

**References:**

Title 5 Sections 55200 et seq.

**Definition:** Distance education means an instructional modality in which the instructor and student are separated and interact through the assistance of communication technology.

SLOCCCD defines distance education as a modality which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor. Distance education courses are delivered primarily via the internet, typically using a campus-supported learning management system. In all distance education courses, students are required to use an Internet connected device as the primary technology and may be required to use other technologies to learn course content. Instructors interact with students regularly and effectively to complete assignments and assessments.

Definition of Correspondence Education

In correspondence education, instructional materials are provided by mail or electronic transmission to students who are separated by distance from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced. Correspondence education is not distance education.

Distance Education Delivery Modalities

Distance education courses can be offered in two modes:

**Online** (Fully Online): Courses in which students work entirely without having to come to a SLOCCCD facility for class meetings. If the course requires proctored exams, there must be an option to use a mutually agreed upon non-SLOCCCD site.

**Hybrid** (Partially Online): Courses in which both distance education and on-site attendance is required. If distance education activity is required of the student in lieu of face-to-face class time for any portion of the course, the course is considered hybrid. Similarly, if students in a distance education course are required to come to a SLOCCCD site for any reason other than a proctored exam, the course is defined as hybrid.

Sources:

- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education: *Institutional Eligibility Under the Higher Education Act of 1965, as Amended*. [34 CFR 600.2] <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title34-vol3/pdf/CFR-2011-title34-vol3-sec600-2.pdf>
- ACCJC: *Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education*, August, 2012, pp. 2-3. [http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Guide-to-Evaluating-DE-and-CE\\_2012.pdf](http://www.accjc.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Guide-to-Evaluating-DE-and-CE_2012.pdf)

**Course Approval:** Each proposed or existing course offered in the distance education modality shall be reviewed and approved separately. Separate approval is mandatory if any portion of the instruction in a course or a course section is designed to be provided through distance education.

The review and approval of new and existing distance education courses shall follow the curriculum approval procedures outlined in Board Policy 4020, Program, Curriculum, and Course Development. Courses offered in the distance education modality shall be approved under the same conditions and criteria as all other courses.

**Certification:** When approving distance education courses, the Curriculum Committee will certify the following:

**Course Quality Standards:** The same standards of course quality are applied to the distance education courses as are applied to traditional classroom courses.

**Course Quality Determinations:** Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance education course were made with the full involvement of the Curriculum Committee approval procedures.

**Instructor Contact:** Each section of the course that is delivered through distance education will include regular effective contact between instructor and students.

### Regulations

Title 5, section 55204. Instructor Contact. In addition to the requirements of section 55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district governing boards shall ensure that: (a) Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and student."

In addition, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) expects that institutions will provide evidence of a policy that defines "regular and substantive interaction" between instructor and student. (*Substantive Change Manual*, p. 22)

### Background

The SLOCCCD Distance Education Committee has agreed that that "regular effective contact" is functionally equivalent to "regular substantive interaction." SLOCCCD documents will use the phrase "regular effective contact" to represent the concept.

### SLOCCCD College Effective Contact Procedure

Instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities in the course. A description of the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and

instructor feedback, should be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents that are made available for students when the course officially opens each semester. All distance education courses at SLOCCCD College will include one or more types of regular effective contact as described below.

### Type of Contact

Distance Education instructors may initiate and maintain regular and effective contact with students in one or more of the following ways:

- Threaded discussion forums with appropriate instructor participation
- Email, phone or messaging to individual students
- Weekly announcements to students
- Timely and effective feedback on student work
- Creating and moderating small virtual groups
- Office hours which may be asynchronous or synchronous
- Instructor prepared e-lectures or introductions in the form of e-lectures to any publisher created materials (written, recorded, broadcast, etc.) that, combined with other course materials, creates the “virtual equivalent” of the face-to-face class.
- Facilitating student to student contact

### Verification of Student Identity

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;  
34 Code of Federal Regulations Section 602.17.

Consistent with federal regulations pertaining to federal financial aid eligibility, the District must authenticate or verify 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 and estimated additional student charges associated with verification of student identity, if any.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs shall ensure that instructors verify student identity by doing one of the following:

- Teach their courses in the district’s Learning Management System, which requires secure login and password to access

-or-

- Train on authentication issues, and

- Provide written documentation on how the course uses other accepted methods of verifying student identity.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs shall establish procedures for providing a statement of the process in place to protect student privacy and estimated additional student charges associated with verification of student identity, if any, to each student at the time of registration.

**Duration of Approval:** All distance education courses approved under this procedure will continue to be in effect unless there are substantive changes of the course outline.

Approved: March 23, 2013  
Revised: February 5, 2014  
Effective Date: June 1, 2013