

**Guam Community College
Board of Trustees**

Distance Education Policy

WHEREAS, distance education (hereinafter referred to as DE) refers to the practice of offering educational services – either instruction or support services – to students who are not physically co-located with the individuals providing the service. DE includes the use of computer and Internet-based educational services as well as video and audio services. Institutions use Internet technologies to bring students educational programming in either synchronous (students and the service provider are interacting on line at the same time) or asynchronous modes (students and the service provider not interacting on line at the same time). Educational interactions delivered through these means may occur on campus as well as off campus, and

WHEREAS, DE can be a convenient, flexible, and effective means of providing education. Nearly half of all the college students in the country are of the age group once thought of as nontraditional. They are working adults or adults seeking first educational credentials or retraining. Many working adult students with multiple demands on their time find DE to meet their needs better than campus-based education, and

WHEREAS, DE is also an opportunity for the College and the students to contribute to environmentally friendly practices. Courses that run through DE reduce the use of paper and copying, as resources are available digitally. In addition, students commute to campus less frequently than traditional courses, lessening the use of gas and related emissions into the environment, and

WHEREAS, in addition to working adults, the traditional-aged college students come to campus with extensive experience using digital technologies in their personal and school lives. For these students, DE that involves the use of Internet, web casts, text messaging, and other digital media is comfortable and familiar. As technology continues to expand world-wide, participation in DE assists students in preparing for the workforce.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that this document serves as a policy for the College to support the policy on distance education and correspondence education of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) (Revised January 2010).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a manual will be developed based on this policy. The manual will include specific forms, and other detailed processes that are necessary to ensure the policy is implemented.

Adopted: July 7, 2010

Resolution No: 7-2010

Definitions

- An Online course is defined as one in which all regularly scheduled classroom time is replaced by required activities completed at a distance and managed online. Online courses allow students to take courses from geographically remote locations, without any need to come to campus (for instance, while deployed in the military).
- Hybrid online courses are taught using two instructional formats: on campus and online, combining traditional face-to-face classroom instruction with computer-based DE (e.g., 50% of the course work is electronically delivered). In a hybrid course, a significant part of the course learning is online and as a result, the amount of classroom seat-time is reduced.
- Web-Enhanced courses are traditional face-to-face classes that are augmented with course web sites. However, unlike hybrid courses, web-enhanced classes continue to hold all of their meetings on-campus. Web-enhanced courses are NOT distance education courses.

Requirements

- The College will adhere to all ACCJC policies regarding DE.
- All credited courses and programs that include or will include components of DE (online or hybrid online) must be approved through the Curriculum Approval Substantive Change Process. These will include courses offered through the regular semester cycle, special projects, or Continuing Education cycle, for as long as they include DE components.
- As per the WASC Distance Learning Policy, the College is expected to give the ACCJC advance notice of intent to offer a program in which 50% or more of the courses are electronically-delivered, through the Substantive Change process. Any request for ACCJC's approval of a DE program, must be coursed through the Office of the Academic Vice President.
- All courses and programs delivered through electronic means must have clearly defined and appropriate program/course student learning outcomes (SLOs).
- Students are responsible for accessing resources to complete all course requirements and resolving any technical difficulties outside of Guam Community College.
- All DE courses must be clearly identified as either online or hybrid online courses in the annually-published college catalog and in the class schedule published every semester.
- All online courses can only be taught during academic years where traditional courses are also offered as an alternative course, with the exception of continuing education courses. All DE courses must be electronically delivered by the course management system agreed upon by the College (in order to ensure consistency and uniformity in course delivery and eventual assessment of these courses.¹
- Prior to teaching a DE course, individual faculty members are responsible for acquiring sufficient skills by completing at a minimum a 3-credit course (must be

¹ The platform the College currently utilizes is the Moodle Course Management System.

verified through official college transcripts) on building an online course, minor troubleshooting, and features of a course management system.

- Faculty must be able to provide minimal technical assistance to students (e.g., course enrollment into course management systems, access to online course materials, access to online examinations, etc.). The College will identify an individual person or department to provide further assistance for students and faculty.
- As per the WASC Distance Learning Policy, the College must ensure that the student enrolling in course is the same student who completes the course. Therefore, students enrolling in DE courses must present photo identification during the orientation procedure. Only those enrolled students should receive the enrollment key or password to enter the course. Students enrolled must agree, in writing, to be solely responsible for the completion of the course.
- Faculty and staff involved in DE courses will be provided with training opportunities specific to online learning.

Resources

- *Copyright.* Faculty and students must refrain from using copyrighted materials illegally and seek permission from the respective author or publisher to use copyrighted material. For more information on the U.S. Copyright Law, visit the U.S. Copyright Office's web site.

Privacy/Security

- In accordance with the U.S. Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the College is committed to protecting the privacy of all faculty and students enrolled in DE courses. The information collected will only be visible to the instructor, system managers, technical support team and other pertinent personnel. In order to ensure privacy, posting personal information such as phone numbers and addresses are discouraged and should be kept confidential. Sole access to DE courses should be limited to the registered student to maintain integrity of privacy and academic integrity as well.

Support

- *Basic Student Support Services.* Each student enrolled in a DE course shall have access to all the academic support services, instructional equipment, and campus events and other non-academic activities provided to other students. Support services may include, but are not limited to, academic advising, counseling, library services, computer access, tutoring services and financial aid.
- *Library Support.* The Library shall provide equivalent, effective and appropriate support for DE courses. Library support may include, but is not limited to, access to over 7,000 different periodicals (majority of which are available full-text) and online public access of the library catalog (through the GCC Library web page) and other strategies that emphasize access to these resources.

- *Technology Support.* In order to maximize instruction in DE courses, appropriate training and support is needed in the use of DE tools, applications and systems, the design and delivery of DE courses, the development and production of online materials, and ongoing collaboration with instructional technology staff.
- *Pedagogy Support.* In order to provide appropriate instruction in DE courses, faculty should have ongoing access to pedagogy support from other faculty, staff, administrators and instructional technology personnel. Periodic training opportunities will be offered to develop and improve teaching skills and methods for DE courses.

Assessment Strategies for Distance Learning

- The Office of Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness shall provide a report on the effectiveness of DE courses to ensure comparability to campus-based courses. Distance education must also be evaluated through an institutionally standardized evaluation procedure which includes faculty self-evaluation, evaluation of online instruction by students, student retention, student satisfaction and evaluation of faculty member by the appropriate supervisor and when appropriate, determine comparability to campus-based programs. This process shall also be used to assure the conformity of DE courses and programs to prevailing quality standards in the field of DE. DE courses and programs shall be consistent with the educational missions and strategic plans of the Department and College. DE courses will follow the regular assessment cycles and will conform to established assessment groupings.
- DE courses must be of the same quality and rigor as those presented face-to face. The course syllabi should demonstrate this equity of quality. All course syllabi must be submitted to the respective Dean of each school, as stipulated in the Guam Federation of Teachers and Guam Community College Board of Trustees Agreement. DE faculty members must deliver accurate and current information. Faculty shall not include in the content or delivery of a course any information which he or she knows to constitute libel, invasion of privacy, infringement of copyright or other literary rights, or otherwise violate the legal rights of others (See the TEACH Act). Instructors must demonstrate how student work is monitored to assure integrity.