

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION**

**Reference:** Title 5 §55200 et seq.;  
Education Code §66700 §70901, §70902

College District Policy and Procedure No. 2515 provide for the College District to rely primarily upon the Academic Senate to develop Distance Education (DE) that complies with federal and state law and Title 5 for curriculum development and mode of instructional delivery.

The DE Plan and Handbook explain current federal regulations for DE, which require the College District to do the following:

- Comply with Section 508 of Federal Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility
- Document academic integrity, student authentication, regular effective contact, and last date of attendance
- Provide access to equivalent student services, library services, and instructional support services
- Train faculty in quality course design, delivery, course facilitation, evaluation of teaching and learning, and new developments in online education
- Assess and train students for online learning
- Evaluate instruction and student learning, including student learning outcomes
- Evaluate student support services for DE students
- Measure success, retention rates, and completion rates
- Monitor quality of course management system

### **Definitions for DE Courses:**

- a) Face-to-face (F2F): 100% is taught in a traditional face-to-face classroom or laboratory environment. This course may also have web-enhanced activities or class information utilizing a course management system (CMS) on which the teacher assigns or posts materials for students to access outside of class.
- b) Hybrid: A hybrid course is a class that offers instruction both online and face-to-face on campus. Required face-to-face meetings are included in the schedule of classes following a predictable pattern (on the same day[s] of the week and at the same

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time). Online instruction uses the college adopted CMS and also follows a predictable pattern. Instructional time follows the Carnegie Unit. This means the faculty must plan an approximate 1:2 ratio of instruction time to homework and study.

- c) Online course: An online course is a class instructed entirely online. The class may meet online using the college adopted Course Management System (CMS), but not for face-to-face instruction. Instructional time follows the Carnegie Unit. This means the faculty must plan an approximate 1:2 ratio of instruction time to homework and study.
- d) Web-enhanced: Web enhanced courses are face-to-face instructional courses that offer students access to class materials, grades, and resources online. Web enhanced courses may offer supplemental activities and homework online, and they may include online communication and electronic submission of coursework. These courses may **not** use Internet-based resources or activities to replace required on-campus face-to-face instruction or in-seat contact hours. Trained instructors may use Blackboard course sites.

All DE instruction will follow the latest agreement between the Southwestern Community College District and the Southwestern College Education Association (SCEA) for Distance Instruction (Article XVI).

### **DE Class Maximums**

Article IX section 9.3.1 states, "The District and the Association agree to maintain class maximum at the level approved by the Curriculum Committee. The recognized class maximum is determined on the course outline as approved by the Curriculum Committee. All development or modification of DE Class Maximums will use the adopted recommendations of the college Curriculum Committee..."that the number of students assigned to any one distance education course section shall be either:

1. 80% of the class maximum set for the face-to-face course in that discipline, or
2. 30 students

### **Policy Standards for DE Instruction:**

As referenced in College District Policy No. 4020 BP, the Curriculum Committee will approve a DE mode of course delivery addendum separately from the F2F course approval. The Curriculum Committee will establish criteria for curriculum processing that complies with federal regulations over DE course delivery including the following areas:

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1. That there be no difference between the content of a F2F course and a course offered with a DE component. Only the mode of delivery may differ as well as the class maximum as approved by the Curriculum Committee.
2. That all courses with a DE component will be taught according to the approved course outline of record (COR) as stipulated by Title 5 and by the SWC Curriculum Handbook.
3. That the instructor will apply all available college means to verify student authenticity and integrity.
4. That the instructor will test all online material to meet compliance with disability access in accordance with Section 508 of Federal Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disability Act.
5. That the syllabus of every course with a DE component will be instructor-generated, rather than publisher-generated, so that the course objectives and student learning outcomes are those of the institution, not the publisher. The syllabus will include approved information unique to a DE course as outlined in the handbook.
6. That each section of the course with a DE component will include regular effective contact (also known as regular substantive contact by the department of education) initiated by the instructor with the students.
  - Instructors will, at a minimum, use the following activities to initiate regular effective contact with students:
    - Threaded discussion forums within the course management system, with appropriate instructor participation. (“Questions for the instructor” forums are good but should be used in conjunction with other forums.)
    - General email
    - Weekly announcements in the Course Management System
    - Timely feedback for student work.
  - Instructor prepared e-lectures or introductions in the form of e-lectures to any publisher created materials (written, recorded, broadcast, etc.) that, combined with other course materials, creates the “virtual equivalent” of the face-to-face class.
  - Group or individual meetings, orientation, review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence,

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voice mail, e-mail, or other activities, and/or CCCConfer, video conference, pod cast, or other synchronous technologies

- CCCConfer is a web conferencing tool that is free to the California Community College System. <http://www.cccconfer.org>
7. Guidelines for attendance and documentation of last date of attendance will be followed.
  8. The availability of student services, instructional support, and library services for students in DE courses with a DE component is equal for students in online or hybrid courses.

For reporting and apportionment purposes, pursuant to California Community College Chancellor's Office requirements, all courses taught 51% or more online are to be identified as "distance education courses."

DE instructional method of delivery forms must be submitted according to the procedures set out in the *SWC Curriculum Handbook*, which is based on the current edition of the *Program and Course Approval Handbook* published by the Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges. All curriculum must be submitted electronically utilizing the College's submission program, CurricUNET, where historical documents and modifications are archived.

### **Substantive Change Review**

Prior to approval by the Curriculum Committee, any DE method of delivery will be reviewed to see if it will cause a substantive change in any program in which it is offered. If the proposed change causes more than 50% of the total number of courses in a program to be available in a DE format, then a substantive change application and a substantive change fee must be budgeted and submitted to the ACCJC by the Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO). Faculty originators and the cognizant deans will identify the source of funding for a substantive change fee, if necessary, prior to submitting the DE forms for approval by the Curriculum Committee. The ALO will submit the substantive change application at the same time the Curriculum Committee reviews the DE application. If the substantive change is not approved by ACCJC, the course may not be offered as DE.

### **Training**

Faculty: Training of faculty is mandatory and will include quality course design, student orientation, delivery, evaluation of teaching and learning, and ongoing professional development. The District and SCEA will agree to compensation for this additional workload.

Student: Student skill in computer literacy and online readiness will be assessed during the

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matriculation process and/or prior to enrollment in an online course. The assessment will indicate readiness or the need for formal instruction via CIS 90 for skills acquisition.

Course Management System: Faculty teaching online courses will be trained in the use the college adopted CMS.

Quality Instruction: Faculty will be trained in effective instruction, evaluation of instruction, and student learning, including student learning outcomes

Research Based Planning: Faculty will be trained in the use of strategies for improvement of success rates, retention rates, and completion rates of students in online courses.