Distance Education Handbook

Riverside Community College District

March 2020
# Table of Contents

Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 3  
Norco College Distance Education Report .......................................................................................... 4  
2030 Educational Master Plan (see pages 27-28) .............................................................................. 10  
Norco College Distance Education Committee ................................................................................. 11  
Norco College Distance Education Curriculum .................................................................................. 12  
RCCD Distance Education .................................................................................................................. 13  
Canvas Certification ............................................................................................................................ 13  
Online Student Services ...................................................................................................................... 14  
Frequently Asked Questions ............................................................................................................... 15  
Appendices ......................................................................................................................................... 18  
Academic Policy 4105: Distance Education ........................................................................................ 18  
Summary of Regulations for Distance Education ............................................................................... 20  
Institutional Self Evaluation Report (See page 65) ............................................................................ 23  
Regular and Substantive Contact ....................................................................................................... 24  
Distance Education Checklist ........................................................................................................... 28  
Canvas Instructor Guide ..................................................................................................................... 30  
Canvas Student Guide ....................................................................................................................... 31  
Resources Available through Canvas ................................................................................................ 32  
Regular and Substantive Contact ....................................................................................................... 32  
Making Grading Easier ......................................................................................................................... 32  
Student Support Tools ......................................................................................................................... 33  
Open Educational Resources Initiative ............................................................................................... 34
Introduction

This Distance Education Handbook is designed to help Norco College faculty understand the context, mission, vision, values, policies and procedures to ensure students enrolled in online, hybrid or lecture courses using the District Learning Management System (Canvas LMS).

Faculty should consult this Handbook to prepare for course design using best practices recommended by the College, District and State Chancellor’s Office. Necessary links and contact information have been included to help facilitate information requests.

The Distance Education Report contains research from the 2014-2019 accreditation cycle aligned with the previous Educational Master plan. As such, it contains much needed insight into the population Norco College services as well as the essential demographics which need attention to ensure greater access, equity and success among our entire College student population. This Distance Education Handbook seeks to address issues identified in the Norco College Student Equity Plan 2019-2022. Online instruction allows students to attend classes who would not otherwise be able to sacrifice time away from familial, employment and personal responsibilities. Distance Education is vital to accomplish Norco College’s goals to increase access to students in the service area with its increasing population. This growth affords opportunity to improve, to expand and to innovate online instruction, course design, and assessment of courses, certificates and degrees.

The California Community College Chancellor’s Office provides guidance for Statewide Distance Education programs through the California Virtual Campus – Online Education Initiative (CVC-OEI). The OEI Course Design Rubric is the gold standard for online instruction and is the basis for membership in this Consortium of California Colleges with online courses, certificates and degrees. Future growth of Norco College Distance Education will necessitate the increasing awareness and use of this model for design and assessment in order to ensure compliance with Title V, ADA and ACCJC standards for online education.
Norco College Distance Education Report

Definitions

Distance Education (DE) courses, for the purpose of this report, are defined as those courses that are offered in hybrid or online format. These courses all have the common element that some seat time is replaced by interaction in the online environment. Throughout the RCCD the configuration of DE courses is not standardized. Hybrid courses vary in the amount of seat time that is replaced, and some online classes require students to participate in face-to-face proctored test situations. However, most Distance Education courses that are offered throughout the District are 51% or more online. Years listed are academic years, e.g. 2018 represents Summer and Fall semesters in 2018, and Winter and Spring semesters in 2019. All data, with the exception of first-time student data was taken from RCCD’s Enrollment Management Dashboard on July 10, 2019. First-time student data was taken directly from Colleague on June 3, 2019.

DE Growth

Percentages of Full-Time Equivalent Students (FTES) enrolled in online (OL) classes rose about 1% each year from 2014-2017, but increased 3% from 2017 to 2018 (from 7.57% in 2014 to 13.89% in 2018). Percentages of FTES in hybrid (Hyb) courses have also grown, but at a slower rate from 4.38% in 2014 to 6.06% in 2018. (Figure 1).

![NC % FTES DE](Figure1.png)

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**Figure 1**
Success and Retention

Retention rates at NC for non-DE courses have remained fairly constant at about 87% over the last five years. Retention rates for DE courses, both hybrid and online, are consistently lower than those that are non-DE. Between 2014 -2017, hybrid course retention rates were slightly higher than those for online courses, but retention rates for online and hybrid were both 83% in 2018 (Figure 2).

Success rates for non-DE courses at NC have been varied between 71% - 74% from 2014 - 2018. DE courses have success rates that are lower than those for non-DE courses, with online courses having higher success rates than hybrid courses in all years except 2017. Success rates for online courses rose 2% in 2017 from 66% to 68% and remained constant in 2018. Hybrid course success rates reached a high of 68% in 2017, but fell to 66% in 2018 (Figure 3).

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**Figure 2**

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**Figure 3**
Success by Department

Success rates in Non-DE courses were clearly higher than those in DE courses in the Math and Sciences and the Business, Engineering and Information Technology departments at NC. This is especially true of Math and Sciences (45% success for online and hybrid compared to 69% success for non-DE courses). Success rates for hybrid courses in the Arts, Humanities and World Languages Department were higher than rates for both online and Non-DE courses, and online success rates for Social and Behavioral Sciences were higher than hybrid or Non-DE courses (see figure 6).

First-Time Students

Twenty-six percent of first time students at NC enroll in at least one DE course (Figure 5), with first time DE students taking an average of 1.4 DE courses (888 enrolled courses/ 649 unique students). While overall success rates for DE courses have been closing the gap, and sometimes surpassing those for non-DE course during the past five years, first-time students have not been faring as well. Successful course completion (A, B, C or P) in DE courses by first-time DE students in Fall 2018 is about 60%, with most students receiving an A grade, closely followed by students receiving an F or FW grade (Figure 6). This success rate is well below the Fall 2018 success rate of 76% for first-time students in non-DE courses at NC. The percentage of first time DE students who withdraw is 15%, much higher than the 3% for Non-DE students. These data may point to a need for making an orientation to online learning a part of the student onboarding process and/or counseling efforts directed at students enrolling in DE courses.
Figure 5

Enrollment 1st time Students NC, Fall 2018
Unduplicated Headcount, N=2514

Figure 6

Fall 2018 Grades NC
DE vs. Non-DE
First Time Students, Duplicated Headcount

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>DE%</th>
<th>No DE%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FW</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equity and Distance Education at Norco College

In disaggregating first-time enrollment by ethnicity, the largest demographic group is White students at 40%, followed by Hispanic students at 35%. The other three groups, Asian, Black and Other (Pacific Islander, Native American, or unknown) students each make up 8% of first time students at NC. When considering the percentage of each ethnic group enrolled in DE courses, the highest percentage in Fall 2018 were Black students, followed closely by Asian students at 31%. Hispanic students had the lowest percentage of enrollment in DE courses at 22% (Figures 7 and 8).
When the grade data are disaggregated by ethnicity, there is clearly a high percentage of Asian students earning A grades in DE courses. The percentage of Black students earning F grades is clearly higher than percentages of other students, a concern as there are high percentages of Black students enrolling in DE. Also of concern are the high percentages of White students withdrawing from DE courses, given that this group of students is largest in number of NC’s first-time DE students.

Notes on Data:
Data taken from EMD on July 10, 2019
OL = courses coded as OL, HYBO, and WRKO
HYB = courses coded as HYB
Non-DE = courses coded as LAB, LEC, WE, WEL, WRK
*Home college as designated on 09/01/2018. There were 71 students not included in the college-specific data, as they had not declared a home college.
In calculating grade data for Non-DE courses, lab courses where students receive no grade were not entered into the calculations.
2030 Educational Master Plan (see pages 27-28)
Strategy 6 to Improve College Going Rates: Online Education

Another strategy to improve college attendance rates in our area entails online education. Over the past Accreditation cycle, Norco College has increased online FTES by a total of 7 percent including online courses in all four Schools. Currently, Norco College’s distance education offerings (online and hybrid courses) impacts nearly one-fourth of all enrollment (23 percent in Fall 2018). Online education enables greater access to college courses as well as progress toward certificates and degrees awarded for students including men of color, disabled, and foster students, whose lives need the flexibility that face-to-face lecture courses do not permit.

Norco College’s values and goals in the Educational Master Plan envision an exciting opportunity to double our online student population. This can easily be achieved through our natural growth in the region’s college eligible population and continued strategic partnerships in dual-enrollment with high schools and online high school programs. By 2030, one or more online Associate of Arts degrees should be created, vetted, and implemented. Finally, Norco College should consider ongoing participation in online educational communities in the College District, throughout the state, and nationally, to expand the online student population and partner with organizations/institutions with shared goals and best practices.

Therefore, Norco College needs a broader vision and commitment for distance education among our administration, faculty, staff and student populations. A robust online education program touches all aspects of Norco’s community. The following elements of Strategy 6 must be funded, implemented, and facilitated over the next decade of the Educational Master Plan.

First, a Director of Online Education could lead this vision to actualization. Next, administration and staff need to support Norco’s online students in onboarding, orientation, counseling, and other services to ensure success in registration and completion. Hiring enough faculty to anticipate growth in online courses and programs ensures the quality, rigor and attention to detail in creating and implementing online certificates and degrees.

Faculty must be afforded the training and resources in the following areas to:

- foster online offerings across all disciplines and courses
- increase awareness of the merits of online education
- inform the andragogy of online instruction at Norco College
- receive stipends for the development of courses, certificates, programs and degrees
- host and to attend events pertaining to online education
- utilize RCCD Best Practices for Course Design created by District Distance Education in conjunction with the Online Education Initiative
- implement best practices for online instruction from a national perspective
- participate in faculty inquiry and learning communities
- adjust for the demands of Statewide accessibility and equity goals and metrics,
including informing the College about gaps between online and face-to-face student populations

Finally, online education requires ample support for students including training in the use of Canvas and third-party applications. Online students must know about the wealth of services available with registration, including Counseling, Disability Resource Center, Health Services, Learning Resource Center, Library, Special Programs, Tutoring, and more. Low income students need on-campus resources made available to them to make up for access issues that may elude them because of their income situations.

The online education community must utilize tools, best practices and ideals from Guided Pathways, Guide for Evaluating and Improving Institutions, @One, and RCCD Distance Education to become a model institution for online education in the region, the State and the nation.

Norco College Distance Education Committee

Norco College Distance Education Committee is a standing committee of the Academic Senate. The purpose of this body as indicated in the Purpose Statement and in the Academic Senate by-laws Section 7.A-B is to develop guidelines for distance education courses and recommend to the Senate policies and procedures for distance education training of faculty and students. The committee advises strategic planning committees on institutional needs and best practices for distance education. This role supports the College’s shared governance process essential to the ACCJC standards for accreditation.

Distance Education Committee meetings occur on the third Wednesdays of each calendar month during Fall and Spring semesters as well as occasional meetings in Winter or Summer as needed. Meeting Agendas and Minutes are distributed to the College constituencies at least 3 days before meetings occur. The Norco College Distance Education Committee pages on the Norco College Website contain copies of past Agendas and Minutes for the public record in support of Accreditation.

All students, staff, faculty and administrators are welcome to attend. Membership includes representation from each of these areas including guests from the District and general public. Participation is welcomed in order to strengthen the distance education program and to fulfill Strategy 6 to increase access indicated in the 2030 Educational Master Plan.

Distance Education Committee Statement of Purpose

The distance education committee develops guidelines for distance education courses and recommends to the Senate policies and procedures for distance education training of faculty and students. The committee advises strategic planning committees on institutional needs and best practices for distance education.
2019-2020 Membership
Melissa Bader, Chair of Chairs, Arts & Humanities (COM)
Michael Bobo, Co-Chair, Arts & Humanities (AHWL)
Damon Nance, Co-Chair, Dean, Technology and Learning Resources (COM)
Sarah Burnett, Social & Behavioral Sciences (SBS)
Vivian Harris, Arts & Humanities (COM)
Marissa Iliscupidez, Social & Behavioral Sciences (SBS)
Sandra Popiden, Social & Behavioral Sciences (SBS)
Walter Stevens, Arts & Humanities (AHWL)
Dana White, Business & Management (BEIT)
Suzanne Witmer, STEM (KIN)

Norco College Distance Education Curriculum

Norco College Distance Education Committee participates in the Curriculum approval process through supporting faculty with their Distance Education Addendum submissions to the Norco College Curriculum Committee.

The Riverside Community College District Curriculum Committees have prepared a 2019 Update to the Curriculum Handbook which contains the policy and procedures related to Distance Education on pages 39-42.

Curricular Meta is the starting point to launch a DE Addendum which will be forwarded to the Norco College Curriculum for review. This approval process is stated in the Norco College Curriculum Handbook located on the Norco College Curriculum Committee webpage.

Faculty interested in preparing a Distance Education Addendum should consult with their District discipline faculty as well as a Distance Education Committee member in order to ensure their proposal has the necessary support to move from the College, Technical Review, District and Board Approval process. Addendums must indicate ways in which instruction will clearly make up for the loss of face-to-face instructional hours through the use of various online applications and Learning Management System resources and integrated third-party applications.

The Curriculum approval process must be rigorous in order to ensure our courses are vetted for Federal, State and local standards and best practices in course design, accessibility, assessment and equity as well as to meet the ACCJC accreditation standards.
RCCD Distance Education

Norco College Distance Education works under the direction and supervision of the Office of Riverside Community College District Distance Education located at the District Offices.

As stated on their official website the mission of RCCD Distance Education (formerly Open Campus) is to extend access to learning through distance education.

Objectives:

To facilitate learning at a distance, Distance Education provides:

- Educational technology to the colleges, faculty, and students to support the delivery of online-based courses and services
- Professional development and training for faculty
- Expertise and experience
- Canvas management, production and problem solving.

All matters of training, technical support, enrollment, and trouble shooting your course content should be directed to their attention. See the Faculty Help & FAQs page for more information and details related to specific issues encountered in the setup, management and maintenance of your Canvas LMS courses.

Canvas Certification

Canvas is the LMS platform that is used by the Riverside Community College District, and while third-party LMS platforms are available and widely used, they must be integrated with Canvas when possible. This will solve issues of accreditors being able to view discussion forums and to verify that online assignments make up a student's grade.

Instructors who plan to teach in any mode which requires the use of Canvas (online, hybrid or web-enhanced) must first complete Canvas training at RCCD. This can be done fully online through Online Canvas Academy, OR face-to-face at your college with one of the District Educational Technology Trainers. In addition to basic instruction on Canvas, the Canvas training covers administrative policies and procedures for online instruction, 508 compliance & accessibility, accreditation information, as well as additional district services and resources available for distance education instructors. Check with Norco college's trainer for a current schedule of availability and training sessions.

For the Online Canvas Academy, sessions open each 1st of the month and close on the 30th day of the month. You can enroll at any time during the month-long session, but keep in mind - each session closes on the 30th of the month.
If you are ready to get started with Canvas sign up for Canvas Certification Training.

Faculty can contact RCCD Distance Education staff directly. You will find their contact information on the Faculty Training Calendar page.

If you need more help, contact RCCD Distance Education via the Faculty Assistance form.

Online Student Services

**Admissions & Records (951-372-7002)**
- Web Advisor and email help – please send an email to admissions@norcocollege.edu
- Transcript request
- Forms can be completed online and submitted through your RCCD student email

**Career Center (951-372-7147)**

**Counseling & Advising (951-72-7101)**
- Online Counseling
- Scheduling Appointments
- Student Education Plan – you can find your education plan in EduNav.
- For help getting into EduNav contact helpdesk@rccd.edu
- For Help using EduNav contact Alex Spencer or Nelya Parada

**Disability Resource Center (951-372-7070)**
- For ASL Interpreting, please call 951-547-1178
- For Accommodations please send an email to drc@norcocollege.edu from your RCCD email.

**Dual Enrollment**
- For JFK and CAVA, contact Patty Sanchez at 951-738-7748
- For ERHS, JVHS, LSHS, contact Adriana Martinez at 951-739-7856
- For CENTEN, CHS, SHS, contact Rachel Rodriguez at 951-738-7735

**EOPS/ CARE (951-372-7128) & CalWORKs (951-372-7052)**
- Counseling appointments/workshops will be conducted using Zoom online. To schedule an appointment, please call (951) 372-7128 or email us at eops@norcocollege.edu
- CalWORKs mid-semester check-in appointments will be completed by phone. Staff will call to schedule your phone appointment.

**Financial Aid (Call 951-372-7009)**
Food Pantry (Located in STEM Center Room 307 and open 8am to 5pm Monday through Friday)

Foster Youth (951-372-7128)
- Laptops will be checked out to students as needed. A flyer is available with free local Wi-Fi zones in the area. Counseling appointments available through Zoom online.
- Please call to schedule an appointment.
- Staff are using the Group Me account for immediate communications/announcements.
- Ruth Jones-Santos is Student Success Coach (951-738-7743) Send Email
- High School Contact is Kimberly Thomas Foster Youth Resources Specialist (951-738-7874) Send Email

Library and Learning Resources (951-372-7019)
- NetTutor - https://norcocollege.libguides.com/nettutor/
- LRC - https://www.norcocollege.edu/academicAffairs/tl/lrc/Pages/index.aspx

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How will students access my Canvas class/How do students login to Canvas?
A: Students can access from the Canvas Login link on the Distance Education website. We also provide students with Canvas login information. students are generally uploaded 2 weeks before the course starts and will be able to access on the first day of the class. Otherwise, recently added students are uploaded within 2 hours. Once published, you can use the Canvas Inbox to message students. Some faculty have used this option to provide the course syllabus to students prior to the class start date. Please keep in mind that even though a class is published students will not be able to access the class until the scheduled start date.

IMPORTANT! Don't forget to Publish your Course! If you do not publish your class, students will not be able to access or view content on the class start date.

Q: How can I find out if I am using a supported browser for Canvas
A: Be sure to check the Canvas Browser & System Requirements page.

Q: How can I view my course as a student? Is there a "demo" student available for instructors?
A: Yes. One option is to click Student View at the far right column on your course home page. Alternately, a “demo” student account can be created for an instructor which allows you to
login to your Canvas classes as if you are a student. Request a demo student account via the Faculty Assistance Form.

Q: How can my students get help?

A: For Students, Canvas support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 1-844-603-4264. Additionally, students can click the help link (located near the bottom of the initial Canvas login area OR on the navigation bottom left after logging into Canvas) and selecting Canvas Guides for Students.

Q: What is the Distance Education Instructor Resources course I see listed under my course listings?

A: We have included resources for Distance Education faculty within the Distance Education Instructor Resources. This includes information, “how-to” guides and resources on Accessibility, the OEI, Software, best practices, links to District licensed software (such as Respondus, Studymate), and more!

Q: How can I get more assistance, training and support with Distance Education, related Educational Technologies, Canvas and content accessibility?

A: Find out more about our support staff.

For faculty support throughout the District, contact: Vincent Alonzo and Derek Moore, Online Educational Support/Technologies Trainers. If you need Canvas training, help with building your Canvas class, setting up course content, accessibility, Canvas tools and apps, or if there’s a problem with how things are working in Canvas, Vincent or Derek are the people to call! Vincent works primarily at MVC and RCC. Derek works primarily at RCC and Norco College.

Vincent Alonzo (vincent.alonzo@rccd.edu)
Distance Education Support Specialist / Educational Technologies Trainer
(951) 571-6935 MVC
(951) 222-8693 CAADO

Derek Moore(derek.moore@rccd.edu)
Distance Education Support Specialist / Educational Technologies Trainer
(951) 222-8694 CAADO
(951) 203-4849 cell

DJ Hawkins and Sean Ulbert, Instructional Designers. Sean and DJ will provide expert consultation to faculty in instructional design theory and support for faculty in universal design. DJ works primarily at MVC and RCC while Sean is primarily at RCC and Norco College.
DJ Hawkins (dj.hawkins@rccd.edu)
Instructional Designer
(951) 222-8216 CAADO
(951) 266-9315 Cell

Sean Ulbert (sean.ulbert@rccd.edu)
Instructional Designer
(951) 222-8263 CAADO
(858) 859-0130 Cell
Appendices

Academic Policy 4105: Distance Education

Riverside Community College District Administrative Procedure

No. 4105 Academic Affairs AP 4105 DISTANCE EDUCATION

References: Title 5 Sections 55200 et seq.;

34 CFR Section 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

The Open Campus is the official District entity responsible for distance education, including technology infrastructure, faculty technology training, reporting and regulatory compliance.

Definition: Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology.

Course Approval: Each proposed or existing course offered by distance education shall be reviewed and approved separately. Separate curriculum committee approval is mandatory if any portion of the instruction in a course or a section of a course 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 Administrative Procedure 4020 titled Program, Curriculum and Course Development. Distance education courses shall be approved under the same conditions and criteria as all other courses.

Certification: When approving distance education courses, the Vice Chancellor, Educational Services, or designee, will certify the following:

- Course Quality Standards: The same standards of course quality are applied to the distance education courses as are applied to traditional classroom courses.
- Course Quality Determinations: Determinations and judgments about the quality of the distance education course were made with the full involvement of the curriculum committee approval procedures.
- Instructor Contact: Each section of the course that is delivered through distance education will include regular effective contact between instructor and students. The manner in which traditional class (seat) time will be effectively replaced in a distance
education format has been addressed.

- Course compliance with Section 508 to ensure the electronic and information technology accessibility needs of individuals with disabilities has been addressed.

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

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 Chief Instructional Officer shall utilize one or more of these methods to authenticate or verify the student’s identity:

- secure credentialing/login and password;
- proctored examinations (determined by department); or
- anti-plagiarism software program

The Chief Instructional Officer shall establish procedures for providing a statement of the process in place to protect student privacy and estimated additional student charges associated with verification of student identity, if any, to each student at the time of registration.

Office of Primary Responsibility: Vice Chancellor, Educational Services

 Administrative Approval: June 15, 2009

 Revised: July 30, 2012

 Revised: June 16, 2015 (References and Titles only)
Summary of Regulations for Distance Education

RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Summary of Regulations For Distance Education

Code of Federal Regulations – Title 34: Education #602.3 Also adopted by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), see ACCJC Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education, edited June 2012

Definition of Correspondence Education

Correspondence Education (CE) 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; and,
4. Correspondence education is not distance education.

Definition of Distance Education (DE):

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, and CD-ROMS are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3)
   (ACCJC 2012 Policy, p.1)

2. California Regulations:
California Code of Regulations, Title 5 (amended 2019) and Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges, Distance Education Guidelines (2008)

**Title 5 §55200. Definition and Application.**

Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by time and/or distance and interact through the assistance of technology. All distance education is subject to the general requirements of this chapter as well as the specific requirements of this article. In addition, instruction provided as distance education is subject to the requirements of 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).

**CCCCCO Guideline for Section § 55200.**

Ensuring that distance education courses, materials and resources are accessible to students with disabilities is a shared institutional responsibility. Faculty need to receive appropriate training in order to ensure that they understand what constitutes accessibility, and institutions must provide faculty with both the necessary training and resources to ensure accessibility. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12100 et seq.), section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. Sec. 794d), and California Government Code section 11135 all require that accessibility for persons with disabilities be provided in the development, procurement, maintenance, or use of electronic or information technology by a community college district using any source of state funds. (See Legal Opinion M 03-09). Title 5, section 55200 explicitly makes these requirements applicable to all distance education offerings.

**Title 5 §55202. Course Quality Standards.**

The same standards of course quality shall be applied to any portion of a class conducted through distance education as are applied to in-person classes, in regard to the course quality judgment made pursuant to the requirements of section 55002, and in regard to any local course quality determination or review process. Determinations and judgments about the quality of distance education under the course quality standards shall be made with the full involvement of faculty in accordance with the provisions of subchapter 2 (commencing with section 53200) of chapter 2.


**CCCCCO Guideline for Section § 55202.**
This section emphasizes the extent to which course quality depends upon the full involvement of faculty in the design and application of DE courses. It discusses course quality standards for distance education and combines language formerly found in sections 55207 and 55209 that it replaces. Language is added to clarify that normal course quality standards apply to any portion of a course conducted through distance education.

**Title 5 §55204. Instructor Contact.**

In addition to the requirements of section 55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district governing boards shall ensure that:

(a) Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular 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, or other activities. Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.

(b) Any portion of a course provided through distance education is conducted consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors.


**CCCCO Guideline for Section § 55204.**

This section defines what contact must be maintained between instructor and student. It is virtually identical to section 55211 that it replaces, except that language has been added to clarify that rules related to conduct of distance education and effective
Institutional Self Evaluation Report (See page 65)

Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.

Standards for student learning in distance education courses are the same as those in face-to-face classes (CR19). Review and approval of new and existing distance education courses follows the curriculum approval procedures outlined in AP 4020: Program, Curriculum, and Course Development (CR20). The College follows the policies and procedures for classifying courses as distance education following AP 4105: Distance Education (CR21) (with a revision in process in 2019), which aligns to USDE definitions, and as described in the RCCD Curriculum Handbook (CR22). Links available on the College’s Distance Education Committee webpage (CR23) and at the District’s Distance Education page for faculty (CR24) provide further detail. AP 4105 also identifies distance education course approval and certification processes, which are detailed in the Curriculum Handbook (CR25). The College does not offer correspondence education courses.

RCCD faculty who elect to teach distance education courses are required to indicate they have read two documents addressing student contact: RCCD Guide to Recommended Best Practices to Achieve Regular and Effective/Substantive Contact in Distance Education (CR26) and the Summary of Regulations for Regular and Substantive Contact (CR27), with current documents linked on the college Distance Education Committee webpage (CR28) as well as the District’s Distance Education/Faculty webpage (CR29).

In order to best serve students, during 2018, RCCD transitioned to the Canvas learning management system from Blackboard. As of January 2019, all distance education classes in the District are taught using Canvas. As required by AP 4105, the College has appropriate means and consistently applies those means to verify the identity of a student who participates in a distance education course. All courses are hosted through Instructure, an educational technology company and developer of Canvas, and are administered through secure login, with information between the browser and website encrypted. In addition to this, there is password protection for each individual user account. Many faculty also use Turnitin.com anti-plagiarism software, which the District makes available to instructors.

The College ensures that the technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education offerings through participation in the California Community Colleges Online Education Initiative (OEI). Instructure is responsible for the hosting and uptime of the entire OEI and participating colleges using Canvas. Other than Canvas, colleges in the District rely on Information Technology (IT) infrastructure that houses student and faculty data and, as described in the District’s Strategic Technology Plan, maintains a secure environment for District’s technology equipment and information (CR30).
Regular and Substantive Contact

RCCD Guide to Recommended Best Practices to Achieve Regular and Substantive Contact in Distance Education

November 4, 2019

Introduction

Regular and substantive contact, as described in the accompanying Summary of Regulations document, is required as outlined in those regulations for in all course sections taught using Distance Education (DE) within the Riverside Community College District, that is, any course section where “seat time” is replaced by other forms of contact with students, including completely online and hybrid course sections. The tools described below represent examples of practices compiled by DE faculty at all three colleges that achieve regular and substantive contact. Faculty are encouraged to share with each other new best practices as they develop in the future from available technologies.

RCCD recommends that DE instructors use the ideas contained here, or others that are similar, to initiate and sustain contact with students, being mindful that all course materials must be ADA, section 508, compliant and pre-certified by the district through the curriculum approval process as being accessible to all students, including closed-captioning on video content, where appropriate, and other compliance requirements.

This best practices document was developed through collaboration with the College Distance Education Committees, the District Curriculum Committee, the College Curriculum Committees, administrators, and Distance Education personnel.

The responsibility for constructing, maintaining and updating this list of best practices resides with the colleges’ Distance Education Committees and College Curriculum Committees, which report to the colleges’ Academic Senates. These committees will review this document regularly and make recommendations to the Academic Senate as significant changes are required. The Colleges’ Curriculum Committees are also responsible for assuring the public that 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...” from Title 5 §55202.

Just a reminder: “Correspondence Education is not Distance Education.”

In Correspondence Education, the institution provides instructional materials by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials to students who are separated from the instructor, and the following conditions also exist: (1) Interaction between the
instructor and the students is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. (2) The course is self-paced.

**RCCD Guide to Recommended Best Practices in Distance Education (DE)**

**Definitions of Terms**

**Definition: Instructor-Initiated Interactions:** Unlike correspondence education, in which students are responsible for initiating contact with the instructor, instructors using DE are required to actively initiate interaction with their students as a group and individually.

**Definition: Frequent and Timely, i.e., Regular Contact/Interactions:** The measure of “regular contact” is based on a standard that is at least the same as it would be in a traditional face-to-face class. Instructors may exceed this minimum at their discretion. The number of asynchronous or synchronous hours that an instructor is available to students enrolled in a DE class must be at least equal to the number of hours of availability as required for face-to-face classes of the same courses. Instructor contact with DE students is understood as distributed over the course of the “instructional week” (seven days) and the term of the course (expressed in weeks). Instructor-initiated contact will occur as often as appropriate for regular contact, as defined by regulation.

**Definition: Substantive Contact/Interactions:** Substantive contact with students and delivery of course content includes instructor interaction with the entire group of students in the course section based on a well defined schedule of availability, deadlines, feedback, and exchanges that are included in the instructor’s Syllabus. Instructors define their schedules in the Syllabus and in other appropriate locations within the course management system.

Course sections taught using DE are considered the virtual equivalent of face-to-face classes, although many online or hybrid course sections may exceed the minimum requirements of the Course Outline of Record (COR) with effective use of current technologies inherent in the mode of delivery. Based on the notion that “a student cannot hide in the back of the room” in an online or hybrid class, substantive contact between students and the instructor is, in many cases, more likely in an online class than in a traditional lecture room.

**Examples of Recommended Best Practices for Achieving Regular Contact (Interaction) for Distance Education Course Sections**

Means of achieving “regular” contact include, but are not limited to:

- Faculty presence, guidance, and initiation of contact.
- The flow, sequence, and deadlines of the course are directed by the instructor and the timing of the course set through use of learning activities, online discussion, and/or lectures.
- Interaction with students happens fairly frequently and students grow to expect it.
• Announcements in Canvas at strategic points in the course by the instructor concerning course assignments and additional guidance
• Notice to students of instructor absence from class and information on when regular interaction will resume.
• Assignments and assessment deadlines are spread throughout the term of the class.

In Case of Interrupted, Regular Contact: Interruptions in instructor contact as defined by the instructor’s Syllabus (such as illness or an emergency that takes the instructor offline) require notification to students via class announcement, email, and/or Discussion Board, or another course tool, stating the duration of the interruption. In the event that “regular” contact cannot be resumed according to the definitions of regular contact on the Syllabus, the Dean of Instruction should be notified.

Examples of Recommended Best Practices for Achieving Substantive Contact (Interaction) in Distance Education Course Sections

Faculty teaching in the online environment should be using varied ways of interacting with their students.

Embracing the tenets of universal design as an approach to ensure that educational programs serve all students, RCCD’s Guide to Best Practices in Distance Education Course Design considers a wide range of strategies to provide an inclusive environment for all students regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, and disability status. To this end, instructors will use more than one method to maintain substantive contact with students and will outline their methods of choice in their syllabus.

Means of achieving “substantive contact” include, but are not limited to:

• Follow-up questions on a discussion board to assist students in reaching a higher learning potential.
• Timely, personalized feedback on assignments, discussions and/or quizzes (through comments in the Canvas gradebook, on discussion forum rubrics, or in Turnitin comments), that guide students to further knowledge and skills.
• Feedback on student assignments should identify specifically what has been done correctly, needs improvement, or guides students to the next steps of learning. Brief comments like “good job” or “you need to improve” are not substantive, nor are generic rubric categories without additional comments.
• Course materials (ex. recorded webinars, videos, and reading materials) which facilitate synchronous or asynchronous interactions and require the student to contact the instructor or participate in an online discussion moderated by the instructor.
• Instructor announcements to the class regarding course content and upcoming
assignments.

- Synchronous online meetings and chats that further explore course material and answer student questions.

Other Suggested Options for Communications with Students

Synchronous Interaction: By utilizing available technologies, such as ConferZoom, DE instructors can maximize face-to-face, synchronous interaction with students, if needed, to achieve the objectives of the course. ConferZoom is a web conferencing tool that is free to the California Community College System and is integrated into Canvas shells in RCCD.

Examples of vital or essential Standards of Regular, Effective/Substantive Contract within a Course (these are all suggestions for the type of information that make expectations clear):

Regular Contact:

- Example of an announcement/syllabus item indicating an estimated time for response to student emails: “Your instructor will respond to emails within 48 hours. Emails received after noon on Friday will not be responded to until Monday morning”
- Example of a feedback expectation statement: “Assignments are due on Sunday night at 10 pm. Your instructor will begin grading them on Monday and all grades will be posted by Wednesday evening”
- Example of a discussion board post expectation: “Your instructor will respond to discussion board questions within 48 hours. Questions posted after Friday at 12 pm will not be responded to until Monday morning.”

Substantive Contact:

- Example of a discussion board statement to correct an error of fact or comprehension: “The point you made in the last discussion post was accurate, but the dates of the conflict were slightly later, perhaps around 1776. Check out earlier posts of the first group that give a good sense of the issues surrounding the conflict and the time period required or completion of the war.”
Distance Education Checklist

DE checklist for Hybrid and Online Courses

We are glad that you will be teaching an Online or Hybrid course for the Riverside Community College District. To make it easier to plan your course, here is a checklist of things to do and items to include.

✔ Training for Distance Education (required by CA Ed Code)

All faculty teaching online or hybrid courses at RCCD must use the District learning management system, Canvas, and must complete training. This can be done in several ways: RCCD’s Online Canvas Academy (OCA), face-to-face training at Riverside City, Norco, or Moreno Valley College, or approved training taken at another college. For details please see the Faculty Training page at http://opencampus.com/faculty/faculty_training.html.

✔ Create a Syllabus (required by ACCJC)

Include course policies, required materials, a plagiarism policy, and a statement directing students to Disability Resources at your college.

✔ Create an Introduction Module for your Course (Best practice in online course development)

Be sure to include contact information (including the times when you are and when you’re not available), your usual response time, expectations regarding the amount of time that students should be spending on their course per week, and an online attendance policy. Inform students about how to navigate the course, how to find assignments and quizzes, and how to find the gradebook and feedback. Consider using the Quest for Success module as a way to prepare your students for their online course. Also consider making an introductory video for your course. Distance Education provides this service to all DE faculty.

✔ Create Modules for Other Course Content (Best practice in online course development)

Chunk learning material in modules – these modules can be organized by unit, by topic, or by week. Consider publishing your material a bit at a time so that students are working on the same material together. Include student learning outcomes for each module, in language that makes sense to students.

✔ Provide Means for Regular and Substantive Contact (required by CA Ed Code, U.S. Dept. of Ed regulations, and ACCJC)

Instructors must initiate regular and substantive contact with students and there must also be
ways for students to interact with each other in a meaningful way in DE courses. Remember to let students know you’re not going to be available if an emergency arises. Consider using two or more methods listed below in your course for regular and substantive contact.

- Weekly content-based announcements in Canvas
- Threaded discussions of course content in Canvas with required student-to-student interaction.
- Regular instructor participation in threaded discussions within Canvas Instructor-created lectures
- Timely and frequent feedback for student work
- Group or individual meetings
- Class events such as orientations and workshops
- Instructor-initiated contact by Canvas inbox, email, telephone, or chat
- Video conferencing, chat, audio recording through ConferZoom

✓ Ensure Course Materials are Accessible (required by CA Ed Code, and Federal regulations)

- Any images will have alternative text to provide access for students with visual impairments.
- Videos will have accurate closed captioning
- Audio recordings will include transcripts
- Pages, Word docs and PowerPoints will use structured headings (i.e. Header 2 for section headings) accessible to a screen reader (use the accessibility checker in Canvas or UDOIT)
- Hyperlinks will be presented using meaningful link text rather than URLs
- Content will provide adequate color contrast, font size (12-14), and font style (sans serif) to ensure readability
- Any PDF files will be text-based, not scanned, and use true headings (e.g. created with the styles menu in MS Word)

✓ If You Use a Publisher Created Learning Management System

Many instructors make use of publisher-created course management systems (e.g., Pearson’s MyLab products, Cengage materials, WebAssign, etc.). California Ed Code states that you must incorporate class management and supervision capabilities within a learning management system that is free of cost to students (this is Canvas for RCCD students). It is not sufficient to provide only a link within Canvas to the publisher’s material. In addition, the following elements are required by CA Ed Code:

- Ensure that publisher materials meet Section 508 requirements (sometimes accessible material is indicated by icons in the publisher material, also videos should be captioned)
- Ensure that students have a secure login and that their privacy is safeguarded
• List the materials that you’re using under “required materials” in your syllabus

• Consider integrating the publisher’s materials with Canvas so that assignments, quizzes, and grades all appear in Canvas

Canvas Instructor Guide

Canvas provides guides for most of their resources built into the default accounts in the Instructor Guides. If you are new to Canvas, please take time to navigate these links. Screen shots will provide you step by step information in setting up your course and implementing your course plan.

We hope you consider this an opportunity to enhance your instruction with new tools students find engaging and enjoyable. Online education is a standard method of instruction around the world with proven retention and success when designed according to best practices.

RCCD Distance Education and Norco College Distance Education Committee have many qualified faculty with insight and experience in online instruction. Reach out to your discipline and department peers whenever possible to brainstorm as you plan for an online or hybrid instruction.

Click on any of these to help you in the areas of your concern. Instructor Guides have been last updated February 2020.

Canvas Provides Instructor Guides on the following topics:

1. Introduction
2. Analytics
3. New Analytics
4. Announcements
5. Assignments
6. Attendance (Roll Call)
7. Calendar
8. Chat
9. Collaborations
10. Commons
11. Conferences
12. Course Import Tool
13. Course Navigation
14. Courses and Sections
15. Discussions
16. ePortfolios
17. External Apps (LTI)
18. Files
20. Grades
21. Groups
22. Inbox
23. Modules
24. Outcomes
25. Pages
26. People
27. Profile and User Settings
28. Quizzes
29. New Quizzes
30. Rich Content Editor
31. New Rich Content Editor
32. Rubrics
33. Settings
34. SpeedGrader
35. Web Services
Canvas Student Guide

Hello, students! We wanted to make a simplified reference tool to help you navigate your transition to Canvas. We understand this is possibly a new Learning Management System to you. Please use this tool to address your user experience.

Consult your instructor, Department Chairs or Deans of Instruction for additional support regarding computer access, Internet access or additional resources. We want to support you in this move from a traditional classroom to an online format.

The Canvas Student Guide provides direction for most of your user experience needs. Canvas LMS recently updated their online tutorial including step-by-step instructions with screen shots to help you navigate and participate in their courses. Some instructors incorporate third party applications. These are not listed in the Canvas LMS guide. Please consult the RCCD Distance Education website for added support.

Thank you!

Canvas Student Guide Table of Contents

1. Introduction
2. Announcements
3. Assignments
4. Calendar
5. Chat
6. Collaborations
7. Conferences
8. Course Navigation
9. Discussions
10. ePortfolios
11. Files
13. Grades
14. Inbox
15. Modules
16. Pages
17. People and Groups
18. Profile and User Settings
19. Quizzes
20. Rich Content Editor
21. New Rich Content Editor
22. Web Services
Resources Available through Canvas

Visit the DE News page for guides to enable these great tools!

Regular and Substantive Contact

ConferZoom

If you’d like to schedule one-on-one or group sessions through video-chats, Confer-Zoom allows this. It will also allow you to share your screen and record sessions so that you can share them with the class. This is a good tool to help in sharing answers to frequently asked questions.

Canvas Discussion Board

Host whole class or small group discussions in your course with options to grade or to just have a meaningful conversation with your students. It reassures student to student contact as well.

Canvas Announcements

Notify your class what is happening. You can enable Announcements in the top of the home page to keep students informed. See the Settings page and scroll down to “Optional Settings” to enable Announcements on the Home page.

Making Grading Easier

Canvas Gradebook

Instructors teaching traditional classes can make use of the Canvas gradebook as a transparent, FERPA-compliant way for students to see how they’re doing in classes.

Gradescope

If you’re a math or science teacher or anyone that regularly gives paper-based tests (especially if they rely heavily on notation or sketches that can’t be easily created digitally), Gradescope is a tool that will allow you to scan and upload tests and then apply rubrics to grade them. It even allows you to adjust the rubric mid-grading and will retroactively update all graded tests with the new rubric information. If you teach programming, Gradescope also can be used to detect plagiarism in coding assignments.

TurnitIn
Did you know that Turnitin does more than detect plagiarism? While Turnitin does combine cutting edge tools with curricular resources to deter plagiarism, it also allows you to create rubrics for assignments that can make your feedback process faster, easier, and more consistent. Turnitin’s Teaching Tools library has a library of free downloadable grading rubrics that you can browse. It even allows for voice recording of comments for your students.

**Student Support Tools**

**NetTutor**

NetTutor is a free online tutoring service that is available 24-7 and is fully integrated with Canvas.

**StudyMate**

Students learn course materials with fun, interactive activities including flash cards, crosswords, matching, self-quizzes, and more. What sets StudyMate Campus apart from flashcard websites is that it works seamlessly with your LMS. There are no external websites to go to, no registration steps, and no URLs to track. Simply login to your LMS and use StudyMate like a native tool.
Open Educational Resources Initiative

The Chancellor’s Office has made a priority to reduce textbook costs for 70% C-ID courses in the CCC system through the creation and adoption of low cost or no cost online resources integrated into the Learning Management System.

If you would like support in your discipline, visit the Open Educational Resources Initiative page and navigate through their many Zoom trainings, PowerPoints and tools available today.

You can receive training through RCCD with FLEX credit approval in your Canvas course or visit the OER Intro course in the OERI Canvas shell.

Either way you will need to use your Canvas login credentials to access the full benefits of these amazing sources of information.

Remember, this is a Statewide drive to help students afford course materials in order to promote their immediate access and increase success.

Thank you for considering this very important Initiative.

Norco Academic Senate

Norco College Distance Education Committee

March 2020 Draft