

DISTANCE EDUCATION GUIDELINES

[Title 5 Distance Education Guidelines \(https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=ICD714E20D48411DEBC02831C6D6C108E&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=\(sc.Default\)\)](https://govt.westlaw.com/calregs/Browse/Home/California/CaliforniaCodeofRegulations?guid=ICD714E20D48411DEBC02831C6D6C108E&originationContext=documenttoc&transitionType=Default&contextData=(sc.Default))), were developed to describe best practices for quality distance education in the California community college system. All distance education is subject to the general requirements under Title 5 as well as the specific requirements of articles 55200 and 55204. These requirements include: faculty regular and effective contact, course approval, course design, faculty training and workload and class size caps.

In addition, instruction provided as distance education is subject to the requirements that may be imposed by 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. § 794d).

Distance education curriculum and instruction at the College of Marin are guided by Administrative Policy [AP 4105 Distance Education \(http://policies.marin.edu/sites/policies/files/AP4105-DistanceEducation.pdf\)](http://policies.marin.edu/sites/policies/files/AP4105-DistanceEducation.pdf).

Course Design

Online Education Initiative Course Design Rubric

To ensure the delivery of high-quality of online and hybrid courses, the College of Marin has adopted the [Peer Online Course Review \(POCR\) CVC-OEI Course Design Rubric \(https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/course-design-academy/online-course-rubric/\)](https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/course-design-academy/online-course-rubric/) and [@One Standards for Quality Online Teaching \(http://ccconlined.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/@ONE_SQOT_CC.pdf\)](http://ccconlined.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/@ONE_SQOT_CC.pdf).

The OEI Course Design Rubric was designed to establish standards relating to five areas:

1. Course design
2. Interaction and collaboration
3. Assessment
4. Learner support
5. Accessibility

Download a current PDF version of the rubric here: [Course Design Rubric \(2020\) \(https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CVC_OEI_Course_Design_Rubric_rev_April_2020_ACC_52021.pdf\)](https://onlinenetworkofeducators.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/CVC_OEI_Course_Design_Rubric_rev_April_2020_ACC_52021.pdf).

For more information about faculty support and professional development opportunities in meeting course design standards, visit [Faculty Support/Training \(http://ol.marin.edu/faculty-support\)](http://ol.marin.edu/faculty-support).

Regular and Effective Contact

Regular effective contact initiated by the instructor is essential for student success in online learning. Title 5 sections 55204 and 53200 require “regular and effective contact” in all distance education courses. Federal regulations require not only regular and effective contact but also “substantive” interaction between the students and instructor. Each course or portion of a course delivered through distance education will demonstrate instructor-to-student(s), student-to-student, and student-to-content interactions.

Best practices for Establishing Regular, Effective, and Substantive faculty-initiated contact:

- Specify course policy in the syllabus regarding frequency and timeliness of all contact initiated by the professor.
- Provide response time in the syllabus for student questions and assignment feedback (e.g. 24 - 48 hours)
- Explain course policy regarding student-initiated contact (where to post questions, assignments, etc.) in the syllabus
- Clarify important dates, such as assignment and assessment deadlines, not only in the beginning but also throughout the course

Best Practices for Ensuring Ongoing Regular and Effective Contact:

- Assign and monitor weekly assignments and projects that promote collaboration among students
- Pose questions in the discussion boards that encourage critical thinking skills and promote interaction among all course participants
- Participate regularly in discussion activities with students and ensure that discussions remain on topic
- Monitor student engagement to ensure that students participate in depth
- Include means for varied types of interaction in the course design
- Maintain an active presence in discussion boards, chat rooms, and other interactive forums
- Give frequent and substantive feedback throughout the course

Last Date of Attendance

The Last Day of Attendance (LDA), is the date the College uses to determine the amount of financial aid, if any, that must be returned to the Department of Education due to student withdrawal. The Department of Education specifically requires “using a last date of attendance at an academically-related activity as a withdrawal date” and states that “it is up to the institution to ensure that accurate records are kept for purposes of identifying a student’s last date of academic attendance or last date of attendance at an academically-related activity.” (Dept. of Education, Reg. 66898)

For Distance Education purposes, the last login into a course management system is not accepted as the last day of attendance. Instead, the Department of Education refers to academic engagement as the activity-based standard for determining the last date of attendance. In other words, attendance is based on the student’s completion or participation in an assigned course activity.

Examples of DE course activities include:

- Submitting an academic assignment
- Taking a quiz or exam
- Participating in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction

- Posting to an online discussion about academic matters
- Initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course (Dept. of Education, Reg. 66952)

Accessibility Guidelines

All distance education is subject to the requirements of Title 5 as well as the requirements imposed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S. Code Sections 12100 et seq.) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S. Code Section 794d). Distance Education courses will be reviewed in the order in which those requested are received by Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to determine ADA compliance.

The College's Assistive and Instructional Technologists will assist faculty in meeting their ADA compliance obligations. This service will also be provided in the order by which requests are received. Faculty must engage in relevant training from the College to ensure that they understand accessibility as it relates to instruction and curriculum. Likewise, any material or technology in support of any instructional activity must be vetted for accessibility compliance by a designated campus authority.

For detailed information and resources visit the [Accessibility Guidelines \(/accessibility-guidelines\)](/accessibility-guidelines).