

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Georgia Virtual School Program?

The Georgia Virtual School Program offers online courses for students state-wide. Students can take an entire course, from any Internet-connected computer, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

During the fall and spring semesters, students may take courses through either the FTE funded program or through the tuition-based, after school program. For more information about which program fits your student, please contact your local school if you are a public or private school student or your local Education Technology Training Center (ETTC) if you are a home school student.

### Am I the type of student who can learn online?

Students who choose to participate in online courses need to examine their personal skills and aptitudes for taking a class online. The following attributes will greatly contribute to a student's success:

- Self-motivation - Students can direct their own learning environment and methods to fulfill course requirements and achieve individual academic success.
- Independent learner - The online environment enables students to learn at their own pace, relieving the stress of feeling rushed or pressured and providing enjoyment in the learning process.
- Computer literate - Although it is not necessary to have advanced computer skills, students should possess a working knowledge of electronic email as well as basic keyboarding skills.
- Efficient time manager - Students must be able to organize and plan their own best time to learn. There is no one best time for everyone, but the key to learning is to make the time to learn.
- Effective written communication skills - Students must use electronic email to communicate with their peers as well as the instructors. The ability to write clearly to communicate ideas and assignments is essential. This method provides the learner with rapid feedback as well as a means to inform instructors of any concerns or problems that they may be experiencing.
- Personal commitment - Since there are no bells that begin and end classes, students must have a strong desire to learn and achieve knowledge and skills via online courses. Making a commitment to learn in this manner is a very personal decision and requires a strong commitment to perform in order to achieve academic success.

### What are the technical requirements?

1. Computer Access. You must have regular access to a computer with reliable Internet service.
2. Internet Service Provider (ISP). An ISP is a company that provides you with the software and access necessary for getting onto the Internet. You will need reliable Internet access to take your courses.
3. Email Account. Your email address is established when you sign up with an ISP or you can choose to use a free email service like Yahoo or Hotmail. Check with your ISP if you do not know your email address. Special characters can cause problems with some systems that make it difficult to reach the intended mailbox. We suggest that you do not use special characters, for example, +, &, \$, etc., in your email address.
4. Java Capable Browser. We support Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 and 6.0 for Windows and Internet Explorer 5.1 through 5.2 for Macintosh. Netscape Communicator 6.2 and 7.1 for Windows and Netscape Communicator 7.1 and Safari 1.x for Macintosh, are also supported.

### Do I have a real teacher?

Yes, a highly qualified, certified teacher will be your instructor for the course(s). You will communicate with them via the course, email, and phone. Remember, they could be located anywhere.

### When are classes offered?

Classes are offered during three semesters each year: fall, spring and summer. For a complete listing of class schedules and semester dates, please visit our web site at [www.GAVirtualSchool.org](http://www.GAVirtualSchool.org).

### What classes are offered?

Students can choose from over 75 courses. Courses cover all core curriculum, as well as business, world languages, health, and test preparation electives. AP courses are also offered. For a complete list of available courses, visit the web site at [www.GAVirtualSchool.org](http://www.GAVirtualSchool.org).

### How many courses can students take?

For the FTE funded model, students may take up to 1.0 Carnegie unit of courses per semester during the fall and spring if enrolled as a part of their regular school day schedule. This may be comprised of two .5 credit courses or one 1.0 (block) credit course. In addition to this, students can take up to 1.0 Carnegie unit of courses for tuition during the fall, spring, and summer semesters which are taken in addition to their regular school day schedule. However, students should consult with their counselors, parents, and local Georgia Virtual School facilitators to determine the number of classes they should take online.

### **Is there an orientation session for online courses?**

Yes, students will work through a short orientation course at the beginning of the course(s) to familiarize them with the technical aspects of taking an online course and the expectations and guidelines of the Georgia Virtual School Program.

### **How much time is involved in taking an online course?**

Students need to plan on spending 6 - 10 hours a week per .5 Carnegie unit course during fall and spring semesters and 15 – 20 hours a week per .5 Carnegie unit course during the summer semester. While students have the flexibility of participating in courses anywhere, from any Internet-connected computer, they are required to log in and turn in assignments daily.

### **Is there a cost for courses?**

If public, private, or home school students enroll in online Georgia Virtual School Program's courses as a part of their regular daily class schedules, they may be eligible for FTE-funded seats during fall and spring semesters. Although these seats are at no cost to the students, these seats are limited and approval for them rests with the students' local approvers.

Summer and supplemental courses taken in addition to the regular school day are \$300 per .5 Carnegie unit course or \$600 per 1.0 Carnegie unit course.

### **Do I need to physically sit in a school building to take a class?**

Local schools or districts will decide the attendance policy for students enrolled in Georgia Virtual School Program's courses as part of their regular daily class schedule. Check with your local facilitator and/or counselor to see if you are required to be present at your school or if you may take the course off-campus. If you are taking courses during the summer or in addition to your daily class schedule, you do not have to be in a school building to take Georgia Virtual School Program's courses.

### **How do I register for courses?**

Students may register online for courses at [www.GAVirtualSchool.org](http://www.GAVirtualSchool.org). However, before students are actually enrolled in their courses, students' choices must be approved through a local approver. For public and private school students, this approver is housed at their local schools. For home school students, this approver is located at their regional ETTCs.

### **Now that I have registered, what do I do next?**

You will receive an email from the Georgia Virtual School Program's registration system acknowledging your particular course(s) requests. However, registration will be pending until your local approver approves your course. Once approved, you will be prompted to pay for your course (if applicable). Once payment is received or if you are registered and approved for a FTE-funded seat, you will receive an email providing you with your ID, login, course, and beginning class date.

### **Will I have a local person to contact with questions about the course or problems I am encountering?**

Yes, each public and private school with students enrolled in the Georgia Virtual School Program will have a staff member assigned to work as a local facilitator to help answer your questions, solve your problems, and check to make sure you are completing your work.

Home school students will have a staff member at their regional Educational Technology Training Center (ETTC) assigned as their facilitator.

### **What is the structure of a course?**

Your teacher will contact you via email and post announcements on the homepage of your course(s). All course work will be delivered and completed via the Internet. If you are in a course that requires an End-of-Course Test, your local facilitator will contact you with information about date and time.

### **How will final exams, End-of-Course Tests, and other standardized tests be administered?**

At the conclusion of the semester, final exams will be given electronically through the course platform. For public school students, End-of-Course Tests and other standardized tests will be scheduled by their local school facilitators. For private and home school students, End-of-Course Tests and other standardized tests will be scheduled by their facilitators at their regional ETTCs.

### **Can I audit a class?**

Yes, a student can audit a class, but must pay the appropriate tuition to do so. Tuition costs \$300 per .5 Carnegie unit course or \$600 per block, 1.0 Carnegie unit, course.

### **What if I want to withdraw from a class?**

Students enrolled in FTE-funded seats will have up to 10 days from their session start dates to drop courses. Drops must be initiated and approved by students' facilitators. Students will then receive notification of drop, approval or denial via email.

Students enrolled in tuition-funded seats can drop courses up to 5 days before the end of their course sessions. However, as with FTE-funded seats, these drops must be initiated and approved by the students' facilitators. Also, no refunds will be given after the classes have started. Refunds are subject to a \$25 administrative processing fee.

## **I have more questions.**

### **Where can I find answers?**

All information regarding the Georgia Virtual School Program, including course offerings and registration procedures, can be found at [www.GAVirtualSchool.org](http://www.GAVirtualSchool.org). You may also contact us at [GAVirtualSchool@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:GAVirtualSchool@doe.k12.ga.us).

**Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools**  
*We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.*

[www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)

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