

7-Week Sessions FAQ

Starting in the summer semester of 2024, Virginia Western Community College will begin offering students the option of completing some programs by taking 7-week session classes. These will replace the 8-week sessions. Shortened classes can give students a better opportunity to balance other responsibilities in their life. While 7-week classes challenge students to prioritize their schoolwork and develop time management skills due to the faster deadlines data from the Achieving the Dream Foundation indicates shortened sessions foster improved success rates in the areas of enrollment and graduation rates while lowering withdrawal rates. Students should check with their advisor to determine if the 7-week option is available for their program and if it is the right fit for their educational needs.

1. What is a 7-week class?

- a. The 7-week class format breaks the standard 16-week semester into two terms that are 7 weeks each. 7-week classes offer the same quality of teaching, support, and content as traditional 16-week classes but in a more compact time frame.

2. Are there advantages to taking 7-week classes?

- a. One of the primary advantages of 7-week classes is that students can focus on fewer classes during one 7-week term. Additionally, research has shown that students in 7-week classes have higher class success rates and higher completion rates.

3. What should I consider when planning a 7-week schedule?

- a. Anytime you are planning for a future semester, we encourage you to talk to your advisor to assist you in creating a schedule that best meets your needs.
 - i. Creating a balanced schedule is extremely important for academic success.
 - ii. The number of classes you take will vary based on whether you are full- or part-time and will depend on your program of study.
 - iii. 7-week classes are of the same rigor and equate to the same overall instructional time and required study hours as 16-week classes but in a more compact format.
 - iv. In general, it is recommended that a student take no more than two or three 7-week classes at the same time and no more than 9 credits in a 7-week session. One example of a balanced schedule would be to take two 7-week classes in each session and one 16-week class.
 - v. Part-time students who work a full-time job are strongly advised to take only one 7-week class at a time.
 - vi. Students, in consultation with their advisor, are encouraged to register for the entire semester (both 7-week terms) prior to the start of the

semester. Failing to register for the entire semester could result in Financial Aid complications.

4. Can I still take a 16-week class if I am taking a 7-week class?

- a. Based on course availability, you may be able to take a combination of 7-week and 16-week classes.

5. What are some student success tips for 7-Week classes?

- a. It is important to be engaged in 7-week courses from day one! Starting strong and making sure you have everything you need (textbooks, login information, etc.) before you begin is key to your success.
- b. Schedule and manage your time wisely. Plan to spend 12-18 hours per week per course studying outside of class. Share your commitment with family and friends.
- c. If your course is online, make sure you log in and participate in the course at least every other day.
- d. Apply the same success rules you would for any type of course.
 - i. Use a planner to keep track of your classes, due dates, and important events.
 - ii. Check Canvas and your student email regularly for updates.
 - iii. Take good notes.
 - iv. Participate in class by engaging in class discussions and getting to know your classmates.
 - v. Have your textbooks on the first day of class.
 - vi. Get to know your teacher.

6. What happens if I fall behind in a 7-week class?

- a. Contact your instructor immediately so you can work together to determine the best plan of action. If withdrawing from the course is the best option, check with Financial Aid to determine the impact of dropping and/or re-enrolling for a course in the 2nd 7-week term.

7. Will 7-week classes transfer?

- a. Yes! Taking a class in a 7-week format will not impact the transferability of a class. A student's transcript will look identical whether they take a class in a 7-week format or a 16-week format. The name of the class and the number of credits assigned to that class will remain the same.

8. Where do I find the dates for the 7-Week Sessions?

- a. In the Academic Calendar below the dates for the 16-week session. [Academic Calendar – Virginia Western Community College](#)

Sample Calendar- Dates will change each year.

7-week 1 Session <i>Aug 28 to Oct 16</i>	7-week 2 Session <i>Oct 24 to Dec 20</i>
16-week Session <i>Aug 28 to Dec 20</i>	

9. Will tuition costs be the same?

- a. Yes, tuition will stay the same as the same class offered in a different format.

10. Will this impact my financial aid?

- a. Nothing drastic is changing in regard to your financial when it comes to the new 7-week sessions. Financial aid will still be processed for the fall, spring and summer terms. However, you will need to make certain to register for all your semester courses upfront. This means if you plan to take courses in the first 7-week session and the second 7-week session, you must enroll for all classes prior to the last day to drop classes for the 16-week session.

11. How will this affect registration?

- a. During each semester, be sure to register for both 7-week sessions at the same time. This will help keep you on track for the most efficient course sequence to complete your program. Registering for both 7-week sessions at the same time will also ensure that you have the correct credit load for financial aid eligibility.

12. What happens if I need to make a course change for the second 7-week session?

- a. You can drop and add courses anytime before the drop/add deadline for the second 7-week session. If you have financial aid and drop a course then add another of the same number of credits, your aid won't be impacted. If you drop a course without adding another course, your aid for the semester will decrease. If you add a course above the original number of credits for the semester, you will not get aid for those additional credits.

13. When should I buy my textbooks and other course materials?

- a. You need to order your books for both 7-week sessions at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters, especially if you plan to use financial aid funds. You must have your textbooks and course materials on the first day of class. However, don't open/unwrap your second 7-week class textbooks until you start that class.

14. How will this impact part-time students?

- a. The 7-week format is beneficial for part-time students. It allows them to focus their efforts on one to two courses at a time while having the opportunity to accumulate more credits each semester.

15. Will we cover the same material in 7 weeks as we do in a semester?

- a. Yes. All courses are expected to meet the same learning outcomes as covered in 16-week classes.

16. Will students have the same face-to-face time with faculty?

- a. Face-to-Face classes will have the same number of contact hours as you would during a semester course. You will either have longer classes or meet more frequently, depending upon the discipline. Hybrid or online classes will follow different formats.

17. Can I take the same number of classes as I normally would in a semester?

- a. Yes. If you take two or three classes every 7 weeks you will still be taking four to six classes per semester. You can also take classes during the summer session.

18. What is the typical schedule for a student taking 7-week courses?

- a. It will depend upon the student's major program of study, however the typical schedule for a student who wishes to be enrolled full time during the fall or spring semesters would be two classes during the first 7-weeks and two classes during the second 7-weeks. Students can combine both 7-week and 16-week classes in a semester, but should be very careful not to exceed the total number of credits allowed.

Examples:

- i. In this example, the student is enrolled in eight credits the first 7 weeks and six credits the second 7 weeks, for a total of 14 credits for the semester.

First 7 Weeks	Second 7 Weeks
SDV 101 Orientation / College Success Skills – 2 CR	MTH 154 Quantitative Reasoning 3 CR
ENG 111 College Comp. I – 3 CR	ENG 112 College Comp. II - 3 CR
CST 100 Principles of Public Speaking – 3 CR	

- ii. In this example, the student is enrolled in six credits the first 7 weeks and three credits the second 7 weeks, while taking a 16-week science course for four credits, which equals 13 credits for the semester. (Though not shown, this student could take an additional 3-credit class the second 7 weeks for a total of 17 credits.)

First 7 Weeks	Second 7 Weeks
ART 101 History of Art – 3 CR	ENG 255 World Literature – 3 CR
PSY 200 Principles of Psychology – 3 CR	
CHM 111 General Chemistry – 4 CR	16 Weeks session

19. How long will each class be?

- a. The length of the class will depend on the number of credits, how often the class meets, and the modality of the class (face-to-face, hybrid, or online).

20. Will a 7-week class mean more work for students?

- a. You will have the same amount of work per class as you would in a semester, but in a shorter period of time. You will only be taking two or three classes so you will be able to focus all your study time on these classes, rather than having more classes to work on. This will require you to schedule dedicated study time. If you fall behind you will have less time to catch up!

21. Will final exams be at the end of the semester?

- a. No. You will take a final exam at the end of each class. A 7-week class will have a final exam at the end of the 7-week session.

22. How often will grades be posted?

- a. Grades will be posted at the end of each 7-week session.

23. Will we still be able to graduate on time?

- a. Yes. You will take the same number of classes each semester and graduate in the same time period as 16-week sessions.

24. What resources does the school provide to help me stay on top of 7-week classes?

- a. Virginia Western offers comprehensive student and academic support services through the Academic Link. Tutoring is strongly encouraged for all students and is available at no cost to the student. Please see our [tutoring website](#) for more information.

Additionally, we offer counseling, emergency aid, food pantry, and many other services to meet our students' personal needs so they can focus on their classes. Visit the [Student Support Center](#) for more information.

25. How does the 7-week format impact veterans?

- a. Military-affiliated students collecting VA Education Benefits must be taking 12 credit hours to receive full benefits: however, VA processes enrollments by the beginning and ending dates. Students are paid based on their rate of pursuit. With our 7-week classes, students will be considered full-time if they are registered for at least six credit hours in the first 7 weeks and six credit hours and the last 7 weeks. Students may be eligible for payments for the week in-between sessions if also taking 16-week courses. Please email military@virginiawestern.edu for more information.

26. How will the 7-week classes format affect student/teacher relationships?

- a. Research suggests that student to teacher and peer to peer relationships are improved in the 7-week class format because more time is typically spent together. For instance, classes may meet four times a week as opposed to twice a week or classes may meet for longer intervals per day.

27. Still have questions not listed here?

- a. Please reach out to your advisor.