Distance Education - Ensuring Regular and Substantive Interaction FAQs

Background

The [federal education code](#), the [ACCJC](#), the [CCCCO](#), local [BP 4233](#)/[AP 4233](#) and local [AP 4105](#) require that distance education courses include regular and substantive interaction between the instructor and student, and between students. Instructors *must initiate* regular and substantive interactionwith students.

Distance education courses of all varieties (Online, OnlineLIVE, Hybrid, HyFlex) include asynchronous components that allow for the following at the start of the term:
- Initiate contact with students by instructors
- Provide opportunities for regular and substantive interaction
- Enable students to participate in academically related activities

FAQs

1. What does regular and substantive interaction mean?

Regular interaction refers to instructors providing frequent, predictable opportunities for interaction and monitoring of student engagement. This must be initiated by the instructor.**Substantive** refers to interaction that is academic in nature.

2. Who must engage in regular and substantive interaction?

Instructors must initiate regular and substantive interaction and provide opportunities for student-to-student interaction as well as interaction between the student and instructor.

3. How do I engage in regular and substantive interaction?

Regular and substantive interaction can be accomplished in a number of ways, including but not limited to: participating in discussion forums that are academic in nature, synchronous learning sessions (e.g. live via Zoom), providing feedback on academic assignments, etc. Your department has included examples in the course outline of record.

4. How does distance education differ from correspondence education?

Distance education courses include regular and substantive interaction between students (student-to-student) and the instructor (instructor-to-student), initiated by the instructor.
Correspondence courses are not distance education, interaction is not necessarily

regular and substantive, and is initiated primarily by the student.

5. *How does the College validate that regular and substantive interaction is consistently implemented in all distance education courses?*

- AP and BP on Attendance – define academic engagement in DE and require faculty initiated regular and substantive interaction
- AP on Distance Education – defines regular and substantive interaction in DE and requires faculty initiated regular and substantive interaction
- Course Outline of Record via the Curriculum Committee – requires descriptions of how a course promotes regular and substantive interaction between the instructor and students as well as amongst students
- Distance Education Faculty Handbook via the Academic Senate and Online Education Department – defines regular and substantive interaction in DE and requires faculty initiated regular and substantive interaction
- Classroom Visitation Process for Adjunct Faculty – includes a specific section evaluating regular and substantive interaction initiated by the instructor
- Classroom Visitation Process for Full-Time Faculty – includes a specific section evaluating regular and substantive interaction initiated by the instructor
- Training via the Online Education Department – during 2020-21, approximately 162 hours of training included regular and substantive interaction
  - Topics included Effective online instruction, humanizing, utilizing Speedgrader for feedback, group and collaborative work in Canvas, teaching and learning with Zoom, trauma informed practices to support students, equity-minded course design
- Course templates designed by Online Education Department give instructors a starting point for creating a comprehensive and consistent course structure
  - Intentionally incorporate best practices in online course design, pedagogy, and accessibility formatting
  - Include ready-to-use course components for instructors to select, including an orientation module, example home pages, and content module, all of which encourage regular and substantive interaction

References

- ACCJC, Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education
- California Community College Chancellor's Office, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to California Code of Regulations, Title 5 Regarding Distance Education
- Santa Clarita Community College District, Administrative Procedure 4233, Attendance
- Santa Clarita Community College District, Board Policy 4233, Attendance
- Santa Clarita Community College District, Administrative Procedure 4105 Distance Education
- College of the Canyons, Distance Education Faculty Handbook
- Department of Education, Federal Register, Rules and Regulations, Distance Education and Innovation
- WCET Frontiers, Interpreting what is required for "Regular and Substantive Interaction"