

**Kern Community College
District Administrative Procedure
Chapter 4 – Academic Affairs**

AP 4105 Distance and Correspondence Education

Accreditation Related

References:

Title 5 Sections 53200 et seq.; 55200 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 II.A.1
Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

NOTE: This procedure is **legally required**.

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, completes, and receives credit for the course or program. At the time of registrations, each respective college will provide to each student at the time of registration, a statement of the process to protect student privacy and estimated additional student charges associated with verification of student identity, if any.

The Chief Instructional Officer shall utilize one or more of the following methods to authenticate or verify the student's identity:

- Secure credentialing/login and password;
- Proctored examinations; and/or
- New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity.

Definition of Distance Education: Distance Education refers to instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by time or distance and interact through the assistance of technology.

Definition of Correspondence Education: Correspondence Education refers to 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: Each proposed or existing course offered by distance education shall be reviewed and approved separately. Separate approval is mandatory if any portion of the instruction in a course or a course section is designed to be provided through distance education.

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 Chief Instructional Officer will certify the following:

- **Course Quality Standards:** The same standards of course quality are applied to the distance education courses as are applied to in-person classes.
- **Course Quality Determinations:** Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance education course were made with the full involvement of the appropriate discipline faculty and the curriculum committee approval procedures.

Instructor Contact in Distance Education Courses: Each section of the course that is delivered through distance education will include regular effective contact between instructor and students, as well as among students, either synchronously or asynchronously. Any portion of a class conducted through distance education must include regular and effective contact between instructor and students and among students, 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, and/or other activities. Regular and effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.

Instructor Contact in Correspondence Education Courses: 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 Chief Instructional Officer or designee. 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 Chief Instructional Officer or designee.

Addendum to Course Outline of Record: An addendum to the official course outline of record shall be made if any portion of the instruction of a new or existing course is provided through distance education. The addendum must be approved according to the District's curriculum approval procedures. The addendum must address the following:

- How course outcomes will be achieved in a distance education mode;
- How the portion of instruction delivered via distance education provides regular

and effective contact between instructors and students, student to student; and

- How the portion of instruction delivered via distance education meets the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Duration of Approval: All distance and correspondence education courses approved under this procedure will remain in effect until substantive changes of the course outline of record.

Faculty Selection and Workload: Instructors of Distance Education and/or Correspondence Education courses shall be selected by the same procedures used to determine all instructional assignments. Instructors shall possess the minimum qualifications for the discipline into which the course's subject matter most appropriately falls. The instructors must be prepared to teach in a distance education delivery method consistent with District policies and negotiated agreements.

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. Refer to AP 5130 regarding financial aid eligibility requirements.

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.

- 12 semester hours for a program that measures progress in credit hours and uses standard terms per academic term.
- 24 semester hours for a program that measures progress in credit hours and does not use terms, over the weeks of instructional time in the academic year, or the prorated equivalent if the program is less than one academic year.
- For a program that measures progress in credit hours and uses nonstandard terms (terms other than semesters, trimesters, or quarters) the number of credits as 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.
- 24 clock hours per week for a program that measures progress in clock hours,. A “clock hour” for correspondence education purposes is defined as sixty (60) minutes of preparation in a correspondence course.
- A series of courses or seminars that equals 12 semester hours in a maximum of 18 weeks.
- The work portion of a cooperative education program in which the amount of work performed is equivalent to the academic workload of a full-time student.

Course Section Enrollment Capacity: Maximum and minimum class sizes will be determined by the College President or designee after consultation with faculty chairs. Class size decisions at each campus shall be made in a fair and consistent manner based on pedagogical and enrollment management considerations.

Use of District-Approved Learning Management System

Faculty choosing to incorporate a learning management system (LMS) into their course(s) must be the Kern CCD-approved LMS.

Regular and Substantive Interaction

The faculty member teaching an online or hybrid (face-to-face and online credit instruction) course shall engage in regular and effective student contact:

- a. Respond to student questions, emails, and other communications within 48 hours, Saturdays, Sundays, non-instructional days and leave days excepted;
- b. Regularly (at least twice a week) initiate contact with students in the online classroom;
- c. Monitor student-to-student interaction in classroom activities requiring interaction;
- d. Select and incorporate some combination of the following student authentication strategies to verify student identity or authenticate the originality of work.
 1. Use proctors for tests and require id's.
 2. Use an originality tool to prevent plagiarism.
 3. Become familiar with students' individual writing styles by requiring a variety of writing tasks, such as discussion forums, paragraph-length answers on exams, and formal research papers.
 4. Require specific research paper topics for which the instructor knows the secondary sources thoroughly.
 5. Employ a lock-down browser system, to prevent students from exiting the exam and surfing the web for answers.
 6. Design test questions to be randomly drawn from banks of questions and shuffled so that each student gets a different set of questions.
 7. Design tests to be open-book but with a limited amount of time to complete.
 8. Require forced completion on exams so student cannot re-enter a test.
 9. Set a short window for testing completion, i.e., one or two days to take an exam rather than a week.
 10. Create a unique password for each exam.
- e. Provide information to students regarding items 1 – 4 above on the class syllabus.
- f. The faculty member teaching an online or hybrid course shall include all course syllabus information as described in the CCA contract within the District's adopted class management system and likewise shall conduct all discussion forums, wikis, and other student-to-student class interactivity entirely within the class management system.