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# GSST New Student Orientation

## Frequently Asked Questions

Below, you will find a compilation of frequently asked questions that arise during the New Student Orientations. Should you have any further inquiries, we kindly encourage you to reach out to a [faculty member](#) via email for assistance.

### General

- Program

- How do you know if you have a summer assignment?

Juniors who intend to enroll in PreCalculus or Calculus at GSST will be required to complete a math summer assignment through ALEKS, an online platform. Additionally, students in the engineering strand will have an additional summer assignment, which can be accessed ([here](#)). It is important to note that there is no summer assignment for Advanced Chemical Analysis.

- How do the course grades impact the high school GPA? Are grades weighted on a 5.0 scale for high school GPA purposes?

How GSST classes are weighted is dependent upon your school district. You will need to ask your guidance counselor how they weigh the GSST classes.

- How many students are in each strand?

On average, each strand accommodates a total of 36 students across the morning and afternoon sessions.

- Where do families access GSST information?

For detailed information regarding the GSST program, interested families are advised to reach out to their respective home school counselor.

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Additionally, families are encouraged to visit the [GSST website](#) and register for the [Prospective Student Newsletter](#) to stay updated on program-related news and updates.

- Dual Enrollment

- Will this program require payment due to enrollment in college classes?

Currently, there are no fees for Virginia Peninsula Community College (VPCC) dual enrolled courses but that could change in the future. Course approval and fees are determined by VPCC and the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).

- What are the benefits of dual enrolled courses?

Please refer to the [Transfer Virginia Dual Enrollment Student Guide](#) for more detailed information. [Transfer Virginia Dual Enrollment Student Guide](#)

- Will we receive our ID numbers from VPCC when we come on site for the VPT?

After completing the VPCC application, you will be assigned an ID number. We will also have a representative from VPCC at the testing event should any issues arise.

- How do I decide if I should take the AP exam or sign up for DE credit?

VPCC works in collaboration with Virginia four-year colleges to facilitate the transfer of college credits. If your student intends to attend college in Virginia, dual enrollment will fulfill the necessary requirements. However, if your student plans to attend a private college or college outside of Virginia, it is advisable to consult with a college admissions counselor. Some colleges may require an AP score as additional validation for transferring dual enrollment credits.

- Clubs

- What times do clubs meet?
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In order to promote participation from both the A.M. and P.M. sessions, clubs typically convene after school or in the evening via Zoom.

## Math

- Acronyms

- VPT = Virginia Placement Test
- VPCC = Virginia Peninsula Community College

- Registration

- Where is the math registration form located?

The handout distributed at the New Student Orientation contains a link to the math registration form. To access a copy of the handout, please click [Math Handout](#).

- I took Calculus AB / Calculus 1 at my school, so will I be taking Calculus at GSST? Is Calculus at GSST equivalent to Calculus BC?

The GSST Calculus course correlates to Calculus BC where students dual enroll for Calculus 1 in the fall and Calculus 2 in the spring. Students who have successfully completed Calculus AB or Calculus 1 are required to register for the GSST Calculus course.

- If I am in PreCalculus or Math Analysis over the summer so that I can enroll in Calculus in the fall, will I need to take the VPT?

Yes, even if you are taking PreCalculus or Math Analysis over the summer, you will still be required to take the VPT. We will request you to take the VPT later in the summer after you have completed the summer class.

- Placement Testing

- Who needs to take the VPT? What does it test?
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Juniors who are interested in enrolling in the GSST Calculus course are required to take VPT to assess their readiness. The test consists of two parts: (1) PreCalculus without trigonometry, and (2) PreCalculus with trigonometry. Students need a 65% on both parts to successfully place into GSST Calculus.

- Are you allowed to use a calculator on the VPT?

Students are not allowed to bring a calculator to the VPT. However, a calculator is provided on the testing website.

- How early are we able to know if we pass the VPT?

The VPT is an online multiple choice test and will show a results page once complete. Your test proctor can interpret your results for you, and a GSST faculty member will email you within a few days after receiving your VPT results to discuss next steps.

- If we fail the VPT or do not make the requirement for Calculus, are we automatically placed in PreCalculus?

GSST utilizes the VPT score to make course placement recommendations. If you fail the VPT, you can still register for Calculus, but it is advised to repeat PreCalculus.

- Will retakes be available for the VPT?

Since VPCC is not requiring students to pass the VPT to dual enroll for Calculus, we are not requiring students to retake the VPT if they do not place into Calculus.

- If I have already taken dual-enrolled Calculus 1 at another community college (not VPCC), but not Calculus 2, would I still have to take the VPT?

If you have successfully completed a dual-enrolled Calculus course, there is no need for you to take the VPT. Please indicate on the Math Registration Form that you require an alternate testing time and inform Ms

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Yee about your dual enrollment status when she contacts you.

- Since AP Calculus BC exam scores are released in July, do we still need to take the placement exam for Calculus because it is possible we could have gotten below a 4?

The VPT does not assess readiness for MultiVariable Calculus. As a result, VPCC only accepts the AP Calculus BC score to fulfill the prerequisite requirement.

- Are we allowed to switch math courses before school starts based upon the results of the VPT or AP exam scores?

Yes, students can switch math courses before school starts in the fall. Please contact Ms Yee and Ms Whitney to discuss your interest in switching math courses.

- Summer Assignments
  - What form do we need to complete to receive the ALEKS registration information?

For juniors who plan to take PreCalculus, completing the [Math Registration Form](#) is sufficient.

Those who wish to enroll in Calculus will receive the ALEKS registration information once they have completed the Virginia Placement Test.

As for juniors interested in taking MultiVariable Calculus and Linear Algebra, they will have a separate summer assignment that does not involve ALEKS.

## Research

- What strand does the “Research” class belong to?

All juniors and seniors are enrolled in a research course. It is a required course for students enrolled in each of the strands.

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- Will the statistical analysis taught in Research prepare you for the AP Stats Exam?

If you wish to take the AP Stats exam, you have the option to do so. Please note that the exam is not administered by GSST. To register, you will need to sign up at your home school. While most of the exam material will have been covered, it is important to understand that this course aligns with VPCC and is not an official AP course.

- For mentorship, are they meeting with mentors during the school day?

The mentorship meetings take place off school campus and outside of regular school hours.

- Does your mentorship have to correspond with your strand at GSST?

The mentorship placements should correspond to your strand. Most mentors are familiar with our strands and expect that the students have the background knowledge learned in the strand courses to prepare them for completing the mentorship projects.

## Biological Science

- If I'm in chemistry now at my home school, am I supposed to retake this course at VPCC?

It is mandatory for all students to complete high school chemistry at their respective home schools. GSST offers a college-level chemistry course with laboratory components. As a result, there is no requirement to retake the course at VPCC.

- Do we take the AP Chemistry exam?

If you choose to do so, you have the option to take the AP Chemistry exam. The material covered on the exam will be taught within our curriculum. However, please note that the exam is not administered by GSST. To register for the AP Chemistry exam, you will need to sign up at your home school.

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- Would we need to purchase the textbook?

Students will receive textbooks at no cost, which will be loaned to them throughout the school year. The GSST textbooks must be returned at the end of the year. It is important to note that there will be a fee for lost or damaged textbooks or technology.

## Computational Science

- Are we going to learn Java?

At present, Java is not included in the curriculum. However, both Python and C++ are programming languages that are covered in the coursework.

## Engineering

- Are the engineering classes preselected for juniors?

For juniors, the engineering physics course and research course are required, the math course is based on student preparedness and could be calculus, multivariable calculus and linear algebra, or differential equations.

- Do we take the AP Physics exam?

If you wish to take the AP Physics exam, you have the option to do so. Please note that the exam is not administered by GSST. To register, you will need to sign up at your home school. While most of the exam material will have been covered, it is important to understand that this course aligns with VPCC and is not an official AP course.

## College Prep

- Is there any ACT prep recommended other than Khan Academy?

The College Board has partnered with Khan Academy to offer exceptional test preparation resources for the SAT. Regrettably, it seems that the ACT has opted

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to partner with Kaplan to promote their test prep products, which are mostly not available for free. However, ACT provides a booklet that provides an overview of the test and includes a print version of a free practice test.:

<https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/Preparing-for-the-AC T.pdf>

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