

# LPC Distance Education Interaction Guidelines

## Federal Regulations

### Definition of Distance Education (34 C.F.R. §600.2.)

Distance Education means:

- (1) Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs 2(a) through (d) to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor(s) and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor(s), either synchronously or asynchronously.
- (2) The technologies may include:
  - a) the internet;
  - b) one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
  - c) audioconferencing; or
  - d) other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (a) through (c).
- (3) For purposes of this definition, an instructor is an individual responsible for delivering course content and who meets the qualifications for instruction established by an institution's accrediting agency.
- (4) For purposes of this definition, 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:
  - a) Providing direct instruction;
  - b) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
  - c) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
  - d) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
  - e) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.
- (5) 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—
  - a) Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and
  - b) 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.

### Definition of Correspondence Education (34 C.F.R. § 602.3.)

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(s) and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.
  - (3) If a course is part correspondence and part residential training, the Secretary considers the course to be a correspondence course.
  - (4) correspondence education is not distance education.

## State Regulations

The only notable difference between the above federal regulations and state Title 5 regulations on interaction in DE courses comes in subsection (a) under Instructor Contact (§ 55204):

- (a) Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular and substantive interaction between the instructor(s) and students (and among students as described in the course outline of record or distance education addendum where applicable), 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.

## Application of Regulations

Strategies in each section below are not meant to be exhaustive; they provide some of the ways that faculty can meet the regulations.

### *Providing direct instruction (4a)*

- Use synchronous tools, such as web conferencing, to deliver live instruction during published meeting times and interact with students or have student engage in post-lecture activities.
- Use web conferencing during office hours to answer students' questions.
- Use chat to interact with students.
- Incorporate instructional videos into asynchronous classes that include instructions from the instructor on how to interact with the content in the videos (e.g. complete a written assignment, take a quiz).

### *Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework (4b)*

- Design assessments that determine how well students are meeting the Student Learning Outcomes and objectives of the course (e.g. written papers, exams, etc.)
- Provide regular and timely feedback on student work that goes beyond perfunctory comments such as "good job" or "great work." For example, tell a student why he got a B and what he can do to get an A.
- Use rubrics for student grading and integrate robust feedback into rubric categories.
- In your syllabus, set expectations for instructor response time, grade turnaround time, student participation, and instructor participation.
- Use video or audio feedback messages to students.

### *Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency (4c)*

- Post announcements, written or video, that are academic in nature, as opposed to only announcements like "Quiz on Wednesday." Examples include:
  - If you notice that students are making common mistakes, share the corrections with the class.
  - Provide overviews of upcoming modules and summaries of recently concluded modules.
  - Set expectations for upcoming assignments and even offer additional tips.

- Send email to students that are academic in nature.

*Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency (4d)*

- Facilitate a whole-class discussion assignment in which students reply to the instructor's prompt, then to other students' posts.
- Create collaborative learning assignments in which students work together in groups facilitated by the instructor.
- Use audio, video or written responses within a discussion assignment.
- Use software tools that encourage participation.
- Include gaming technology to encourage student-to-student live interactions.

*Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency (4e)*

- Create wiki assignments in which students collaborate on creating a web page.
- Look for ways to document within the learning management system when third-party tools are used for instructor-to-student and student-to-student interaction.

*Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency (5a)*

- In your syllabus, note when all of the activities will take place (e.g. course schedule).
- Schedule office hours.
- Provide an online review session before each exam or assessment.
- Make your announcements, modules and assignments (including your interactive assignments) available on a predictable basis throughout the semester.
- Provide information regarding the expectation of the type and frequency of interactions during the course.
- Interaction patterns will vary depending on the length of the course.

*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*

- Utilize course analytics to track student engagement and progress.
- Use exams or quizzes.
- Participate in the online instructor evaluation process negotiated by the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District and the Faculty Association.
- Participate in the Distance Education Committee's course review process to determine if instructors have the proper structures set up to ensure sufficient interaction.
- Review the interaction checklist that is sent to instructors at the beginning and in the middle of each semester
- Evidence of interaction is necessary for accreditation and auditing purposes. Try to keep all of your interactions within the course management system and/or on district-authorized sites.
- Provide resources, such as self-evaluation surveys, to equip students to monitor their success in the course.
- Utilize early alert tools to identify students needing support, then provide help.
- Use gradebook tools to make notes on students' progress.
- Encourage students to utilize tutoring services and other student and academic support services offered by the college.

## Insufficient Interaction

The following are NOT examples of Regular and Substantive Interaction:

- Computer-generated feedback such as in a quiz or exam
- Interaction that occurs only upon the request of the student (either electronically or otherwise)
- Live lectures that do not require the students to interact with an instructor or to engage in post-lecture activities
- Recorded webinars and reading materials if the course design materials do not require the students to watch the webinars and then interact with an instructor
- Contact with mentoring staff who are not directly providing instruction on the course's subject matter
- Recorded lecture videos that do not require the students to watch and then interact with an instructor
- Open-ended question discussion forums
- Organized, written content from the instructor
- Texts and files that are curated and organized for readability