



ANTELOPE VALLEY COLLEGE

Distance Education Faculty Handbook

Table of Contents

Definitions	2
AVC DETC Mission Statement	3
Technical Support and Training	3
Syllabus/Start-Up Requirements	4
Orientation and Student Readiness	4
Distance Education Attendance Policy	5
Census Rosters	5
Drop Policy	6
Regular Effective Contact	6
Office Hours	7
Evaluation Process	8
End of Semester	9
Appendix 1	10

Definition of Distance Education

Title 5, Section 55000 defines Distance Education as a means of instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology. Antelope Valley College currently offers Distance Education courses.

AVC Definitions

Currently there are three categories of DE courses for AVC used by the Academic Policies & Procedures committee of the Academic Senate. These are the categories and their definitions (AP&P Standards & Practices Handbook):

Online: a course designed for all instruction to take place online with no requirement for students to meet on campus at any time.

Hybrid: a course designed for all instruction to take place online. Students will be required to meet on campus for orientations, exams or other non-instructional activities.

Blended: a course designed for instruction to take place both online and in the classroom. Students will be required to engage in both formats concurrently (Approved Spring 2016, AP&P) .

AVC DETC Mission Statement

The Distance Education and Technology Committee is charged with developing guidelines for the delivery of distance education that will maximize student opportunities for success. The committee makes recommendations to the Academic Senate on issues related to distance education, examines distance education practices for the purpose of developing best practice guidelines, and acts as a resource for technical matters related to academic computing.

The Distance Education and Technology Committee's mission is two-fold: first, to assist in the planning and implementation of the Technology Mediated Instruction (TMI) used by instructors and staff in the preparation of educational materials; and second, to provide guidance and recommendation in the pedagogical development and technology in both traditional and distance education.

- Reviews new and revised Distance Education courses as part of the AP&P course approval process
- Address problems with academic computing, including the Course Management System (LMS)
- Recommends the LMS for the College
- Works closely with the Academic Senate and IT Committee

Technical Support and Training

In an effort to maintain a high standard of quality both in technology and Distance Education pedagogy, all faculty are recommended to participate in the following professional development activities prior to teaching a Distance Education course at AVC

- Instructors teaching Distance Education Courses, should have completed training using the current (LMS), which currently is Blackboard. This is offered through the campus technical trainer.
- Training opportunities are offered throughout the year as a part of Faculty Professional Development
- Technical support is limited to AVCCD owned equipment, software or contracted services
- All Distance Education online/hybrid courses must be delivered using the course management system adopted by the College (as per Article XVII, Section 6.0 of the faculty contract).

Weekend Technical Support

There is no AVC technical support for faculty on the weekends, holidays, or days in which the AVC campus is closed. The same is true for student technical support. Therefore, faculty should schedule deadlines for major student submissions in the LMS (i.e. exams, research papers) for days and times that fall within the business day, when there will be technical support from AVC. Currently our LMS does provide phone support 24 hours a day 7 days a week, it is recommended that faculty provide that information to their students.

Syllabus/Start-up Requirements

All faculty members must provide students with a course syllabus specific to the course. AP&P has developed the Syllabus Content Checklist which includes instructor contact information, course description, course objectives, course learning outcomes, assigned texts and materials, grading policy, expectations for classroom behavior, plagiarism policy and penalties, disability statement, and a schedule of topics, reading, activities, and assignments. [Link to Guidelines and Required information for class Syllabus P. 115](#)

The syllabus is a contract with the students in the class. A clear and detailed syllabus will lead to fewer misunderstandings. Instructors often include detailed descriptions of assignments and rubrics for evaluation. Faculty are strongly encouraged to have the syllabus available to their students through the LMS.

Orientation and Student Readiness

Provide the students with advanced information about course requirements, expectations regarding course work standards, equipment needs, and techniques for succeeding in the distance learning environment, as well as technical training and support through the LMS (syllabi etc.) It is also recommended to provide a guide or 1st assignment that will prepare the student for the skills necessary to succeed in a distance learning class. Here is a link that can help with student readiness for Distance Education [Student Readiness](#).

- Students need to understand how to access the LMS through the college administered authentication process (student ID related to password protection).
- Password updates take place on a regular basis via password aging policy
- Students check-in to a Distance Education class via the AVC Online attendance policy. If a student does not check-in to the course, the faculty member may drop them and add additional students.
- Instructors are encouraged to clearly define plagiarism and cheating in their course.

Distance Education Attendance Policy

Online Attendance Policy - Online students are subject to the same attendance policy as are on-ground students. Refer to the Attendance Policy in the current catalog. Student attendance in online courses is defined as “active participation” in the course, as described in the instructor’s course syllabus. Active participation is typically described as submitting an assignment (such as an exam, exercise, or project element), participating in discussion forums, or by engagement in other academic events that indicate an online presence within a specified time frame. Online courses at minimum will have weekly mechanisms that will determine a student’s active participation. Instructors will identify specific activities that must be completed during the first week of the course. A student who fails to complete the specific activities by the posted due date will be dropped as a NO SHOW unless the student has made prior arrangements with the instructor. Student participation will be monitored throughout the course by the instructor. Students who fail to maintain active participation in the online course, as defined in the course syllabus, may be dropped from the course.

Census Rosters

Census Rosters are mandatory for Distance Education classes just as they are in face to face classes . All faculty members are required to submit census rosters prior to census due date. The education code mandates completion of census rosters to provide an accurate count of students. The college submits census data to the Chancellor’s Office to determine state funding for the district. Any student on a roster who has never attended an instructor’s class on-campus or signed into your online class **MUST** be dropped before the Census date as mandated by Title 5. The date of census may vary according to the start date and length of each section.

Drop Policy

There is a federal requirement concerning the “last day of attendance” in online classes that we must follow. We can no longer use the course statistics to determine when a student has stopped participating in class. Instead, we have to document when the student stopped being engaged in the work of the class (i.e. submitting assignments, posting to discussion forums, etc.). If you have a student who stops actively participating, but is logging into your class, you should try to contact them to get them to participate. In this communication, remind them of the attendance policy that states they must stay active in the course work or will be dropped from the course. This has been precipitated by a number of schools having to pay back considerable amounts of money to the government as a result of student financial aid fraud. It is always good to refer to the online attendance policy that is in the current AVC Catalog.

Regular Effective Contact

Faculty presence is an important factor in the success of online courses. Online instructors must meet the requirements for regular effective contact. Student retention and success rates are improved when there is active participation in the class that fosters a sense of community. Faculty should be prepared to encourage student interaction, build opportunities for learner-learner contact, and give response and feedback in a timely manner (Appendix 1 - AVC Regular and Effective Contact Policy).

Regular Effective Contact constitutes methods and frequency of interaction between instructor and students when separated by distance and can be accomplished in a number of ways (From the 2015-2016 AP&P Academic Policies & Procedures p. 96):

- Announcements: a communication tool often found in course management systems.
- Blogs: a shared online journal where people can post entries about their experiences and observations, often with hyperlinks provided by the writer.
- Chatrooms: an electronic space where multiple users communicate with each other synchronously.
- Discussion Boards: electronic threaded discussions allowing multiple participants follow the flow of discussion; also called discussion forums.
- Electronic Bulletin Boards: software that allows users to leave messages and access information of general interest.
- E-mail: electronic mail delivered over a network.
- E-mail Lists: e-mail addresses that can be easily grouped for mailing to multiple participants.
- FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions): a collection of the most often asked questions and answers.

- Multimedia: a mixture of graphics, motion, sound, and text.
- Face-to-Face: required meetings with students on campus for traditional classroom activities or assignments/tests.
- Wiki: A collaborative website whose content can be edited by anyone who has access to it.

Office Hours

All full time faculty teaching Distance Education classes are required to maintain regular on campus office hours and are to participate in campus governance responsibilities.

- Unit members 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. Virtual office hours may be held in proportion to the professor's distance learning load so long as the proportionate office hour is conducted in a synchronous mode and clearly communicated in the syllabus.
- "Regular effective contact," as defined and identified in the Distance Education Form Question 5A "Regular Effective Contact" from AP&P, between instructor and students includes group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, email or other activities. Distance learning faculty shall use professional discretion in selecting the appropriate method(s) and shall specify those method(s) in the course description including the response time for asynchronous communication.

Evaluation for Online Courses

The evaluation process for evaluating online courses is the same as face to face classes. The school does not differentiate from Distance Education Classes and face to face.

Faculty teaching online courses or performing other faculty job duties online shall provide an orientation to the evaluators if necessary on how to access the site(s) and various methods of student interaction such as email and chat rooms. Access shall be granted to the evaluators for five working days and the evaluatee will make arrangements for access. Should additional observations be desired or necessary, the evaluatee will make arrangements for access as appropriate.

Any unit member who elects to teach an online class must agree to have his or her competency to teach distance education courses evaluated by the respective Dean and students during their first semester.

- Instructors teaching distance education courses shall be evaluated
- Anyone who evaluates an online course shall have experience or training in online delivery or evaluation.
- For probationary faculty, online course evaluation shall be part of the regular tenure evaluation process. For tenured and adjunct faculty, this evaluation will not restart the agreed upon 3 year evaluation process.

****Collective Bargaining agreement****

End of Semester

Archive a Course

After the semester ends and grades are turned in, faculty will want to archive course(s). ITS is no longer archiving course shells, and will purge all shells older than the past two full semesters. Faculty may choose to archive a course(s) every week or two during the semester and download it to a safe place.

Download a Gradebook

Once students are deleted from the Blackboard server, neither their work nor their grades will appear in an archived course. This is why faculty should download their gradebook separately. Like the archive, download the gradebook to a safe place. In addition, like the archive, faculty may choose to do this every week or so during the semester. We are limited on space in Blackboard and instructors need to keep a copy of the grade just as you do with face to face courses.

Archive Faculty Emails

If faculty decide not to use the Messages tool in Blackboard, they are advised to archive any emails from their students. Archiving a Blackboard course does not archive student emails that are sent to and from faculty AVC email accounts; unless faculty use the Messages (Blackboard internal email).

This handbook is subject to change as new technologies emerge and new decisions are made.

Appendix 1

Antelope Valley College Regular, Effective Contact Policy for Online Instruction

1. Background
 - 1.1. 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.
 - 1.2. 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. The guidelines do say that quality assurances within the regulations apply to all distance education (hereafter, DE) courses, which include hybrid courses. 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."
2. Relevant Ed Code
 - 2.1. Ed Code §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 §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 §53200) of chapter 2. NOTE: Authority cited: §66700 and §70901, Education Code. References: §70901 and §70902, Education Code.
 - 2.2. Ed Code §55204. Instructor Contact. In addition to the requirements of §55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district-governing boards shall ensure that:
 - 2.2.1. 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 §53200 et seq.
 - 2.2.2. Any portion of a course provided through distance education is conducted consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor

pursuant to §409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors. NOTE: Authority cited: §66700 and §70901, Education Code. Reference: §70901 and §70902, Education Code.

3. AVC Distance Education

- 3.1. All distance education courses at AVC, whether hybrid or fully online, will include regular effective contact as described in this section.
- 3.2. **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. Opportunities that relate to the content of the course should include those in which students interact with instructors, instructors to interact with students, and students to interact with each other. Providing students with an open-ended question forum, although participation may be required, does not constitute the entirety of effective instructor initiated interaction. In addition to open ended question forums, utilizing LMS blogs, journals, AVC email, and collaboration chat tools are appropriate to engage instructor and student interaction. Furthermore, implementing web 2.0 tools into course activities (ie. VoiceThread, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) are also appropriate tools to create interaction. Some web 2.0 tools can be brought into the LMS and some can be linked from the LMS. Instructor prepared content (written, recorded, broadcast, etc.) combined with other course materials, creates the “virtual equivalent” of the face-to-face class and must be included in your course.
- 3.3. **Frequency:** Distance Education courses are considered the “virtual equivalent” to face-to-face courses. Therefore, the frequency of the contact 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. A class that meets three hours a week would require three hours of faculty communication time. Faculty office hours are not included as fulfilling the regular effective contact requirement and are a separate requirement. Given the nature of asynchronous instructional methodologies, contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure that regular contact is maintained over the course of a week and should occur as often as is appropriate for the course.
- 3.4. **Establishing expectations and managing unexpected instructor absence:** Instructor availability for any synchronous class meeting times 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 for any reason associated with a leave, the instructor must follow standard procedures for such leave as delineated in

the faculty collective bargaining agreement and applicable administrative policies. Students will be notified of the instructor's absence or leave at the earliest opportunity.

3.5. **Type of Contact:** In all AVC DE courses, instructors should use a mix of resources to initiate and maintain contact with students. Acceptable resources include, but are not limited to the following:

- Threaded discussion forums;
- AVC email and voicemail;
- Weekly announcements;
- Field trips, seminars, or other in-person activities;
- Timely feedback for student work.