

## AP 4105 Distance Education

Reference: ***Title 5 Section 55200 et seq.; 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

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The Chancellor shall establish procedures that will provide methods to authenticate or verify the student's identity for distance education and correspondence education courses.

### **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

### **Definition:**

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.

**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 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 portion of a course conducted through distance education as are applied to traditional in-person courses.

**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.

**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.

**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 initiated by the faculty and the curriculum committees.

**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.