



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.

Table of Contents

General	1
Math	3
Research	6
Biological Science	6
Computational Sciences	6

General

- Program
 - Are there any tasks I must complete over the summer before I start at GSST?
[Incoming juniors planning to register for GSST precalculus or calculus complete the ALEKS math summer assignment. The ALEKS assignment is essential preparation for GSST's advanced math courses. \(See under Math section\)](#)
 - Do we need to purchase textbooks?
[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.](#)
 - How many students are in the junior class?
[On average, there are a total of 90 students across the morning and afternoon sessions.](#)





- Are the GSST classes weighted similarly to dual enrollment and AP courses, where an A is equivalent to 5.0?

Yes, the GSST classes are weighted similarly to dual enrollment and AP courses. Therefore, earning an A in a GSST class is equivalent to a 5.0 GPA.

However, how GSST classes are weighted specifically depends on your school district's policy. Please consult your guidance counselor for clarification on how GSST classes are weighted in your district.

- 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. 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. Accepted students will automatically receive newsletters published by GSST.

- 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?
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 but will not be required to take the VPT.
-



- I took Calculus BC at my school, will I be able to take Multivariable Calculus?

Students who took the AP Calculus BC exam and scored a 4 or 5 may take multivariable calculus and linear algebra. Students who did not obtain a 4+ on the AP Calculus BC exam will be required to take the Calculus I and II sequence. If your student took AP Calculus BC, they are not required to complete the VPT.

- 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?

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 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 to discuss your interest in switching math courses.
- Math Summer Preparatory Tasks
 - 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

- For mentorship, are students meeting with mentors during the school day?
The mentorship meetings take place off school campus and, typically, outside of regular school hours. Some students, who have free periods at their home school, have adjusted schedules to allow mentorship activities during the school day.
- Does your mentorship have to correspond with your strand at GSST?
The mentorship placements generally 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

- How does Chemistry at GSST differ from AP or Honors Chemistry taken at my home school?"
You can expect to conduct far more laboratory experiments in your chemistry class at GSST - typically two or three labs per week. In addition, the additional class hours (more than 7 hours weekly) compared to your home high school courses allow for much greater depth as well as breadth of study. Finally, learning science from a scientist trains you to think and learn like a scientist.

Computational Sciences

- Are we going to learn Java?
Java is not covered in the course. Python and C++ are covered in the course.
- Do we need to purchase technology?
Computers necessary for the computational sciences are available for classroom use. It is important to note that there will be a fee for lost or damaged technology.

Physics

- 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.
-