



Administrative Procedure

Chapter 4 – Instructional Services

AP 4105 – DISTANCE EDUCATION

Consistent with federal and state regulations pertaining to financial aid eligibility, the District authenticates/verifies that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education courses is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The District will provide to each student at the time of registration, a statement of the process in place to protect student privacy. No student shall be charged additional fees associated with verification of student identity.

The Executive Instruction Officer or designee in collegial consultation via the District Governance Council shall utilize one or more of these methods to authenticate or verify the student's identity:

1. secure credentialing/login and password;
2. proctored examinations; or
3. new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

Definition

Distance Education means education that uses one or more technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor(s) and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor(s) either synchronously or asynchronously.

1. The internet;
2. One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
3. Audioconferencing; or
4. Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in the paragraph above.

The definition of "distance education does not include correspondence education.

Accessible means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally, and independently as a person without a disability. Although this might not result in identical ease of use compared to that of persons without disabilities, it still must ensure equal opportunity to the educational benefits and opportunities afforded by the technology and equal treatment in the use of such technology.

Course Modality Approval

In order to ensure consistency and academic rigor all sections delivered via distance education are based on the same course outlines of record (CORs) as all other sections of the course.

The review and approval of new and existing courses, regardless of delivery modality shall follow the curriculum approval procedures outlined in AP 4020 titled Curriculum Development. Courses proposed to be offered via distance education shall be approved under the same conditions and criteria as all other courses.

Certification

When approving courses proposed to be offered via distance education, the college curriculum committee will certify course quality standards, quality determinations, and instructor contact as defined and described below.

Quality Standards

The same standards of course quality shall be applied to distance education courses as are applied to in-person classes. Furthermore, distance education courses, materials and resources shall follow Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Quality Determinations

Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance education courses are made with the full involvement of the college curriculum committee and discipline faculty.

Instructor Contact

Each section of a course that is delivered through distance education will include regular and substantive interaction between instructor(s) and students (and among students as described in the course outline of record, either synchronously or asynchronously; through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities.

Substantive interaction: Engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:

1. Providing direct instruction;
2. Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
3. Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
4. Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
5. Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.

Regular interaction: Interaction between a student and instructor(s) is ensured by, prior to the student's completion of a course by:

1. Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled bases commensurate with the length and time and the amount of content in the course; and
2. Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to title 5, sections 55204 and 53200 et seq.

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Addendum to Course Outline

An addendum to the official course outline of record shall be made if any portion of the instruction of a new or existing course is provided through distance education. The addendum must be approved according to the District's curriculum approval procedures. The addendum must address the following:

1. How course outcomes will be achieved in a distance education mode;
2. How the portion of instruction delivered via distance education provides regular and substantive interaction between instructors and students, as well as among students when applicable; and
3. How the portion of instruction delivered via distance education meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Duration of Approval

The approval to offer a course via distance education shall continue to be in effect until changed or cancelled. If there are substantive changes to the course outline of record, the distance education approval shall be reviewed.

Faculty Selection and Workload

Instructors of course sections delivered through distance education are individuals responsible for delivering course content who meet the qualifications for instruction established by the District's accrediting agency. Instructors will be selected using the District or college's same procedures for determining other instructional assignments.

Publication of Distance Education

The class schedule shall include the following for each course offered via distance education:

1. All online and in-person activities;
2. Any required asynchronous in-person activities;
3. Any required technology platforms, devices, and applications; and/or
4. Any test or assessment proctoring requirements.

Reference: Education Code Sections 66700 and 70901 et seq.;
Title 5 Sections 55002.5, 55200 et seq., and 55260 et seq.;
34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 602.17 (U.S. Department of Education regulations on the Integrity of Federal Student Financial Aid Programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended);
ACCJC Accreditation Standard 2

Approved: 2/10/17

Revised: 9/22/23

(Supersedes: New procedure)

Accreditation reference updated July 19, 2024