Mission: The mission of Los Angeles Southwest College is to facilitate student success, encourage life-long learning and enrich the lives of its diverse community.

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LASC MISSION

**Mission:** The mission of Los Angeles Southwest College is to facilitate student success, encourage life-long learning and enrich the lives of its diverse community.

**Vision:** Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) is a learner-centered institution dedicated to meeting the needs of learners – the students and community who access the college for programs; and the faculty, staff and administrators who provide learning opportunities and support. We subscribe to the premise that the learner is at the center of what we do in creating opportunities, providing an environment conducive to learning and working, establishing a place where the discourse of ideas can occur and where individuals can have experiences without sacrificing their individuality. Our foundations are driven by our institutional core values.

THE DISTANCE EDUCATION MISSION

“To support online success and retention by ensuring uniformity in terms of Learning Management System (LMS) and online instructor responsibility and accountability, according to the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Contract (Article 40). Also, the purpose of this document is to provide clear expectations, guidelines and policies for instructors teaching online in order to adhere to the requirements of ACCJC.”

STATEMENT OF CONGRUENCE

The Distance Learning mission is congruent with the college mission because it facilitates student success and appeals to a diverse community where some students need online access to courses and programs.

DEFINITION OF DISTANCE LEARNING

*According to Article 40 (Section A. 1) of the American Federation Teachers Agreement, “Distance Learning is a formal mode of interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously.”*
WHAT IS PEDAGOGY?

*It is the process of being a teacher and can be referred to as the correct use of instructive strategies. The instructor’s own beliefs are harbored by the student’s background knowledge and experience, situation, and environment.*

CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMS)

CMS is a system that provides a number of procedures used to manage work flow in a collaborative environment. Manual or computer-based processes are two types of procedures used.

INTENDED STUDENT POPULATION

The Distance Learning program at LASC accommodates students who:

1. Are full-time workers
2. Lack child care
3. Lack transportation
4. Are medically and physically challenged
5. Are immobilized
6. Prefer going to school online

CLASSIFICATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The Online Course classifications and definitions currently are:

1. **Online-Assisted**: An Online-Assisted course includes at a minimum the posting of the course syllabus, course outlines and faculty information. The information posted for the Online course is covered in class and used as a reference Online. An Online-Assisted course does not require any special approval or designation in the schedule of classes.

2. **Hybrid**: A Hybrid course includes all requirements of the Online-Assisted course, utilizing up to 50% of Online features, such as Course Documents, Discussion Boards, Virtual Classrooms, Groups, Assignments, External Links, Digital Drop Boxes and Grade Books, etc. A Hybrid course can: 1) utilize Course Management System (CMS) features to enhance communication and collaboration that is supplemental to in-class participation, 2) utilize the CMS to strictly enhance course content delivery or, 3) use a combination of the two. The course can be offered during regularly scheduled class times or with Online components that replace some of the regularly scheduled class meetings. Notice of face-to-face class sessions will be given by instructors in their syllabi and in the class schedule.
3. **Online**: An Online course includes all requirements of the Hybrid course, and shall utilize features such as Course Documents, Discussion Boards, Virtual Classrooms, Groups, Assignments, External Links, Digital Drop Boxes and Grade Books, etc. Students do not typically attend a physical classroom when participating in an Online course. All course materials, instruction, discussion and assessment are posted and done Online. In the Online course, the course content should go hand in hand with the aspects of communication and collaboration in the course. Online courses require of the student and instructor the same amount of course work and hours outside of the classroom as traditional courses; they are offered in a more flexible and independent environment. Online courses should be noted as such in any published schedule of classes.

**DE COMMITTEE CHECKLIST**

*Reaffirmed that the Educational Planning Committee is the governance group to which the Distance Learning Committee will report. The Distance Learning Committee now includes equal representation of AFT and Academic Senate Distance Learning Faculty (AFT Agreement, Article 40 (Section B.2)).*

**Distance Learning Committee is charged with...**

1. Supporting instructors with resources, workshops, seminars, and webinars
2. Maintaining contact and communication with IT Department and Learning Management System support services
3. Reviewing the Distance Learning Policies and Procedure Manual each semester
4. Determining proficiency in a CMS and shall serve as a resource to the college on distance learning issues. Making assignments and evaluating faculty remain the responsibility of the department chair (AFT Agreement, Article 40 (Section B.2)).

**ACCJC – Standard III: RESOURCES**

**EVIDENCE/ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

**A. Human Resources**

☑ Evidence about how the institution determines human resource needs of DE/CE programs and services

☑ Evidence that the institution has a reasonable means for deciding what employee qualifications are needed for positions aimed at teaching distance education and/or correspondence courses
Evidence of the practices the institution uses to decide if an applicant is well qualified to teach distance education and/or correspondence courses

Evidence that personnel evaluation includes issues related to on-line teaching and that the institution uses the results of personnel evaluation for improvement

Evidence the institution evaluates the effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes of teachers, tutors, and others involved in the distance education and correspondence education teaching-learning process

Evidence that staff development has supported faculty performance in developing and assessing student learning outcomes in DE/CE mode

Evidence that the institution applies an ethics document or documents for all personnel that appropriately takes aspects of teaching in distance education and correspondence education mode into consideration

Evidence about how the institution uses identified teaching and learning needs to determine professional development opportunities for faculty involved in on-line DE/CE

B. Physical Resources

Evidence that the institution provides adequate facilities and equipment for its distance education programs and services

These sites are considered additional learning sites and may be subject to a visit by the evaluation team according to U.S.D.E regulations

FACULTY QUALIFICATIONS

Based on Article 40, (Section B. 5) of the American Federation of Teachers Agreement, prior to being able to teach Online, faculty should be certified on the current Learning Management System used by LASC. “Proficiency must be established before a faculty member may assign a Distance Learning course. Distance Learning Committee must determine CMS proficiency through training completed prior to the offer of any Distance Learning assignment. Proficiency gained in CMS at any District college is portable to any other District college using the same CMS.”

It is strongly recommended that online instructors also possess the following knowledge and/or capabilities:

1. Learning theory as it applies to Online students
2. Online class pedagogy
3. The use of standard CMS tools to foster a “positive learning environment”
4. Sufficient technical skills to provide the required course content using the Learning Management System of the college.
5. The ability to use email.
6. Contractually adjunct faculty can teach .67 FTE per semester online
7. Contractually full-time faculty can teach up to 1.6 FTE per semester online.

Faculty is also to be encouraged to upgrade their Online teaching skills by availing themselves of seminars and other in-service training.

*(See Appendix B of Online Best Practices and Appendix F, Article 40 of the AFT Agreement)*

**ONLINE INSTRUCTOR ASSESSMENT**

In order to meet Title V requirements, as required for traditional classroom instructors, evaluations for online instructors should be conducted. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that online instructors grant access to their online class for instructor evaluation at an arranged time.

*(See Appendix E – Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education)*

**ASSESSMENT AGENDA**

In order to meet the ACCJC evaluation requirements, and based on Article 19 of the American Federation Teachers (AFT) Agreement between the Los Angeles Community College District and the ACCJC Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education, and the ACCJC Standards by LASC Planning Processes (Standard I (B3), Standard II (A1a: A1b:A2a:A2b,A2c, and A2d), it is required that student and instructor assessments be conducted to adequately evaluate Distance Learning, evaluate stated goals, delivery systems, procedures to design, identify learning outcomes, identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes, high-quality instruction and appropriate learning strategies, and use of delivery modes and teaching methodologies reflecting diverse needs of students. The following types of online evaluations/surveys for assessments will be implemented:

A. Instructors will:
   1. Be evaluated on classroom performance by designated instructor/faculty member
   2. Evaluate LASC’s Learning Management System
   3. Evaluate online resources and learning tools
   4. Evaluate instructor online support
   5. Evaluate Student Learning Outcome (SLO)

B. Students will evaluate:
   1. Instructor’s classroom performance
   2. Operation of Learning Management System
   3. Overall Distance Learning experience and program
   4. Course satisfaction
   5. Online student support services, for example, tutoring, library, and other resources
ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

In order to meet accreditation standards and to improve student learning, all online courses should be part of the college’s regular assessment cycle in which Student Learning Outcomes for online classes are assessed, evaluated and results discussed in order to improve student learning.

Therefore, the Distance Learning Committee is creating various mechanisms to gather evidence about the effectiveness of the Distance Learning programs at LASC to meet ACCJC accreditation requirements: Following are examples to be created:

1. End-of-course surveys for students evaluating learning experience, student services and instructor support
2. Distribute student feedback to online faculty
3. Annual student focus groups
4. Annual instructor feedback of the online program through surveys or focus groups
5. Random telephone surveys to online students
6. Mailings to online students to indicate how LASC can improve its online services and programs.

STUDENT AND FACULTY SUCCESS AND STUDENT RETENTION

To ensure that LASC’s online program is of high quality the following procedures will be implemented and monitored:

1. Data will be collected by the Distance Learning Committee from admissions of enrolled students to compare to end-of-the semester data of students remaining in courses.
2. Annually, student and instructor surveys will be reviewed and documented by the Distance Learning Committee and distributed to department chairs and the Academic Senate President for further review and feedback.
3. Online instructor evaluations will be reviewed by Chairs annually in the same manner/schedule as classroom faculty.

DISTANCE LEARNING ANNUAL REPORT

This report will document retention status, success rates, and matriculation of students qualifying to attend the next higher courses where applicable. Data will be collected on the following:

1. Online enrollment per semester
2. Retention
3. Matriculation
MONITORING IMPROVEMENT FOR LASC’S DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

Results from the following mechanisms will allow the college to continuously maintain stability and growth and to monitor improvements to its Distance Learning program:

1. Student evaluations
2. Instructor evaluations
3. Student surveys and feedback
4. Instructor surveys and feedback
5. LASC’s Assessment Agenda
6. LASC’s Assessment Strategies
7. LASC’s committee to ensure a quality education and online learning environment

STUDENT SECURITY/IDENTIFICATION

To login to the Learning Management System, online students use their student identification number issued by admissions. The password is their month and day of their birthday for security and identification purposes. Such secure information ensures that the student who enrolled in the course is actually the student participating in the online class.

INSTRUCTOR’S RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

1. Meet minimum requirements for the program, but strive to do more
2. Understand that the lack of face-to-face instruction does not lessen the quality of education (AFT Agreement, Article 40 (Section A.3)
3. Understand that the same amount of work is required Online as in the classroom
4. Stay current with subject matter and technology (AFT Agreement, Article 40 (Section B.3)

DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE RECOMMENDED CHECKLIST

• Online classes should be taught online exclusively. Online courses at LASC will be provided in an asynchronous-paced mode, using the Internet.
  ○ Face-to-face orientation should be optional for students
Orientation is highly encouraged for faculty and students

Orientation material can be….
  - Posted online
  - Done via web-conferencing
  - Conducted face-to-face

- All online classes must use multi-media features beyond text, such as images, videos, animation, slides, and auditory and any other visually creative tool. LACCD campuses are required to comply with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act standards by ensuring that electronic and information technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities. For more information about Section 508 and how to create accessible websites and documents, visit:
  - [http://webaim.org/standards/508/checklist](http://webaim.org/standards/508/checklist)
  - [http://section508.gov/](http://section508.gov/)

- All faculty member should use the Learning Management System Platform designated by LASC for online instruction.

- It is recommended that instructors use a rubric for clear grading guidelines.

- Assignments should specifically be designed to enhance learning through discussions, web-conferencing, online chat, team projects, forums or any other tool to engage the student.

- Course outline should meet Student Learning Outcomes (SLO).
Online content developed should meet course objectives defined by course outline, Student Learning Outcomes, and Program Learning Outcomes.

Courses offered Online are advised to adhere to the same course outline requirements as traditional classrooms, including regular faculty and student attendance and online participation.

**LACCD ONLINE INSTRUCTOR ABSENTEE POLICY**

Title V - 55376. Instructor Contact.

. . . district governing boards shall ensure that:

(a) All approved courses offered as Distance Learning shall 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.

(b) All Distance Learning courses shall be delivered consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor pursuant to Section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors. Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to Title 5 ’53200.

**LACCD ONLINE STUDENT ABSENTEE POLICY**

It is recommended that the Distance Learning (DE) instructor define in his/her syllabus what constitutes an absence in the class and the policy for being dropped or losing points, due to excessive absences.

An absence in an online course is evident by the “Activity Report” available in the Learning Management System used by the college, and should be noted on the syllabus. In an online class, students should/may earn participation points, which should also be calculated with the final points for the class. Participation points are left up to the discretion of the instruction, which should not exceed more than 20 percent of the overall grade earned for the course.

A weekly attendance is counted if the student checks in at least two times per week or more, i.e. looking at a video, opening a document, posting assignments, participating in discussions, responding to peers, or submitting any form of material.
If the student does not meet the standards for attendance during the drop add period, the student may be dropped/and or lose points. After the drop/add period, the student will lose point as indicated on the instructor’s syllabus.

**LACCD STUDENT FEEDBACK RECOMMENDATIONS**

Meaningful regular contact may include, but is not limited to the following examples done at least once a week for a full semester class or within 48 hours for a short-term class:

1. Submit/grading assignments (students/faculty)
2. Participate in discussions (students & faculty)
3. Respond to emails / phone calls (students & faculty)
4. attendance at scheduled chats (students & faculty)
5. adherence to scheduled events in the syllabus (students & faculty)
6. logging into the virtual classroom, reviewing messages and responding to messages (students & faculty)
7. Web conferences or other live events scheduled for the class (students & faculty)
8. On-campus events or other locations where instructor and students meet for class; i.e. museum, observatory, etc. (students & faculty)

**LACCD STUDENT COMPLAINT POLICY**

When students complain of lack of contact/response from instructor, the Division Chair or Department Head needs to be notified and he/she needs to investigate the situation. The instructor can be asked to provide documentation of instructor/student interaction to determine the amount, the regularity, and the type of meaningful contact that took place.

Multiple complaints regarding lack of regular meaningful contact should be forwarded to the appropriate Division Chair or Department Head. If there is substantial evidence of multiple —absences‖ and lack of meaningful contact, the instructor can be removed from the list of approved Distance Learning instructors.
DISTANCE LEARNING INSTRUCTOR CHECKLIST

Communication is essential in an Online course and before accepting to teach in this mode, strongly consider the following to ensure student success.

**Recommended Technical Skills**

1. Meet a minimum computer proficiency
2. Be trained and certified on the LASC Learning Management System
3. Be familiar with Online teaching environment (link tutorial provided on home page)

**CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

1. Upload relevant videos, articles and other information to enhance learning
2. Direct students to outside websites related to course materials
3. Upload PowerPoint presentations and other learning tools to assist the student
4. Use the Online tools within Learning Management System
5. Use a variety of Learning Management System tools to stimulate participation and activity.
6. Individualize and create course content
7. Advise students to avoid cutting and pasting from documents as a response to discussion questions.
8. Check accuracy of student posts and assignments through the plagiarism check link
9. Include current event information and articles

**HOME PAGE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Every course should have:

- District-wide plagiarism policy placed on home page
• District-wide policy for students with disabilities, with the Disabled Students Programs & Services contact information

• Contact information for technical support

• Tutorial videos/links, for example:
  ○ English basics tips/videos (grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/)
  ○ Math basics tips/videos (khanacademy.org)
  ○ Writing Essays tips/videos
  ○ Research Tips

• Instructor’s contact information and virtual office hours

• Include e-mail link from student to instructor

• Course/verbiage and section number and course description

SYLLABUS GUIDELINES

1. Use approved Academic Senate syllabi format accepted and agreed.

2. Be as specific as possible in the syllabi. Include:
   a. Course name
   b. Faculty name
   c. Contract information
   d. Virtual office hours
   e. Course objective
   f. Course description
   g. Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)
   h. Plagiarism policy
   i. Participation policy
j. Late policy  
k. Specify instructor’s time zone  
l. Disabilities policies and services  
m. Faculty expectations, such as discussion and posting requirements, late policy,  
n. Identify assignment categories, such as quizzes/exams, projects, discussions, and research papers  
o. List specific chapter reading assignments  
p. Include points for all graded assignments within syllabus  
q. Note specific deadline dates for each week as outlined in the course format  
r. Note Drop/Add/W deadlines  

**REACHING AT–RISK STUDENTS**  
1. Recognize that at-risk students often follow these patterns:  
   a. Do not check in within a week  
   b. Score low on assessments  
   c. Do not participate in forums, i.e. discussions, assignments, etc.  
   d. Do not respond to emails  
   e. Express a need, i.e. stress, emotional, circumstances, etc.  
   f. Do not take advantage of office hours  
   g. Have difficulty with understanding assignments and requirements  

2. To contact at-risk students consider using the following:  
   a. Email reminders of virtual office hours  
   b. Individual emails to encourage student participation, for example:  
      • “I see that you are struggling in this class, but please continue to try your best. If you need any assistance, please contact me as soon as possible so that your grade does not suffer.”
• “I noticed that you did not participate this week. Please remember that it is essential that you are an active online student throughout the duration of the course so that your grade does not suffer. My goal is for you to succeed, but to do that you should do your part and I know you can do it.”

3. Methods to engage at-risk students:
   a. Ask engaging questions related to the course content
   b. Encourage collaborative learning
   c. Encourage use of online tutoring
   d. Produce, record and upload orientation/course assistance tutoring video for at-risk students

**DISABILITY POLICY**

**ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Because LASC is a publicly funded community college, we are bound by Federal and State accessibility standards to ensure that electronic and information technology is accessible to individuals with disabilities. All online classes must use multi-media features beyond text, such as images, videos, animation, slides, and auditory and any other visually creative tool. For more information about Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and how to create accessible websites and documents, visit:


http://webaim.org/standards/508/checklist

http://section508.gov/

Please note that if your website contains video clips or a live video feed, you will need captioning to accompany the video. LASC is eligible to receive captioning funding from the Distance Learning Captioning and Transcription (DECT) grant. “DECT represents a commitment by the California Community Colleges to expand access to Distance Learning to all students. Funding has been authorized by the Chancellor’s Office to aid California community colleges in improving their capacity to serve disabled-student populations and, in some instances, the general public, by ensuring the accessibility of aural information” (College of the Canyons Distance Learning Captioning & Transcription).

Visit http://www.canyons.edu/Offices/Distance_Learning/Captioning/ for more information regarding captioning and DECT.
Students with documented disabilities are entitled to receive accommodations in DE classes. Students with disabilities should contact Disabled Students Program & Services (DSP&S) to complete the initial intake in order to receive accommodations. DSP&S will notify the online instructor by providing him/her with the student’s Accommodations and Services Agreement. Please make sure to include a statement on your syllabus such as, “If you have a documented disability and will require disability-related accommodations, please contact the DSP&S office at (323) 241-5480.”

See Appendix c - Distance Learning Access Guidelines for Students with Disabilities Excerpts related to online classes. Developed By: Distance Learning Accessibility Guidelines Task Force, Chancellor’s Office California Community Colleges

TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

1. Technical assistance is available through the Help Desk at lascdehelpdesk@lasc.edu

2. LASC is adopting a new Learning Management System that will upload and drop students automatically into on-site and online courses. This will eliminate issues with students accessing and joining online classes without being officially enrolling through Admissions/Records.

3. Instructors have 24/7 support through Etudes Learning Management System via email

ADMISSIONS & ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

1. Instructors are encouraged to check the District’s Official Roster against participating students within the course on a regular basis

2. Be aware of the maximum number of students allowed in an online class.

3. Be aware of the deadlines for the Census Rosters

COUNSELORS

1. Counselors should make students clearly aware that there are minimum requirements to take Online classes (See Checklist for students).
2. Counselors should stress that the same amount of work is required of students in online classes as in traditional classrooms

3. At least one LASC counselor is certified and knowledgeable of the Learning Management System being used at the college to better assist online students

4. Counselors can be contacted via email or by telephone to assist and advise online students

**STUDENT SERVICES/RESOURCES**

To achieve student success in an Online educational experience, the Distance Learning College Program needs to include individual links on all course sites that give students immediate access to information on the course home page.

**Library Online Research Resources**

- The Los Angeles Southwest College Library contains a collection of over 40,000 electronic titles and journals and 50,000 books. The on-line computerized library catalog is accessible both on and off campus via the Internet. Library research may now be done at home using one of the many remote access electronic databases.

LASC Library Catalog and Electronic Databases are now available on the college web at: [http://lasc.edu](http://lasc.edu) Click: **Library**

To access library electronic resources remotely: Enter ID: lasc Password: cougars

1. **For print books:**
   - a. Click: **LIBRARY CATALOG** - Search by any word, author or subject

   **FOR THE FOLLOWING DATABASES**

   **CLICK ELECTRONIC RESOURCES……..**

2. **EBSCO eBooks/ ONLINE BOOKS AND FULL TEXT**
   - a. Click link; or for Online Catalog eBooks click “url” (Available 24/7)

3. **EBSCO/JOURNAL AND MAGAZINES ARTICLES/**
   - a. Click: [search.epnet.com](http://search.epnet.com)
   - b. **SELECT EBSCO host Research Databases**
c. Check Boxes for Academic Search Elite and Masterfile Premier

(NOTE: CINAHL, Health Source/Nursing, and Health Source/Consumer may be added as needed.)

d. Click: CONTINUE

e. Defaults to “Keyword Search” and “Full Text Search”

(If you need scholarly journals, Click: Peer Reviewed Box)


   a. Click the word HERE under PROQUEST

5. OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS/ “Pro and Con”

   a. Click: Address Link

   b. Click: Proceed (if password is requested use cougars)

   c. articles take a position/ also general magazines, journals, WEBSITES, etc.

6. Gale Virtual Reference Library/ Online reference books and dictionaries and general works that cover a broad array of disciplines: literature, drama, business, biographies, business

7. Scribner Writers Series/ Literary Authors by name, genre and more

8. Lexis-Nexis/ Legal, Medical and Business Articles, Law /Law Cases

   Please ask Librarian for Remote Access Password (323) 241-5235

9. Gale Science in Context/ Reference and general articles on a variety of science topics

10. CountryWatch/ Current information on countries worldwide


OTHER HELPFUL WEBSITES

1. www.ipl.org (Internet Public Library & Librarians’ Index provides Reliable Websites)
2. www.citationmachine.net (Create a Bibliography or Works Cited Page- MLA/APA)
5. www.englishwritingcenter.blogspot.com (English writing center resource page)

DO NOT TO GIVE THESE PASSWORDS OR USERNAMES TO NON–LASC STUDENTS

TUTORING SERVICES

As with traditional courses, students enrolling in Distance Learning courses must have access to learning support online resources. In an effort to meet expectations, the Student Success Center is committed to partner with the Distance Learning instructors to offer the appropriate learning support systems to Distance Learning students as in any traditional on-campus situation.

Distance Learning students will receive free online tutoring sponsored by the Student Success Center. These services encompass tutoring for a number of subjects including math, science, writing, business, and nursing. By accessing the Student Success Center’s online navigation tab, this online service includes several options for students such as “Connect With an e-instructor,” “Interact with a Live Tutor,” “Submit Your Writing” for any class to our Online Writing Lab, and “Submit a Question” and receive a reply from a tutor within 24 hours maximum.

It is highly recommended for instructors to incorporate tutoring information into the syllabi and points system to guarantee student usage of the online learning support services available.

To coordinate this service, please contact the Student Success Center by phone 323-241-5455, or email mcbridkr@lasc.edu, the Student Success Center Coordinator, for more information.

Computer Services/Lab:

- Computer labs are available to students to work and to complete online class activities.
DISTANCE LEARNING COLLEGE

Current Participating Disciplines

1. Anthropology
2. Art
3. Biology
4. Business
5. Child Development
6. Computer Applications Office Technologies
7. Computer Science-Information Technology
8. English
9. Health
10. History
11. Humanities
12. Microbiology
13. Music
14. Political Science
15. Psychology
16. Sociology
APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – Listed are important excerpts from the ACCJC News, Spring 2010

• By 2010, the Obama administration wants to ensure that community colleges graduate an additional five million students, so that 60% of American adults have at least one year of college education, and America has the most educated workforce in the world.

• The ACCJC has, with its current Standards, focused on what students have learned, and by giving its member institutions years to implement new strategies, is helping institutions to focus on improving student learning and increasing institutional effectiveness.

• The very large amount of money that governments provide to higher education institutions has increased governmental concerns that the funds be used wisely and effectively.

• The legitimacy of accreditation is also based in public confidence that accreditation has high standards that work to the benefit of students and of society.

• Distance Learning is becoming more and more common as a delivery mode for instruction among institutions within our region. Sixty percent of the substantive change reviews for the ACCJC this past year were for colleges offering more than 50% of a program, degree, or certificate through a mode of distance or electronic delivery.

• Requirements for accreditors to monitor include whether or not institutions have a process for verifying that the student who enrolls in a Distance Learning course is the same student participating in the course and receiving credit for the course, as well as the growth of Distance Learning and correspondence education courses/programs.

• ACCJC team members will conduct of-campus visits to prepare a brief report of findings to be integrated into the final team report.
APPENDIX B – DE BEST PRACTICES FOR ONLINE COURSES

Reviewed June 6, 2011

Purpose: This document is intended to serve as a guide and resource for all Los Angeles Southwest College Online courses.

Basic Assumptions:

1. The courses offered Online will adhere to the same course outline requirements as the courses offered in traditional classrooms.
2. LA Southwest Department Chairs or their designees and Administration will ensure that all courses, including Online courses, as presented by instructors are adhering to course outline requirements.
3. Online courses should be subjected to neither additional nor fewer requirements or regulations beyond those applied to traditional courses.
4. Online courses at LASC will be provided in an asynchronous-paced mode, using the Internet.
5. The requirements set down here are intended to foster Online course offerings, not to inhibit them.
6. Online classes are intended to accommodate students who cannot or do not wish to attend on-campus sessions. These students may be encouraged, though not required, to physically attend on-campus sessions stipulated by instructors in their syllabi and in the schedule of classes.
7. Online classes may, at the discretion of the instructor, include proctored examinations whereby the student is required to take such examinations face-to-face, either on campus or overseen administered by instructor-approved proxies at locations off campus.
8. Hybrid classes are by nature a mixture of on-campus and Online content. Hybrid classes should be clearly identified as such by instructors in their syllabi and in course listings in the schedule of classes.
9. Teaching Online is fundamentally different from that of teaching traditional courses. Once a course is created and the Online content developed, the instructor should have command of Online pedagogy and technical skills.

Seven Guiding Principles:

1. Encourage Student-Faculty, Student-Student contact
2. Encourage Student Cooperation
3. Encourage Active Learning
4. Give Prompt Feedback
5. Emphasize Time on Task
6. Project High Expectations
7. Respect Diverse Talents and Learning Styles

Faculty Support:
1. Los Angeles Southwest College shall ensure appropriate training opportunities for faculty who teach Online courses.
2. Los Angeles Southwest College shall provide faculty with adequate equipment, software and communications on campus for interaction with students, institutions and other faculty.

Student Support:
1. Prospective students shall have the ability to preview an Online class syllabus.
2. LA Southwest College shall provide students with clear, complete and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, technological competencies and skills necessary for successful course completion, technical equipment requirements, availability of academic support services, financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.
3. Students shall have access to training via CAOT 133, “How to Succeed in an Online Course,” or its equivalent. Students shall be encouraged to avail themselves of this training prior to taking a Hybrid or Online course.
4. Los Angeles Southwest College shall provide its Online students with accessible library and other learning resources appropriate to the courses or programs delivered via electronic technology. It shall develop systems to support the students in accessing and using the library and other learning resources effectively.
5. Enrolled students shall have reasonable and adequate access to student services and resources appropriate to support their learning.
6. Los Angeles Southwest College shall provide an Online survey/questionnaire to help students evaluate their technical skill levels for taking and succeeding in Online or Hybrid classes.
7. Students shall have technical support services, i.e., Help Desk, available Monday – Friday from 8:00 am until 8:00 pm\(^1\) to help students resolve issues involving student interface with the Online classes.

Course Requirements:
1. All categories of Online course offerings shall meet the same Course Outline requirements as those of their traditional face-to-face course counterparts.
2. All Los Angeles Southwest College Online courses shall comply with the Title 5, Section 55211 regarding Instructor Contact. All LA Southwest College Online courses shall comply with the “Online Education Guidelines for the California Community Colleges, Section 55211.” Rights and responsibilities of the instructors shall comply with the current AFT Contract as it refers to “Distributive/Distance Learning.”
3. Within the parameters specified by the Course Outline, individual instructors shall accomplish the required contact hours via a combination of these methods:
   a. Online lecture hours
   b. Online laboratory hours
   c. Student conferences (face-to-face or virtual)

\(^1\) Note: finalized times of availability to be negotiated
d. Student tutoring (face-to-face or virtual)

e. Threaded discussion forums with appropriate instructor participation

f. Email messaging
g. Instant messaging

h. Weekly announcements in the Course Management System

i. Timely feedback for student work

j. Instructor prepared e-lectures

k. Virtual meetings and conferences.

4. All categories of Online course offerings shall include, at a minimum, the posting of each course syllabus and faculty information.

5. All categories of Online course offerings shall include a list of minimum hardware and software requirements in each course syllabus.

6. All Hybrid and Online courses shall also provide, at a minimum, the posting of lecture notes or other class materials, links to outside resources, and the posting of Online grades.

7. Online courses shall include, at a minimum, the following:

   a. Syllabus
   b. Class news (regular updates to the students)
   c. Questions forum (discussion forum for students to publicly ask questions related to the course material)
   d. Online lecture materials
   e. Online assignments
   f. Links to outside resources
   g. Optional Online exams
   h. Email links to the instructor
   i. Electronic posting of grades

8. All Online courses shall be presented in an asynchronous-paced format. Individual activities or assignments can be synchronous, but the objective is to provide the students with the ability to take the Online courses asynchronously. Students will not be required to be physically present on campus unless otherwise noted.

9. Online students may be encouraged, though not required, to physically attend on-campus sessions except those of hybrid classes in which the instructor requires such sessions/exams as approved by the department and noted in the syllabus and schedule of classes.

10. Students have a right to timely feedback. Instructors shall, as a goal, answer students’ posted questions and email messages within 24 hours. Assignments should be graded and returned to students in a timely manner that is consistent with that of traditional face-to-face courses.

11. Online courses require special efforts by the instructors to build positive learning environments. Instructors shall use tools such as forums for introductions and open-ended discussion questions, group assignments, Online presentations, instant messaging, and others to foster virtual learning communities in their Online classes.

**Course Management System:**

1. The Los Angeles Southwest College Course Management System (CMS) is currently in Moodle and Etudes, which was endorsed by the Academic Senate.
2. All Online courses (all categories) shall use Moodle or Etudes as the main portal through which students enter the Online courses.
3. Faculty who choose to use publisher-provided CMS’s and course materials may continue to do so, but they should provide students with a portal from Moodle into their courses.
4. Faculty may not use other CMS’s to develop Online courses. Moodle and Etudes are to be used to provide the students with consistent and uniform Online course offerings and technical support.

**Accessibility Requirements:**

All courses offered at Los Angeles Southwest College shall comply with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Online courses at Los Angeles Southwest College use as guidelines the “Online Education: Access Guidelines for Students with Disabilities” as published by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office in August 1999. The Course Management System (Moodle) used to deliver Online courses provides for compliance with the guidelines as required in this document and accessible Online at:


Each individual instructor will use these features in presenting Online courses.

**Course Evaluations:**

All Online courses shall provide an Online assessment of the class, including instructor evaluation, based on the assessment tool used in traditional face-to-face courses, but modified to reflect Online content delivery.

**This Policy:**

1. Will be revisited each three (3) to five (5) years.
2. Is incompliance with the following documents:
   a. “Guidelines for Good Practice: Effective Instructor-Student Contact in Distance Learning”
      by The Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges, adopted Spring 1999
   c. “Distance Learning Guidelines,” based on Title 5 Regulations, by Chancellor’s Office
      California Community Colleges, March 2004
   d. “Distance Learning, Access Guidelines for Students with Disabilities,” by Chancellor’s
      Office, California Community Colleges, August 1999
   e. LACCD and AFT Agreement, 2011-2014, Article 40, “Distributive/Distance Learning”

**APPENDIX C– Access Guidelines for Students with Disabilities**
Excerpts related to online classes

January 2011

Chancellor’s Office California Community Colleges
Distance Learning: Access Guidelines for Students with Disabilities January 2011
Developed By: Distance Learning Accessibility Guidelines Task Force, Chancellor’s Office California Community Colleges

Legal Requirements

Both state and federal law require community colleges to operate all programs and activities in a manner which is accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities (also referred to in federal law as ‒ qualified handicapped persons‖). (29 U.S.C. § 794, 20 U.S.C. § 1405, 42 U.S.C. § 12101, Gov. Code § 11135.) The operative federal laws referenced above are commonly referred to as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. (29 U.S.C. § 794, 42 U.S.C. § 12101.) As the system develops its capacity for creation of technology-based instructional resources and the delivery of distance learning, it must proceed with the needs of all students in mind, including the unique needs of students with disabilities.

Title II recognizes the special importance of communication, which includes access to information, in its implementing regulation at 28 C.F.R. 35.160 (a). The regulation requires that a public entity, such as a community college, take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with persons with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.

The United States Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for ensuring that all educational institutions comply with the requirements of all federal civil rights laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the ADA. As a result, the opinions of OCR are generally afforded considerable weight by the courts in interpreting the requirements of these laws. OCR has had occasion to issue several opinions applying the requirements of the Section 504 and ADA regulations to situations involving access to Distance Learning and/or computer-based instruction.

In responding to a complaint by a student with a disability alleging that a university had not provided access to the Internet, OCR noted that:

“[T]he issue is not whether the student with the disability is merely provided access, but the issue is rather the extent to which the communication is actually as effective as that provided to others. Title II [of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990] also strongly affirms the important role that computer technology is expected to play as an auxiliary aid by which communication is made effective for persons with disabilities.” (OCR Docket No. 09-95-2206, January 25, 1996)

Adding additional clarity to the meaning of "effective communication," OCR has held that the three basic components of effective communication are: "timeliness of delivery, accuracy of the translation, and provision in a manner and medium appropriate to the significance of the message and the abilities of the individual with the disability." (OCR Docket No. 09-97-2145, January 9, 1998)
OCR also points out that the courts have held that a public entity violates its obligations under the ADA when it only responds on an ad-hoc basis to individual requests for accommodation. There is an affirmative duty to develop a comprehensive policy in advance of any request for auxiliary aids or services.

Finally, in considering the magnitude and responsibility of this task, OCR states: —[T]he magnitude of the task public entities now face in developing systems for becoming accessible to individuals with disabilities, especially with respect to making printed materials accessible to persons with visual impairments, is comparable to the task previously undertaken in developing a process by which buildings were to be brought up to specific architectural standards for access. Buildings in existence at the time the new architectural standards were promulgated are governed by "program access" standards. However, buildings erected after the enactment of the new architectural standards are strictly held to the new standards on the premise that the builder is on notice that such standards apply. One who builds in disregard of those standards is ordinarily liable for the subsequent high cost of retrofitting. Similarly, from the date of the enactment of Title II onwards, when making purchases and when designing its resources, a public entity is expected to take into account its legal obligation to provide communication to persons with disabilities that is "as effective as" communication provided to non-disabled persons. At a minimum, a public entity has a duty to solve barriers to information access that the public entity’s purchasing choices create, particularly with regard to materials that with minimal thought and cost may be acquired in a manner facilitating provision in alternative formats. When a public institution selects software programs and/or hardware equipment that are not adaptable for access by persons with disabilities, the subsequent substantial expense of providing access is not generally regarded as an undue burden when such cost could have been significantly reduced by considering the issue of accessibility at the time of the initial selection. “ (OCR Docket No. 09-97-2002, April 7, 1997)

There are also state laws and regulations which require community colleges to make their Distance Learning offerings accessible to students with disabilities. Government Code section 11135 et seq. prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including mental or physical disability, by entities receiving funding from the State of California. The Board of Governors has adopted regulations in Title 5, California Code of Regulations, section 59300 et seq. to implement these requirements with respect to funds received by community college districts from the Board of Governors or Chancellor's Office. These regulations require community college districts and the Chancellor’s Office to investigate and attempt to resolve discrimination complaints filed by students or employees.

In addition, the Board of Governors has adopted Title 5 regulations setting forth the general requirements applicable to all independent study courses (section 55300 et seq.) and those requirements specific to Distance Learning courses (section 55370 et seq.). Section 55370 expressly states that the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act are applicable to Distance Learning courses.

**Title 5, California Code of Regulations on Distance Learning**

The Board of Governor's approval of Distance Learning regulations for the California Community Colleges permits colleges to explore and develop educational initiatives using advanced communication and computing technologies to address student access issues related to geographical, cultural, disability or facility barriers. Ensuring that Distance Learning courses, materials and resources are accessible to students with disabilities is a shared institutional responsibility. Faculty need to receive appropriate training in order to ensure that they understand what constitutes accessibility, and institutions must provide faculty with both the necessary training and resources to ensure accessibility. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12100 et seq.), Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794d), and California Government Code section
11135 all require that accessibility for persons with disabilities be provided in the development, procurement, maintenance, or use of electronic or information technology by a community college district using any source of state funds. (See Legal Opinion M 03-09.) Title 5, section 55200 explicitly makes these requirements applicable to all Distance Learning offerings.

“It is unacceptable for universities to use emerging technologies without insisting that this technology be accessible to all students.” OCR „Dear Colleague” Letter (2010)

**Basic Requirements for Distance Learning**

**Distance Learning courses, resources, and materials must be designed and delivered in such a way that the level of communication and course-taking experience is the same for students with or without disabilities.**

One of the primary concepts of Distance Learning (DE) is to offer students *learning anytime, anywhere*. Therefore, all DE resources must be designed to afford students with disabilities maximum opportunity to access Distance Learning resources *anytime, anywhere* without the need for outside assistance (e.g. sign language interpreters, aides, etc.).

Distance Learning resources must generally be designed to provide —*built-in* accommodation (i.e., closed or open captioning, descriptive narration) and/or interface design/content layout, which is accessible to —*industry standard* assistive computer technology in common use by persons with disabilities.

Whenever possible, printed information should be provided in the alternative format preferred by the student (i.e., Braille, audio tape, large print, electronic text, MP3, DAISY). When choosing between possible alternative formats or methods of delivery, consideration should be given to the fact that methods which are adequate for short, simple or less important communications may not be equally effective or appropriate for longer, more complex, or more critical material. (Example: Use of a telephone relay service may be an acceptable method for a faculty member to respond to a brief question from a deaf student during his/her office hours, but would not be appropriate as a means of permitting that same student to participate in a class discussion in a course conducted by teleconference.) Issues concerning accommodation should be resolved through appropriate campus procedures as defined under Title 5, section 56027.

Adoption of access solutions which include assigning assistants (i.e., sign language interpreters, readers) to work with an individual student to provide access to Distance Learning resources should only be considered as a last resort when all efforts to enhance the native accessibility of the course material have failed. This is particularly true since, for several years, colleges have received funding to assist them in providing access to Distance Learning. In the event that a student files a discrimination complaint, a district relying on the use of readers or interpreters to make a Distance Learning course accessible will bear the burden of demonstrating that it was not possible to build in accessibility.

Access to DE courses, resources and materials include the audio, video and text components of courses or communication delivered via existing and emerging technologies. Access includes the audio, video, multimedia and text components of Web sites, electronic chat rooms, e-mail, instructional software, CD-ROM, DVD, laser disc, video tape, audio tape, electronic text and print materials. Where access to Web sites not controlled by the college is required or realistically necessary to completion of a course, the college must take steps to ensure that such sites are accessible or provide the same material by other accessible means.

Distance Learning courses, resources and materials must be designed and delivered in such a way that the level of communication and course-taking experience is the same for students with or without disabilities.

Any DE courses, resources or materials purchased or leased from a third-party provider, or created or substantially modified —*in-house* after August 1999, must be accessible to students with disabilities, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the instructional activity or result in undue financial and administrative burdens on the district.

In August 1999, the Chancellor’s Office began requiring that the curriculum for each DE course and its associated materials and resources be reviewed and revised, as necessary, when the course undergoes curriculum review pursuant to Title 5, sections 55002 and 55206, every six years as part of the accreditation process. Thus, this process should now have been completed for all Distance Learning courses.
If a college has not yet reviewed its Distance Learning courses to ensure accessibility, it should do so immediately. However, in the event that a student with a disability enrolls in an existing DE course before this review is completed, the college will be responsible for acting in a timely manner and making any requested modifications to the curriculum, materials or resources used in the course, unless doing so would fundamentally alter the nature of the instructional activity or result in undue financial burden on the district.

In the event that a discrimination complaint is filed alleging that a college has selected software and/or hardware that is not accessible for persons with disabilities, the Chancellor's Office and the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights will not generally accept a claim of undue burden based on the subsequent substantial expense of providing access, when such costs could have been significantly reduced by considering the issue of accessibility at the time of initial selection.

In all cases, even where the college can demonstrate that a requested accommodation would involve a fundamental alteration in the nature of the instructional activity or would impose an undue financial and administrative burden, the college must provide an alternative accommodation which is equally effective for the student if such an accommodation is available.

The college is responsible for assuring that Distance Learning courses, materials and resources are accessible to students with disabilities. All college administrators, faculty and staff who are involved in the use of this instructional mode share this obligation. The Chancellor's Office will make every effort to provide technical support and training for faculty and staff involved in the creation of accessible Distance Learning courses, resources and materials.

**Access Guidelines for Media Categories**

In general, all electronic information can be placed in one of the following categories:
- Text
- Image
- Audio
- Video
- Complex

While the first four categories are hopefully self-explanatory, ‘complex’ media encompasses any kind of electronic information that includes interactivity with the end user, as well as electronic information that is a combination of multiple media types.

When considering issues of accessibility with any digital media, it is always important to understand the playback context in which the student will open the media.

**Media Type – Text**

Text is the most common form of digital information and most Assistive Technology (AT) applications can access digital text documents. Because of this, text is often thought of as the base-level digital format for providing access to information.

**Access Challenges**

Text requires formatting to make it more readable and useable, and this applies to accessibility as well. Applying styles to text, such as 'Index,' 'Heading 1' and 'Heading 2,' will also provide digital formatting for non-visual users.

Access to information in general, and to educational information specifically, is increased when effective navigation structures are provided. By organizing the content and applying styles, the end user is allowed a
means to efficiently navigate and interact with the material. The overall usability of the information is increased for all students, regardless of disability.

**Solutions/Best Practices**

1. Ensure a participatory and collaborative process led by faculty sets goals to improve the expansion and effectiveness of the college’s Distance Learning offering.
   a. Planning for Distance Learning courses and/or programs should include objectives derived from goals that are measurable and allow for ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and reevaluation.
2. Provides evidence that the Distance Learning offerings are high quality and provide for the varied educational needs of students consistent with their educational preparation and the diversity, demographics, and economy of its communities.
3. Rely upon research and analysis to identify student learning needs and to assess progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes in Distance Learning offerings.
4. Ensure that delivery systems and modes of instruction are compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the current and future needs of its students.
5. Establish procedures designed to identify learning outcomes for, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate Distance Learning courses and programs.
6. High quality instruction and appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning characterize all programs. The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students. Evaluates all courses and programs through an on-going systematic review institution assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning including library services and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution. The institution assures equitable access to all of its students. The distribution and utilization of technology resources support the development, maintenance, and enhancement of its programs and services.

Digital text comes in a variety of formats, and it is common to denote the type of file format with a three- or four-letter extension following a period, indicated here in parenthesis after each file type.

A range of accessibility and usability potential exists among the digital text varieties, running from simple to powerful. Current digital text categories can be organized as follows:

**Plain Text (.txt), which is, quite literally, plain text with no formatting**

**Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents**

**Proprietary document formats like Microsoft Word (.doc or docx) and InDesign (.indd), etc.**

**HTML (.htm or .html)**

**PDF (.pdf)**

There are many digital file formats that use digital text, but not all file formats will open interchangeably without owning the proper application. Because of this, a key consideration for accessibility is to use a non-proprietary file format, or ensure that the necessary technology to open the file is also available to the student.

Of all the digital text formats, properly formatted HTML is a preferred option for access, usability, and content design. HTML provides a high level of access and usability while being freely distributable, easy to create, and able to be viewed with many free applications, as well as many portable devices.

**Media Type – Images**

Images have a unique power to instill emotions and affect attitudes in ways that textual information cannot. Images take advantage of our visual ability to decode complex and sophisticated information, allowing us to quickly comprehend and
organize data in various ways. It is easy to see how digital images can be a tremendous asset in designing and delivering Web-based instruction.

**Access Challenges**

Ensuring that images are accessible requires providing a textual equivalent. However, when an image is worth a thousand words, this task can be a bit daunting. Remember to let the context define the textual description. An image may be expressing radically different information, depending on the intent of the message being conveyed.

Consider the role of the image in the bigger message, and determine the significance of the image in communicating that message. The more critical the image is to comprehending the message, the more detailed the textual description should be.

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**APPENDIX D – ACCJC Standards by LASC Planning Processes**

Committee: **DISTANCE LEARNING COMMITTEE (DEC)**

Charge of Committee:

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B2: The institution sets goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. The institution articulates its goals and states the objectives derived from them in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. The institutional members understand these goals and work collaboratively toward their achievement.

B3: The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and reevaluation. Evaluation is based on analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data.

B4: The institution provides evidence that the planning process is broad-based, offers opportunities for input by appropriate constituencies, allocates necessary resources, and leads to improvement of institutional effectiveness.

A1a: The institution identifies and seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with their educational preparation and the diversity, demographics, and economy of its communities. The institution relies upon research and analysis to identify student learning needs and to assess progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes.

A1b: The institution utilizes delivery systems and modes of instruction compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the current and future needs of its students.

A2a: The institution uses established procedures to design, identify learning outcomes for, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs. The institution recognizes the central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving instructional course and programs.

A2b: The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.

A2c: High-quality instruction and appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning characterize all programs.

A2d: The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students.

A2e: The institution evaluates all courses and programs through an on-going reevaluation.

A3: Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution’s constituencies.

A4: The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. It agrees to comply with Accrediting Commission standards, policies, and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, self study and other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. The institution moves expeditiously to respond to recommendations made by the Commission.
Background
Recognizing that most accredited institutions are making use of the growing range of modalities for delivery of instructional and educational programs and services, including various electronic means, the Commission has adopted a policy based on principles of good practice to help ensure that distance learning is characterized by the same expectations for quality, integrity, and effectiveness that apply to more traditional modes of instruction.
This policy reflects the federal regulatory requirements regarding distance education and correspondence education.

Definition of Distance Education
Distance Education means [34 CFR §602.3]:
Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (4) to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may 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) audioconferencing; or
(4) video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3).

Definition of Correspondence Education
Correspondence education means [34 CFR §602.3]:
(1) education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor.
(2) interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.

(3) correspondence courses are typically self-paced.

(4) correspondence education is not distance education.

Policy
Commission policy specifies that all learning opportunities provided by accredited institutions must have equivalent quality, accountability, and focus on student outcomes, regardless of mode of delivery. This policy provides a framework that allows institutions the flexibility to adapt their delivery modes to the emerging needs of students and society while maintaining quality. Any institution offering courses and programs through distance education or correspondence education is expected to meet the requirements of accreditation in each of its courses and programs and at each of its sites.

Policy Elements
☑ development, implementation, and evaluation of all courses and programs, including those offered via distance education or correspondence education, must take place within the institution’s total educational mission.

☑ institutions are expected to control development, implementation, and evaluation of all courses and programs offered in their names, including those offered via distance education or correspondence education.

☑ institutions are expected to have clearly defined and appropriate student learning outcomes for all courses and programs, including those delivered through distance education or correspondence education.

☑ institutions are expected to provide the resources and structure needed to accomplish these outcomes and to demonstrate that their students achieve these outcomes through application of appropriate assessment.

☑ institutions are expected to provide the Commission advance notice of intent to initiate a new delivery mode, such as distance education or correspondence education, through the Substantive Change process.

☑ institutions are expected to provide the Commission advance notice of intent to offer a program, degree or certificate in which 50% or more of the courses are via distance education or correspondence education, through the Substantive Change process. For purposes of this requirement, the institution is responsible for calculating the percentage of courses that may be offered through distance or correspondence education.

☑ institutions which offer distance education or correspondence education must have processes in place through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence course or program is the same person who participates every time in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credits. This requirement will be met if the institution verifies the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the institution’s discretion, such methods as a secure log-in and password, proctored examinations, other technologies and/or practices that are developed and effective in verifying each student’s identification. The institution must also publish policies that ensure the protection of student privacy and will notify students at the time of class registration of any charges associated with verification of student identity [34 CFR§602.17g].

2 See Addendum: WCET Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education Version 2.0, June 2009.