

Distance Education - Ensuring Regular and Substantive Interaction - FAQs

Background

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

Distance education courses of all varieties (Online, OnlineLIVE, Hybrid, HyFlex) include asynchronous components that allow for the following at the start of the term:

- Initiate contact with students by instructors
- Provide opportunities for regular and substantive interaction
- Enable students to participate in academically related activities

FAQs

1. *What does regular and substantive interaction mean?*

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

2. *Who must engage in regular and substantive interaction?*

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

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

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

4. *How does distance education differ from correspondence education?*

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

Resources

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