

## HARTNELL COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

### AP 4105 Distance Education

**References:** Title 5 Sections 53200, 55002 and 55200 et seq.; References: 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; 34 Code of Federal Regulations Section 602.17; ACCJC Accreditation Standard 2, Hartnell College Administrative Procedures 4020 and 4022.

**Distance education** refers to instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology. (5 CCR §55200) Distance education courses may be offered fully online (the required number of instructional hours based on the number of units is conducted online) and hybrid (a course in which any of the required number of instructional hours based on the number of units is met face-to-face as well as online).

**Course Approval:** Distance education courses are approved under the same conditions and criteria as all other courses and follow curriculum approval procedures with the full involvement of faculty in accordance with Title 5 §53200 and §55002. The review of new and existing distance education courses follows the curriculum approval procedures outline in Administrative Procedure 4020, Program, Curriculum and Course Development, and 4022, Course Approval. Each proposed or existing course offered by distance education is reviewed and approved separately if any portion of the instruction in a course is designed to be provided through distance education. (5 CCR 55206)

When approving distance education courses, the Curriculum Committee will certify the following:

**Course Quality Standards:** the same standards of course quality are applied to any portion of a course conducted through distance education as are applied to traditional classroom courses;

**Course Quality Determinations:** determinations and judgments about the quality of distance education under the course quality standards shall be made with the full involvement of Curriculum Committee approval procedures.

**Instructor Contact:** any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students (5 CCR §55204). The instructor is responsible to initiate this contact through a variety of means described and approved in an addendum to the course outline of record.

In addition, the Curriculum Committee will assure that the course complies with requirements 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).

**Duration of Approval:** courses are reviewed on a five-year rotational cycle and updated as needed in accordance with Hartnell Administrative Procedure 4020. Distance Education and hybrid modalities are reviewed and approved as a separate action of the Curriculum Committee.

**Authentication:** Federal regulations pertaining to federal financial aid eligibility require that distance education courses and programs include processes to verify student identity and protect student privacy. The authentication approach currently used by the District is a secure credentialing/login and password through the campus student information system. As they emerge, the District may utilize new or more effective technologies and practices to verify student identification.

**Regular and Effective Contact:** All distance education courses at Hartnell College, whether hybrid or fully online will include regular effective contact as described below:

**Initiated interaction:** instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities of the course. Providing students with an open ended question forum, although appropriate, does not constitute the entirety of effective instructor initiated interaction.

**Frequency:** distance education courses are considered the “virtual equivalent” of face to face courses. Therefore, the frequency of the contact should be at least the same as would be established in a regular, face to face course. This suggests that, at the very least, the number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face to face students should also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with students in the DE format. Contact should be distributed in a manner that will ensure that regular contact is maintained given the nature of asynchronous instructional methodologies.

**Establishing expectations:** an instructor or department established policy describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback, will be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents that are made available for students at the beginning of each semester.

**Type of Contact:** instructors will, at a minimum, use the following resources to initiate contact with students:

- Email
- Timely evaluation of coursework
- Timely response to student-initiated communications
- Instructor prepared material that, possibly combined with other course materials, creates the “virtual equivalent” of the face-to-face classroom.

**Other types of contact:** distance education instructors are encouraged to use to initiate and maintain contact with students through a variety of other means:

- Weekly announcements in the Course Management System
- Threaded discussion forums with appropriate instructor participation
- Chat room/Texting/Twitter
- E-Portfolios/Blogs/Wikis
- Online office hours
- Online quizzes/exams
- Face-to-face individual or group meetings
- Phone calls/Voicemail
- USPS mail
- Library workshops
- Posted audio/video
- Live audio/video
- E-conference (CCCConfer, Google Hangout, Skype)

**Faculty Qualifications for Teaching Online:** Instructors of course sections delivered via distance education technology shall be selected by the same procedures used to determine all instructional assignments. Instructors shall possess at least the minimum qualifications for the discipline into which the course's subject matter most appropriately falls.

Prior to teaching an online or hybrid course faculty must meet qualifications described in the District/Hartnell College Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement including the completion of formal coursework in the teaching and delivery of online education or prior online teaching experience.

**Student Participation:** 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 course management software (CMS). Pursuant to the provisions of the Collective Bargaining Agreement, online courses must be delivered using the CMS adopted by the District.

See Board Policy 4105 and Administrative Procedures 4020 and 4022  
 Approved by Superintendent/President: April 6, 2016