

ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING

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Introduction

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

Outlined here are the core principles that underpin our commitment to providing an enriching and accommodating learning experience for all participants. We recognize that each individual has distinct learning preferences, challenges, 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 is a declaration of our 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.

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The Verto Method

Verto’s mission is to help students discover themselves and the world around them by making international education a foundational and accessible part of a four-year college 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 that reduce barriers to participation and ensure all students 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 wider diverse and 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 student success than those which engage students with experiences that prioritize **active learning**. This refers to engaging with, and inviting, students to actively consider and make sense of information using a variety of methods that extend far beyond reading, listening, or memorization. Methods include class discussions, group work, problem-solving, case studies, role plays, reflection, and more. This is made possible by our commitment to small class sizes (generally fewer than 25 students for non-language classes and 18 students for language classes).

Experiential Learning

Learning happens best when students are actively engaged in the world around them. A great way to achieve this is by taking students out of the classroom, into new settings, to apply learning in practice. That is why faculty emphasize learning through hands-on, experiential activities, such as service learning, field trips, demonstrations, and discussions with individuals from the host community.

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 create learning atmospheres that engender trust and 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 student body with diverse backgrounds and differing experiences, and recognize that students will have varied learning experiences, strengths, needs, and interests. We therefore provide the relevant support to ensure that all students succeed and thrive. Whether it be providing **scaffolding** to bridge learning gaps for those that need them, or assignments and assessments that challenge more advanced students, our goal is for everyone to be in their

stretch zone. Faculty and academic success coordinators meet students where they are to ensure everyone remains challenged but not panicked (or bored!) by their coursework.

Holistic Education

Learning should not just be about cultivating academic skills and intellectual knowledge. It should also be about building non-cognitive skills like self-awareness, social awareness, intercultural competence, and responsible decision-making. Prioritizing collaboration, community-building, shared norms, academic integrity, and open and vulnerable dialogue, courses promote not only academic but also social and emotional learning to set students up for long term personal, academic, and career success.

Academic Success Plans and Academic Actions

Verto wants all participants to feel connected to their academics and personally motivated to grow and succeed. We have created comprehensive systems and advising to support students to achieve their academic goals. Our comprehensive Academic Success Programs include a wide range of tools and resources, as well as advising services to offer students opportunities to achieve their academic goals.

Academic Success Program Strategies:

- Learning Support Services
 - College Strong “Grab and Grow” Toolkit
 - Tutoring
 - Writing Coaching
- Academic Success Programming
 - Learning and Self-Discovery Labs
 - Academic Skill Development Workshops
- Academic Success Plans
 - Academic Progress Reviews
 - Midterm Grade Reports
- Care Team Support
 - Academic Advising
 - College Counseling
 - Student Life Counselors
- Academic Assessments
 - Academic Skills Assessment
 - Typefinder - Career and Personality Assessment

If a student 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 student learning and success and details prompt corrective action(s) when needed. Read more to learn more about Verto's approach to [Academic Success and Academic Actions](#)

Student Responsibilities

Academic Accommodations

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

While faculty are informed of student's accommodations, participants are responsible for self-advocating that their accommodations are implemented. The student should make an appointment with their instructor during the first week of classes to discuss how they can be successful in the course.

Academic Engagement

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

Academic engagement is defined as regular and meaningful interactions with your professors and peers in the learning environment. Regulations consider student academic engagement as part of academic progress reporting and immigration compliance.

In simpler terms, we need to see that you are actively participating and engaging with your instructors and peers in class. All students 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;
- Participating in scheduled experiential and active learning activities for class, including activities that may be scheduled outside of regular class sessions;

- Engaging in online course learning systems (e.g. Canvas, Cengage), discussions and other course related resources;
- Participating in required meetings between peers, faculty, and academic support staff
- Regular communication with faculty and academic staff related to academic performance, attendance, and academic support needs;
- Student application and timely disclosure for necessary academic accommodations, as relevant, and related student-led communication with faculty and academic 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 ASCs;
- Following any requirements related to academic improvement, probation, or academic actions;
- Submitted work that demonstrates “sufficient mental effort, active participation, and commitment” that is gradable by faculty.

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 in a timely manner **while participants are onsite**.

- For questions or concerns about homework, grades, attendance, class specific accommodations or related 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 Academic Success Coordinator 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 that are related to the academic environment (and not specific grades) or about your overall academic experience, please discuss with your Academic Success Coordinator early and often to ensure we partner together to address needs for your academic success.

General concerns and grievances should be addressed to your Academic Success Coordinator 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 student resources from the University of New Haven can be found on the [UNewHaven Participant Resource Page](#).