

Barstow Community College

Distance Education Regular Effective Contact Policy

Revised September 7, 2017

Introduction:

In accordance to regulations set forth in the California Code of Regulations, Title 5, Sections 55202 and 55204, the California Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) set forth guidelines to ensure that distance education is characterized by the same expectations for quality, integrity, and effectiveness that apply to more traditional modes of instructions. **(See the Regulations Attached)**

According to Title 5 and the Distance Education Guidelines for the California Community Colleges, each community college must have a policy regarding regular effective contact between instructor and student (including the nature and frequency of the contact) in any course that is fully or partially conducted through Distance Educations.

Barstow Community College (BCC) defines "Distance Education" (DE) as an interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated by the instructor and which supports regular and effective interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously.

In face-to-face courses, regular instructor and student contact occurs at each class meeting via lecture, discussion, and other in-classroom teaching/learning methods. How comparable contact occurs in a distance education modality?

BCC Regular Effective Contact Policy:

All DE courses at BCC, including hybrid courses, will include regular effective contact as described below:

- **Initiated interaction:** Instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students on a group or one-to-one basis. The instructor should, on a regular basis, cognizant of the degree to which students are participating in the course – similar to how a face-to-face instructor is constantly aware of how many students are attending and participating in the class. Providing students with an open-ended question forum, although appropriate, does not constitute effective instructor initiated interaction without dialog between the instructor and the student.

- **Frequency and duration:** In a DE course, the frequency and duration of contact should be comparable to that of the “equivalent” face-to-face course. At the very least, the number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available to face-to-face students will also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, to DE students. Given the nature and variety of DE contact, especially asynchronous contact, it is not expected that contact will necessarily occur during well-defined blocks of time as in a face-to-face course. Nevertheless, over the course of the week, an individual student can expect contact that is comparable in frequency and duration to that which would be experienced in an “equivalent” face-to-face course.
- **Establishing expectations and managing unexpected instructor absence:** An instructor and/or department established policy describing the frequency and timelines 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 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.

BCC Mandatory types of contact

All BCC DE courses, instructors will, at a minimum, make use of the following to initiate and maintain contact with the students:

- Weekly threaded discussion forums within the BCC Learning Management System (LMS) with instructor participation. The instructor is required to be present and interact with the students in the discussion board at least three times per week on different days.
- Timely feedback on student work (within 48 hours)
- Weekly announcements in the LMS
- General email and/or messaging through the LMS
- Instructor prepared material that, possibly combined with other course materials, creates the “virtual equivalent” of the face-to-face classroom.
- Regular virtual office hour
- Online quizzes/exams

Other types of contact

The following are other forms of communication that DE instructors may wish to make use of to initiate and maintain contact with students:

- Chat Room/Instant Messaging
- E-conference (CCCConfer)
- Telephone/Voicemail
- USPS mail
- E-Portfolios/Blogs
- Field trips
- Library workshops
- Posted audio/video
- Live audio/video
- Schedule face-to-face group or individual meeting
- Facebook/Twitter

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