

Definition of Distance Education

Distance Education is defined by Title 5 Section 55200 as

...instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication 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 that may be imposed by 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). NOTE: Authority cited Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code; Title 29 United States Code Section 794d, and Title 42 United States Code Section 12100 et seq.

Distance Education is further defined by ACCJC in the following way:

...for the purpose of accreditation review as a formal interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. Distance education often incorporates technologies such as the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CDROMs, in conjunction with any of the other technologies.

Vision of the Reedley College Distance Education Program

In support of the institution's Mission, Vision, and Values, the Reedley College Distance Education program will provide "anytime-anywhere" educational opportunities to foster and cultivate professional, well-prepared individuals who will contribute to their respective communities.

Mission of the Reedley College Distance Education Program

At Reedley College, Distance Education is one part of a multi-site effort to provide an accessible educational environment ensuring high-quality and innovative learning opportunities supported by those services appropriate and necessary for student success.

History of the Reedley College Distance Education Program

In its infancy, the Reedley College Distance Education program consisted of a few telecourses and courses conducted via synchronous multi-site video feeds. In 1998, the program began to offer a handful of online courses in Business and English using instructor-designed websites with non-standardized software. Instructors relayed course content through posting of text-based materials.

During the following decade, several important technical transitions took place ensuring greater cohesiveness in course offerings and equivalent rigor in presentation: district-wide adoption of Microsoft Office, including an e-mail client for administration, faculty, and staff, eventually leading to the district-wide issuance of student e-mail addresses; college (then district-wide) adoption of Blackboard as the CMS; use of lecture-capture software (initially Impatica, then Tegrity, and finally Camtasia Relay/Studio) for presentation of lecture materials. In 2007, the Reedley College Distance Education committee was established by the Academic Senate to oversee the Distance Education program at Reedley College (RC) and its centers at Willow/International (W/I), Madera (MC), and Oakhurst (OC). Distance Education guidelines were written and subsequently adopted in 2009 by the Academic Senate. Those guidelines will be reviewed in conjunction with this plan on a four-year cycle. (See Appendix A for RC Distance Education Guidelines.) In 2008, one faculty member on a 50% reassigned time assignment was designated as Distance Education coordinator and made responsible for scheduling training and acting as liaison between administration and faculty regarding scheduling, staffing, and new curriculum development. In spring semester 2014, the DE Coordinator was placed on a one-semester 100% reassigned time assignment in order to review and re-invigorate the program, its policies, and procedures. In 2012, the Willow/International Center advanced to candidacy as an autonomous college; this document, then, refers to Reedley College, the Madera Center, and the Oakhurst Center, and will become part of a larger DE Faculty Handbook.

Current status of Reedley College Distance Education Program

While the Reedley College Distance Education program has expanded its offerings over the course of the past fifteen years (120 courses are now approved for fully online or hybrid delivery with approximately 60 sections of such courses being offered each semester), there are still gaps in the offerings that would lead to a completely online degree. Those areas (such as Political Science or P.E.) not yet available online at either RC, MC, or OC are available via other District sites (FCC, W/I) or other California Community Colleges. The Reedley College Distance Education program is currently undergoing a comprehensive review of its curriculum, offerings, policies, procedures, as well as past practices. Subsequent modifications to our programs will also consider potential state-wide course and program support offerings through the CCC Online Education Initiative

Definitions of Reedley College Distance Education Courses

Defining the various types of distance education classes can sometimes create confusion on the part of all constituencies (administration, faculty, staff, students, and community) since the definitions of online and hybrid courses have not always been treated consistently depending on context (state reporting, curriculum, contract). Please refer to the following table:

Descriptor	Definition	Curriculum	Contract	Notes
Fully online	Courses in which students work entirely without having to come to any college facility. Arranged proctored tests are available in this modality (students do not have to come to a Reedley College learning center to take tests); orientations and/or face-to-face class meetings are optional. Synchronous activities are not required but if synchronous events are scheduled, they may be posted as required archives for asynchronous access.	Requires separate Curriculum Committee approval with Distance Education (DE) form and follows all quality measures as outlined in the Distance Education Guidelines (i.e. Regular Effective Contact)	Instructors teaching fully online courses will be paid a 4/3 factor according to the contract with State Center Federation of Teachers. Instructors who develop a new course for online presentation are entitled to 1 LHE release time per 1 hour class equivalent in the semester prior to the class being offered. These contract provisions sunset in June 2015.	Requires faculty readiness standards are met prior to online teaching. If proctoring is required, it cannot be required that students come to campus. Rather, instructors must arrange for a proctoring location in collaboration with the student.
Hybrid	Anytime distance education is offered in lieu of face-to-face class time, where planned face-to-face time is formally scheduled. This designation is also given whenever students are required to come to a Reedley College site for any reason (testing, orientation, etc.).	Requires separate Curriculum Committee approval with Distance Education (DE) form and follows all quality measures as outlined in the Distance Education Guidelines (i.e. Regular Effective Contact). For state reporting purposes, hybrid courses with greater than 51% of contact hours conducted online are reported as distance education courses. Courses with less than 51% LHE online are not reported to the Chancellor's Office as distance education courses but still must be approved for distance education delivery by the Curriculum Committee in compliance with Title 5 and DE Guidelines.	Instructors teaching hybrid courses (with more than 51% of contact time conducted online) will be paid a 4/3 factor according to the contract with State Center Federation of Teachers. Instructors who develop a new course for online presentation (more than 51% of contact time) are entitled to 1 LHE release time per 1 hour class equivalent in the semester prior to the class being offered. These provisions sunset in June 2015.	Requires faculty readiness standards are met prior to online teaching. Face-to-face class meetings must be clearly identified in the printed Schedule of Courses and in WebAdvisor.
Face-to-face (web-enhanced)	Face-to-face courses that require the student to access the Internet and/or Blackboard as part of the course work. All courses offered by the college are provided with a Blackboard course shell that an instructor may choose to employ for the posting of materials (e.g. syllabus, classroom handouts, and lecture materials) and grades.	No further Curriculum Committee approval is necessary other than the Course Outline of Record.		These courses at a minimum will declare the required online use in the course syllabus.

Organizational structure

The following individuals serve the Reedley College Distance Education Program in the following capacities:

- Vice-President of Instruction, Reedley: Supervises the Faculty Distance Education Coordinator and, in consultation and cooperation with the Vice-President of Instruction, Madera/Oakhurst, is ultimately responsible for the administration of the Distance Education Program as part of the larger Office of Instruction.
- Faculty Distance Education Coordinator: (Full-time faculty member with 50% reassigned time; 100% reassigned time for spring 2014). Serves as liaison between faculty and administration in distance education matters, leads planning efforts for DE professional development, chairs the Distanced Education Committee, and reviews and recommends for approval DE courses through the Curriculum Committee as needed. Assists faculty with a variety of technical and pedagogical matters related to DE. Serves as a liaison with Director of Technology for RC (RC, MC, OC) and W/I.
- Director of Technology: (Administrator for Technology infrastructure for RC, MC, OC, and W/I). Provides leadership in collaboration with the DE Coordinator in all areas related to technology (hardware, software, networking, new purchase, maintenance, replacement, and repair) for four of the five campus sites within the district. Works cooperatively with counterparts at FCC.

Additional Support Services:

Student Services

- Financial Aid (campus website, phone)
- Counseling/Advising (available online on a limited basis)
- Application and Registration (WebAdvisor)
- Student Orientation (online)

Learning Resource Centers

- Tutoring (Tutorial Center, Writing Center, Math Lab with varying degrees of online access)
- Supplemental Instruction (Beyond the Classroom)
- Library Online Services (Access to the catalog, e-books, electronic data bases, librarian support, and specific library research documents)

Business Services

- Bookstore (online ordering)

DSPS department

- Accessibility Review and Assistance (appointments by phone)
- Captioning Assistance (through Chancellor's Office DECT grant)

College Committees

- Staff Development
- Student Success
- Distance Education (DE)
- Technology Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Curriculum Committee

Program and course development process

The Reedley College Distance Education Guidelines suggest the following reasons for developing, approving, and offering an online course:

- Reaching students for whom attendance at a regular District site is less suitable;
- Providing specialty courses for students at one or more sites, where there is not a sufficient pool of students to warrant traditional classroom instruction;
- Recruiting and supporting students who would not otherwise have initial access to the District;
- Serving the community and business institutions by providing work-site courses for external organizations requiring special training.

The DE addendum submitted to the Curriculum Committee must fully identify how methods of instruction have been adapted for online delivery and what strategies will be employed to ensure regular and effective contact as required in Title 5 and the proposed Reedley College Distance Education Regular Effective Contact Policy (See Appendix A: Regular Effective Contact Policy).

Faculty wishing to adapt an existing class (a course with a current Course Outline of Record) to an online class must have approval from their department chair (or division representative) and dean. A distance education addendum must be reviewed and approved by the curriculum committee before a new distance education course can be developed for online delivery.

Faculty members developing an online course are strongly encouraged to work in tandem with other experienced Distance Education faculty. Throughout the development process, faculty should collaborate with one another to ensure best practices and to share insights into both the technology and the pedagogical ramifications of converting a traditional course for online delivery. Several checklists or rubrics exist for assisting faculty in this critical endeavor. Since moving from the traditional classroom to a virtual classroom is not as simple as merely putting existing course notes and readings online, faculty should critically evaluate their online course to ensure that opportunities have been created for active, student-centered learning. It is strongly suggested that faculty members developing a new course use the Quality Matters Rubric for Online Instruction [<https://www.qualitymatters.org/layout-1/download/QM%20Standards%202011-2013-4.pdf>] as a means of evaluating the design of their courses.

Distance education policies

Institutional support:

State Center Community College District and/or Reedley College is responsible for providing the following:

1. Funding for the CMS (Blackboard).
2. Funding for a 24/7 monitoring of all technical systems related to online program delivery.

3. Regularly offered comprehensive training for faculty, staff and administrators, as well as web based tutorial assistance with the Blackboard course management system, and help desk support. **(See Action Items #1 and 2.)**
4. Orientation and readiness material for students available prior to their enrolling in DE courses (that remain available for the balance of the course term) as well as 24/7 help desk support for Blackboard use. **(See Action Item #5.)**
5. Instructional design support for faculty developers. **(See Action Items #1, 2, 10.)**
6. Student support services at a distance, including library, counseling, bookstore, orientation, and tutoring, and enrollment services. **(See Action Item #6.)**
7. Easily accessible schedule and catalog copy for students seeking distance-learning opportunities. **(See Action Item. #4.)**
8. Support for course development and delivery particularly in the area of accessibility compliance. **(See Action Item #10.)**
9. A system for designating in which states our enrolled online student are residents and detailing where and how Reedley College can obtain approval to offer courses to students in those states.
10. Appropriate substantive change report to the ACCJC when programs reach the ability to offer 50% or more of their degree or certificates via distance education.

Student integrity and authentication

1. Students access the Course Management System through a college administered authentication process (student ID related password protection).
2. Password updates take place on a regular basis via a password aging policy. **(See Action Item #11.)**
3. Instructors are encouraged to use multiple methods of assessment in their course design. (see <http://wcet.wiche.edu/wcet/docs/cigs/studentauthentication/BestPractices.pdf>).
4. Assessment, grading and interactive activities will take place within an authenticated, copyright appropriate, and Section 508 compliant environment. **(See Action Item #10.)**
5. Instructors will monitor students' continuous active participation in the course. **(See the Regular Effective Contact Policy, Appendix A)**
6. To protect the integrity of the teaching/learning process in courses that do not feature a proctored test environment, the students will be required to acknowledge Reedley College's Student Conduct Standards.
7. Instructors are encouraged to define plagiarism and cheating in their online course policies as articulated in the course syllabus.

Faculty readiness

In order to ensure quality and appropriate rigor, faculty electing to teach online classes should have training in online pedagogy and the use of Blackboard. To teach a course in the Distance Education program or to design a new online course, the faculty member should—

- have received appropriate training/certification in online teaching, such as that provided by @ONE, the Reedley College flex day program on Effective Practices in Online Teaching and Learning (see Appendix D), or another approved or accredited program, or

- be able to demonstrate equivalent experience such as prior success at teaching online courses through the observation of a deployed course site, portfolio, or experience as deemed appropriate by the DE Committee and Instructional Administration.

The faculty member must then seek approval from the relevant division Dean and department chair (or division representative, designated discipline expert, and/or DE Committee member) to teach an online course.

Teaching and learning

In order to develop quality Distance Education courses, the following standards will be applied.

1. All Distance Education courses will follow the approved course outline of record.
2. Distance education students will be given information about course requirements, expectations regarding course work standards, equipment needs, and techniques for succeeding in a distance education environment at least five days in advance of the start of the course. Technical training and support will be available throughout the course via the Blackboard portal, RC Online page, and within individual courses (syllabi, etc.).
3. Courses will provide ample written instructions for every task the student has to perform: taking tests or quizzes, posting contributions to the on-line discussion, downloading files/software, finding supplementary reading, returning to the website, etc.
4. Students will be required to be active learners in presenting, organizing, applying, and constructing information, ideas, and knowledge. They are prepared and expected to participate in collaborative activities throughout the length of their course of study.
5. All course objectives, Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), and requirements will be presented clearly in each course.
6. Courses will provide opportunities for regular and ongoing interaction between teacher and students, among students, and between students and the learning environment (Regular Effective Contact). Students are held accountable for the communication activities within courses. Instructors will initiate contact with all students. (See the Reedley College Regular Effective Contact Policy, Appendix A.)
7. All student assignments and their due dates, as well as tests and test dates, will be explained and posted at the beginning of the course, or in a way to give reasonable preparation time for the student. A clear announcement on how often updated grades will be posted will be prominently shown in the syllabus.
8. Any special testing (i.e., proctoring) and laboratory situations and/or arrangements will be clearly described to the student in the syllabus and announcements area of the course. Fully online courses do not require the students to come to a Reedley College site for any reason. Hybrid courses must inform students of specific dates and times when on-campus meetings are required through the syllabus, WebAdvisor, and the printed Schedule of Courses.
9. Course design will address multiple learning styles of students.
10. Student assessment and evaluation methods will be relevant to the activities, reading assignments, and other learning materials presented in the course.
11. Instructor feedback to student assignments and questions will be constructive and provided in a timely manner. Instructors will clearly define feedback response time in the course syllabus.
12. Instructors will keep back-up copies of their digital grade books.

13. The course documents or a similarly defined course area will describe the functions of the course website to the student (e.g., how to post assignments, communicate with the instructor, etc.).
14. The instructor will make frequent announcements regarding the progress and processing of the course. **(See the Regular Effective Contact Policy, Appendix B)**
15. A policy regarding deadlines in the case of technical difficulties will be communicated in the syllabus or overview of the course.
16. Faculty will post cheating and plagiarism policies in the online syllabus.
17. Course Media and Materials Standards will be posted in the syllabus.
18. All external links and internal functionality of Distance Education courses will be available and operational when the class starts.
19. The course content will be kept current term by term and will open on the date listed for the start of the semester and remain open at least until the closing date of the course as listed in the schedule.
20. Technology will be appropriate to the course pedagogy.
21. The course syllabus will adhere to the checklist available in the Reedley College Faculty Handbook; the course contents will adhere to the course outline of record.

Accessibility and security

1. Distance Education courses will provide accessibility for those users employing screen readers. Images and links contained in the course website must show alternate text upon cursor contact. Presentations employing audio files must be captioned (captioning services are available through the DECT grant).
2. Distance Education students have access to sufficient library resources that may include a “virtual library” accessible through the Web.
3. Academic counseling and advising will be available to distance learning students at the same level as it is for students in on-campus environments. **(See Action Item #6.)**
4. Privacy and Protection Standards from FERPA are followed, particularly when directing students to resources that are outside of the college controlled CMS.
5. Procedures are in place to help ensure security of student work.
6. Students receive clear instructions to save and retain copies of all work submitted electronically.
7. Instructors back-up all grade book data.

Program review

1. An approved evaluation instrument is provided within the course to ensure student feedback on the organization and content of the course and the instructor performance. **(See Action Item #3.)**
2. Reviews of student outcomes include assessment of student products and exams, as well as student evaluations of the course.
3. Data on enrollment, costs, and successful/innovative uses of technology are used when reviewing program effectiveness.

4. Intended learning outcomes are reviewed regularly to ensure clarity, utility, and appropriateness.
5. Courses meet or exceed Reedley College's academic standards.
6. Courses are reviewed on a regular basis and revisions documented. Instructional materials are reviewed periodically to ensure they continue to meet program standards. Course evaluation includes technical design, curriculum alignment, rigor, depth, breadth, student performance, and student participation and interaction.
7. Peer Evaluation of the Instructor will be accomplished via approved methods as agreed to by the Academic Senate, the bargaining unit (CFT Local #1533), and District. (See Appendix C for RC Faculty Online Observation Form.)
8. Distance Education program review exists as part of the Office of Instruction.
9. Program review for courses takes place in the individual discipline areas as do creation and maintenance of Student Learning Outcomes.

Student support

1. All students will have 24/7 access to the Blackboard Course Management System.
2. Distance Education students will have the same access to both academic and student services resources as traditional students. **(See Action Item #6.)**
3. All courses have Blackboard course shells that are populated at the time of enrollment through the Datatel system.
4. Assistance for students who need help with Blackboard is provided by a 24/7 help desk support is also provided as outsourced to the Blackboard Helpdesk.
5. The RC Online page from the main college web site, and the Blackboard portal, have assistance opportunities and information for students about accessing Blackboard, course schedules, orientations, help desk and all other virtual support services. **(See Action Item #4.)**
6. Supplemental Instruction opportunities are available to distance education students.
7. Readiness information for students wanting to become Distance Education students will be available in the form of information and readiness tests for self-evaluation, available at the RC Online page. **(See Action Item #5.)**
8. Preparedness opportunities will be available for students wanting to become DE students via a not-for-credit online orientation course in Blackboard. **(See Action Item #5.)**

Department or discipline specific

1. The course adheres to the integrated Course Outline of Record and is the virtual equivalent to the traditional course.
2. The course is offered with rigor, depth, and breadth consistent with its face-to-face counterpart.
3. It is the responsibility of the discipline/department to maintain the quality of delivery of all classes offered regardless of modality.
4. Student learning meets the standards set within the discipline, especially within sequenced and/or transfer courses.

5. Distance Education courses incorporate department's official course SLOs into the course design.
6. Faculty teaching in Distance Education modalities will have met minimum qualifications for the discipline, have been approved by department discipline experts, and have met the Reedley College Readiness Standards for DE Faculty.

Other faculty-related items

General Recommendations:

This plan allows faculty members to grow into distance education at their own pace and comfort level. The administration has assured the Senate and the bargaining unit that no faculty member will be penalized for not offering distance education courses or forced to convert courses to the online environment. One priority of the college will be to look for candidates for new faculty hires who are willing and/or able to incorporate technology resources into their teaching and learning. Current faculty members are given the opportunity to offer courses at a distance based on the need as appropriate to the discipline and as identified earlier in this plan.

In accordance with Title 5 guidelines, which designate online and partially online courses as equivalent in credit status with regular courses, the Administration and Faculty of Reedley College, consider distance education courses the same in content and credit as regular courses. It is to be determined through bargaining what percentage of the instructor's load can be conducted in distance education mode.

Classroom Visitation Protocol for Online Courses:

Background: It is common practice for administrators to visit face-to-face classes occasionally to offer support to instructors as well as to observe students in class settings and to stay connected to the actual practice of instruction. Instructional administrators also have the responsibility to ensure that classes are meeting as posted in the schedule of classes and that the instructor is providing the instruction agreed upon as contracted. When an administrator visits a face-to-face class in session, the instructor, if possible, has been notified ahead of time, is present in the room, and aware of the visitation. It is appropriate to assume that the same situation should exist during visitations in the virtual classroom. Because it is possible for administrators to observe an online course without the instructor's knowledge, the following protocol will be followed by Reedley College instructional administrators.

Visitation of online courses by administrators may occur for the purposes listed below. The course instructor must be notified via email and/or phone prior to the visitation.

Visitation of online courses may occur by the division dean and/or the department chair:

1. To ensure that the course is appropriately available to students in the course management system.

2. To ensure that regular effective contact is taking place according to the established Reedley College Regular Effective Contact Policy (see attached.) and compliance with Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act (accessibility for disabled students) and the Higher Education Act.
3. In response to a request from the instructor in the course. (questionable student conduct, technical problems, course development review, and recommendation, etc.).
4. In response to student complaints about the instructor, the course, or the course management system infrastructure.

This visitation does not constitute a formal evaluation; however, a formal evaluation may be planned because of the visit. An informal email summary of the visitation will be forwarded to the instructor upon the conclusion of the visitation.

Reedley College Distance Education Program Goals

Reedley College's commitment to maintaining a viable and quality Distance Education program is a logical extension of those goals articulated in the Strategic Plan for State Center Community College District and in the Reedley College 2013-2017 Strategic Plan. These goals and consequent action items will be reviewed and examined as part of the Distance Education Committee's ongoing review of the program and formal analysis of achievement or deficiency will be accomplished as part of the 2018 review of this plan.

Expanding service:

1. Develop greater breadth of Distance Education course offerings, with special attention to AA/AS degree requirements and CSU/UC General Education requirements. (RC Strategic Plan: Directions 2.1, 3.1, and 3.2)
2. Create a clearer, more accessible pathway for online matriculation. (RC SP 2.2)
3. Increase student retention and success rates of distance education courses for parity with face-to-face classes. (RC SP 1.3, 1.4, and 2.3)

Ensuring Integrity

1. Improve faculty participation in on-site Distance Education workshops and/or off-site professional development programs such as those offered by @ONE. (RC SP 3.3)
2. Review requirements for student authentication in fully online classes. (RC SP 2.4)
3. Ensure that all classes (F2F and DE) employing online presentations and materials are accessible and ADA compliant. (RC SP 2.3 and 2.4)

Action Items

1. Institute an all-day Introduction to Online Teaching class as a Flex Day option (beginning fall 2014), to be used as partial fulfillment for college-certification in distance education. (See Appendix D.)
2. Institute regular bi-weekly "topics" workshops in pedagogy, course design, and/or technology adapted for pedagogical needs. (Reinstituted spring 2014)

3. Develop a Distance Education course evaluation form for use within the course for Distance Education program review purposes. (In use by fall 2014)
4. Create and publish a revised RC Online (MC/OC online) page on the campus websites, clearly listing the pathways for students. (In use by fall 2014)
5. Create and implement a Reedley College Student Orientation for Distance Education including a readiness assessment for the RC Online page and a non-credit Student Orientation for Distance Education class. (Pilot in use by fall 2014)
6. Develop online Student Services components (including counseling, financial aid, available tutorial options—general, math, and writing—and library), linked to the RC Online page. (Pilot in use by fall 2014)
7. Develop a 24/7 online tutorial option in compliance with Standard II.C of the Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education (A Publication of ACCJC).
8. Conduct a comprehensive audit of Reedley College Distance Education courses in conjunction with requirements for a degree and/or general education patterns for transfer. (Complete by end of spring 2014)
9. Work with department chairs and discipline experts to fill the gaps in degree/GE patterns. (Ongoing)
10. Analyze the instructional quality between face-to-face and online courses and make recommendations to faculty and departments. (Ongoing)
11. Ensure ADA Section 508 compliance for all Reedley College DE courses through workshops and spot review of courses. (Ongoing)
12. Develop increased security and safe test taking for online classes including appropriate methods for student authentication, single sign-on with periodic password-reset, and specific sites and protocols for proctoring. (Revision available for fall 2014)
13. Forward recommendations regarding the structure and oversight of the Reedley College Distance Education program to the Reedley College Council by the end of spring 2014.

RC/NC DISTANCE EDUCATION GUIDELINES

Approved by the RC/NC Distance Education Committee and forwarded to the RC Academic Senate

May 11, 2009

Further revised on September 17, 2009 in consultation with FCC DE Committee Chair, Paula Demanett

A. Definition:

1. Distance education means instruction and student services in which the instructor, student support services, and students are separated and interact through the assistance of communication technology.
2. Distance education may include but is not limited to Internet, two-way interactive TV, telecourses, and satellite.

B. Purpose:

1. Distance education is used to provide students with alternative access to educational opportunities.
2. Distance education may be used but is not limited to,
 - reaching students for whom attendance at a regular District site is less suitable;
 - providing specialty courses for students at one or more sites, where there is not a sufficient pool of students to warrant traditional classroom instruction;
 - recruiting and supporting students who would not otherwise have initial access to the District;
 - serving the community and business institutions by providing work-site courses for external organizations requiring special training.

C. Quality:

1. The same standards of course quality shall be applied to distance education as are applied to traditional classroom courses.
2. The same availability of student support service quality shall be applied to distance education as are applied to traditional student support services.
3. Regular curriculum review of a distance education course shall occur every five years as per program review and with the same frequency and scope as that of traditional face-to-face courses.
4. Regular evaluations of distance education courses and instructors shall include student, faculty, and administrative evaluations following faculty contract guidelines. The evaluation will consider factors unique to the distance education delivery system.
5. The discipline faculty shall decide what DL course format is best to ensure quality of the course. If students in a DL course are consistently performing at a significantly lower level (retention/success) than the corresponding face-to-face course, the discipline shall consider changing the DL course format or discontinuing the DL offering of the course.
6. Assessments in a course offered through distance education shall abide by the Academic Senate Resolution on Internet Plagiarism.
7. A course taught through distance education shall authenticate all identities of the students participating in the course.
8. Courses taught by distance education shall be in compliance with accessibility requirements as per the ADA.

D. Courses:

1. Courses taught through distance education shall be selected by discipline faculty within the department based on the appropriateness of a particular course for that delivery system.
2. Courses taught through distance education shall be developed and designed and/or adapted by discipline experts within the department in which those courses reside.
3. All courses offered through distance education shall be subject to curriculum committee approval and ECPC review. If a substantial change to the approved distance education format is proposed, the course must be resubmitted to the curriculum committee for approval.
4. Departments shall strive to offer as many of their courses through distance education where the quality can be maintained in order to expand access to students.
5. Preference for multiple offerings of a course currently offered through distance education shall occur only when the course exhibits comparative success and retention rates to the face to face sections.

E. Instruction:

1. Instructors shall be selected by the procedures used to determine all instructional assignments as per contract. (Title V)
2. Instructors shall have appropriate training in the techniques of effective distance education instruction before teaching a distance education class. Members of the department and/or discipline shall determine the appropriateness of the training and preparedness of the instructor.
3. For any course delivered through distance education, instruction shall include regular and effective personal contact between instructor and students through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact hours, Web- based communications, or other person-to-person activities as described in the RC Distance Education Plan (related to Title V 55376).

F. Workload/Class Size

1. Any additional compensation and/or load factor and/or released time provided for the additional time required for a distance education course assignment shall be determined by contract.
2. The determination of the number of students assigned to a distance education course section shall be guided by what class size best contributes to educational quality and reasonable faculty workload, that determination to be made by the discipline experts within the department in which the course resides in consultation with the administration.

G. Institutional Support

1. Technical support will be provided in a timely, effective manner for all distance education courses to free instructors to teach most effectively.
2. Enrolled students shall have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their learning and assess their progress.
3. Instructors of distance education courses shall be encouraged to attend distance education workshops and seminars and to visit other districts with distance education

programs, with expenses reimbursed through staff development funds.

H. Intellectual Property Rights

See Section XIX, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS, Page 70, of the "Agreement for Fiscal Years 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 Between State Center Community College District and State Center Federation of Teachers, Local 1533, CFT/AFT, AFL-CIO."

I. Periodic Review

1. A review of the Distance Education Guidelines and of the distance learning program in general shall be conducted by the campus committees annually, or semi-annually if warranted. (See Title 5, Section 55317).
2. In reviewing and evaluating the guidelines and program, the Distance Education Committee shall seek input from faculty at large, faculty teaching distance education courses, students taking distance education courses, administrators, department chairs, curriculum committees, academic senates, and the SCFT.

Reedley College Regular Effective Contact Policy

Regulations:

Title 5 and the Distance Education Guidelines for the California Community Colleges state:

55202. Course Quality Standards.

The same standards of course quality shall be applied to any portion of a course conducted through distance education as are applied to traditional classroom courses, 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.

NOTE: Authority cited: Section 66700 and 70901, Education Code.

References: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code.

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 distance education courses. It discusses course quality standards for distance education and combines language formerly found in sections 55207 and 55209 which it replaces. Language is added to clarify that normal course quality standards apply to any portion of a course conducted through distance education.

55204. Instructor Contact.

In addition to the requirements of section 55202 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, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, 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.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code.

Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code.

Guideline for Section 55204

This section defines what contact must be maintained between instructor and student. It is virtually identical to section 55211, which it replaces, except that language has been added to clarify that rules related to conduct of distance education and effective instructor contact apply to any portion of a course conducted through distance education.

Subdivision (a) stresses the responsibility of the instructor in a DE course to initiate regular contact with enrolled students to verify their participation and performance status. The use of the term “regular effective contact” in this context suggests that students should have frequent opportunities to ask questions and receive answers from the instructor of record.

The last published Distance Education Guidelines, March 2004, issued by the Chancellor’s Office pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors, as referenced in subdivision (b), establishes the principle that for DE courses there are a number of acceptable interactions between instructor and student, not all of which may require in-person contact. Thus, districts and/or colleges will need to define “effective contact” including how often, and in what manner instructor-student interaction is achieved. It is important to document regular effective contact and how it is achieved. Since regular effective contact was declared an academic and professional matter, this documentation must include demonstration of collegial consultation with the academic senate, for example through its delegation to the local curriculum committee. A natural place for this to occur is during the separate course approval process (see section 55206) as well as during faculty evaluations, student surveys, and program review. Documentation should consist of the inclusion of information in applicable outlines of record on the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each DE course/section or session. Local policies should establish and monitor minimum standards of regular effective contact.

Background:

In hybrid or fully online courses, ensuring Regular Effective Instructor/Student Contact guarantees that the student receives the benefit of the instructor’s presence in the learning environment both as a provider of instructional information and as a facilitator of student learning. In a face-to-face course the instructor is present at each class meeting and interacts via all class announcements, lectures, activities and discussions that take a variety of forms. For example, discussions can be held as part of a lecture format, group work scenarios, or content review sessions. The instructor also serves as a content advisor when he or she answers questions both as they come up in class and as they arise in individual situations. These types of questions are dealt with via the telephone, email, social media, or face-to-face office visits.

Title 5 regulations do not make a distinction between regular and distance education courses beyond the need to have a separate curriculum approval process and the need to ensure regular effective contact. Therefore, it is assumed that those qualities of regular effective contact described above for the face-to-face environment, should also be applied to the distance education situation. The DE Guidelines require colleges to develop a policy regarding regular effective contact that addresses “the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each DE course/section or session”.

Reedley College Policy:

All DE courses at Reedley College, whether hybrid or fully online will include regular effective contact as described below:

- Initiated interaction: Instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities in the course. Providing students with an open-ended forum for questions about course assignments, although appropriate, does not constitute the entirety of effective instructor initiated interaction.
- Frequency: Distance Education courses are considered the “virtual equivalent” to face-to-face courses. Therefore, the frequency of contact between instructor and students will be at least the same as would be established in a regular, face-to-face course. At the very least, the number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face-to-face students, will also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with students in the DE format. Contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure that regular contact is maintained, given the nature of asynchronous instructional methodologies, over the course of a week and should occur as often as is appropriate for the course and comparable to face-to-face course offerings of the same class.
- Establishing expectations and managing unexpected instructor absence: A policy describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback, will be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents that are made available for students when the course officially opens each semester. If the instructor must be out of contact briefly for an unexpected reason (such as illness or a family emergency that takes the instructor offline), notification to students will be made in the announcements area of the course and/or a group e-mail that includes when the students can expect regular effective contact to resume. If the offline time results in a lengthy absence (i.e. more than three or four days) a substitute instructor should be sought who can assist students while the instructor is unavailable. The Instructor should contact her/his department chair or dean immediately to work on appropriate faculty substitution

Type of Contact:

Regarding the type of contact that will exist in all Reedley College Distance Education courses, instructors will, at a minimum, use the following resources to initiate contact with students:

- General email
- Weekly announcements in the Course Management System
- Threaded discussion forums (or other forms of student-instructor interactions, such as blog posts, journal entries, and/or wiki activities) with appropriate instructor participation. (“Questions for the instructor” forums are good but should be used in conjunction with other forums and interactive tools within the course management system.)
- Timely feedback for student work.
- Instructor prepared e-lectures or introductions in the form of e-lectures to any publisher created materials (written, recorded, broadcast, etc.) that, combined with other course materials, creates the “virtual equivalent” of the face-to-face class.

Suggestions:

- Instructors should also choose to use other forms of communication, as mentioned in section 55204 of Title 5. (“...through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions,

supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities.”) and/or Blackboard Collaborate, video conference (Skype, Google Hangouts), or other synchronous technologies may also be included.

- It is suggested that Instructors should have a threaded discussion that is set aside for general questions about the course and may wish to have weekly or other regularly scheduled question-and-answer sessions available to students, as well as regular interactive activities directly related to the content of the course.

Faculty Online Observation

Reedley College
State Center Community College District

Faculty Name:	Date:
Course:	Location::
Topic:	Evaluator:

Category	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Not Observed	Not Applicable	Comments
PLANNING					
Online class site and content presented in an organized manner and is user-friendly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Curriculum logically progresses from one concept to the next.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES					
Announcements or other tools are used to communicate with the class regularly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Use of vocabulary is appropriate to content and class level.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Class materials are communicated in an effective and understandable manner.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
A class forum, threaded discussion or other means (IM chat, Skype, journals, blogs) is provided for students to communicate in "class discussions" or with instructor on a regular basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Displays flexibility and respect for the ideas of others in discussion boards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Skillfully facilitates student participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
PRESENTATION					
Demonstrates current knowledge of the subject.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Uses examples to clarify and illustrate concepts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Demonstrates through online interactions enthusiasm for and interest in the subject matter.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Employs a variety of materials and techniques appropriate to varying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

abilities and backgrounds.					
Provides alternatives (ie: illustrations, animations, audio, video, or PowerPoint presentations) for students who do not learn well through text-only instructional models.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
STUDENT RELATIONS					
Creates a feeling of genuine interest in student progress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Summary Statement: Please address the following:

1. What specific strengths did you identify in this faculty?

2. Please list any specific changes recommended to strengthen this faculty's effectiveness.

3. List any other suggestions for improvement.

4. Other comments or suggestions.

Evaluator's Signature: _____

The signature below indicates this observation has been discussed with me but does not constitute consent or agreement. I understand I may prepare a narrative statement to be attached to this document.

Faculty Member's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Proposed Reedley College Readiness Standards for DE faculty

In order to ensure quality, campus certification for faculty teaching in a distance education format (either fully online or hybrid) must be achieved through the following means:

I. Initial Training

1. Prior verified distance education teaching experience. Dean, department chair, or discipline expert and DE Coordinator or DE Committee member should have reviewed a CV indicating the extent of that experience, conducted an interview regarding the instructor's preparedness, as well as having access and opportunity to review at least one course site;
or
2. Verified satisfactory completion and/or certification from a recognized distance education training program (e.g. @ONE Online Teaching Certification Program);
or
3. Attendance and completion of Reedley College's Effective Practices for Online Teaching and Learning (see below).

II. Continuing Education

1. In the first semester of teaching a distance education course for Reedley College, the DE instructor will attend at least one mid-semester workshop offered (either on-ground at one of the college sites or virtually).
2. During subsequent semesters, Reedley College instructors will attend at least one mid-semester workshop every two semesters (instructors who provide verification of their enrollment in @ONE course work leading to Online Teaching Certification are exempt from this requirement).
3. Attendance at mid-semester workshops will be verified by the DE Coordinator and forwarded to the Office of Instruction. Part-time instructors attending required mid-semester workshops will be compensated.

III. Review of Course Site Design

Prior to the first day of instruction, a new distance education instructor will make his/her developed course site available for review by the appropriate dean, department chair, or discipline expert and the DE Coordinator or a member of the DE Committee. Those designated to review the course site will be available for consultation with the new DE instructor from the date of hire and throughout the course of the semester in which the course is taught. In the event of a late hire or substitution, the instructor should be certified by one of the means above and the course site made available for review within a week of the hiring.

Effective Practices for Online Teaching and Learning (flex day course)

This specially targeted course in Distance Education pedagogy will be conducted during one eight-hour flex day activity at the beginning of each semester. It satisfies the campus initial training requirement for teaching online in lieu of verified previous online teaching experience or other forms of certification (e.g. @ONE). This will not satisfy the new statewide requirements that are currently being devised through the Online Education Initiative, and instructors are encouraged to seek certification through @ONE as part of their ongoing professional development. This course will be designed to incorporate pedagogical best practices as well as practical considerations regarding the use of the LMS (Blackboard) and peripheral applications (e.g. MS Office, HTML editors, Adobe Acrobat, Camtasia Studio/Relay, etc.).

1. Introduction to teaching in an online environment: what does it mean to teach at a distance?
2. Designing the most effective course: basing course design on objectives and student learning outcomes
3. Creating meaningful assessments
4. Working the modalities: text, image, audio, video for content presentation
5. Regular and effective contact: communicating by any means possible
6. Accessibility issues: considering our audience