

AP 4105 Distance Education

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

Distance education courses can be offered in three modes ¹:

1. Fully Online (OL): 100% of instructional hours is provided through distance education; there are no required face-to-face sessions, though proctored exams may be required. If the course requires proctored exams, there must be an option to use a mutually agreed upon non-SLOCCCD site.
2. Hybrid (HY): A combination of face-to-face and distance education with at least 51% of the hours of instruction for the course provided through distance education. [5 CCR 55210]
3. Blended (BL): A combination of face-to-face and distance education with less than 51% of the hours of instruction provided through distance education.

Distance Education Faculty Qualifications and Approval

As an essential part of our commitment to student success in all areas of learning, distance education courses at SLOCCCD should provide high quality, innovative instruction that maintains the highest standards and best practices in the teaching and learning environment delivered electronically.

SLOCCCD is committed to ensuring that faculty who wish to teach online be proficient in basic technology skills and online pedagogical skills (course design, student interaction/authentication, student assessment and accessibility) in order to assure that online course quality translates into student success.

Qualifications

¹ 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] and ACCJC: Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education, August, 2012, pp. 2-3.

Prior to teaching an online or hybrid course at Cuesta College, faculty must meet one of the following requirements one semester prior to assignment:

1. Has completed formal training or college-level coursework from an accredited college or university in online teaching and associated technology that included course design, student interaction, student assessment and ADA / 508 compliance.
2. Has completed two semesters of teaching in an online format, preferably using the SLOCCCD Learning Management System (LMS), that included course design, student interaction, student assessment and ADA / 508 compliance.
3. Present a teaching demonstration to the Distance Education Standards Subcommittee (a subcommittee of the DE Committee/Academic Senate) in an online format, showing evidence of technology literacy and distance education pedagogy fundamentals, including familiarity with SLOCCCD's Learning Management System. (see Distance Education Resources Website for technology literacy and pedagogical readiness qualifications).
4. Has completed three (3) courses for online teaching and learning as prescribed by SLOCCCD's Distance Education Committee (Course available through @One or SLOCCCD's in house training series) that included course design, student interaction/authentication, student assessment, and ADA / 508 compliance.

In addition to the above, a faculty member must possess basic technological proficiency in computer skills such as:

- work within a standard operating environment (PC or MAC),
- manage and manipulate files,
- use standard word processing application(s),
- use the Internet and email accounts,
- upload and manage content in the course learning management system.

Faculty should also be acquainted with and feel comfortable using more advanced programs and applications. Additionally, they should possess the following pedagogical skills to successfully teach online:

Fundamental Principles

- Distinguish the differences between face-to-face and online instruction.
- Understand the unique challenges that affect academic integrity and student authentication in the online environment.
- Use the approved Course Outline of Record to define goals and outcomes to ensure quality of online instruction is equivalent to face to face instruction.
- Demonstrate awareness of institutional policies and institutional services (such

as code of conduct, student authentication, academic honesty, drop policy, DSPS services, library services, tutorial services).

Management and Interaction

- Engage in regular effective contact (in accordance with district guidelines below) through faculty to student and student to student interactions.
- Set clear expectations about course policies in a syllabus (such as course participation, netiquette, time requirements, course evaluation, necessary materials).
- Provide and explain strategies for ongoing, timely feedback and suggestions for improving student performance.

Technology Integration

- Effectively use a range of discipline appropriate tools that support student learning and engagement.
- Employ appropriate tools for course communication, discussion and assessment.

Assessment

- Provide multiple opportunities for ongoing authentic assessment that measure both
- student understanding of course content and participation.
- Provide formative feedback and/or grading rubrics to help students achieve learning objectives.

Accessibility

- Create or modify course content, including multimedia so that it is accessible to students with disabilities in compliance with Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 (AA).
- Provide links to campus services (such as technical support and DSPS) and be able to discuss available resources with the students.
- Recognize any potential issues with accessibility and the LMS.

Determination of Qualifications and Approval will be made by the Division Chair as outlined in CCFT contract 5.11.2. Determination must be made at least one semester prior to assignment as to whether or not an instructor meets the qualifications and technological/pedagogical readiness as defined above. The Distance Education Coordinators and/or OEI certified trainers will make recommendations to the Dean or designee for faculty who meet the requirements ².

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 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.

Distance Education Syllabus Standards

All Distance Education course syllabi should follow the Distance Education Syllabus Standards adopted by the Cuesta College Academic Senate. See: http://www.cuesta.edu/student/documents/distancedocs/DE_Syllabus_Standards.docx.

The use of these standards will assist faculty in adhering to quality standards for student success and to comply with national and regional articulation agreements and the California Education Code.

² Sources: ACCJC: June 2015 Edition of Guide to Evaluating and Improving Institutions. Standards corresponding to IIA.1, IIA.2, IIA.5, IIA.7, IIA.16, IIIA.1, IIIA.2 Pages 24, 25, 27, 30, 44 & 58, Course Design Rubric for Online Education Initiative, and @One Standards for Quality Online Teaching

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

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
Reviewed: August 21, 2015
Revised: February 23, 2016