

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Updated June 2025

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING SUMMARY

The summary below highlights the key features of Verto Education's Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy.

Verto is dedicated to the creation of a dynamic learning environment that encourages participant engagement, fosters inclusivity, and prioritizes individualized academic needs.

Verto Education has a strong commitment to providing an enriching and accommodating learning experience for all participants. We recognize that each individual has distinct learning preferences, needs, and circumstances that influence their educational path.

The Verto Method is built around five core principles:

- Active Learning
- Experiential Learning
- Diverse and Inclusive Curriculum
- Differentiated Instruction
- Holistic and Restorative Education

In order to get the greatest benefit of the Verto Method, participants must take responsibility for their learning and regularly attend classes to engage in the active and experiential components of the course, and are encouraged to seek out support from the instructor and onsite staff, and share any concerns and grievances promptly, while onsite, when possible. Participants needing academic accommodations must apply through the University of New Haven before the program starts.

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ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING

Overview

Verto is dedicated to creating a dynamic learning environment that encourages participant engagement, fosters inclusivity, and prioritizes individualized academic needs.

Verto Education is committed to providing an enriching and accommodating learning experience for all participants. We recognize that each individual has distinct learning preferences, needs, and circumstances that influence their educational path. By actively engaging with our diverse academic community, participants can not only excel in their studies but also cultivate essential life skills such as effective communication, problem-solving, and resilience.

This policy represents Verto's dedication to fostering a learning environment that not only imparts knowledge but also equips participants with the skills and confidence to self-advocate, engage deeply in their studies, and contribute meaningfully to both personal growth and that of the broader community.

The Verto Method

Verto's mission is to help participants discover themselves and the world around them by making international education a foundational and accessible part of an undergraduate degree.

In addition to the academic support outlined in the [Accommodations Policy](#), Verto subscribes to core pedagogical commitments that inform course development and implementation across all our courses and programs. These commitments create accessible and inclusive learning environments designed to eliminate barriers to participation and ensure all participants leave their Verto experience with the academic, social, and emotional skills required to thrive in college and make a positive and responsible impact in our global society.

The learning environment is characterized by five core principles:

Active Learning

Research shows that lecture-only classrooms are markedly less likely to deliver participant success than those that engage participants with experiences that prioritize active learning. Active learning is an instructional approach that invites participants to actively engage directly in the learning process as active rather than passive recipients of information. This also means eliminating distractions and focusing on the learning environment. Participants consider and make sense of information using a variety of methods extending far beyond reading, listening, memorization, or solely lecture-based classes. Active learning methods include small and large-group class discussions, group projects, problem-solving, case studies, role plays, debates, reflection, and other project and problem-based learning approaches to bring learning to life through active engagement with course content. This is made possible by our commitment to small class sizes - generally fewer than 25 participants for non-language classes and 18 participants for language classes.

Experiential Learning

Learning happens best when participants actively engage in the world around them. Starting college abroad at a Verto program location provides ample opportunities for participants to learn by doing and reflecting on their experiences. Learning extends far beyond the classroom. Participants have hands-on, practical experiences to apply learning in practice using the city as an extension of their classroom. Faculty emphasize learning through real-world experiential activities, such as service learning, field trips, demonstrations, and discussions with individuals from the host community. Many STEM courses also have opportunities for participants to engage in lab work and see STEM in action in the local community. Through these rich experiences, participants prepare for, engage in, reflect upon, and apply knowledge and experience to develop concrete skills directly applicable to future academic study and careers.

Diverse and Inclusive Curricula

The curriculum is based on a foundational commitment to diversity and inclusion, and to building access and opportunity for all participants to thrive and grow. We strive to create learning atmospheres that engender trust and create a sense of belonging. Through practices that demonstrate mutual respect, tolerance, and empathy, we build brave spaces for diverse perspectives, experiences, and broad-ranging views. All faculty participate in ongoing training and professional development to support diverse learners' needs in the classroom.

Differentiated Instruction

We value a participant body with diverse backgrounds and differing experiences, and recognize participants will have varied learning experiences, strengths, needs, and interests. We provide the relevant support to ensure all participants succeed and thrive. Whether it be **scaffolding** to bridge learning gaps for those that need them, or assignments and assessments or peer tutoring and leadership opportunities that challenge more advanced participants, our goal is for everyone to be in their **stretch zone**. Faculty and academic staff meet participants where they are to ensure everyone remains challenged but not panicked (or bored!) by their coursework.

Holistic and Restorative Education

Learning is not only about cultivating academic skills and intellectual knowledge. It is also about developing the whole person, building non-cognitive skills like self-awareness, social awareness, intercultural competence, and responsible decision-making. Holistic and restorative education approaches encourage self-awareness, mindfulness, and accountability to create strong connections in and outside of the classroom, addressing conflict through dialogue and accountability, and prioritizing relationships to co-create a positive learning community.

Prioritizing collaboration, community-building, shared norms, academic integrity, and open and vulnerable dialogue, Verto promotes not only academic but also social and emotional learning to set participants up for long-term personal, academic, and career success. Verto's Community Values and [Code of Responsibility](#) inform academic community building and ensure all participants have opportunities to contribute to building a positive learning community.

Student Success

Verto wants all participants to feel connected to their academics and personally motivated to grow and succeed. We have created comprehensive systems, including advising, to support participants in achieving their academic goals. Our comprehensive approach to Student Success includes a wide range of tools and resources, as well as advising services to offer participants opportunities to achieve their academic goals.

Student Success Strategies:

- Learning Support Services
 - Tutoring
 - Peer Study Groups
 - Faculty 1x1s and Office Hours
- Student Success Initiatives
 - Student Success Advisor Meetings

- Learning Workshops and Self-Discovery Labs
- Academic Skill Development Workshops
- Post-Verto Planning and Transition Workshops
- Student Success Plans
 - Academic Progress Reviews
 - Student Success Plans and Improvement Plans
 - Midterm Grade Reports and Review Meetings
- Care Team Support
 - Dedicated Care Teams (typically no more than 35 participants per Care Team)
 - Holistic advising encompassing Academics and Student Life
 - Dedicated Coaching & Mentoring

If a participant is not meeting the academic expectations and requirements of a course, or is at risk of not meeting full-time status, Verto offers support for participant learning and success and details prompt corrective action(s) when needed. Read more to learn more about Verto's approach to [Student Success](#).

Participant Responsibilities

Academic Accommodations

Participants are responsible for requesting academic accommodations from Verto's Academic Provider, the University of New Haven, before the start of the semester, following the steps outlined in the [Accommodations Policy](#). If granted accommodations, participants and faculty are notified through the AIM system accessed through myCharger. Participants should read and thoroughly understand the nature of their approved accommodations.

While faculty are informed of participants' accommodations, participants are responsible for self-advocating to ensure their accommodations are implemented. Accommodations cannot be retroactively applied.

Important: Participants with UNewHaven-approved academic accommodations must meet with their instructor at the beginning of the semester to request specific accommodations and discuss how they can be successful in the course. Participants are responsible for coordinating and planning their assessment schedules in each course with their Student Success staff and faculty at least five business days prior to any assessments requiring academic accommodations. This pre-planning ensures participants have access to the necessary accommodations in a timely manner to stay on track with course requirements.

Accommodations in the study abroad environment may differ from accommodations in the U.S. and follow local regulations and resources.

Academic Engagement

Verto values active participant participation and engagement in the overall academic experience and emphasizes the importance of participant engagement in creating a positive learning environment. Faculty also consider participant engagement in addition to regular attendance. Participants are evaluated upon active, academic engagement.

Academic engagement is defined as regular and meaningful interactions with professors and peers in the learning environment. Studying abroad requires and prioritizes participant academic engagement as part of the overall experiential learning approach, as well as for academic progress reporting and student visa/immigration compliance.

In simpler terms, participants must actively participate and engage with instructors and peers in class. All participants should be present, participating, and connecting with faculty and classmates during their college journey.

This includes:

- Arriving to class on time and staying for the full class or learning activity duration;
- Active participation and engagement in classes and out-of-class activities;
- Staying focused and on task, distraction-free, and following appropriate use of technology (no cell phones visible, technology used only for educational purposes);
- Participating in scheduled experiential and active learning activities for class, including activities that may be scheduled outside of regular class sessions;
- Submitting work demonstrating “sufficient mental effort, active participation, and commitment” that is gradable by faculty.
- Engaging in online course learning systems (e.g., Canvas, Cengage), discussions, and other course-related resources;
- Participating in required meetings between peers, faculty, and support staff
- Regular communication with faculty and staff related to academic performance, attendance, and academic support needs;
- Participant application and timely disclosure for necessary academic accommodations, as relevant, and related participant-led communication with faculty and staff;
- Attending faculty office hours, participating in related study groups or learning support services such as test reviews, tutoring, etc., as encouraged by faculty and staff;
- Following any requirements related to academic improvement, probation, or Student Success Actions;
- Taking responsibility for learning and decisions impacting learning;

- Contributing to the creation of a dynamic and positive learning environment.

Academic Concerns and Grievances

Participants are responsible for proactively addressing academic questions and concerns about their grades, academic progress, and/or overall academic standing. Any questions about grades earned during the program should be addressed promptly **while participants are onsite**.

- For questions or concerns about homework, grades, attendance, class-specific accommodations, or other academic concerns, participants must discuss with faculty directly.
- Any academic grievances or appeals related to grades received while onsite must be initiated by the participant directly with their faculty. Participants may reach out to their onsite staff for assistance.
- Any academic grievances or appeals related to grades received after program departure (e.g., final exams, final grades) should be directed to faculty within no more than 30 days of program completion.
- For any other concerns related to the academic environment (and not specific grades) or about the overall academic experience, participants must discuss with onsite staff early and often to address needs for academic success.

General concerns and grievances should be addressed to a participant's Student Success Advisor onsite, or reach out to the local Academic Manager or Director.

For additional support, please reach out to the [Dean of Students](#) or the [Registrar](#).

Available participant resources from the University of New Haven can be found on the [UNewHaven Participant Resource Page](#).