RCCD Regular and Substantive Interaction Guidelines

Administrative Procedure 2105: Distance Education contains procedural language consistent with state and federal standards for distance education courses offered in the Riverside Community College District. As a complement to AP 2105, the Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) Guidelines define how to interpret the standards to ensure that online courses offered in the district meet or exceed them.

The responsibility for updating the Regular and Substantive Interaction Guidelines resides with the colleges' Distance Education Committees which report to the colleges' Academic Senates. The Distance Education Committees will review this document and make recommendations to the Academic Senate as changes are required every 3 years. Federal language is in bold and cannot be modified.

Distance education means 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).**

Note that Correspondence Education requirements are different from Distance Education requirements.

Correspondence education means

> **(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**

Definitions from the [department of education website](https://...) (34 C.F.R. § 602.3.)

Substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes *at least two* of the following:

(i) Providing direct instruction via synchronous or asynchronous methods

- Synchronous instruction is distance education classes with meeting(s) during scheduled days and times. Students will attend class online during the published course times. Additionally, students will log in to Canvas and complete work regularly throughout the week. Canvas and other technologies will be required to complete coursework.
  - Evidence of class meetings (ConferZoom, Recording, announcements with basic information about time, date, topic, link, etc.,).
- Asynchronous instruction is distance education classes with no scheduled meeting days. Students will log in to Canvas and complete work regularly throughout the week. Canvas and other technologies will be required to complete coursework.
  - Instructional videos (synchronous meeting recordings, self-made and/or curated instructional videos) with basic contextualization from the instructor about what to do with the materials.

(ii) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework

- Feedback on coursework can be given to individual students in a rubric, in submission comments (written, audio, or video), as quiz question comments, and/or as a written or video message as announcements, with in discussion boards, or as emails (archived in Canvas) to the *entire class*.

(iii) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency

- The instructor provides information and/or answers to student questions related to the content of a course or competency, with audio, video, or written explanation as to how students should engage with the course materials.

(iv) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency

- Facilitating a *group* discussion regarding the content of a course or competency could occur in discussion boards or in other locations throughout the course.
- Instructor presence as a facilitator in a group discussion serves the purpose of advancing the conversation.

(v) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency

- Substantive interactions that are not included in the first four methods.

- o District external tools that do not require separate login, with sufficient instructor engagement and data tracking.
- o Substantive direct instruction using Canvas content pages created by the instructor.

An institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency—

(i) 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;

- *Examples can include but are not limited to:*
  - o Interaction patterns will vary depending on the length of the course. The instructor establishes predictable publishing, unlocking, and availability window cycles (modules, assignments, or announcements) with due dates spread throughout the semester.
  - o The instructor provides a tentative schedule showing items such as the frequency of student contact, due dates, topics of instruction, etc.
  - o The instructor provides information regarding how they contact students and how students contact the instructor.
  - o The instructor provides information regarding the expectation of the type and frequency of interactions during the course.

(ii) 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.

- Actions taken by the institution and instructor to monitor needs and extend support.
- *Examples can include but are not limited to:*
  - o Reaching out to students using the *Message Students Who* tool, Inbox messages, and/or assignment comments to note changes in participation and/or course work
  - o Promoting and encouraging attendance to tutoring services, engagement centers or other campus resources
  - o Using Canvas analytical tools to track student progress and engagement
  - o Providing resources to equip students to monitor their success in the course
  - o Providing Canvas guides and video tutorials where needed
  - o Utilizing Early Alert and special program grade checks