Distance Education
FACULTY HANDBOOK

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Distance Learning Faculty

This is a supplemental guide to Cabrillo College's Faculty Handbook designed to provide information about policies and procedures for Distance Education.

This manual is organized as an online document that can easily allow for supplementation and revision as policies and procedures develop and change. **The goals of this handbook are to** articulate the mission and goals of the Distance Education Program, especially as they pertain to **Cabrillo College's Educational Master** Plan, and provide technical and pedagogical support and resources for faculty teaching online and hybrid courses.

Faculty may also refer to this handbook about training and mentoring for online and hybrid course delivery methods. The mandatory policies and procedures that relate to distance education courses, best practices in distance education, and how these best practices may be incorporated into course design and delivery, are found in this handbook.

Distance Education Administrative Unit Outcome
Students will be able to meet their educational goals by accessing technology-mediated instruction in online, hybrid and web-enhanced courses. Faculty will be provided services, mentoring, and the technical support staff needed to assist them in the development, design, evaluation, and ongoing maintenance of new and existing quality distance learning courses.

Distance Education is an approach to learning where instruction takes place outside the traditional classroom setting. Instead of teaching face-to-face, instructors use electronic or a blend of face-to-face and electronic delivery methods to develop and furnish content for instruction and interaction with students.

Students in distance education courses are required to 'attend' class and participate just as if they were in a face-to-face course. Attendance is based on documentation from "regular effective contact." Instructors establish guidelines for how much each lecture, reading assignment, discussion or project qualifies as a meeting during the course of a week or course learning module.

Special thanks to Dr. Leslie Tirapelle and Katie Datko at
Pasadena City College for sharing their Distance Education Handbook.

Faculty Preparation: 5 Principles of Online Learning

1 **Establish and maintain *Regular Effective Contact*.**

Regular effective contact is a California requirement for distance learning, which states that instructors must keep in contact with students on a regular and timely basis both to ensure the quality of instruction and to verify performance and participation status.

2 **Create opportunities for student-centered learning.**

In distance education, instead of being the sole source of content knowledge, the role of the instructor is as a facilitator. Students should be encouraged to interact not only with the content and instructor but also with each other in order to understand, research and come to their own conclusions about the course material.

3 **Create opportunities that have practical real world applications.**

The activities in distance education courses should be **authentic**, that is, based on tasks that students would have to perform in various setting outside the classroom. Students should also have chances to enhance their knowledge about the world through critical thinking and reasoning skills.

4 **Provide support for each student's learning process and autonomy.**

Distance education **instructors should engage all types of learners** by providing content and assessments that respect and accommodate the different needs, learning styles and strategies of each student. In addition, instructors should provide support for students in time management and academic skill development.

5 **Ensure all course content is readily and easily accessible to all students.**

Instructors should make certain that their courses meet all the necessary accessibility requirements (508 compliance). They should also create course content and assessments that are user-friendly in terms of technology and provide alternate means of access to the course material should there be problems with the Learning Management System.

Two Modes of Distance Education

Online

An online distance education course is delivered via the Internet using a campus-supported Learning Management System (LMS). Some classes may require on-campus meetings for orientation or test sessions. Students are required to use a computer with Internet access as the primary technology and may be required to use other available technologies to acquire and learn course content. Through regular effective contact, instructor and students interact to complete assignments and assessments and to demonstrate Student Learning Outcomes. *An online course will be designated as Online in published campus materials and defined as 51% or more online student contact hours.*

Hybrid

A hybrid distance education course replaces some face-to-face class time with online instructional time. Any distance education course that requires students to attend on-campus orientations, assessments, scheduled class meetings, or other required activities is a hybrid course. A campus-supported LMS is used to provide course content replacing face-to-face time. Students must have access to a computer and the Internet. *A hybrid course will be designated as Hybrid in published campus materials and defined as 50% or less online student contact hours.*

Web-Enhanced Courses

A web-enhanced course is not considered to be an online course, but uses online activities to complement class sessions without reducing the number of required class meetings. This may be any course tied to the traditional classroom but involving some sort of computer usage, such as a software simulation, or online design software for art, or engineering applications. Traditional courses and web-enhanced courses are very similar, indistinguishable in most cases, and therefore not designated differently in college publications.

Faculty Preparation: Technology and Pedagogical Readiness

New online and hybrid faculty should have previous online experience or training prior to teaching distance education courses.

Faculty members who wish to teach online should not only possess basic proficiency in computer skills but should also be acquainted with and feel comfortable using more advanced programs and applications. The following technical skills, listed from least to most complex, are examples of what would be needed to teach online and hybrid courses:

Basic Computer Skills
Keyboarding
Updating operating system and managing security settings
Audio recording (microphone) and webcam recording (video)

File Management
Create and name files
Understand file formats
Understand local and cloud-based file storage
Organize and manage files
Understand formats that are mobile device accessible

Email
Send and receive email
Attach documents and pictures (optimized for small file size)
Participate in discussion groups/listservs
Create and manage discussion groups

Word processing
Create, edit, and save documents in various formats (.docx, .txt, .pdf)
Use structural formatting techniques (headings, sub-headings, lists, etc.)
Insert accessible tables, graphs, and graphics into documents

Presentation Technology
Create, edit, and save presentations in various formats
Add accessible media to presentation
Understand how to use webinar technology

Video
Link or embed accessible media from the web
Create, edit, and save video
Use simple captioning tools for media

Internet
Understand and use different browser types
Know how to do targeted searches
Understand how to use online databases
Be familiar with social networking tools (e.g. Facebook and Twitter), YouTube, podcasts, blogs, webinars & wikis

Learning Management System*
Upload content
Create, design, and edit course modules
Make content accessible
Create announcements, discussion forums, blogs, and wikis
Create assessments, surveys, and polls
Use the Grade Center
Upload multimedia
Use messaging or chat
Use notifications

*Appendix A, Online Education Initiative Course Design Rubric

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 that may be imposed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. s 12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. s 794d).

At Cabrillo, the term Distance Education applies to online and hybrid but not to web-enhanced courses. Section 55200 also specifies that all distance education content and delivery needs to be accessible.

New Online or Hybrid Instructor Training

Faculty who are new to distance education and would like to teach using online technology are required to take two courses: *Introduction to Teaching with Canvas* (Free from @ONE) and *Introduction to Course Design* (TLC) before teaching online at Cabrillo. Participating as an online student while learning how to teach online is a valuable experience and one where faculty will be introduced to the statewide online course design rubric.

Also available through @ONE are additional courses in *Creating Accessible Online Content, Assessment in Digital Learning,* and *Dynamic Online Teaching*. Training and instructional design support is available through the Teaching and Learning Center.

Additionally, after completing the two required courses listed above, faculty new to distance education are required to participate in a two-hour Cabrillo Distance Education Orientation which meets on campus or via webinar. The orientation details the Cabrillo course development process, as well as the College's policies and procedures as they relate to distance education. (*CCFT Article 11.2.2.15.1*)

Before faculty can teach an online or hybrid course for the first time, the course must be formally reviewed and approved by the Distance Education Coordinator or designated instructional designer. The Distance Education Coordinator will collaborate with the faculty member a minimum of four weeks before the course is offered to ensure the course meets all College requirements in addition to accreditation guidelines, accessibility standards, and other state and federal laws. Faculty must provide a representative sample of the body of work, such as the first 3–4 weeks of developed modules in the Canvas learning management system. Evaluation will be conducted based on the ***Online Education Initiative Course Design Rubric*, Appendix A.**

Waivers

Faculty who have taught online at another institution within the past five years, but not at Cabrillo, may choose to waive a specific required course. They will need to arrange a meeting with the Distance Education Coordinator to discuss their experience and present a course (or courses) that have been taught online. Faculty who have not taught online but can show proof of completion of coursework equivalent to the @ONE classes listed above, may elect to waive some or all of the recommended Cabrillo training.

Even if some of the training has been waived, in order to become acquainted with distance education at Cabrillo, faculty will need to take the Distance Education Orientation prior to scheduling their course(s).

Fully Online or Hybrid: which is better for your class?

The following are some advantages and disadvantages of fully online or hybrid courses:

Fully Online Courses
- Reduced student commute time/resources needed to go to classes
- Increased course offerings without increased classroom space
- More convenient for out-of-area students
- Student authentication more difficult to establish
- Technology can be difficult for some students
- More difficult for some students to feel they are learning without face-to-face instructor contact

Hybrid Courses
- Easier for instructors to know their students
- A wider range of learning opportunities to make the best use of each modality
- More opportunities to document student learning
- Student authentication easier to establish — instructors have the chance to interact with students both face-to-face and online
- Technological problems handled in both the face-to-face and online environments
- Less convenient for out-of-area students

Curriculum Process

The curriculum proposal process requires teamwork and effort from many different faculty members and administrators. Each course taught in an online or hybrid format must be approved by the Curriculum Committee.

The Curriculum Committee process to approve new online or hybrid courses is ongoing throughout the year. The actual development and design of the course is approximately 100–300 hours. The time needed to create a course also depends on the amount of time it takes for instructors to receive training and whether or not the Curriculum Committee requests revisions to meet the State requirements.

New courses will not be taught until we get State approval.

A new distance education course can be taught in the first full semester after it has been approved and cleared to teach by the Distance Education Coordinator.

The job of the Distance Education Program is to advise and guide faculty during the course development process to make certain that each new course meets all Cabrillo standards for best practices.

Curriculum Deadlines: Campus deadlines are published by the Curriculum Committee. See your Department Chair for details.

There's not a lot you have to do in eLumen but re-engineering an existing course or creating a new online course may take up to 100 hours.

The phrase "May be offered in Distance-Learning Format," added to the description plus a short form in eLumen is your first step in launching the curriculum approval process. In the form, the most important sections are the ones that ask you how students are engaged throughout the course. Methods used for regular/effective academic engagement must be described in terms of the tools used and how frequent the contact is. Include multiple forms of contact, and define the frequency. For example, graded discussion forms 1-2x/week, bi-weekly quizzes, and writing assessments bi-weekly.

Teaching Online

Types of Regular Effective Contact

Instructor—Student Interaction:
- Course announcements
- Messaging via the LMS
- Personalized feedback
- Discussion boards
- Chat/IM
- Videoconferencing/Skype
- Phone/voicemail

Student—Student Interaction:
- Messaging via the LMS
- Discussion boards
- Chat/IM
- Collaborative projects: group blogs, wikis

Examples of Content Interaction:
- Modules on the LMS
- Lectures (recorded/streaming)
- Podcasts/webinars/screencasts
- ConferZoom.org
- Discussion boards

How to Implement Regular Effective Contact

Initiated Interactions

Include means for all types of interaction in the course design.
- Utilize appropriate media for **accessibility**.
- Design daily or weekly assignments and projects that promote collaboration among students.
- Model course **netiquette** at the beginning of the semester with instructor-guided introductions.
- Pose questions in the discussion boards which encourage various types of interaction and critical thinking skills among all course participants.
- Monitor content activity to ensure that students participate fully and discussions remain on topic.
- Create a specific forum for questions regarding course assignments. (e.g. "Got a Question?")
- Ask students for feedback about the course on a regular basis and revise content as needed.

Frequency & Timeliness of Interactions
- Maintain an active daily presence, particularly during the beginning weeks of a course.
- Establish guidelines for frequency of contact, and define what interactions a student can expect each week.
- Make known response time for student questions/inquiries and assignment feedback (e.g. 1-2 business days).
- Give frequent and substantive feedback throughout the course.

Expectations for Interactions
- Specify course policy regarding frequency and timeliness of all contact initiated by the instructor in the syllabus.
- Explain course policy regarding student-initiated contact (where to post questions, assignments, etc.) in the syllabus.
- Outline and explain **netiquette** in initial course documents.
- Include a diversity statement that describes how your course respects contributions from all students and promotes respect and tolerance.
- Clarify important dates, such as assignment and assessment deadlines not only in the beginning but also throughout the course.

Absences from Interactions
- Inform students immediately of course designee should an illness, family emergency or other unexpected event prevent continuing regular effective contact for a prolonged period of time.
- Let students know when instructor-initiated regular effective contact will continue.

Course Assessments

Assessments in distance education courses are not that different from assessment techniques in on-campus classes. Course-embedded assessment asks faculty to look closely at the work that students produce in their courses in order to assess SLOs. The assessment is "embedded" in regular course work, so that students do not have to do any extra work in order to measure the SLO.

A rubric is a handy tool to use for assessing student learning outcomes if you are using a course-embedded assessment method. It provides you with detailed information about how students are mastering the parts or aspects of any particular assignment, and that in turn, can tell you how well they are mastering a course, certificate or degree SLO.

Performance then becomes a process linked to learning outcomes as opposed to a recitation of content.

Rubrics are terrific tools to assess student learning in portfolios, exams, reports, logs and journals, simulated performances, interviews, papers, and production work. They can be used for just about anything except multiple choice exams.

It is best to give students your rubric for an assignment before they attempt to complete it. This will give them a very detailed idea of what they need to do to achieve a particular grade. Students report that it eases their anxiety to see a rubric in advance because they don't have to "figure out what my teacher wants."

Rubrics
Rubrics are tools that outline the quality standards for student success in an assessment. Descriptions in a rubric are directly linked to the learning objectives of a particular assignment or project. When these benchmarks are used and given to students prior to turning in their assignments, students know what is expected of them. This gives students more opportunities to reflect on and revise their work.

Creating Rubrics
Numerous resources exist for creating and modifying rubrics for distance education courses. Many websites, such as RubiStar, have rubrics which can be modified to meet individual course needs. Most learning management systems also have interactive rubric tools to aid in the grading process.

Benefits of Rubrics:
- More closely align assessments with student learning outcomes.
- Clearly communicate course and instructor expectations.
- Assess a wider range of skills and performances.
- Give students greater autonomy in their learning.
- Evaluate both the process and the product of a student work.

Types of Rubrics
There are two main types of rubrics used in higher education—**analytic** and **holistic**. While each type of rubric has advantages and disadvantages, in distance education, analytic rubrics are used most often because of the amount of detailed feedback they provide students.

Analytic Rubrics
- Criteria for success are listed separately.
- Provide more detailed feedback about performance.
- Focus on criteria for success.
- Take more time to create (at first).
- Are used to evaluate authentic assessments.

Holistic Rubrics
- Criteria for success are all listed together.
- Provide general information about performance
- Focus on a scale of performance.
- Take less time to create.
- Are often used to evaluate general proficiency

Resources
Student Learning Outcomes
How to Create a Rubric

DE Policies

Assigning Faculty for DE Courses

Faculty **must be well-versed in online teaching pedagogy** in order to teach distance education courses. **Faculty who have not been cleared by the Distance Education Coordinator (under the direction of the Dean) cannot teach online or hybrid courses.** This applies to full-time and adjunct faculty members alike. While the Distance Education Coordinator understands that this may place some undue constraints on staffing, this recommendation is in place to make certain that online and hybrid course delivery meets Federal, State and Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) quality standards for online instruction. Contact the Distance Education Coordinator for any questions about or assistance with faculty training concerns.

Title IV Considerations
Several online programs in the community college system have been targeted by financial aid fraud schemes in which a 'student' registers for an online course, logs in, and then drops the course after financial aid funds have been dispersed. Federal and ACCJC guidelines indicate student logins to distance education courses *no longer count* as student participation, and students must provide evidence of academic engagement. According to the U.S. Department of Education: "…institutions [need] to take steps necessary to ensure that **students are academically engaged** prior to disbursing Title IV student aid funds." **If students do not begin attendance, Title IV funds must be returned** (34 CFR 668.21(a))(Runcie & Ocha).

DE Course Review Visits
Faculty currently teaching DE courses may be subject to peer review during their evaluation cycle, or other visits (Accreditation Team, Division Dean, or DE Coordinator) to verify evidence of regular and substantive interaction with students. Considering the sensitive nature of such observations, reviewers will maintain confidentiality throughout the observations.

Syllabus Content and Welcome Communications

Because of these legal requirements, procedures for **online courses** at Cabrillo need to be explicitly stated in the syllabus:

The Course Check-In Assignment
If students do not complete a documented assignment that actively engages them within the first week the course begins, they will be dropped from the class. E-mailing the instructor at a personal e-mail address or counting logins as 'attendance' do not fall within these guidelines.

Course Communication
Communication with instructors must originate from within the LMS or via an on-campus orientation. Cabrillo must be able to provide documentable evidence of **regular effective contact** and student participation in learning activities, such as a posting in the discussion forum, a syllabus quiz or other form of self-assessment.

On-campus Course Meetings
Hybrid course descriptions in the Schedule of Classes must include the meeting time and place of an on-campus orientation. Students will be dropped if they do not attend the first class session. The description in the syllabus and welcome communication must also include information about additional on-campus meetings.

Standard Online Welcome
Just before the semester begins, students receive a **welcome e-mail with detailed course information** at the e-mail address provided to Cabrillo via Colleague. Students **MUST** login to the course management system to complete an introductory assignment, or they will be dropped from class.

Standard Hybrid Welcome
Just before the semester/term begins, inform students that portions of the course are replaced with online teaching. List the required on-campus meetings; day, date, time, and room. Include how to access the online content for the remaining course hours.

Welcome Letter for Online Courses

In the face-to-face classroom a large part of the first class meeting is spent introducing the course, going over the syllabus, getting to know the students and answering any questions that arise about the course content or assignments. Since students do not have this type of contact with the instructor or with other students in fully online classes and limited face-to-face contact in hybrid classes, they may often feel isolated and uncertain of what they need to do. In order to establish rapport with the students and to incorporate general best practices for distance education, instructors must introduce the course and login information with a **welcome letter before the course begins**. Include your waitlisted students with a brief explanation on how they can add your course.

The welcome letter

- Helps students unfamiliar with the distance education environment understand course expectations.
- Tells students **how** and **where** to login.
- Lets students know where to go for technical help and support.
- Establishes rapport and promotes regular effective contact with the students early on.

The **online syllabus** differs from its face-to-face counterpart. It still follows the main structure of the traditional syllabus, but, because it is **the main source of information** about the course, it needs to include a **greater amount of detail**. Provide students information about the course assignments and texts. Provide a map for the course on the Learning Management System, and sets up guidelines for class participation and grading criteria. Explain the course schedule in detail.

Welcome Letter & Online Syllabus Differences

The welcome letter is generally written in an informal tone, briefly introducing the course, describing the first week, and explaining how to log in to the LMS. The syllabus is generally written in a formal tone, detailing course learning objectives and student learning outcomes. The syllabus describes the entire semester and is posted on the LMS.

Welcome Letter in Detail

Include basic course information
- Course name, section number
- Course dates
- Instructor name/information
- Contact information: phone number & email

Define the type of course
- Fully online or hybrid — for hybrid, place and date of first meeting.

Include important information for first week
- Required textbook(s)
- LMS URL
- Login instructions
- LMS support link
- Getting started/orientation links/course Check-In
- Syllabus location

Include additional information/links
- Distance education student resource(s)/website
- Information about accessibility & link to ASC website
- Self-assessment for online learning links
- Technical support

What is your preferred method of contact?
- Where & how to post/email questions
- Format of contact

Syllabus in Detail

The online syllabus should include three main elements: the contract, map, and schedule. The **Course Contract** is the core of the online syllabus, providing students with information about academic policies and expectations. In short, everything they need to know so that they can access the course content, understand course policies, and complete assignments.

The **Course Navigation Pane** helps students understand the organization of the site. For example, you can include instructions in your Syllabus such as, "*You can respond to the Discussion Board by clicking the **DISCUSSIONS** link on the Navigation Pane.*" Content is often organized in the form of **MODULES**.

The **Course Schedule** in an online syllabus is similar to a face-to-face syllabus. It includes a description of weekly lessons, readings, activities, discussions, projects and assessments. Because there is so much additional information in an online syllabus it is also particularly helpful to call special attention to **Important Dates** in the semester. It is also useful to give students a **general weekly timeline** for when lessons are released and activities, discussions and assessments are due.

Accessibility (504 & 508 Compliance)

Sections 504 & 508 of the **Federal Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility and Compliance Act** guarantee equal access to programs and services for everyone in institutions receiving Federal funding. California also has its own set of requirements for accessibility. What this means is that **prior to course approval and implementation, all courses must be designed keeping those students who have special needs and require assistive technology in mind.**

Understanding Accessibility
Simply stated, accessibility refers to the ability for everyone, particularly those with special needs, to have equal access to materials on the web. This means instructors should think about using the principle of **Universal Design** that is, creating course materials that accommodate the needs, learning styles and strategies of as many students as possible regardless of their ability.

Students who have disabilities may often have difficulty completing certain tasks on the internet such as reading, listening or typing. They may find chat rooms and videoconferencing challenging. It is important to understand what students may require in the form of assistive tools such as screen readers for the visually-impaired that require text tag modifications for images or captioning for the hearing-impaired. Creating courses keeping Universal Design principles in mind will also benefit students with a range of learning styles and preferences as well.

Differences between 504 & 508 Compliance

Section 504 specifies that institutions receiving federal funding have to accommodate individuals with special needs so that they can have equal access to learning facilities and materials. Section 504 compliance begins with the individual approaching the institution and requesting specific assistance.

Section 508 specifies that institutions have the responsibility to provide resources that are accessible to everyone. Electronic resources need to follow principles of universal design, meaning that the creation of websites, online materials, and online courses have to be developed with the objective of meeting the needs of everyone.

The following chart summarizes the differences between 504 & 508 compliance:

504
- Guarantees **accommodations for an individual**
- Is handled by **specific departments** such as **ASC**
- Finds workable **solutions as the need arises**
- Is used **when 508 compliant materials still do not meet an individual's needs**

508
- Guarantees **access for all**
- Is the responsibility of **everyone on campus?**
- Creates workable **solutions that are built-in** to the system
- Is the **starting point** for accessibility

Federal & State Guidelines

Table created by: Fiori and Glapa-Grossklag

Federal guidelines for accessibility:
- All applications should have accessibility features activated.
- All programs used should have keyboard-activated functionality.
- Users should be able to modify display elements and style sheets as needed.
- Images should:
  - Have text tags.
  - Have a description of the image that matches any function it may have.
  - Have a non-animated means of identification, if animated.
  - Have a frequency that is between 2 – 55 Hz, if animated.
- Text should be used:
  - To highlight information that relies on color-coding for emphasis.
  - To identify frames in webpages.
  - To label headings in data tables.
- Narration and captioning alternatives for videos and PowerPoint Presentations should be in sync with materials.

Federal & State Guidelines Continued

- All elements in electronic forms should be easily identified by assistive technology and should not be subject to time constraints.
- Links to plugins and special software should be provided.
- Users should have a way to avoid recurring navigation links.

State requirements that apply to distance education:
- Students should be able to use their preferred means of assistive technology.

- The frequency, amount, and quality of communication with students should be equal, regardless of their disability.
- Course materials should be updated following guidelines for **regular effective contact**.
- Course materials and resources should incorporate accessibility guidelines internally, that is, within their framework, thereby reducing the need for outside assistance for students with disabilities.

Captioning Guidelines

The following are guidelines for when to caption video and audio materials: (Provided by the *High Tech Center Training Unit*)

Caption
- Material that will be used in additional courses that has both video and audio.
- Any compilation of video clips that is archived.
- Archived video material that is used.
- Video created by the campus and placed on a public website.

Don't Caption (transcript/captioning only required as an accommodation)
- Video and audio material that is used for one term in a class with restricted access (such as a password-protected class).
- Links to YouTube videos (permission may be needed to caption since these materials are not public domain).
- Short video clips from longer works (captioning only needed when clips are compiled).
- Video material that already has subtitles.
- Student work or raw footage that will not be archived.

Use Transcript
- Any material that is audio only and is archived.

Captioning Assistance
Funding may be available through the Distance Education Captioning and Transcription (DECT) Grant. Check with the Teaching and Learning Center.

Other Considerations
In addition to the material in the LMS, instructors also need to ensure that online third-party resources (websites, videos) comply with accessibility guidelines. This also applies to preloaded publisher-created content, known as e-Packs. Some e-Pack materials may not include alt tags or other accessibility options. Before considering an e-Pack for a course it is important to find out if instructors can alter the course content to make it accessible.

Student Privacy (FERPA Compliance)

The **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act** (FERPA) provides guidelines for access to and release of student education records. Any student at a post-secondary institution, even those who are not yet 18 years of age, has the right to: check their student records, request amendments/corrections to their records, opt out of disclosing **directory information** and use an alias in the case of distance education.

Student FERPA rights begin the first time a student is enrolled in and attends class. Only those with a **legitimate educational interest** that is, school officials, accrediting organizations or law enforcement agencies who require student information in their official capacity, may access student records without a student's signed and written consent. **Educational Records** at Cabrillo can only be released with student consent or for legitimate educational interests.

FERPA & Distance Education

Policy Guidelines
§ 99.3 A "student" is defined as an individual who is or has been "in attendance" at an educational agency or institution and regarding whom the agency or institution maintains education records. The final regulations add other situations in which students "attend" classes but are not physically present, including attendance by videoconference, satellite, Internet, or other electronic information and telecommunications technologies. This change will ensure that individuals who receive instruction through distance learning and other contemporary modalities are covered as "students" and, therefore, that their records are protected under FERPA (US Department of Education).

What this means
Electronic information refers not only to computerized educational records but also to **email communication, comments in discussion boards, student projects**

uploaded to a website, etc. This makes it necessary to consider how course structure and materials will affect online learning with regard to FERPA.

FERPA regulations also refer to TAs, college assistants or student helpers. Any person who is not the Instructor of Record **cannot** have access to student records. Instructors may share notes with assistants, but not the educational records themselves. Before any distance education instructor can give course access to an assistant, they need to do make certain that:

- All unclassified employees are in the Cabrillo Human Resources system and officially assigned to the instructor of record.
- All unclassified employees understand FERPA regulations

FERPA & the Internet
Since many websites may require written input of some sort (email registration, comments, etc.) it is important to understand how different activities on the internet may affect FERPA Compliance.

FERPA Compliant
- Internet research, information retrieval
- Surveys, tests, quizzes, problem sets that do not require login information
- Publisher websites that do not require login information

Only FERPA compliant if just directory information required
- Internet research, information retrieval that requires login information
- Voluntary surveys, tests, quizzes, problem sets that require login information
- Publisher websites that do not store grades but require login information

Most likely not FERPA compliant*
- Social media sites
- Blog or wiki creation outside the LMS
- Mandatory surveys, tests, quizzes, problem sets that require login information
- Publisher websites that store grades

*Third party websites that require or store any information that may compromise student privacy (grades, student ID numbers, etc.) are **not** FERPA compliant. Before entering into an agreement with a third party vendor (such as a publisher), contact the Distance Education Department to ensure the site complies with FERPA guidelines.

Copyright

Distance Education courses follow the College's **Computer and Network Usage Administrative Regulation**. [AR 4340] For the full text document, refer to the College's website.

Accreditation

ACCJC Accreditation Concerns

The following is a list of accreditation concerns that most directly affect course design and implementation:
- Distance education course standards should be the same as in face-to-face classrooms and the mode of course delivery should be appropriate for the course content.
- Distance education should be compared with corresponding traditional courses and programs in order to meet institutional learning outcomes and quality standards.
- Faculty should have:
  - Appropriate training.
  - Means for ongoing professional development.
  - Sufficient resources for technical and pedagogical support.
  - The same faculty evaluation process as in the face-to-face classroom.
- Students should have:
  - Appropriate technical and pedagogical training in the course delivery method.
  - Expectations that distance education courses will provide the same level of instruction as face-to-face courses.
  - A clear idea about the technical skills needed for the course
  - The same level of interaction with and access to the instructor as in face-to-face courses.
  - The same access to support services as on-campus students.

Cabrillo is continually developing and enhancing its policies for distance education courses. Please refer back to this section of the handbook periodically for the most current information about how local policies and recommended best practices may affect online courses.

The following sections provide a summary of Cabrillo policies as well as suggestions about how to implement them in individual online and hybrid courses.

Attendance & Participation

Student Responsibilities

A student is expected to be in attendance at all times in classes and laboratories and is responsible for making personal contact with the instructor of each class missed. An absence does not relieve the student from the responsibility of making up all work missed. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain information concerning missed assignments and to see that they are completed and turned in. It is also the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from classes by published deadlines to avoid failing grades or having to pay fees. However, **faculty should be proactive, including utilizing an early alert and intervention strategy that can often get at-risk students back on track.**

Attendance at First Class Meeting

If a student is unable to attend the first class meeting, it is his/her responsibility to notify the instructor personally or in writing; however, students who do not attend the first class meeting may be considered as "No Shows" and may be dropped and their seats filled by other students. ([AR 3270](#))

Excessive Absence

Class hours of absence are considered excessive when they total more than the number of hours a full-term class meets during each week of a 16-week semester. This applies proportionately to short-term day, evening, summer, winter session, and weekend classes. For example, if a student is absent for more than three hours in a summer class that, when scheduled as a full-term class during a fall or spring semester, meets for three hours per week, the student's absence can be considered excessive, irrespective of the number of class meetings missed. ([AR 3270](#))

Excessive absence from class as defined in the above paragraph may constitute reason for an instructor to drop a student from that class. However, it is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw from classes by published deadlines to avoid failing grades or having to pay fees.

Local policies and instructor directives/guidance must be developed for appropriate clearing of course rosters (inactive enrollment), including for distance education courses, by census. This includes "No Shows," students who have officially withdrawn, and students have been dropped from the course. A student must be dropped if no longer participating, except if there are extenuating circumstances. Attendance should be based on documentation from "regular effective contact."

All distance education courses, whether hybrid or fully online, include demonstration of regular effective contact. The instructor (a) regularly initiates interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course materials, (b) is available at least the same number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face-to-face students, and (c) establishes and publishes, in the course syllabus or other course documents, an expectation for frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback. The instructor uses one or more of the following resources to initiate and maintain contact with students: threaded discussions, email, announcements in the learning management system, timely feedback for student work, instructor prepared online lectures or introductions in the form of online lectures to any publisher created materials, that combined with other course materials, create the "virtual equivalent" of the face-to-face class.

For online classes, students may be dropped who do not complete the required orientation or contact their instructor by the end of the day published as the start date of the class.

Legal Reference: Education Code Sections 70901 and 84500. Title 5 Section 58004 (c) (1) – (3), 55204, and Involuntary Drop after Census Date CCCCO Legal Opinion 11-04

Individual Course Attendance & Participation Policy

Even more than in face-to-face courses, participation is a critical part of assessing learning outcomes. Each online or hybrid course syllabus should have a well-defined and detailed description of participation course policies that support the College's attendance policy.

Determining participation grades

- Require a set number of **course activities** for each week. For example — a 3 unit course might require 2-3 activities each week on non-consecutive days.
- Require a set number of **discussion posts** for each week. For example – a 3 unit course might require one discussion post and 2 comments to classmate's posts for every weekly module.
    - In order to get full credit, provide **examples** and a **rubric** detailing what constitutes an adequate post or response.
- Give weekly **quizzes** on course material.
- Require **timely completion** of assignments.

(Chronicle of Higher Education)

Creating late work guidelines

- Make certain students are clear as to **where** and **when** (day, date, time & time zone) to post their work for each assignment. For example – **assignments** might be emailed to the instructor directly but **discussions** posted in the unit/weekly discussion board.
- Encourage students to **check their grade book** so that if they have submitted an assignment but it hasn't been received, students can be aware of what they are doing wrong before it becomes a recurring problem.
- Decide whether or not late work will be accepted. If accepted consider the following:
    - Specific **final deadline** for assignments.
    - Specific **point value** deduction for late assignments (letter grade/percentage/points).
    - **Where** students will post late work.
- Be clear if late work will be accepted due to extenuating or **legitimate circumstances**.

Drop Policy

Federal Guidelines

Policy Guidelines
The Federal government has not issued formal guidelines regarding what constitutes the "Last Day of Attendance" in the online classroom. However, because of the potential for financial aid fraud in online programs, the US Department of Education has recently determined that there should be "regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty" in online courses (Salomon and Murray).

What this means for distance education
It is not enough to evaluate a student's attendance based solely on the number and frequency of logins or through course statistics on the LMS. The new guidelines are meant to protect the institution from students who are receiving financial aid assistance but who are not participating in class. Although guidelines have yet to be created, instructors must drop students based on their participation in class. 'Attendance' (through logins) is not the same as participation. Participation means actively completing course activities such as assignments, assessments, posting on discussion forums, etc. **Participation policies must be clarified in the online syllabus**.

Cabrillo's Drop Policy
All distance education courses currently follow the Cabrillo College Policy for Attendance, Class Drops and Auditing courses.

Policy Guidelines
- Each instructor is required to drop all students who fail to attend the first meeting of a class if they have not made prior arrangements with that instructor, and may drop students who arrive late at the first meeting of a class or who fail to attend the second meeting if they have not made prior arrangements with that instructor.
- Each instructor is required to drop all students who become nonparticipants by the **census date**. In a regular 16-week class the census date is usually Monday of the third week of class. (For all other courses, see the official policy to determine the census date or contact the Registration Office.)
- After the census date and before the final drop deadline for the class, each instructor has the option of dropping students who, in his or her judgment, become inactive in class.
- Prior to the final drop deadline, a student may drop a class by submitting the approved form in the Registration Office, or by using the telephone or on-line registration system.

What this means for distance education
The face-to-face policy of 'attending' the **first class**, particularly for students who are new to distance education may present a problem. There are often students who, either because they are unaware of the policies or overwhelmed by the technology, may login to the course but might not complete any of the assignments on the first day.

It is therefore important for online and hybrid instructors to create a **coherent** and **well-defined** course drop policy and to articulate this in the initial email and **welcome letter** sent to the students prior to the course start date as well as in the **online course syllabus**.

Individual Course Drop Policy
The College's drop policy is quite clear for face-to-face instruction, but less so for online and hybrid courses. Because of this, it is important to clarify what constitutes the "first day of class."

Establishing a drop policy
- Create a course **Check-In Procedure**, such as a discussion forum, an introductory email students send to the class, or a self-assessment. Simply having the student login for the first day of class is not enough. **Federal guidelines to prevent financial aid fraud** state that **student logins no longer count as participation**.
- State the **last day** for **Check-In** to occur. For example – the second or third day after the course begins.
- Require students to complete **ALL** assignments in the first learning unit by the due date.
- Be specific as to the exact **day, date** and **time** of your drop deadline. Include **time zone** information (eg. PST/EST) so that there is minimal confusion for students.

If a student has not checked-in, it is best to send an email **before** the drop deadline to inform them that they are in danger of being dropped if they do not respond by the deadline.

Dropped Students in the Learning Management System
Although a student is dropped through the Cabrillo system, changes will NOT appear in the LMS. Faculty are required to remove students from their section.

Add Policy
All distance education courses currently follow **Cabrillo College Policy for Attendance, Course Repetition, Class Drops and Auditing** courses. [see Board Policies and Administrative Regulations]

Add Policy Guidelines
Students must obtain an add code from the instructor and register through WebAdvisor or the Colleague Student Planning Module. The add code indicates that there is room in the class and the student has a reasonable chance of catching up.

What this means for distance education
Students will have to go through the same procedure to add distance education courses as they would for face-to-face instruction. Inform students in the order that they appear on the waitlist by email that they can add the course if there is still space available. Make certain that the email states a **day, date,** and **time** (include **time zone**) they must add the course by.

Adding Students in the LMS
Once the student adds themselves through the college's registration system, changes will appear in the LMS within one business day. It is important to remind students that they will not be able to login to the LMS until they are loaded into the system and this process may take up to one business day.

Grading Policy
All distance education courses follow the **Cabrillo College Policy for Standards of Scholarship.**

Cabrillo's Grading Policy

Policy Guidelines
- It is the policy of the Cabrillo College that appropriate evaluation of each student's academic performance is an integral part of the student's learning experience at Cabrillo. In the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith or incompetency, the instructor is the final authority on the assignment of grades. Procedures for grading, awarding credit, including credit by examination, and appealing decisions shall be understandable, fair, and consistent with State laws and regulations.
- Courses shall be graded using the grading system established by Title 5 regulations.

What this means for distance education
As with face-to-face courses, grades in online and hybrid courses are an indicator of student achievement and learning. Because the nature of instructor-student contact is different in the distance education environment, course grades and progress reports become an ever greater part of the learning process.

Evaluative feedback from the instructor allows students to be aware of their progress in the course and directs them toward fulfilling learning outcomes.

In addition, state and regional accreditation guidelines for regular effective contact require that instructors in distance education courses apply the same course quality standards to their online and hybrid courses as they do to their face-to-face classes:

> "…portions of courses delivered through electronic means (need to) adhere to the same principles of academic quality and integrity (Distance Learning Manual)."

This means that students should receive the same type, amount and frequency of feedback from assignments and tests as they would were they taking a course on-campus.

Grade Submissions
All instructors using a Learning Management System are required to submit their grades by college deadlines and in accordance with current Cabrillo protocol.

It is the responsibility of instructors to archive grades and grade documentation for each online and hybrid course.

Academic Honesty and Authentication

Academic honesty and **student authentication** (verification of a student's identity) in distance education often go hand in hand. Because of the lack of face-to-face classroom time, it can be difficult for instructors to know if the student enrolled in the class is the actual person who is logging in and turning in their own work. The following sections provide information about Cabrillo's policies on academic honesty and some suggestions for ensuring academic integrity and authentication in the online. All distance education courses currently follow Cabrillo College's Student Rights and Responsibilities policies**.** ([AP5500](#))

Honor Code

Cabrillo expects students to pursue their studies with integrity and honesty. When students are caught cheating or plagiarizing, a process is begun that may result in severe consequences. It is important to their academic success that faculty know what constitutes academic dishonesty at Cabrillo College.

What this means for distance education

The guidelines for academic honesty in face-to-face courses also apply to students in online and hybrid courses. Plagiarism, disruptive behavior (such as improper discussion posts or poor **netiquette**) and taking an exam for someone else are all violations of student conduct guidelines.

There is little evidence to suggest that online and hybrid students are more likely to cheat. In fact, the few studies that have researched this issue found that online students were less likely to engage in academic dishonesty than those in face-to-face classes. In part this may be because of the nature of the distance education environment where, because of **regular effective contact guidelines**, instructors often have more interactions with individual students. Students who are able to learn at their own speed and who are provided with many different forms of alternative assessments may also be less likely to 'panic cheat', that is, impulsively cheat during an exam (Stuber-McEwen, Wiseley & Hoggat).

Academic Dishonesty

- Cheating
  - Copying, in part or in whole, from someone else's writing, test, exam, project, or paper;
  - Submitting work presented previously in another course, unless approved by the instructor;
  - Altering or interfering with grading;
  - During an exam or other class activity, using or consulting any sources, electronic equipment, including cell phones, or materials unless approved by the instructor; or
  - Committing other acts that defraud or misrepresent.

- Plagiarism
  - Incorporating the ideas, words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs or parts of another person's writings, without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as your own;
  - Representing another's artistic or scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawings or sculptures as your own;
  - Submitting a paper purchased from a research or term paper service, including the internet; or
  - Undocumented Web source usage.
- Other Specific Examples of Academic Dishonesty
  - Purposely allowing another student to copy from your paper during a test;
  - Giving or selling your homework, term paper or other academic work to another student to plagiarize;
  - Having another person submit any work in your name;
  - Lying or misrepresenting your work to an instructor or college official to improve your grade;
  - Stealing tests; or
  - Forging signatures on college documents.

In addition to violation of the Honor Code, the following **unacceptable conduct** may result in consequences:

- The use of threatening, harassing, sexually explicit language, or discriminatory language or conduct that violates state and federal law and Cabrillo College policy on sexual harassment or discrimination;
- Disruptive behavior online such as use of profanity, or disrespectful language used in course communication tools such as discussion forums, email, blogs, etc.; (See Section IV. C.)
- Unauthorized posting or transmitting content that violates state or federal law, or Cabrillo's Academic Honor Code. (See Sections III. A. and III. B.) This includes College policy on academic dishonesty;

Academic Dishonesty Continued

- Violation of the terms of service agreement for course software, including reconfiguring the software, or gaining unauthorized access.

Individual Course Academic Honesty Policy

It is important for instructors to establish clear expectations in their online syllabus as to what constitutes academically dishonest behavior.

Creating guidelines for academic honesty
- Clearly explain what constitutes cheating, plagiarism and proper netiquette.
- Establish classroom guidelines in your online syllabus for the types of behavior that are appropriate and inappropriate.
- Provide students with standards for group work and how those differ from unauthorized collaboration on class projects.
- Let students know what the consequences will be for academic dishonest behavior.

Preventing plagiarism
- Raise students' awareness by designing rules for academic honesty and classroom behavior as part of an initial class activity.
- Provide external resources on how to avoid plagiarism (for example, **Purdue OWL's page on plagiarism**).
- Give students examples and/or provide activities describing how to properly cite sources and how to paraphrase properly.
- Ask students to provide their source material as part of each formal writing assignment.
- Create a range of authentic assessments in the course design that measure critical thinking skills and knowledge integration instead of relying solely on objective tests.
- Use test banks which randomize questions and answers on objective tests.

Academic Honesty

Perhaps the biggest challenge in the distance education environment is **student authentication**. Using Cabrillo's secure login system and incorporating best practices for regular effective contact — such as getting to know students and their writing styles — are effective means to help to ensure that students registered for the course are truly the ones contributing to it. For instructors teaching hybrid courses with proctored exams on campus, this may be less of an issue than for those who are teaching fully online courses for high stakes exams.

In addition to incorporating best practices for academic honesty into online and hybrid courses, there features and additional software services that help prevent plagiarism in the LMS. Please check back to this section periodically, as software packages and features are added and updated frequently.

Plagiarism detection is web-based service which can be used directly within Canvas that identifies plagiarism in student work. The software then completes an originality checking process that compares student work against internet and database sources.

Office Hours

In accordance with the **Cabrillo Contract Agreement regarding Office Hours**, faculty teaching distance education courses may elect to fulfill their office hour requirement for the distance education course in an alternative distance mode away from the office. Office hours **must be posted** on the online **course syllabus** as well as the faculty member's Salsa directory listing.

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES
ONLINE EDUCATION
INITIATIVE

COURSE DESIGN RUBRIC

The Online Education Initiative (OEI) is a collaborative effort among California Community Colleges (CCCs) to ensure that significantly more students are able to complete their educational goals by increasing both access to and success in **high quality online courses**.

Revisions approved by the Online Education Initiative Steering Committee December 9, 2016.

Links to Online Education Initiative Course Design Rubric

APPENDIX B
Open Educational Resources (OER)

OER provide access to educational resources for students who may not otherwise be able to afford them. And, because OER are open-source, instructors can often tailor materials to best meet their learners' needs, using the most up-to-date technology and multimedia content. Examples may include eBooks, webcasts, videos, lesson plans, assessments, and learning objects.

Differences between OER & free resources
The line between OER and free internet/electronic resources is not often clear-cut. But in general, OER materials have "…an open license that promotes sharing and remixing" (Judith Baker, Foothill College). Free materials, on the other hand, may not require a fee but may have additional restrictions (such as copyright or specific attribution requirements) that limit their use even though they may still have educational applications under the Fair Use/TEACH Act.

Faculty can access the Canvas OER Guide containing multiple resources for integrating free content in your discipline.