

DISTANCE EDUCATION AND STUDENT AUTHENTICATION PROCESS

A. Definition: Distance education allows the exploration and development of educational initiatives using advanced communication and computing technologies to address student access issues related to geographical, cultural, disability or facility barriers. A distance education course/section or session is defined as the use of technology utilized 51 percent or more of the time to deliver instruction during the course term and where the student and instructor are separated by distance. (CCC Distance Education Guidelines)

Distance education instruction is subject to requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 55200). The Director of the Access and Ability Center will assure that all accommodations are accessible to students with disabilities as outlined in the California Community Colleges Distance Education Guidelines, 2012 edition.

B. Course Approval: Each proposed or existing distance education course 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 Procedures 4020 or 4022.

1. Course Quality Standards: The same standards of course quality shall be applied to distance education as are applied to traditional classroom courses (Title 5, Section 55202).
2. Course Quality Determinations: Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance education course were made with the full involvement of the Curriculum Committee, the Academic Senate, and the Board of Trustees according to Sequoias CCD approval procedures.
3. Duration of Approval: All distance education courses approved under this procedure will continue to be in effect unless changes are warranted through the regular review cycle or there are substantive changes of the course outline.
4. Instructor Contact: All approved distance education courses include regular effective 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 (Title 5, Section 55204). Online courses that do not involve regular and effective contact between instructors and students may

be considered correspondence courses for which apportionment cannot be claimed.

A regular, effective contact audit form, developed by the DECOS committee, is available to instructors who wish to use it as a tool to develop, assess, and maintain course structures and online instructional practices that promote and document regular, effective contact in online courses. The use of the audit form is optional and is not intended as a faculty evaluation tool. The audit form can be found on the DECOS website.

For the Sequoias CCD, authentication uses secure credentialing/login and password within the COS email system and applicable course management systems, as specifically referenced in the federal regulation as appropriate and accepted procedures for verifying a student's identity. The email and Blackboard methods involve secure credentialing/login and password using Banner ID and randomly generated password retrieved from Banner. The other method involves photo ID authentication at hybrid sessions in order to receive password to other course management systems.

The regular, effective contact policy located on the DECOS website assures high quality online education. Any changes to this policy will be made in collegial consultation between the Academic Senate and COSTA.

It is important to document regular effective contact and how it is achieved. Documentation may include email archives, discussion board archives, anecdotal records, and inclusion of information in applicable syllabus and/or curriculum outlines of record on the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each online course/section or session. Standards for documentation may be established by individual divisions, departments, and individual instructors.

C. Faculty Selection and Workload: Instructors of course sections delivered via distance education technology shall be selected by the same procedures used to determine all instructional assignments. Instructors shall possess the minimum qualifications for the discipline into which the course's subject matter most appropriately falls. The number of students assigned to any one course section offered by distance education will be determined by and be consistent with other District procedures related to faculty assignment. (Title 5, Section 55208)

D. Student Authentication Process: 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 course 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 Vice President of Academic Services shall authorize one or more of the methods to authenticate or verify the student's identity approved by federal regulation.

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The Vice President, Academic Services 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.

E- Student's Last Day of Attendance: A student's last day of attendance in an online class is determined by one or more of the following activities:

1. Opening, editing, or submitting an assignment online using the Course Management System assignment feature, by email, or in person.
2. Participating in an online discussion.
3. Engaging in an exam either online or in person.
4. Engaging in course activity beyond login (e.g., wiki, blog, group) as demonstrated by record in Blackboard Course report.

A faculty member is encouraged to store the following evidence in such a manner that it can be easily retrieved should the College be audited:

1. Record of student's grade for assignment or test and corresponding due date.
2. Course report (Course Management System) of user activity beyond login.
3. Email.

F. Ongoing Responsibility of Districts: Title 5, Section 55210 requires that the District maintain records and report data through the Management Information System on the number of students and faculty participating in new courses or sections of established courses offered through distance education. In addition, the District shall provide other information as deemed necessary by the Board of Governors.

G. Reporting: The Distance Education Coordinator will make an annual report to the Board of Trustees addressing the current state of distance education at COS.

References: Title 5, Section 55200 et seq.; California Community Colleges Distance Education Guidelines, March 2004.

Form: Curriculum Committee Distance Education Form

Adopted: May 12, 2009

Revised: April 8, 2013

Revised: May 13, 2015