

HARTNELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

AP 4105 Distance Education

References: Education Code Sections 66700 and 70901 et seq.; Title 5 Sections 55002.5, 55200 et seq., and 55260 et seq.; 34 Code of Federal Regulations Part 602.17 (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); ACCJC Accreditation Standard 2

Student Authentication

Consistent with federal regulations pertaining to federal financial aid eligibility, the District must authenticate or verify that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education courses is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The District will provide to each student at the time of registration, a statement of the process in place to protect student privacy and estimated additional student charges associated with verification of student identity, if any.

The Vice President of Instruction shall utilize the following method to authenticate or verify the student's identity: secure credentialing/login and password

Privacy

The Vice President of Instruction shall establish procedures for providing a statement of the process in place to protect student privacy of each student at the time of registration.

Definitions

Distance Education: Distance education means education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor(s) and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor(s) either synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies that may be used to offer distance education 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) audio conference, (4) other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in this definition. Distance education does not include correspondence courses.

Correspondence Education: Correspondence Education means education provided through one or more courses by a community college or district under which the college or district provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and student is limited due to separation, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced, although a regular cycle of assignment submissions and delivery of feedback should be established for

facilitated learning. If a course is part correspondence and part residential training, it is considered a correspondence course. Correspondence education is not distance education.

Course Approval: The review and approval of new and existing distance education courses shall follow the curriculum approval procedures outlined in AP 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 Hartnell College Curriculum Committee will certify the following:

Course Quality Standards: The same standards of course quality are applied to the distance and correspondence education courses as are applied to in-person classes.

Course Quality Determinations: Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance and correspondence education course were made with the full involvement of the Curriculum Committee approval procedures.

Regular interaction: Interaction between a student and instructor(s) is ensured by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency: (1) providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency and (2) monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

Substantive interaction: Engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following: (1) providing direct instruction, (2) assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework, (3) providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency, (4) facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency, or (5) other instructional activities approved by the District's or program's accrediting agency.

Instructor Contact

Distance Education: Each section of the course that is delivered through distance education will include regular and substantive interaction between the instructor(s) and students, as well as among students, as described in the course outline of record, either synchronously or asynchronously, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions,

supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities.

Correspondence Education: Each section of a course conducted through correspondence education will be established through a cycle of assignment submissions and comprehensive, responsive feedback, as determined by the Hartnell College Curriculum Committee. Instructors will be responsible for ensuring that each student will receive ongoing support toward making meaningful academic progress.

Students who participate in correspondence education will have access to student support services, including counseling, library searches, research assistance, and tutoring or other learning support through mail, email, telephone or in-person contact, as determined by the Curriculum Committee.

Course Outline of Record or Addendum to Course Outline: The course outline of record or an addendum to the official course outline of record for any new or existing course provided through distance or correspondence education **must** address the following:

- How course outcomes will be achieved in a distance or correspondence education mode;
- For distance education, how the portion of instruction delivered via distance education meets the requirement for regular and substantive interaction;
- For correspondence education, how the portion of instruction delivered via correspondence education documents and facilitates learning progression through a cycle of assignment submissions and feedback; and,
- The course design and all course materials must be accessible to every student, including students with disabilities.

Duration of Approval: All distance and correspondence education courses approved under this procedure will continue to be in effect unless there are substantive changes of the course outline.

Faculty Selection and Workload: Instructors of course sections delivered through distance or correspondence education are individuals responsible for delivering course content who meet the qualifications for instruction established by the District's accrediting agency. Instructors will be selected using the District or college's same procedures for determining other instructional assignments.

Prior to teaching an online or hybrid course, faculty must meet qualifications described in the District/Hartnell College Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Correspondence Education Students: A student is considered to be "enrolled in correspondence courses" if correspondence courses constitute 50 percent or more of the courses in which the student is enrolled during a financial aid award year.

In order for a correspondence education student to be considered a full-time student at the District, at least one-half of the student's coursework must be made up of non-correspondence coursework that meets one-half of the District's requirement for full-time students.

- For a program that measures progress in credit hours and uses standard terms (semesters, trimesters, or quarters), 12 semester hours or 12 quarter hours per academic term.
- For a program that measures progress in credit hours and uses nonstandard-terms (terms other than semesters, trimesters, or quarters) the number of credits determined by,
 - (1) Dividing the number of weeks of instructional time in the term by the number of weeks of instructional time in the program's academic year; and
 - (2) Multiplying the fraction determined under paragraph (3)(A) of this definition by the number of credit hours in the program's academic year.

Student Participation in Distance Education Courses: The Hartnell Community College District, in alignment with the Department of Education, requires that students be dropped if they have not regularly and substantively interacted with the instructor teaching the distance education course. Instructors in courses offered via distance education shall drop students if they have not entered a meaningful discussion board post, or completed an assignment, **or** communicated with the instructor by email either initiated by the student or as a response to the instructor's email within 72 hours of the start date. After first census, students that fail to regularly and substantively interact in the course in the manner described above shall be dropped by the instructor. In addition, the instructor of a course offered via distance education will maintain a record of students' attendance to demonstrate compliance with said last date of attendance policy.

Use of Course Management System: Faculty wishing to teach distance education courses must complete an orientation to the learning management system. Pursuant to the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, online courses must be delivered using the CMS adopted by the District.

Approved by Superintendent/President: April 6, 2016

Revised: May 12, 2026

See Board Policy 4105 and Administrative Procedures 4020 and 4022