

About VIP

The Vertically-Integrated Projects (VIP) Program operates in a research and development context. Undergraduate students that join VIP teams earn academic credit for their participation in design/discovery efforts that assist faculty and graduate students with research and development issues in their areas of expertise.

The teams are:

Multidisciplinary - drawing students from all disciplines on campus;

Vertically-integrated - maintaining a mix of sophomores through PhD students each semester;

Long-term - each undergraduate student may participate in a project for up to three years and each graduate student may participate for the duration of their graduate career.

The continuity, technical depth, and disciplinary breadth of these teams are intended to:

- Provide the time and context necessary for students to learn and practice many different professional skills, make substantial contributions to the project, and experience many different roles on a large, multidisciplinary VIP team.
- Support long-term interaction between the graduate and undergraduate students on the team. The graduate students mentor the undergraduates as they work on VIP projects embedded in the graduate students' research.
- Enable the completion of large-scale projects that are of significant benefit to faculty members' research programs.

Learning Objectives

Through VIP students will:

- Learn and practice professional skills;
- Make substantial contributions to the team project;
- Experience different roles on a large, multidisciplinary team

Automated Algorithm Design Team

Meeting Times and Location:

- Monday @ 5:00 Klaus 1440
- First semester VIP AAD students will meet Wednesday @ 5:00 Klaus 1440 for bootcamp for the first 10 or so weeks of the semester. After completing bootcamp, the first semester students will join the returning students at the Monday meetings. During bootcamp, first semester students will not attend the Monday meetings. After bootcamp the Wednesday meetings can be used for common meeting times, but will not be required.
- Additional meetings TBD

[!NOTE] A note on Midterm and Final Presentations: Midterm presentations will take place Monday October 26th, 2026 from 5PM to 7:50PM. With the exception of an academic conflict, which must be documented and reported the first week of class, you are expected to attend the entire midterm

presentations. If you have an academic conflict, you are expected to attend the portion of the presentations that do not conflict.

Instructors:

- Jason Zutty - Jason.Zutty@gtri.gatech.edu - 404.407.8505
- Aaron McDaniel - Aaron.McDaniel@gtri.gatech.edu - 404.407.7049

Office Hours & Location:

Baker building room 101E by appointment.

Each team will determine working times, designated as "sub-team meetings." Students are responsible for participating in their team and sub-team meetings. If you miss any meeting, you are responsible for knowing what occurred in that meeting, typically by discussing it with other team members. An excused absence does not relieve you of that responsibility.

Team Focus

To develop a framework that fundamentally alters the development of algorithms. We desire to create an automated method that starts with the best human algorithms and then dispassionately develops hybrid algorithms that outperform existing methods. And then prove that these algorithms can also be studied by humans for inspiration in development of new algorithm and optimization methods.

Semester Overview

See wiki [Calendar Fall 2026](#) for detailed, up-to-date schedule.

Week	Date	Activity/Event
Week 1	Week of Aug 24	Introductions Overview of team's work Discussion of semester goals
Week 2	Week of Aug 31	Sub-team selections finalized Sub-team meeting times finalized
Week 3	Week of Sep 2	Assignment: Self-grade VIP notebook with rubric Verification of Student Participation in class, due by Tuesday at 4pm
Week 4	Week of Sep 9	Due: Self-graded rubric
Week 8	Week of Oct 12	Web-based peer-evaluations released for students to complete. Online form due by end of day Friday. Late

submissions will not be accepted.

Midterm grades for 2000-level courses due in OSCAR (S for satisfactory, U for unsatisfactory).

Midterm Presentations		
Week 10	Week of Oct 26	Turn in VIP notebooks after team meeting for mid-term grading
Week 10	Oct 31	Withdraw Deadline
Week preceding finals	Nov 30 – Dec 8 Open Close	Web-based peer-evaluations released for students to complete. Online form closes at 11:59PM on Tuesday. Late submissions will not be accepted
Final Presentation	Friday, December 11 6:00PM – 8:50PM	Final presentations Turn in VIP notebooks at team meeting for final grading
Finals Week	Dec 10 – Dec 17	No assignments.

Grading

The premise of VIP is teams working on projects. Much like a real-world team, individual members work on different aspects of the project. Team members range from sophomores through graduate students, from first-time participants to students who have been involved for four or more semesters. The number of credits for which a student is enrolled is taken into account in grading. Zero-credit students (reserved for paid participation only) participate in the same grading process.

Your grade is based on three areas, along with three requirements. Although each student contributes in different ways, you must demonstrate achievements in all three areas below.

1. Documentation and records (33%)

- VIP Notebook (not optional);
- VIP Wiki/blog documentation: <https://github.gatech.edu/emade/emade/wiki/Automated-Algorithm-Design>;
- Code (via GT GitHub) if team is developing software: <https://github.gatech.edu/emade>.

2. Personal accomplishments and contributions to your team's goals (33%)

- Quizzes, learning modules, essays, reports required by your advisor(s);
- Engagement in project;
- Pursuit of knowledge necessary for project;
- Contributions to the technical progress of the team;
- For more experienced members of the team, contributions to the management of the project may be expected;

- Support for team events such as VIP poster sessions and competitions.

3. Teamwork and interaction (33%)

- Peer Evaluations;
- On-time attendance in meetings;
- Actively contributes to overall team goals;
- Coordinates activities with other team members;
- Assists other team members via resources such as Discord (<https://discord.gg/As9bPw8YJy>) or class help desk hours;
- Team presentation(s).

· As part of the assessment of the above, each student is required to:

- Maintain a VIP notebook. Scans of well-maintained VIP notebooks are available on the VIP website. **Each student must understand that if work is not documented in their VIP notebook, "Then you didn't do it,"** (i.e. work that is not documented in the notebook will not count toward your grade).
- Complete the mid-term peer evaluation. This is a web-based form, and links are available on the VIP website. **Failure to complete the peer evaluation will result in a full letter grade deduction. Late submissions are not accepted.**
- Complete the final peer evaluation, which will be available for one week during the week preceding finals. **Failure to complete the peer evaluation will result in a full letter grade deduction. Late submissions are not accepted.**

Performance Assessments

Performance assessments will be done once at mid-terms and again at the completion of the semester. The mid-term assessment is advisory.

Assessments will include:

Notebooks	Will your VIP notebook be of use to people who join the team later and need to refer to it? This includes legibility, intelligible technical and meeting notes, and overall organization. See (Notebooks Spring 2023)
Wiki content	Documentation produced online, either through the VIP wiki site, or other VIP-approved site.
GT GitHub (if student is developing software)	Code produced and checked into the GT GitHub or other VIP-approved code repository. The frequency, quantity and quality of contributions are evaluated.

Academic Honesty

The main principle in VIP academic honesty is that you will not present someone else's work as your own. Tests and specific assignments (homework, lab assignments, etc.) must be your own work. For other work you are encouraged to consult whatever sources are helpful in learning and understanding the issues associated with the material, but you should always provide appropriate references and citations where such material is included in your VIP notebook, programming code, presentations, etc.

Additionally, to provide a good working environment for all students, you're expected to adhere to rules given here, posted, or disseminated in class. Academic Honesty is taken seriously and failure to follow these principles will result in disciplinary actions as stated in the Student/Faculty Handbook.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Georgia Tech offers accommodations to students with disabilities. If you need a classroom accommodation, please make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services (www.disabilityservices.gatech.edu). If you have an accommodation letter from ODS, please provide your team advisor with a copy of your accommodation letter and discuss with them how your accommodations will be applied. This should be done as early as possible in the semester.

Labs and Facilities

VIP has rooms and equipment that are shared by many VIP teams. In order to provide a good working environment, the following rules apply to anyone with access to these rooms and equipment:

1. The room priorities are:
 1. Scheduled team meetings, lectures, and learning modules;
 2. Weekly sub-team meetings (multiple groups can use rooms at same time);
 3. Video conferences or special meetings with VIP stakeholders;
 4. Other project-related work (multiple groups can use rooms at same time).

Room schedules can be viewed on the VIP website.

While the above priorities indicate which events take precedence, a good neighbor policy on using the rooms applies. If you need to access computers, equipment, or work on a project in the room while other activities are going on (sub-team meetings, etc.), you are welcome to do so as long as it does not disrupt a scheduled activity. Similarly, multiple groups may use a VIP room at the same time. Also, where it does not disrupt one of the above uses, VIP participants may use the rooms for other activities such as studying.

2. Everyone is expected to pitch in to keep the rooms clean. Food is allowed in the rooms provided any spills or messes are cleaned immediately. The rooms are monitored by camera, and **staff will pull videos to identify offenders**. Gum is a particular problem especially in carpeted rooms. Do not place used gum anyplace other than in a trash can.
3. The rooms have equipment both for general use and for specific teams. General use equipment includes the projector in Klaus 1440, and monitors in VL 465 and VL 463B. Other equipment may be for general use or dedicated to a team specific purpose; some equipment may be general use one semester and assigned to a team another semester. If you are unsure of whether equipment is available for general use, contact the VIP trouble-ticket system at vip-request@ece.gatech.edu. You should only use equipment for the designated purpose. Some equipment may pose personal hazards if used inappropriately!
 1. Equipment owned by the VIP Program may not be removed from a VIP room without completed an equipment loan agreement, which would need to be approved by one of the VIP Directors. To request permission, email vip-request@ece.gatech.edu.

2. You will be responsible for the replacement cost of any equipment not returned in good condition.
3. You must be sure you know how to operate the equipment safely. Written approval to use the equipment does not indicate that the team advisor has reviewed equipment use and safety. You are responsible for knowing the hazards and safe operation of any equipment you use.
4. Computer accounts are issued for your use only. You may not share computer accounts with anyone else, even another team member. All computer usage is subject to rules and policies of Georgia Tech, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents, and the State of Georgia. Additionally, you are expected to be considerate of other users. Computer permissions are not authoritative. For example, just because you have file access to something does not indicate that it is appropriate for you to read or modify that file.
5. Buzz-card access to VIP facilities is a privilege contingent on abiding by the above rules. **Buzz-card access is logged, and rooms are video recorded.**Be aware that if there is a problem (theft, vandalism, or simply a mess left in a room), the logs and video records will be consulted. Do not allow unknown people to access VIP facilities. Be sure to secure the facilities (i.e. close the door) when you leave.

Category-AAD