

AP 4105 Distance Education

Reference: **Education Code Sections 66700 and 70901 et seq.;**
Title 5 Section 55200.5, 552200 et seq. and 55260 et seq.;**34**
Code of Federal Regulations 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; and 34 Code of Federal Regulations
Section 602.17.;**ACCJC Accreditation Standard II.A.1**

Date Issued: June 13, 2012

Revised: July 21, 2020

NOTE: This procedural language is **legally required** in an effort to show good faith compliance with the applicable Federal Regulations if the District offers distance education or correspondence education. The Federal Regulations require districts to have processes in place to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives academic credit. A district will meet this requirement if it follows the language below. Note that the Federal Regulations do not require districts to charge students fees associated with the verification of the student's identity. However, any district that does charge a fee, must notify the student in writing of the estimated amount of those fees in addition to a statement of the processes used to protect the student's privacy.

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 Chancellor shall ~~establish procedures that will provide~~utilize one or more of these methods to authenticate or verify the student's identity for distance education and correspondence education courses.

NOTE: Insert **local practice** below: the following approaches are specifically referenced in the federal regulation as appropriate. The key is to utilize an accepted procedure for verifying a student's identity.

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

The [**Chief Instructional Officer**] 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.

Authentication and Verification of Student Identity:

One or more of these methods will be used 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

NOTE: *The following procedure is legally required if the District has implemented distance education or correspondence education courses. Local practice may be inserted below, but it must include the following minimum requirements contained in Title 5.*

Definitions:

~~Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication by using one or more technologies to deliver instruction, either synchronously or asynchronously. Any portion of the course conducted through distance education must include regular effective and substantive contact between instructor and students.~~

What is a DE course?

~~DE Courses are considered the "virtual equivalent" to face to face courses. Therefore, the frequency of the contact will be at least the same as would be established in a regular, face to face course. At the very least, the number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face to face students, will also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with students in the DE format. Contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure that regular contact is maintained, given the nature of asynchronous instructional methodologies, over the course of a week and should occur as often as is appropriate for the course.~~

~~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. Providing students with an open ended question forum, although appropriate, does not constitute the entirety of effective instructor initiated interaction.~~

~~Regular and effective contact is required by federal, state, ACCJC, and GCCCD Board policies.~~

Distance Education: 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.

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:

~~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 T.~~

The review and approval of new and existing distance education courses shall follow the curriculum approval procedures outlined in Administrative Procedures 4020, Program and Curriculum Development. Distance education courses 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 ~~any the distance and correspondence education courses~~ portion of a course conducted through distance education as are applied to traditional in-person courses.

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] approval procedures.

~~**Instructor Contact:** Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, and among students, either synchronously or asynchronously, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, discussions, announcements, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities. Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter.~~

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.

Correspondence Education: Each section of a course conducted through correspondence education will be established through a cycle of assignment submissions and comprehensive, responsive feedback, as determined by [curriculum committee]. Instructors will be responsible for ensuring that each student will receive ongoing support toward making meaningful academic progress.

Addendum to Course Outline: If any portion of the instruction in a new or existing course is to be provided through distance education, an addendum to the official course outline of record shall be required. In addition to addressing how course outcomes will be achieved in a distance education mode, the addendum shall at a minimum specify how the portion of instruction delivered via distance education meets:

- a) Regular and effective contact between instructors and students and among students and
- b) Requirements of the 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. § 749d).

The addendum shall be separately approved according to the district's adopted curriculum approval procedures.

Course Outline of Record or Addendum to Course Outline: The course outline of record or an addendum to the official course outline of record for any new or existing course provided through distance or correspondence education **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 meets the requirement for regular and substantive interaction;
- 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,

- The course design and all course materials must be accessible to every student, including students with disabilities.

Duration of Approval: All distance and correspondence education courses approved under this procedure will continue to be in effect unless there are substantive changes of the course outline initiated by the faculty and the curriculum committees.

Faculty Selection and Workload: Instructors of course sections delivered through distance or correspondence education are individuals responsible for delivering course content who meet the qualifications for instruction established by the District's accrediting agency. Instructors will be selected using the District or college's same procedures for determining other instructional assignments.

Correspondence Education Students: A student is considered to be "enrolled in correspondence courses" if correspondence 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.

NOTE: Insert local practice below; provisions may include:

- For a program that measures progress in credit hours and uses standard terms (semesters, trimesters, or quarters), 12 semester hours or 12 quarter hours per academic term.
- For a program that measures progress in credit hours and does not use terms, 24 semester hours or 36 quarter hours over the weeks of instructional time in the academic year, or the prorated equivalent if the program is less than one academic year.
- For a program that measures progress in credit hours and uses nonstandard-terms (terms other than semesters, trimesters, or quarters) the number of credits determined by,
 - (1) Dividing the number of weeks of instructional time in the term by the number of weeks of instructional time in the program's academic year; and
 - (2) Multiplying the fraction determined under paragraph (3)(A) of this definition by the number of credit hours in the program's academic year.
- For a program that measures progress in clock hours, 24 clock hours per week. A "clock hour" for correspondence education purposes is defined as 60 minutes of preparation in a correspondence course.
- A series of courses or seminars that equals 12 semester hours or 12 quarter hours in a maximum of 18 weeks.

- The work portion of a work experience education course in which the amount of work performed is equivalent to the academic workload of a full-time student.

State Authorization:

Under federal regulations, a student that is enrolled in any educational program including via distance education offered by a post-secondary institution cannot use Title IV program funds for that program if the institution the student is attending does not have authorization in the State in which the student resides. Institutions must develop procedures to make a determination of the State in which a student is located, both at the time of the student's initial enrollment in an educational program and upon formal receipt of information from the student that their location has changed.

To ensure that institutions offering distance education are legally authorized and monitored by states, as required by the Higher Education Act, the proposed regulations clarify state authorization requirements for institutions to participate in the Department's federal student aid programs. The proposed regulations also address state and federal oversight of American colleges operating in foreign locations worldwide.