Welcome

Online Advising Module for First Time In College Students

ALAMO COLLEGES

SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE

Introduction to the Alamo Colleges Educational Services (ACES)

As an ACES user, you will have access to register for classes, financial aid information, email, library resources, and online courses. ACES will also provide you with the latest information of events and important news taking place within your college. From making an official transcript request when the time comes to transfer, to viewing your final grades for the semester

Student Email

You as an Alamo Colleges student have access to your own student email account. Students will have the ability to access their email using their mobile devices such as your iPhone, Windows Mobile phone, Blackberry and any other type of phone that supports Exchange, POP, or IMAP. Take full advantage of IM, voice, and video chat features included to all Alamo College Students. You can also create workspaces to share with other students if you find yourself working on a group project.

Your Alamo Colleges email account is the Official form of communication between SAC and the Student. For more information on your student email account please click on Student Email

My Courses Tab

Once registered for your desired courses, this tab titled My Courses, will show you what courses you are registered for, as well as show previous semester courses you may have taken in semesters past. The drop down menu will allow you to change to different semesters showing previous courses taken.

When your courses are displayed it will give you the course name, number and corresponding professor teaching your course, along with their email address. This is also how you will access any course you choose to take online. Clicking on the course will then launch San Antonio College **Canvas**.

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My Page Tab

This tab serves as a quick link and easy access to your Academic Profile, Personal Information, Registration Tools, Alamo GPS-Degree Works, Financial Aid information, Account Balance and Statement.

Alamo Colleges Tabs

After viewing you're My Courses tab, you will then see a row of tabs indicating all the other campuses within the Alamo College School District. Clicking each tab will provide you with information of that particular college.

This is a great way to become more familiar with the other colleges in the Alamo College District.

My Library

This tab allows you to search different library databases of all the Alamo College district campuses. You will also have contact information for each library along with an integrated search field to search the database from within ACES.

My Resources

The My Resources tab will provide you with information for tech support, emergency services as well as college health centers information. This is a great resource to keep in mind when you need to have your system password reset, or need to get in contact with our DPS dispatch services.

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Student Records

As briefly mentioned, you have access to all of your student records you accumulate as a student at the Alamo Colleges. When you are ready to transfer you may request your transcripts electronically online through your ACES account. Please allow 15 to 20 days for processing of all transcript requests. Final grades are also viewed through your ACES account. If you are wanting to see your grades after your final exams are completed, professors will post grades typically a week after finals, and you may view them via your ACES account

One important feature you will want to familiarize yourself with is the ability to view all of your holds that may prevent you from registering. It is very important you check on your holds periodically, especially before a registration period begins. Applying for your degree and graduation is also one of the many actions you can complete online via ACES. As you track your progress with an academic advisor, and the time comes to graduate, you will apply online through ACES, as well as meet one last time with an academic advisor.

What is a College Catalog?

The college catalog is a comprehensive guide containing information about degree program requirements, course descriptions, tuition, academic calendar, academic policies and procedures, and much more. It is a valuable planning tool for degree completion. At San Antonio College (SAC), the college catalog is available exclusively online at Course Catalog (SAC)

The college catalog is published annually each academic year. The academic year begins with the fall semester and continues through the following spring and summer semesters. For example, the 2012-13 academic year includes the fall 2012, spring 2013, and summer 2013 semesters. You will be placed under the catalog in effect the academic year in which you first attend SAC. If you first enroll at SAC in spring 2013, you will follow the guidelines of the 2012-13 college catalogs. If you took dual credit coursework in high school through SAC and are not sure which catalog year you should be following, you should consult with an academic advisor.

It is important to know which catalog year you are following because degree program requirements, including the core curriculum selection list, can change from one catalog year to the next. If you do not know which catalog year you should be following, you may take unnecessary classes and delay degree completion.

Your college catalog is good for five years. If you do not complete your degree program requirements within this timeframe, you will need to visit with an academic advisor to discuss your options.

The Core Curriculum

All academic degrees offered by Texas public colleges and universities include a core curriculum, sometimes referred to as “the core” or “basics,” consisting of general education courses designed to provide students with a solid academic foundation and to facilitate the transfer of credit between Texas public institutions of higher education. The Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) academic degrees offered by San Antonio College (SAC) include a core curriculum component consisting of 42 semester credit hours.

The core curriculum is divided into ten categories common across the Alamo Colleges including Communication, Additional Communications, Mathematics, Natural Science, Humanities, Additional Humanities, Visual/Performing Arts, History, Government, and Social/Behavioral Sciences (total 42 hours). Individual institutions may also select from five subcategories to complete their core curriculum. Each core course is assigned a core curriculum component number used by all Texas public institutions of higher education to identify coursework that satisfies core curriculum requirements.

If you complete SAC’s entire 42-hour core curriculum prior to transferring to another Texas public institution of higher education, you will be core complete at that institution as well, even if their core is different, unless the receiving institution’s core curriculum is longer than SAC’s core. In other words, if you complete the core at SAC, it should transfer as a block of credit. Please note that if you choose a major that requires you to take specific coursework within the core curriculum, major requirements take priority over the core. For example, if you are following the AA-Criminal Justice degree plan, you must specifically take ECON 2301 to fulfill the Social/Behavioral Sciences core requirement, as indicated on that particular degree plan.

Core Curriculum Cont…..

If you transfer from SAC to another Texas public college or university prior to completing the SAC core curriculum, you will receive credit towards the receiving institution's core for each core course you successfully complete at SAC, but you may be required to satisfy the remaining core curriculum requirements of the receiving institution.

San Antonio College also offers an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) or "workforce" degree. Workforce degrees contain approximately 15 semester credit hours of core curriculum coursework. The AAS degree plan will either specify particular core courses you must take, or will indicate that you may choose from the core curriculum selection list. If you follow an AAS workforce degree plan, you are not considered core complete when you transfer.

If you know what field of study you plan to major in and which Texas College or university you plan to transfer to, you may want to consider following a transfer plan if available. Transfer plans are prepared by the senior institutions and list specific coursework you may take at SAC that will apply to your major at that institution. If you follow the curriculum provided on the transfer plan, there will be no loss of credit when you transfer to that particular institution. Do check with an academic advisor to determine if you need to complete a Joint Admission Agreement form to lock into the transfer plan.

For more information about the Core Curriculum, go to State Core and Degree Information

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Course Descriptions

A course description is a brief summary of a course and can be found in the college catalog. A course description includes the course prefix, course code, keyword or phrase, prerequisites, corequisites, basic skills prerequisites, a summary of the course content, and the semester-hour value (including lecture and laboratory hours). Course descriptions are very useful in determining whether you are eligible to enroll in a particular course. See the sample course description (below) which includes an explanation of each of its components.

Sample Course Description: PHYS 1101 - General Physics I Lab

Prerequisites: MATH 2412 or MATH 1314 and department permission

Co-requisite: PHYS 1301

Writing Basic Skills Prerequisite: ENGL 0301

Reading Basic Skills Prerequisite: READ 0303

Laboratory experience for students enrolled in PHYS 1301. The topics include motion, forces, conservation of energy, momentum, fluids, wave motion and heat.

Semester Hours: (1-0-3)

Components of Course Description

Course Prefix:
A four-letter abbreviation for the course subject. The prefix for Physics is PHYS.

Course Code:
A course code is a four-digit number containing information about the course. In the sample course description, the course code is 1101.

The first digit indicates of the course code indicates the level of the course:
0= Developmental
1= Freshman
2= Sophomore

PHYS 1101 is a freshman-level course. San Antonio College does not offer junior or senior level courses.
The second digit indicates the number of semester credit hours, in this case 1.
PHYS 1101 is a one-semester credit hour course.
The third and fourth digits are for departmental sequencing purposes.

Keyword or Phrase:
The title of the course. The title of PHYS 1101 is General Physics I Lab.

Prerequisite:
A course that must be successfully completed prior to taking a more advanced-level course. Some prerequisites specify a minimum grade requirement. The prerequisite for PHYS 1101 is MATH 2412 or MATH 1314 and department permission.

Components of Course Description

Corequisite:

A course that must be taken at the same time as another course. The corequisite for PHYS 1101 is PHYS 1301.

Basic Skills Prerequisites:

The level of development that must be successfully completed prior to taking a particular course; in this case the basic skills prerequisites for PHYS 1101 are ENGL 0301 and READ 0303. Note - if you place above a basic skills prerequisite based on your test scores, you do not need to complete the course. For example, if you place at college-level Reading, you do not need.

Summary:

A brief description of the course content. The summary for PHYS 1101 is "laboratory experience for students enrolled in PHYS 1301. The topics include motion, forces, conservation of energy, momentum, fluids, wave motion and heat."

Semester Hour Value:

Three numbers within parentheses that indicate the semester-hour value of a course, in this case (1-0-3).

The first number indicates the number of semester credit hours a course is worth.

The second number indicates the number of lecture hours per week the class meets.

The third number indicates the number of laboratory hours per week the course meets. The semester-hour value (1-0-3) indicates that PHYS 1101 is a one-semester credit hour course that does not meet for lecture, but does meet for 3 laboratory hours per week.

Career Advising

Many students come into college feeling like they have to have their whole lives already planned. They feel the pressure of needing to know their career and major before they ever set foot in a college classroom. Thinking about a career, choosing a major, and getting an education are what college is all about. Yes, there are some students who arrive on campus knowing what they want to major in, but the majority of students do not know, and that is okay. There is no need to rush into a decision about your major—don't panic.

And guess what? The majority of college and university students change their major at least once; while others change their major several times over the course of their college career.

Discovering your ideal career is a journey. Don't fall into the trap of deciding on a college major before you know your career goal. This is an important decision. Make sure you spend some time thinking about it. Don't be discouraged if you still don't know your career goal by the end of your first semester in college. Your goal should be narrowing your focus from all possible careers to a few areas that you can then explore in greater depth.

Career exploration is the process of finding your ideal major or career. Visit your Career Services department on campus to engage in a career assessment.

Career Advising

Career assessments can help students understand their skills, interests, personality traits, work values, and how these relate to majors and jobs.

"What career would suit me best?" How many times have you asked yourself this question? It is a common question and a good one. There are three important points to address when asking the question, “What career is right for me?”

1) Your Interests. What are your interests or hobbies? What is your passion? What types of jobs or careers appeal to you? Don’t be lured into a job solely because of the title, status, or pay, or you may not be happy. Why be unhappy in a job that’s not a good fit if there are career opportunities better suited to someone with your particular talents and interests?

2) Your Abilities. What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? What kind of skills do you have? You can begin this self-examination by looking at the courses you took in high school. What were your best subjects? Is there a pattern there? What kinds of extracurricular activities did you participate in while in high school? What kinds of things did you learn from part-time or summer jobs?

3) Your Values. What do you value? Some people value family and the ability to schedule work around life, while others may value the need to work around certain types of people. Other examples of values include: helping society, working under pressure, group affiliations, stability, security, status, and working alone or with groups. Whatever your values and ideals, it is important to find a career that reinforces them.

Schedule Building Strategies

Time Management Strategy - There are many factors to take into consideration when deciding how many classes to take each semester. Do you work? If so, how many hours per week? Do you have a family? Are you involved in sports, church, or other personal activities? What about chores? How much sleep do you need? There are 168 hours in a week. What is your ideal course load? It is better to maintain a healthy grade point average than to complete your degree program quickly. Don't sacrifice quality for quantity.

School - Let's start by determining how many hours per week you will need to attend class and do homework. *The rule of thumb in college is for every one hour you spend in class, you should plan on spending two hours a week outside of class on homework*. For example, if you enroll in 13 semester credit hours, you should plan on spending approximately 13 hours a week in class and 26 hours a week outside of class on homework, for a total of approximately 39 hours per week. If 40 hours a week is the definition of a fulltime job, being a fulltime student is like having a fulltime job.

Work - Do you plan on working while you are attending college? If so, how many hours per week? Based on the number of hours a week you plan on working, the following course loads are recommended:

WORK (hours/week)	SCHOOL (course load)
40 hours (full time)	6 hours (1/2 time)
30 hours (part time)	9 hours (3/4 time)
20 hours (part time)	12 hours (full time)
10 hours (weekend, etc.)	12+ hours (full time)

We have found that these recommended course loads allow students to effectively balance work and personal activities, and still devote adequate time to their studies.

Schedule Building Strategies

According to the Texas Higher Education Board (THECB), students should not enroll for more semester credit hours than there are weeks in the semester/session. If you simultaneously enroll in sessions of different lengths, you may enroll in a maximum number of credit hours equal to the number of weeks in the longest session.

Enrollment Status - The Fall and Spring semesters include a 16-week (Regular) session, 14-week (Start II) session, an 8 week session at the beginning of the semester (Flex I), and a second 8-week session that begins mid-semester (Flex II). During the Fall and Spring semesters, you are considered a full-time student if you are enrolled in a minimum of 12 semester credit hours, and a half-time student if you are enrolled in six to 11 hours. The maximum course load you may enroll in during the Fall and Spring semesters is 18 credit hours.

The Summer semester includes a 3-week Maymester, a 6-week and an 8-week session during early Summer (Summer I), and a second 6-week session in late Summer (Summer II). During the Summer semester, you are considered a full-time student if you are enrolled in six hours during a session, and a half-time student if you are enrolled in three to five hours during a session. The maximum course load you may enroll in for the entire Summer semester is 17 credit hours.

Given that this is your first semester in college, we recommend that you refrain from enrolling in the maximum numbers of credit hours allowable until you get a feel for how you personally handle the challenges and rigors of college-level coursework.

Accelerated Courses - You should know that courses scheduled to meet fewer than 16 weeks still cover 16 weeks of material, but in an accelerated format. This includes Flex I, Start II, and Flex II courses during the Fall and Spring semesters, and all Summer courses. Such courses meet more often and/or for a longer period of time, are faster paced, and have more homework. Because you are covering 16 weeks of material in half the time or less, you are doing double the amount of work or more. For this reason, one 3-hour course taken during a Flex or accelerated session is considered half-time enrollment academically because it feels like two courses in terms of workload. Likewise, if you take two 3-hour courses taken during a Flex or accelerated session, it is considered full-time enrollment because it feels like four courses in terms of workload. The exception is the Maymester, in which one three-hour course is considered full time enrollment.

Please go to http://mysaccatalog.alamo.edu to learn more about course load requirements.

Course Balancing Strategy - In addition to balancing school, work, and personal activities, you should also balance the courses you take in terms of basic skills when planning your course schedule. *It's a good idea to enroll in a mix of courses so you aren't overwhelmed by any one basic skill*:

Courses

Type of Course	Basic Skill
English Courses	Writing Intensive
Math & Natural Science Courses	Analytical or Problem Solving
Humanities/History/Government/ Social & Behavioral Science Courses	Reading Intensive and Writing
Other Core Courses; Coursework for Major Varies	

A balanced course schedule in terms of basic skills for a full-time student might include ENGL, MATH, HIST, and a Visual/Performing Arts core course.

Instructional Delivery Methods - At the Alamo Colleges, a student can take advantage of different delivery methods for courses.

Course Formats

Internet - Many SAC courses are offered online. Internet courses are ideal for students who may have difficulty traveling to campus due to schedule, work, childcare, or transportation issues. In Internet courses, students receive instruction and complete assignments by logging in to an online classroom. Although there are no requirements to visit the campus on a regular basis, students may be required to come to campus for an orientation, exams, or labs.

Hybrid - Hybrid classes combine the traditional on-campus class meeting with online instruction. Students are required to attend meetings on-campus during the dates and times listed. However, at least half of the course content is delivered online. Hybrid courses are ideal for students who need flexibility in their schedules, yet still enjoy face-to-face exchanges with faculty and students.

Linked or Co-taught - In keeping with a commitment to synergy and community, SAC offers several forms of learning communities. Learning communities enhance opportunities for collaboration by engaging students in multidisciplinary environments and creating a forum for teachers and learners to share their experiences and ideas. These courses combine classes from two different disciplines and are team-taught by two teachers. Students earn credit for both classes.

Off-Campus - SAC offers select courses at Off Campus Sites throughout San Antonio.

Holds

Academic Holds preventing the release of official Alamo Colleges' transcripts will be placed on students' records until all admissions requirements are met. Academic Holds result when a student does not provide all official transcripts from all institutions attended or does not comply with the Alamo Colleges' academic policies, such as failing to maintain a 2.0 GPA. Lack of compliance results in delayed registration. Academic Holds will be placed on students' records to ensure that academic advising/counseling is obtained whenever necessary. Academic holds prevent the release of official Alamo College transcripts and delay registration. Academic holds result when students:

a. Do not comply with the admission requirements
b. Do not provide all official transcripts
c. Do not comply with academic policy
d. Are required to consult an advisor

To view your student account and see if you have any holds preventing you from registering, log into your ACES account and click on the student web services tab. Then chose the student records link, and lastly view holds.

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Student Development

Student Development (SDEV) courses offer techniques in life-long learning, creative and critical thinking, time management, test and note taking, studying, career planning, and building lasting relationships. Students who complete SDEV courses have a proven record of higher retention and persistence in college. A variety of SDEV courses are offered to fit specific student needs.

SDEV College Success is for the new student transitioning to college. Course topics include, but are not limited to, college resources, time management, note-taking, degree plans and transfer strategies, campus culture, career exploration, and college policies and procedures. Familiarization with these topics contributes to a student's personal and academic success.

Entering students with fewer than 15 college semester credit hours are required to successfully complete SDEV College Success during their first semester of enrollment. Dual Credit hours are not counted as college credit hours for this purpose.

If you do not successfully complete SDEV College Success during your first semester, you will be required to re-enroll in the course the following semester. Three-peat tuition will apply on a third (3) enrollment.

If a registration hold is placed on your record because you never enrolled in SDEV, were dropped from SDEV due to nonpayment, or enrolled in SDEV but did not successfully complete the course, you will need to contact Advising Services for information on steps you need to take to have this hold lifted.

How to Register

Now that you have planned out what courses to take based on your schedule, it is now time for you to register for your courses. The following steps will teach you how to do just that.

1. Login to ACES portal https://aces.alamo.edu with your ACES ID and password (If you do not have your ACES ID and password, Login to ACES and follow the instructions.)
2. Select Student.
3. Select Web Services.
4. Select Student and Financial Aid.
5. Select Registration.
6. Select Add or Drop Classes.
7. Select a Term and Submit.
8. Select Class Search.

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Registration Cont…

Select the Subject you are looking for. You can choose to enter a college, location/attribute type, course number, time and/or day. NOTE: The location/attribute type option allows you to pick alternate locations like a SAC course being held at Northeast Lakeview College (NLC).

10. Enter your information then select Class Search at the bottom. This returns a list of all courses meeting the criteria you entered. Courses you are eligible to register for will have a check box available to you. Select the course you want by checking the box next to that section.

Be aware: Classes listed at NLC are on Kitty Hawk Road in Universal City, TX, and notat the San Antonio College campus on San Pedro Ave.

Classes listed at CTTC are held at the Central Texas Technology Center in New Braunfels, not at SAC.

11. Check the appropriate class, scroll to the bottom and select Register.

12.You will be taken back to your schedule to view it with the new class added. If there were any errors or holds (pre-requisite, co-requisite, other restrictions), the error/hold would display with your schedule and the course will not be added.

Repeat steps 7-12 to add additional classes.

To Drop classes from your schedule, click the drop down menu beside the course you wish to drop and select **Web Dropped Prior to Term**.

At the bottom, select Submit Changes and the course will be removed from your schedule.

How to Change Your Schedule After You've Initially Registered

A student's schedule can be changed right up until the semester begins, but a student can't add into classes that are full or have already met. If you have a college schedule, you may have had a preference in coursework, but what you are paying for are a certain amount of credits. If you had already paid your tuition and wanted to switch classes, as long as you add/drop the same amount of credits, no money would need to exchange hands. You would add/drop classes in ACES the same way that we described in Module 6. If you do change the amount of credit hours that you initially had, you would want to check with your student account to determine if you needed to pay additional tuition and fees or were going to receive a refund. If you are receiving financial aid, it is a good idea to check with them how adding and/or dropping classes would affect your financial aid. Keep in mind, if you make changes after the semester begins, you should discuss with an advisor what sort of implications would be associated with your account by adding/dropping classes after the semester has begun.

Cost and Payment Information

Tuition rates at SAC are approximately one-fourth (1/4) the cost of larger public universities and as much as one-fifteenth (1/15) the cost of private universities in San Antonio. As mentioned above, your tuition rate is calculated and determined by your residence status. For a typical Bexar County resident student, attending as a full-time student (12 credit hours or more), your tuition is approximately eight hundred dollars ($800) per semester not including books and other fees (credit hours and other fees will be covered later in other modules).

Please go to Tuition and Fees to learn about the current tuition rates.

Tuition costs and payments can all be taken care of by logging into your student ACES account. Once you log in to ACES, you will want to navigate to your "***student tab"***. After clicking on the "***student tab***", directly below you will see a link for "***Web Services***". This will bring up your student web services, which gives you the options of ***Personal Information*** or***Student & Financial Aid***. Choose the ***Student & Financial Aid*** tab and then click on the Student Account tab. Once here you will find different options that pertain to your student account.

To make a payment simply choose the ***"Make a payment***" link and follow the steps outlined.

To see how much your tuition total is, choose the ***"Account Summary by Term***" option.

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Virtual Business Office

The portal where you will log in to pay for courses is your student ACES account. However once logged in, you will launch the Virtual Business Office. It is in the Virtual Business Office where you can:

- Pay your tuition in full
- Set up an Installment Plan (requires a fee)
- Set up direct deposit/Electronic Refund account
- Set up Alamo Colleges Market Place Mall (Testing fees, Parking Permits)

In the Virtual Business Office, paying for your tuition in full or installment plan, allows you to use Credit Cards (Visa, MasterCard), or Web check. Visiting the Business Office will give you more information on business office services they offer.

Payment Deadlines

It is very important you make yourself aware of the different payment deadlines. These deadlines will depend on the date you registered for courses. Payment deadlines will be posted on Payment Deadlines as well as in and around the college campus. You may also visit the Business Office to view the updated payment deadlines for each semester.

What happens if I do not pay by my deadline?

If you are not able to pay for your tuition balance in full, or set up a payment plan, your registered courses will be dropped due to non-payment and will result in you no longer being enrolled in college courses. You will then have to re-register for courses, whether you are able to find your exact courses that you were previously registered for, may or may not occur.

(*Remember if you are relying on Financial Aid to pay for your courses, you will want to stop by the Financial Aid office in the Fletcher Administration Center to ensure your financial aid is available and paying for your courses.* ***DO NOT*** *just apply for financial aid and not check your status, as your courses may not be paid for automatically)*

Mandatory Quiz/Hours of Operation

Students must complete and submit the Quiz found on the following link: New Student Advising Online Quiz in order to receive credit for the Online advising module.

You must include your Name and Banner ID.

Once the quiz is completed, student must wait 24 hours before proceeding to the next step, which is meeting with an Advisor in the Counseling and Advising Department in the Moody Learning Center 1st floor. Students taken on a walk-in basis. Click on the following for our Hours of Operation.

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