between ACCESS teachers and local students.

TRANSFER CREDIT

Grades for students taking an ACCESS course will be transferred in the same manner as those for any other course taken at the local school level. The receiving school will accept and record on the student's transcript the final term/semester grade assigned by the ACCESS teacher.

EXAM EXEMPTION

Students taking ACCESS Distance Learning courses will follow the semester/final exam exemption policies of their home schools. The school administrator (or designee) will make the final determination concerning student exemptions.

The following timeline is suggested:
• The school administrator, facilitator, or other designee will notify the e-teacher of the date and time of the school's semester or final examination schedule approximately seven (7) days prior to the administration of the ACCESS course exam.
• The teacher will complete the grading of all current student assignments, exams, quizzes, etc., so that an accurate and up-to-date report of grades is available in the learning management system at least five (5) days before the scheduled exam.
• Four (4) days before the scheduled term examination, under the direction of the local classroom facilitator, students will print, sign, and date their current grades from the course grades area in the learning management system. **The grade percentage at the time of printing will be the grade percentage used to determine exam exemption.** Please note that students may be responsible for additional assignments or may be allowed to submit

assignments that are late between the time of exemption determinations (4 days prior) and the term exam; therefore, in some situations, grades may change.

- Facilitators will provide the printed copies of students' grades to the school administrator (or designee). Upon receipt of the printed copies of students' grades, the school administrator (designee) will notify the students and their e-teachers of the exemption status of each student on an Exam Exemption Form. The Exam Exemption Form may be found on the ACCESS Web site (http://accessdl.state.al.us) under the Resources tab. Completed forms (without students' grades) should be faxed or e-mailed to e-teachers and support center prior to the day the school would like to schedule an ACCESS course exam.
- If a student fails to take the semester exam and was not exempt, the local school counselor, school administrator, or facilitator should immediately contact the e-teacher or regional support center staff to assist the student in rescheduling the exam as soon as possible.

GRADES

At the end of each term/semester, numerical grades will be provided to the student's school for placement on official school records and distribution to students and parents or legal guardians in accordance with local policies. Numerical grades shall be assigned by the online teacher and accepted by the participating high school. Honor points, weighting, and other special considerations will be made, when appropriate, at the discretion of the local school administration [290-3-1-.02 (13) (d) 2 (f)].

Grades from an ACCESS VCI course section will be calculated following the policies of the sending teacher's school. The sending teacher will provide a copy of the grading policies and course syllabus to students and receiving schools at the beginning of the term in which a course is delivered.

All students in a WBI course section will be graded using the same grading scheme. The teacher will communicate the grading scheme and pacing schedule to the receiving schools and students via the learning management system at the beginning of the term in which a course is delivered.

Each ACCESS one-credit course is divided into two semesters or terms. Student grades are cumulative for each individual semester/term. The local school may average the two grades if a course grade is needed.

DROPS/WITHDRAWALS

Students may drop a course within the timeline established by the SDE and posted on the ACCESS website without penalty, unless local school policy establishes an earlier date. Students will begin the drop/withdrawal process with the local school counselor during the open withdrawal period.

Following local policy, students who are enrolled in a one-credit course (traditional or block) and who ask to drop that course at the end of the first semester (or before the established drop date for the next semester of that course) will be allowed to do so without penalty. Students dropping a course under these circumstances will be issued the grade received for the first semester and counted as a withdrawal for the second semester.

Counselors or school administrators (designee) should discuss with the support center director all requests for withdrawals after the open withdrawal period to determine the best situation for each individual student. The ACCESS teacher will work with the school administrator (designee) to determine the status of the grade.

Students whose status is determined as "Withdrawn with Grades" will be assigned zeros for assignments not submitted before a final grade is calculated; students assigned a status of "Withdrawn without Grades" will not incur a grade penalty.

STUDENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION

Communication between ACCESS teachers and students is essential and must be frequent and ongoing. A variety of modes, including e-mail, telephone, discussion boards, Web conferencing, and other appropriate services or tools, may be used by teachers and students to communicate regarding course requirements, expectations, grading, and other issues related to course content and instruction.

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

The following policies are written for students with disabilities who have either an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Plan.

1. Prior to registration for an ACCESS course, the counselor shall contact the student's case manager for a review of the educational needs of the student based on the requirements of the IEP or the 504 Plan.
2. If a distance learning course is determined to be appropriate for the student based on the IEP or 504 Plan, and the student takes such a course through ACCESS during the implementation period of the IEP or 504 Plan, the local school will be responsible for providing any supplementary aids and services as required in the IEP or 504 Plan that are not supported within the Web-based environment and for maintaining communication with the ACCESS teacher.
3. Counselors will work with the Special Education case manager to ensure that the IEP or 504 Plan is made available to the ACCESS

teacher and support center director. The ACCESS teacher must be informed of his or her responsibilities for implementing the IEP or 504 Plan.
4. If an ACCESS course is taken by a student receiving special education services during the summer, or any time period not covered by the IEP, neither the local school nor ACCESS will be responsible for providing supplemental aids and services.
5. The ACCESS teacher and support center will maintain confidentiality with all personally identifiable educational records received by storing such records in a secure environment. At the end of the term, any personally identifiable educational records received by the ACCESS teacher or support center director will be shredded.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) COURSES

It is the school's responsibility to ensure that students meet all prerequisite requirements for an Advanced Placement course. Schools will also provide students with textbooks and any supplementary resources needed for these courses.

School administrators and/or counselors should make students aware of their option to take AP exams, inform them of available AP exam review materials, notify them of the date for the administration of each exam, and order and administer the exams in accordance with College Board policy.

HOMEBOUND STUDENTS

Students who (upon the recommendation of their physician) have been placed on homebound status by their local school system may participate in approved WBI courses upon request and notification to the SDE of students' homebound status by the local school system superintendent. Homebound students must

complete all graded activities (tests) in the presence of a facilitator provided by the local school system and meet the requirements identified in the *Alabama Administrative Code*. School systems will be required to submit documentation from the student's physician and an official exception request from the local school system superintendent to the State Superintendent of Education. If students are approved to receive ACCESS courses at home, it will be the responsibility of the school/school system to determine if adequate Internet access is available and provide a computer and any other equipment needed to ensure successful course delivery.

It is recommended that parents of homebound students attend training provided by the regional ACCESS Distance Learning support center when possible.

ON-SITE CLASSROOM FACILITATORS

Schools will provide facilitators to supervise and assist students. Local school systems shall develop policies to establish requirements for facilitators. At a minimum, facilitators must be adults approved by the local school who have completed professional development in online methodology and technical aspects of Web-based instruction through ACCESS and serve as liaisons to WBI and VCI teachers and providers. They must have passed mandatory fingerprinting and background checks, have basic computer and e-mail skills, and possess the ability to use a fax machine and a scanner. On-site classroom facilitators or paraprofessionals in Title I schools must be under the direct supervision of a certified teacher who is in close proximity to the distance learning classroom.

It is the responsibility of the local school administrator to assign personnel to monitor student behavior in the physical classroom as well as in the virtual classroom.

The responsibilities of the on-site classroom facilitator are as follows:
- Supervise and assist students.
- Monitor academic progress and student behavior in the physical classroom as well as in the virtual classroom.
- Communicate on a day-to-day basis with the e-teacher.
- For Web-based courses, log on to the learning management system each school day to view announcements and track assignments.
- Assist students with minor technology issues.
- Ensure that students remain on task and on pace.
- Ensure the integrity of students' work.
- Support the sending teacher.
- Take attendance and send absentee reports to teachers and school staff daily.
- Provide students with training on the use of e-mails, attaching documents to e-mails, and accessing WBI courses.
- Serve as a resource to the sending teacher.
- Report technical issues to support center staff as well as to the school and/or system technology coordinator.

TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER MATERIALS

It is the responsibility of receiving school systems to provide students with the required textbooks and ancillary materials needed for each distance learning class. When possible, the cost of CD and online texts will be built into course development cost at no expense to schools, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Textbooks and other course materials must be available on the starting date of each class. Local school systems having students enrolled in a distance learning course must adopt the designated textbook (print, online, or CD) at the local level and report this adoption to the Alabama Department of Education's textbook office.

A list of required textbooks for Web-based courses will be provided on the ACCESS Distance Learning website. Textbooks for videoconferencing courses will be determined by the sending school. Information regarding these textbooks will also be provided on the ACCESS Web site and updated as courses are revised or as course providers change.

Supplementary materials may be required for some courses. A list of such materials is available to schools and students at http://accessdl.state.al.us under the "Courses" tab in the "WBI/VCI Course Descriptions" category from the drop-down menu. Schools will be responsible for costs associated with these additional resources. Check the course information available at the same Web address for more information.

Novels required for English classes (if not available in the local school library) will be considered the responsibility of the student.

LAB SAFETY

Labs are required for all science courses. Some of these may be virtual labs; others will be hands-on. Safety precautions must be implemented and adequate facilities must be provided for implementations of programs

prescribed by SDE Bulletin(s) [290-3-1-.02-(1)(a)]. The local school will be responsible for implementing all safety precautions, providing adequate facilities, securing the lab facilitator, and providing all required laboratory supplies and equipment for hands-on labs.

TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT

Schools will provide the hardware, software, and other equipment needed by students in distance learning classes. See the ACCESS Distance Learning web (http://accessdl.state.al.us) for more information and a complete list of recommended equipment and software specifications.

Sending and receiving schools will provide students enrolled in both WBI and VCI courses with laptops/computers during the scheduled class time.

The local school will also provide technology support for equipment and ensure that software required in ACCESS courses is available to students. Counselors will notify technology support of software downloads as listed in the ACCESS course descriptions found under the "Courses" tab on the ACCESS website (http://accessdl.state.al.us).