

Coast Community College District
Administrative Procedures
Chapter 4
Academic Affairs

AP 4105 Distance Education

This Administrative Procedure is associated with BP 4020 Program, Curriculum, and Course Development.

References:

California Education Code Sections 66700, 70901 and 70902
California Code of Regulations Title 5 Sections 55200 et seq.;
34 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R) Parts 600.2, 600.22 and 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;
BP 4020 and AP 4020 Program, Curriculum, and Course Development

I. DEFINITION

Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and the student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology.

34 C.F.R 600.2 defines distance education as education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) below of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously.

The technologies may 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 conferencing; or
- (4) Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this definition.

34 C.F.R 600.22(1)(7)(i) and (ii) state that “academic attendance” and “attendance at an academically-related activity” include, but are not limited to

- (1) Physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students;
- (2) Submitting an academic assignment;
- (3) Taking an exam, an interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction;
- (4) Attending a study group that is assigned by the institution;
- (5) Participating in an online discussion about academic matters;

- (6) Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course; and

Do not include activities where a student may be present, but not academically engaged, such as

- (1) Living in institutional housing;
- (2) Participating in the institution's meal plan;
- (3) Logging into an online class without active participation; or
- (4) Participating in academic counseling or advisement.

A determination of "academic attendance" or "attendance at an academically-related activity" must be made by the institution; a student's certification of attendance that is not supported by institutional documentation is not acceptable under federal laws and regulations.

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 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.

The District shall utilize secure credentialing/login and password to authenticate or verify the student's identity.

II. COURSE APPROVAL

Each proposed or existing course offered by distance education 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 Administrative Procedure 4020 Program, Curriculum, and Course Development. Distance education courses shall be approved under the same conditions and criteria as all other courses.

III. CERTIFICATION

When approving distance education courses, the college Curriculum Committee shall 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 are made with the full involvement of the instructional dean, department chair, and the Curriculum Committee.

Instructor Qualifications: Faculty teaching distance education course shall be selected by the same procedures used to determine all instructional assignments.

Instructor Contact: Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular and substantive instructor initiated contact between instructor and students, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities. Alternate online activities that entail instructor-student contact should be made available to students unable to attend face-to-face activities. Alternate online activities include, but are not limited to, online chats, video or audio conferencing, online interactive tutorials or computer-assisted instruction, online discussions, or online exams.

Instructors will use the following practices of regular and substantive contact in their distance education courses:

- *Regular Announcements:* Faculty should make general course related announcements to the students in their distance education classes on a regular basis, whether by the announcement area in the Learning Management System or via e-mails to the entire class.
- *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 quantity of discussion board postings required of the student. This information will be available to students on the first day of class.
- *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 and 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, synchronous chats, video conferencing, individualized contact via phone or e-mail, and, in the case of a hybrid course, regular face-to-face meetings.
- *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.
- *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.).
- *Notifying Students of Faculty Unavailability/Offline Time:* If the instructor must be out of contact briefly for any reason (such as an illness or family emergency that takes the instructor offline), 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 effective contact to resume. This should occur for any offline periods lasting longer than two days.

- *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 effective 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.
- *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. Alternate online activities, such as those mentioned in the sections above, that entail instructor-student contact should be made available for such students.

IV. 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 of record. Distance education courses are subject to the curriculum review process as are all courses subject to Title 5 regulations.

V. ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

The following general principles should be followed to the extent possible to ensure that distance education courses are accessible to students with documented disabilities.

Distance education courses, resources, and materials are designed and delivered in such a way that the level of communication and course taking experience is the same for students with or without documented disabilities.

Instructional materials and textbooks shall permit maximum opportunity for access by students with documented disabilities without the need for outside assistance (i.e. sign language interpreters, aides, or other forms of human assistance).

Distance education resources provide "built-in" accommodation where possible (i.e. closed captioning or descriptive narration) and/or interface design/content layout that is accessible to "industry standard" assistive technology in common use by persons with disabilities.

Alternative testing format and extended test-taking time are provided, which address the student's documented disability and impact on his or her academic performance.

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