

## ACD014. Distance Learning

**Procedure Category:** Academic/Research

**Subject:** Distance Learning

**Procedure Owner:** Associate Vice President for Distance Learning & Site Management

**Related Procedures:** Schedule, Calendar, Observations

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### I. Scope

This procedure applies to all formal educational processes in which a percentage of the instruction (or interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance delivered course may employ interaction via electronic communication, correspondence, or equivalent mechanisms, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other.

### II. Procedure Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for the design, development, implementation, instruction, and evaluation of distance learning programs and courses offered for academic credit at Cowley College. These policies and procedures, in conjunction with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) and the Kansas Board of Regents, are intended to help individuals involved in distance learning to be successful and to ensure quality of instruction.

### III. Definitions

*Instructors* - For the purposes of this document, this refers to both full time faculty and part time or adjunct instructors.

*Online Course* -An online course provides all instruction in an asynchronous manner and has limited or no regular on-campus schedule. Synchronous virtual conferencing may be used when appropriate. For the purposes of HLC accreditation, online courses must support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously.

*Hybrid (Blended) Course* - A hybrid course provides a minimum of 25%, but not more than 99%, of the instruction (course material, discussion, and evaluation) online through the learning management system.

*Synchronous Learning* - is a teaching modality in which classrooms are equipped with cameras, microphones, and video monitors. Multiple classrooms are networked together so the instructor and students located in one classroom can interact with students in the remote locations.

*Learning Management System (LMS)* - A learning management system is a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, and delivery of educational courses, training programs, or learning and development programs.

#### **IV. Procedure**

##### **A. Course Offerings**

###### **1. Academic Calendar**

Distance learning courses are offered according to the regular semester schedule that is utilized by face-to-face courses. Each course is listed in the semester schedule. Individual course syllabi indicate significant dates, exam schedules, etc. Syllabi are created by instructors within their course shell and kept on file by the Office of Academic Affairs.

###### **2. Course Size**

Class size for distance courses will be determined through a process that includes recommendations of instructors and Department Chairs with final decision by the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Courses must maintain sufficient enrollment to be taught and are subject to the course cancellation procedure, regardless of instructional format.

##### **B. Course Integrity**

Courses at Cowley College ensure the same academic standards and rigor by following the same academic processes regardless of method of instructional delivery.

##### **C. Students**

All students taking distance learning courses for credit or non-credit must first be admitted to Cowley College. Students in degree or certificate programs must meet the same entrance and completion requirements as face-to-face students in those programs.

1. Identification of Students -The student who registers for an online course must be the same individual who completes the coursework and receives the course credit; this is verified through the use of a secure login and password. Each student is issued a unique user ID (created by the student information system), which also provides authenticated access to other systems (student email, learning management system, student information system, etc.) A secure login and password is required to access the student's account, including the course homepage.

##### **D. Instructor Training**

1. All instructors teaching online or hybrid/blended courses for the first time are required to attend training prior to teaching their first session of that class in the accepted LMS (and version) used by Cowley College.

2. All instructors teaching online or hybrid/blended courses must also complete training over the QM Rubric within their first semester of teaching at Cowley College.

E. Accessibility

A number of accessibility issues require accommodation in the design and implementation of distance learning courses for special needs students. Resources are available from the office of Disability Services and the Cowley Distance Learning team to assist instructors with appropriate and accessible design strategies. Online and Hybrid/Blended courses are expected to earn an overall Ally score of 85% or better.

F. Course Development

Distance learning courses will require approval from both the relevant Department Chair and the Office of Academic Affairs before beginning content development on a new course or revised course.

G. Course Structure

Each online or hybrid/blended course should follow the standardized course shell layout and QM Rubric guidelines. Each online or hybrid/blended course should utilize the accessible Salsa Syllabus template.

H. Course Delivery

1. All online and hybrid courses must be completed with essential course information and the first week/unit/module content ten days prior to the first scheduled day of class.
2. All online and hybrid courses will be available by 12:01 AM on the first scheduled day of class, unless otherwise designated by the instructor.

I. Course Observations

1. Each instructor is evaluated according to the observation schedule (every semester for 3 yrs./every yr. for 3yrs/once every 3 yrs.) using the Course Observation form.
2. Results of the observation are shared with the instructor by the observer, and if necessary, plans for improvement are discussed with the VP of Academic Affairs or designee with the expectation that the feedback will be assimilated into current and future course instruction and development.

J. Student Surveys

1. Instructors will be notified via email when the surveys have been deployed and when results are available. Survey results are anonymous.
2. Student Surveys will be reviewed in a timely manner by the correlating Department Chair and the VP of Academic Affairs and/or designee(s).
3. The evaluation results are used for continuous program improvement.

K. Student Resources

1. Students enrolled in distance learning courses have the same resources available to them as students in face to face courses.

- Library
- Tutor.com
- Bookstore
- Help desk/Technical Support
- Online Student Orientation
- Academic Support Services
- Support Services
- Counseling services
- Disability services
- Writing Cener

L. Student Complaints

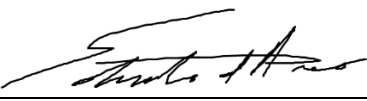
Students who have complaints about academic issues should follow the established chain of command based on the [SDT008 Complaint Process for Online Students Policy](#) found in the student handbook and first attempt to contact their instructor. Should the issue not be resolved, they can then contact the Vice President of Academic Affairs who will direct the student to the appropriate Department Chair if needed. For content delivery and technical issues, the students should contact Support Services through the Helpdesk at 1-866-940-0063.

**V. Effective Date(s)**

This procedure first became effective 5/5/2015.

This procedure was reviewed 8/12/2020.

**VI. Signature and Title**

This procedure is implemented by: 

Title: Associate Vice President for Distance Learning and Site Management