



ADMINISTRATIVE

PROCEDURE

4105

DESERT COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

DISTANCE AND CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION

Definitions:

Distance Education: Per Title 5 Section 55200, distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance or time and interact through the assistance of technology. 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.

- I. College of the Desert offers Distance Education and Web Enhanced courses via [six](#) delivery modes:
 - a. Online: a course in which 100% of instruction takes place entirely online with no mandatory face-to-face meetings, synchronous visits, and/or campus visits.
 - b. Online Synchronous: a course in which 100% of instruction takes place entirely online with mandatory scheduled virtual meetings.
 - c. Hybrid: a course that provides instruction both online and face-to-face with at least at least 25% of course hours scheduled as mandatory on-campus meeting. Mandatory meetings are regularly scheduled and the dates are posted in the schedule of classes. Students are informed of mandatory

meetings in the schedule of classes. All remaining course hours are scheduled entirely online with no additional mandatory meetings.

- d. Hyflex: Hyflex courses meet on campus for all scheduled hours with a live zoom component and a fully asynchronous component as attendance options. Students may choose from among the three attendance options. Choice of attendance may change weekly dependent upon the student need.
- e. Proctored Online Course (POC): Assignments and examinations in a Proctored Online Course will be submitted in an asynchronous manner. ~~but you will~~ Students may be required to take tests at a proctoring facility. Your instructor is responsible for arranging proctoring accommodations at COD. Off-site proctoring services (other than at a COD location) are arranged by the student and are subject to approval from the instructor.
- f. Web Enhanced Course (WEC): Web Enhanced Courses are in-person classes that make routine use of the Learning Management System. These courses hold all their meetings on campus. The instructor will post required course materials and/or activities online and may require assignments be turned in online.

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 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:

- How course outcomes will be achieved in a distance or correspondence education mode;
- For distance education, how the portion of instruction delivered via distance education provides regular and substantive interactions between instructors and students as well as student to student;
- 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 Distance Education Senate Subcommittee; online certification DE courses include the following topics:

- a. Online Instruction & Course Design,
- b. Accessibility,
- c. DE at COD which includes a capstone course shell review assignment.

Certification Waivers: Faculty who have taken an equivalent course in Online Instruction and/or Accessibility within the past 5 years may be eligible to waive these course requirements. The DE at COD course cannot be waived. Faculty applying for a waiver must submit the following documents to the Distance Education and Instructional Design Coordinators: evidence of the completion of the coursework (certificate, transcript, etc.) and course descriptions including hours/units of course work. Upon waiver approval, faculty should then complete the DE at COD course.

Re-certification: In order to maintain DE certification, the faculty member shall demonstrate continued professional growth through the completion of 40 hours of DE requirements every five years. The faculty applying for re-certification will submit to the Distance Education and Instructional Design Coordinators a description with attached documentation of the completion of re-certification requirements on or before the 5th year following the initial certification date:

- 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 Distance Education Subcommittee.
- Additional hours can be satisfied by participating in activities such as, but not limited to, attendance at online teaching Flex presentations, workshops, professional meetings and seminars, conferences, and Distance Education Subcommittee membership.

Failure to submit re-certification documentation before the 5-year deadline will result in de-certification until the re-certification has been completed.

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 [a](#) and Instructional Design Coordinators [s](#) or Educational Technology and Distance Education Senate Chair.

Establishing Regular, Effective, and Substantive Faculty-Initiated Contact: Instructors will use the following practices of regular and substantive contact in their Distance Education courses:

- a. Regular Announcements: Faculty should make general course related announcements to the students in their distance education classes on a weekly basis, whether by the announcement area in the Learning Management System or via e-mails to the entire class.
- b. Establishing Expectations: Faculty will include in their syllabus or course orientation a description of the frequency and timeliness of instructor-initiated contact and

- feedback, as well as expectations for student participation. This should include the timeframe for responding to e-mails and phone calls, the timeframe for receiving feedback on student work, the timeframe for submission of assignments, and the expectations of discussion board postings required of the student. This information will be available to students on the first day of class.
- c. **Faculty-Initiated Interaction:** Faculty will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine that they have access to the course materials, that they understand the material, that they understand what is required of them, and that they are participating in the activities of the course. There are various ways of accomplishing this, including but not limited to, asynchronous discussion board forums with appropriate faculty input in the forum or grade book, synchronous chats, video conferencing, individualized contact via phone or e-mail, and, in the case of a hybrid course, in face-to-face meetings.
 - d. **Timely Feedback on Student Work:** Faculty will grade and provide feedback on student work within a reasonable timeframe. If discussion boards are required, students should be given guidelines at the outset of the course and feedback on their participation throughout the duration of the course.
 - e. **Content Delivery:** Faculty will provide content material either through online materials (in written, video, and/or audio forms) and/or through introductions to materials not created by the instructor (such as publisher-provided materials, web sites, streaming video, etc.).
 - f. **Notifying Students of Faculty Unavailability/Offline Time:** If the instructor must be out of contact briefly for any reason, notification to students will be made in the announcements area of the course and/or via e-mail that includes when the students can expect regular substantive contact to resume. This should occur for any offline periods lasting longer than three business days.
 - g. **Faculty Absence Notification:** If a faculty member must be offline for a period of time that results in the faculty member not being able to meet his or her regular substantive contact for any given week, this would be considered an absence and the Dean of the division in which the course is taught must be notified. Absences will be handled in accordance with the negotiated faculty contract.
 - h. **Face-to-Face Forms of Contact:** Faculty are encouraged to utilize the face-to-face forms of contact mentioned in Title 5, Section 55211 (e.g., group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, and library workshops), but to keep in mind that in the case of fully online classes it will not be possible for all students to attend such activities and these activities cannot be mandatory unless the course is hybrid and meetings times are announced in the schedule. Alternate online activities, such as those mentioned in the sections above, that entail instructor-student contact should be made available for such students who cannot attend.
 - i. **Student to Student Contact:** Faculty will ensure ongoing regular and substantive student-to-student contact. Best practices include, but are not limited to, include implementing communication means for varied types of interaction in the course design, assigning and monitoring weekly assignments and projects that promote collaboration among students, posing questions in the discussion boards that encourage critical thinking skills and promote interaction, and monitoring student engagement to ensure that students participate with depth.

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 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 AM 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 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 and Curriculum 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 II.A.1

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 & Practices Committee Review/Approval, 1st Reading: May 4, 2023

Educational Policies & Practices Committee Review/Approval, 2nd Reading: September 7, 2023

Educational Policies & Practices Committee Review/Approval, 3rd Reading: November 2, 2023

All Faculty Senate Review/Approval, 1st Reading: November 9, 2023

All Faculty Senate Review/Approval, 2nd Reading: December 14, 2023

College Planning Council Review/Approval, 1st Reading: February 9, 2024

College Planning Council Review/Approval, 2nd Reading: February 23, 2024

Board Meeting/Information Item: March 15, 2024

Next Review: March 2029