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General Information and Overview of Responsibilities

Virtual Class Aides (VCA) are necessary to provide a well-functioning Encore Learning classroom. VCAs will serve as hosts for each class session on Zoom. As a VCA, you will:
● Arrive online early (15-30 minutes prior to class start time) to set up with the instructor
● Confirm the instructor is ready and comfortable with the virtual class setting
● Confirm instructor is able to be understood, to be visible and to present their materials
● Monitor the virtual waiting room after the class has begun and admit late arrivals if the virtual waiting room feature will remain turned on throughout the class session. In some cases, the waiting room feature will be disabled by the staff host at the start of the class, allowing late arrivals to enter directly into the class in session (confirm with staff host).
● Use the chat feature to ask participants to update their name if necessary.
● Ensure that students are able to see, hear and participate as determined by the instructor
● Collect feedback provided during the course and share with staff.
● Collaborate with co-VCA to establish clear roles in classroom management
● Report technical or content issues to appropriate Staff or Virtual Coach

Encore Learning will provide resources to help you achieve success in this role. In addition to the Zoom training sessions for VCAs, the Encore Learning website offers several Zoom-related resources to ensure your success as a VCA. You will be assigned a staff host who will guide you and the instructor as needed. Instructors will also have training so they are comfortable with the virtual classroom. In addition, there will be a pre-course run-through with all instructors, the VCAs and a staff member. As always, staff is available to answer any questions that may arise. An email to info@encorelearning.net is the best way to reach us.

Pre-Course Co-VCA Contact

The majority of courses will have two assigned VCAs. Prior to the start of the class you will receive an email with your co-VCA and instructor contact information.
● Email your co-VCA to introduce yourself and discuss the tasks outlined in this guide.
● Exchange cell phone numbers.
● Divvy up responsibilities according to your strengths. This is the most important feedback we have received from successful aides.
● Review current class schedule on website. Determine how to handle any dates either aide will not be in class.

Technical Rehearsal / Initial Contact with Instructor

The instructor is a volunteer who has generously contributed her/his time and expertise; therefore, Encore Learning would like to relieve her/him of as many administrative duties as possible. The staff host will coordinate a technical run-through of the course 1-2 weeks before the course start date. This will serve as your initial contact with the Instructor.

During the technical run-through, you should cover the following:
● CONTACT INFO: Exchange cell phone numbers for quick communication in case of emergencies or other change of plans
● CONFIRM class meeting dates and times. Confirm that the instructor, staff, and VCAs will log on 30 minutes prior to the first class and 15 minutes before following classes.
● ZOOM PLATFORM: The staff host will confirm the Zoom setup that will be used for the courses. The majority of courses are run as Zoom meetings while a few are Zoom webinars. The features differ slightly between the two.
● CLASS MATERIALS: Remind the instructor to send any supplemental materials at least a week prior to each class session to courses@encorelearning.net if they would like them

shared with the class members.
- ■ Stress the importance of sending any document(s) they will be sharing during class (PowerPoint, PDFs, etc.) with the VCAs before the class starts. In the unlikely event the instructor has Internet connectivity issues, a VCA may have to take over screen sharing duties for the instructor.
- BREAKS: Ask if she/he would like to take a short break midway through the presentation. Breaks may not be needed because participants can easily slip away, but check to see if the instructor wants one, particularly for 2-hour classes.
- Q&A/CHAT: Establish with the instructor when she/he would like to take questions (e.g., hold all questions until the end of the presentation) and how questions should be posed (e.g., have participants' raise hands, send a chat message, or for webinars, through Q&A).
- ■ Determine who will manage participant questions (e.g., instructor will handle them directly or the VCA will condense questions and pose to the instructor).
- ■ Some instructors, especially for small classes, may prefer that participants keep their video on during the class and speak out when they have a question or comment. It is more engaging to have a dialogue, but it takes more effort for it to run smoothly, especially if several people have questions at the same time.
- ■ Discuss if and how the instructor wishes to engage students. Do they wish you to post questions in chat to stimulate discussion? Do they want students to turn on video at certain times?
- SHARING SCREEN: Have the instructor practice sharing their screen if they are not used to teaching on Zoom. Note that if the instructor will be sharing videos or audio, they must select "share audio" when sharing their screen.
- If the instructor has additional concerns or support needs, please forward them to the Academic Course Coordinator at courses@encorelearning.net

Day of Class Responsibilities

Staff host's responsibilities are to:
- Ensure instructors and VCAs have panelist links [for Zoom webinars only]
- Open Zoom session at appropriate time
- Admit all (Zoom meetings) or start broadcast (Zoom webinars) for registered students at the start of class. Disable the virtual waiting room feature when applicable.
- Ensure instructor and VCAs have confidence to host the class and have support available as needed
- Provide assistance with other Zoom features such as polling if notified in advance
- Enable live transcription if allowed by instructor
- Address issues related to unregistered attendees or technical issues for participants
- Transfer Host designation to one of the aides before leaving
- Track attendance

VCA's responsibilities are to:
- For the first class session only, arrive 30 minutes before the designated start time. Arrive 15-20 minutes early for each subsequent session
- Make introductions and housekeeping remarks at the beginning of class
- Ensure participants' audio is muted and video is off unless the instructor prefers otherwise
- Use the chat feature to ask participants to update their name if necessary
- Monitor the waiting room and admit latecomers if the virtual waiting room feature will remain on throughout the class session. In some cases, the waiting room feature will be disabled by

the staff host at the start of the class, allowing late arrivals to enter directly into the class in session
- Monitor Q&A and Chat as pre-determined by the instructor
- Respond to participant concerns and share information with Encore Learning as needed
- Notify staff of any issues that arise during the class

See the appropriate **Day of Class Checklists** for detailed day of class procedures:

Meetings:
> **https://encorelearning.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/VCA-CHECKLIST-Zoom-Meetings.pdf**

Webinar:
> **https://encorelearning.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/VCA-CHECKLIST-Zoom-Webinars.pdf**

Hybrid:
> **https://encorelearning.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CLASS-AIDE-CHECKLIST-Hybrid.pdf**

Recommendations for a More Professional Class Experience

VIRTUAL BACKGROUND: The use of a virtual background by VCA's helps prevent visual distractions, such as people/pets wandering through. Avoid a video background which utilizes more bandwidth.

CLASS START: Make it a goal to start and end class on time. The Zoom licenses are shared among classes and another class may need to use the license. Also, this will encourage participants to enter on time and many participants have events after class.

WAITING ROOM: Ask the Instructor beforehand when to admit participants from the Waiting Room: 5 minutes prior to class start or at the actual time. Once the Encore Learning staff member leaves, the WAITING ROOM may be deactivated and all late participants can enter immediately.

FIRST CLASS: It is a good idea for the Zoom VCA to prepare and share a Power Point slide to show: a) if participants are admitted 5 minutes before the class starts and/or b) while the VCA makes initial announcements. See below for a sample introductory slide.

OPENING SLIDES FOR SUBSEQUENT CLASSES: The Instructor may choose to share a slide, music, or video before class starts. Work this out in advance with the Instructor.

VCA ZOOM MONITORING:
- The Encore Learning Staff member will make you Host, about 10 minutes after the start of class. Be aware that the Host has access to a variety of Settings, in case something needs to be changed during the class (e.g., Closed Captioning; Allow participants to view all webinar questions etc.).
- Do not turn your back to the camera when on screen. Stay in the center of the screen and be sure your full face appears, not just the top of your head or your mouth.
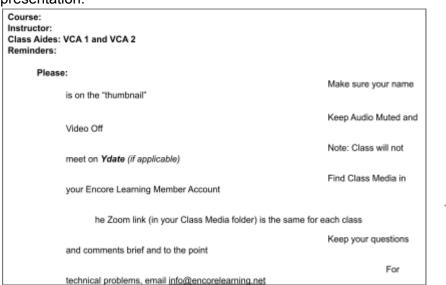
- In general, turn off your video and audio when not speaking.
- Check via the Participants Box that the participants have muted themselves and turned off their video. You have the ability to turn off a participant's audio and video via the Participants Box. You can also remove an unruly or unauthorized Participant, although the need for this is rare and usually occurs mostly with Webinars.
- If you will be monitoring the chat on behalf of the instructor, it is a good idea to keep your chat box open on a corner of your screen to easily monitor comments and questions.

SPOTLIGHT THE INSTRUCTOR: Click on the ellipsis next to the instructor's name in the participant list which brings down a menu. Select "Spotlight." This function ensures that the instructor is the primary figure and not someone whose microphone is on and makes a noise.

SAVING THE CHAT: CHAT notes are not automatically saved during a session. If you or the instructor want to preserve the CHAT information, there is a "Save Chat" button at the bottom of the Chat Box. All Participants can do this if they want, especially if there are a lot of links provided in Chat. But remember that all CHAT comments are recorded, even between participants if this option is allowed by the Host Settings. The chat is usually saved to an individual's My Documents / Zoom folder.

Sample Introductory Slide for VCAs

VCAs may share a one-page introductory slide, such as below, prior to the start of class. This information would be visible as students enter the class. Once the instructor is ready to begin class, the VCA would Stop Screen Share and prompt the instructor to share his/her presentation.


```
Course:
Instructor:
Class Aides: VCA 1 and VCA 2
Reminders:

    Please:
                                                          Make sure your name
        is on the "thumbnail"

                                                          Keep Audio Muted and
        Video Off
                                                          Note: Class will not
        meet on Ydate (if applicable)
                                                          Find Class Media in
        your Encore Learning Member Account
                                                                                T
            he Zoom link (in your Class Media folder) is the same for each class
                                                          Keep your questions
        and comments brief and to the point
                                                                    For
        technical problems, email info@encorelearning.net
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Note: If an instructor is particularly challenged to share their screen you may want to omit this share or provide the slide to the instructor to insert at the beginning of their share.

Class Contact

Class aides are available to class members in the virtual classroom for general questions. Class aides do not email or call class members. All class members should direct their emails and calls to the Encore Learning staff at info@encorelearning.net. If students want to know the other students in the class, they should look at the participant list or make an introductory chat

message.

Class Media
Instructors have been advised to send supplemental course material directly to the Encore Learning office well in advance of each class session. Please do not accept course materials from the instructor. Staff uploads the material to the class website (new starting in Fall 2024) and notifies all class members when new materials are available. Course material posted online by staff is available to class members throughout their membership. Once a course has ended, they may view the course material under their historic enrollments in their member account. Online instructions for accessing Class Media can be found here:
https://encorelearning.net/courses/quick-start-guide/

Class Attendance
VCAs are not required to take attendance per se. You will be sent a Class Roster of all students registered for the course for informational purposes. If there is a participant in the waiting room not on the class roster, please let them into the class. Staff will track attendance and verify all registrations. You can assist staff by sending a private chat message to individuals with unclear names (ex. Iphone) asking them to change their name in zoom to the name they registered for the class with.

You will be advised by email when additional participants have enrolled in or withdrawn from your class. You may simply write in the new students onto the Class Roster. Please draw a line through students who have officially withdrawn. If the number of changes becomes complicated, you may request an updated roster by emailing staff at
courses@encorelearning.net.

Emergency Communications
If an instructor informs you that a session must be canceled unexpectedly (e.g., due to instructor illness), please notify Encore Learning staff via email as soon as you learn of it. Staff will notify all class members via email. In the case of a missed session, staff will ask instructors if they would like to extend the course to make up for any missed sessions and, if the instructor would like to pursue this option, staff will determine if a class extension can be accommodated.

Reading Assignments
Reading assignments may be listed in the course description. However, Encore Learning cannot guarantee the availability of texts suggested by the instructor. Most instructors use books available in local bookstores or libraries or online.

Liability Insurance
While acting within the scope of their appointments, Class Aides are considered to be agents of Encore Learning and are covered under Encore Learning's liability insurance policy. This coverage does not extend to illegal activity, improper conduct, the willful disregard of safety, transportation, or holding class in an unauthorized location.

Privacy and Conduct Policies
Encore Learning has recently updated their policies. Please review the Conduct and Privacy policies, which includes Discrimination and Civility clauses.
https://encorelearning.net/about/policies/

Last Class Session Announcement

Please make this announcement:

We are so glad you participated in this class. You should have received a SurveyMonkey class feedback form in your email inbox this morning. We encourage you to share your class feedback to assist our Academic Programs Committee with planning for future classes. Your feedback will also be shared with the instructor.

We'd also like to alert you to some ongoing opportunities to meet other Encore Learning members and to give back some of your talents and a bit of time.

Some options require just a couple of hours, like helping to distribute flyers to library branches and community centers, or helping to staff an information table at one of our outreach events. Other possibilities might allow you to contribute to ideas for future classes, or help organize a social event!

If this sounds interesting to you, please contact one of our wonderful Encore Learning staff members at info@encorelearning.net, who can give you further information. We'd love to have your help and expertise, and give you a chance to keep making new friends!

Key Contact Information

Class Aide Co-Chair	John Metzler	johnmetzler3@outlook.com	(703) 850-9439
Class Aide Co-Chair	Michael Stutts	stuttsml@gmail.com	(757) 641-9248
Executive Director	Lora Pollari-Welbes	exec@EncoreLearning.net	(703) 228-2144 ext 3
Academic Course Coordinator	Kerry Fraatz	courses@EncoreLearning.net	(703) 228-2144 ext 4
Administrator	Patty Rowland	info@EncoreLearning.net	(703) 228-2144 ext 2
Virtual Course Administrator	Donna Banks	virtual@EncoreLearning.net	(703) 228-2144 ext 5

Voice mail messages left at **703-228-2144** for Encore Learning staff members are checked daily throughout the day.