



ADMINISTRATIVE

PROCEDURE

4105

DESERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

DISTANCE AND CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

Definitions:

Distance Education: Per Title 5 Section 55200, Distance education means education that uses one or more of the 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 instructor(s) either synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies that may be used to offer distance education include: (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) audio conference, (4) other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in this definition. Distance education does not include correspondence courses. All distance education is subject to the general requirements under Title 5 as well as the specific requirements of articles 55200 and 55204. In addition, instruction provided as distance education is subject to the requirements that may be imposed by the American with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. Section 12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 Section 794d).

The U.S. Department of Education defines distance education as education that uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, as well as among students, either synchronously or asynchronously. (Title 34 Subtitle B, Chapter IV Part 600 Subpart A section 600.2)

Correspondence Education: Correspondence education means education provided through one or more courses by a community college or district under which the college or district provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited due to separation, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced, although a regular cycle of assignment submissions and delivery of feedback should be established for facilitated learning. If a course is part correspondence and part residential training, it is considered a correspondence course. Correspondence education is not distance education.

Course Approval: Distance and correspondence education courses shall contain the same content, rigor, and course quality as in-person courses and must meet all state and federal requirements. Each proposed or existing course offered through distance and correspondence education shall be reviewed and approved via an addendum to the Course

Outline by the Curriculum Committee. Separate approval is mandatory, according to Title 5, Sections 55378 and 55206, if any portion of the instruction in a course or a course section is designed to be replaced through distance education. The review and approval of new and existing distance education courses shall follow curriculum approval procedures as outlined in Board Policy and Administrative Procedure 4020 Program, Course, and Curriculum Development.

Addendum to the 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 or correspondence education. The addendum must be approved according to the District's curriculum approval procedures. The addendum must address the following:

Course Quality Determinations:

Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance and correspondence education course were made with the full involvement of the Curriculum Committee's approval procedures.

- How course outcomes will be achieved in a distance or correspondence education mode;
- Regular interaction:
 - Interaction between a student and instructor(s) is ensured by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency: (1) providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency 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.
- 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 District's or program's accrediting agency.
- Instructor Contact:
 - Distance Education: Each section of the course that is delivered through distance education will include regular and substantive interaction between the instructor(s) and students, as well as 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.
- For correspondence education, how the portion of instruction delivered via correspondence education documents and facilitates learning progression through a cycle of assignment submissions and feedback; and
- How the portion of instruction delivered via distance education meets the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. Section 12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. Section 794d)

Duration of Approval: All distance and correspondence education courses approved under this procedure will continue to be in effect unless there are substantial changes to the in-person Course Outline of Record (COR). Departments shall review distance education courses when in-person courses are modified or submitted for review.

Distance Education Instructor Certification: Distance Education (DE) faculty must be certified to teach distance education prior to being assigned a distance education course. New faculty hires may be scheduled with a one semester waiver but must complete the DE Instructor Certification within their first Fall or Spring term of employment. Certification is granted by satisfactorily completing an online certification program approved by the Academic Senate and offered through the local POCR Senate Subcommittee.

Certification Waivers: Faculty who have taken an equivalent course in Online Instruction and/or Accessibility within the past 5 years may be eligible for a waiver of some certification requirements. Eligibility for waivers will be reviewed and approved by the Academic Senate through the Local POCR Senate Subcommittee, following the guidelines outlined in College of the Desert's Distance Education certification policy. The waiver request process can be found on the DE Website and handbook.

Re-certification: In order to maintain DE certification, the faculty member shall demonstrate continued professional growth in online education. Recertification is granted by demonstrating satisfactory evidence of competency in online teaching. Recertification must be approved by the Academic Senate through the Local POCR Senate Subcommittee through one of the following options

- Review and alignment of a current distance education course shell consistent with COD's DE quality standards outlined by the Senate and implemented by the local POCR Senate Subcommittee.
- Satisfactorily completing an online recertification program approved by the Academic Senate and offered through the local POCR Senate Subcommittee.

For additional information on Distance Education Instructor Certification, Waivers, or Re-certification refer to College of the Desert's Distance Education Subcommittee website and contact the Distance Education and Instructional Design Coordinators or Educational Technology and Distance Education Senate Chair.

Accessibility: Each course that is delivered through distance education must comply with up-to-date Section 508 accessibility requirements. All course content delivered via distance education must be accessible to all persons including those with disabilities. All activities and instructional media shall be accessible, including, but not limited to,

- a. accurately captioned videos
- b. transcribed audio files
- c. images that have alternative text
- d. readable course materials using effective font, color contrast, and spacing
- e. meaningful hyperlink text
- f. documents that are created in such a way that screen reading software is able to read them
- g. accessible synchronous communication
- h. prescribed accommodations that are followed for other graded course activities
- i. keyboard navigation.

Enrollment, Attendance and Participation in Distance Education Courses: Students will register and enroll in distance education courses in the same manner as in-person courses. Faculty must make online courses available on or before 8:00 a.m. on the first day of class. It is the right of the faculty member to determine their own participation and drop policy based on requirements of the college catalogue, but faculty must state the policy in their syllabus. Faculty have the right to drop, as a No Show, a student who does not complete the check-in procedure within 48 hours; the 48 hours begins at 8:00 a.m. on the first day of class or the first day students late register.

Attendance will be determined through contact with professors in the first week of the term; logging into the learning management system does not constitute active participation. Professors may drop students from DE courses for lack of active participation. Active participation may include, but is not limited to, writing in discussion forums, submitting assignments, taking quizzes and/or exams, or other interactive class activities. The COD Faculty Enrollment Services Guide describes the importance of recording a student's last date of attendance or activity if they received a grade of 'F' or 'FW' in the course.

Instructional time in all credit courses, regardless of modality, follows the standard formula derived from Title 5, section 55002.5. One unit of credit is defined as a minimum of 48 total hours of student work, inclusive of all contact hours plus outside-of-class, or homework. Faculty must plan an approximate one-to-two ratio of instructional time to homework and study based on units of credit courses. For example: in a 3-unit online course, online course work should be equivalent to 3 hours of face-to-face work per week of a regular term (completing course work, such as but not limited to, lecture, discussion, assignments, and quizzes); and homework would be equivalent to 6 hours work per week of a regular term.

Authentication of Students in Distance Education Courses: Any activity that results in a grade in a DE course will be conducted through College of the Desert's server-authenticated methods.

Accepted practices for authentication include user ID and password authentication to access the student portal or learning management system or by use of COD e-mail address. Publisher materials may also be included as long as the publisher materials require a unique login and are accessed through COD authenticated methods.

Scheduling of Distance Education Courses: Distance education courses shall be listed in the COD Schedule of Classes in the same manner as in-person courses, with any required on-campus meetings and other required components prominently displayed to students. Area deans (in collaboration with department chairs) determine and approve faculty assignments for all courses, including distance education sections. Chairs and program faculty should consider modality of delivery as part of their Program Enhancement Plan. As per the Collective Bargaining Agreement, all teaching assignments requiring distance education shall be voluntary on behalf of the faculty. Once scheduled, faculty should have access to course development areas in the learning management system as soon as the next term schedule is finalized to allow for faculty preparation of the online course materials. Faculty will only be scheduled to teach a DE course after successful completion of online certification or upon waiver for newly hired faculty.

Online Education Initiative Course Exchange Scheduling should be mutually agreed upon by

the Office of Instruction, Area deans (in collaboration with department chairs), the Distance Education and Instructional Design Coordinators, and the Academic Senate Educational Technology and Distance Education committee. As per the collective Bargaining Agreement, all teaching assignments requiring distance education, including in the OEI Course Exchange, shall be voluntary on behalf of the faculty.

Evaluation of Distance Education Faculty: Student evaluations and classroom visitation evaluations of distance education faculty shall be conducted per the Faculty Agreement. Prior to conducting a distance education classroom visitation, evaluators should review that course's Distance Education Course Amendment Form and Course Outline of Record (COR). This ensures that the faculty member is teaching to the COR and is utilizing the methods of delivery approved and listed in the Distance Education Course Amendment Form, although not all methods need to be utilized.

Familiarity with distance education pedagogy best practices is helpful in a conducting a course evaluation. It is recommended that the course evaluator complete the DE certification process prior to completing a distance education course evaluation.

Correspondence Education Students: A student is considered to be "enrolled in correspondence courses" if correspondence education courses constitute 50 percent or more of the courses in which the student is enrolled during a financial aid award year.

In order for a correspondence education student to be considered a full-time student at the District, at least one-half of the student's coursework must be made up of non-correspondence coursework that meets one-half of the District's requirement for full-time students.

Support for Distance Education Students: To ensure support for DE students comparable to in-person students, services should be available in a distance education mode. Student Services include, but are not limited to, a DE readiness course, counseling, library resources and library reference services, tutoring, fee payment, and the College's technical support systems.

Authentication/Verification per Federal Financial Aid or Special Services

Eligibility: Consistent with federal regulations pertaining to federal financial aid eligibility, the District authenticates or verifies that the student who registers in a distance education course is the same student who participates in and completes the course of 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 Instruction shall utilize one or more of these methods to authenticate or verify the student's identity:

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

Please see also:

- Board Policy and Administrative Procedure 4020 Program, Curriculum, and Course Development
- College of the Desert Distance Education Plan

References:

Education Code Sections 66700 and 70901 et seq.;

Title 5 Sections 55200 et seq.;

Title 5 Sections 55260 et seq.;

34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R) 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);

Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. § 794d);

ACCJC Accreditation Standard 2

Administrator: VP Instruction

Board Information: March 15, 2013

Board Information: February 11, 2015

Board Meeting/Information Item: November 16, 2016

Board Meeting/Information Item: June 14, 2018

Board Meeting/Information Item: June 18, 2020

Executive Cabinet Review/Approval: November 1, 2022

Educational Policies and Practices Committee Review/Approval, 1st Reading: September 5, 2024

Educational Policies and Practices Committee Review/Approval, 2nd Reading: October 3, 2024

All Faculty Senate Review/Approval, 1st Reading: October 10, 2024

All Faculty Senate Review/Approval, 2nd Reading: October 24, 2024

College Planning Council Review/Approval, 1st Reading: November 8, 2024

College Planning Council Review/Approval, 2nd Reading: November 22, 2024

Board Meeting/Information Item: December 20, 2024

Next Review: 2026-2027