

## **AP 4105 Distance and Correspondence Education**

Reference:

**Education Code Sections 66700 and 70901 et seq.;**  
**Title 5 Sections 55200 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);**  
**ACCJC Accreditation Standard II.A.1;**  
**ACCJC Policy on Distance and Correspondence Education (revised June 2021)**  
**WASC/ACS Criterion 4, Indicator 4.1a and Criterion 5, Indicator 5.4**

### **1.0 Definitions**

- 1.1 Distance Education: Distance Education means education that uses one or more technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are physically separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interactions between students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously:
- 1.1.1 The internet;
  - 1.1.2 One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
  - 1.1.3 Audioconferencing; and
  - 1.1.4 Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in the paragraph above.
- 1.2 Substantive Interaction: Substantive interaction means engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and includes at least two of the following:
- 1.2.1 Providing direct instruction;
  - 1.2.2 Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
  - 1.2.3 Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
  - 1.2.4 Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; and
  - 1.2.5 Other instructional activities approved by the District's or a program's accrediting agency.
- 1.3 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

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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.

### **2.0 Course Approval**

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 The review and approval of new and existing distance education courses shall follow the curriculum approval procedures outlined in AP 4020, Program and Curriculum Development. Distance education courses shall be approved under the same conditions and criteria as all other courses, and funded according to established campus procedures.

### **3.0 Certification**

- 3.1 When approving distance education courses, the respective Curriculum Committees and Vice President of Instruction or President will certify the following:
  - 3.1.1 Course Quality Standards: The same standards of course quality are applied to the distance education and correspondence courses as are applied to in-person courses.
  - 3.1.2 Course Quality Determinations: Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance and correspondence education courses were made with the full involvement of the academic deans and curriculum committees.
  - 3.1.3 Instructor Contact: Each section of the course that is delivered through distance education will include regular and substantive contact between instructor and students.

### **4.0 Instructor Responsibilities**

- 4.1 Each section of the course that is delivered through Distance Education shall include regular and substantive interactions between the instructor and students, initiated by the instructor, as well as among students, either synchronously or asynchronously. The District ensures regular interactions between a student and an instructor or instructors, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency, by:
  - 4.1.1 Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with a student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and

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the amount of content in the course or competency.

4.1.2 Monitoring a student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interactions with a student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by a student.

4.2 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 through the curriculum approval process. Instructors will be responsible for ensuring that each student will receive ongoing support toward making meaningful academic progress.

Students who participate in correspondence education will have access to student support services, including counseling, library searches, research assistance, and tutoring or other learning support through mail, email, telephone or in-person contact, as determined through the curriculum approval process.

### **5.0 Addendum to Course Outline**

5.1 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 (BP/AP 4020). The addendum must address the following:

5.1.1 How course outcomes will be achieved in a distance or correspondence education mode;

5.1.2 For distance education, how the portion of instruction delivered via distance education provides regular and substantive contact between instructors and students;

5.1.3 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,

5.1.4 How the portion of instruction delivered via distance education meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

### **6.0 Duration of Approval**

6.1 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.

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### **7.0 Faculty Distance Education Training and Certification**

7.1 Instructors of course sections delivered through distance education will be required to complete training in online pedagogy and be certified as a result.

7.1.1 The Colleges and NOCE will maintain and publish a process for faculty to remain certified to teach distance education courses.

7.2 At a minimum, training in online pedagogy will include course design, regular and substantive interaction, accessibility and assessment. The Colleges and NOCE will maintain and publish an equivalency process for training in online pedagogy.

### **8.0 Correspondence Education Students**

8.1 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.

8.2 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.

9.0 Consistent with federal and state regulations pertaining to financial aid eligibility, the District must authenticate and verify that the student who registers in a Distance Education course is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. No student shall be charged additional fees associated with verification of student identity.

10.0 The District shall make available for faculty members to utilize while teaching a Distance Education course one or more of these methods to authenticate or verify the student’s identity:

10.1 Secure credentialing/login and password for users, including the District-provided Learning Management System;

10.2 Proctored examinations; or

10.3 After consultation with the Academic Senate, new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity.

11.0 Faculty teaching a Distance Education course who accept the electronic submission of coursework that impact a student’s grade, must verify student identity by requiring enrolled students to submit such electronic coursework through the District-provided Learning Management System or the District-provided student email account. Coursework impacting a student’s grade that an instructor allows or requires a student to digitally submit through software or computerized applications other than the District-provided Learning Management System, such as publisher-provided digital homework platforms, must be accessible to the student through integration with, or a hyperlink from, the District-provided Learning Management System.

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- 12.0 Nothing in this procedure precludes faculty teaching Distance Education courses from requiring students, as part of their coursework, to utilize or access the internet, software, or computerized applications.
- 13.0 The District shall establish procedures for providing students a statement of the District's process to protect student privacy and provide to each student a statement of such process at the time of registration.

See Administrative Procedure 4020, Program and Curriculum Development

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