



# DISTANCE EDUCATION HANDBOOK

Evergreen Valley College

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## **Modalities of Distance Education Courses**

A course is a distance learning course if any percentage of it is delivered via a methodology where the student and the instructor are not present in the same physical location. Distance education (DE) at Evergreen Valley College has offered students the opportunity to attend classes online for many years and provides students with both excellent learning resources and a wide variety of high-quality college courses. Students who may not be able to attend classes on-campus due to scheduling conflicts associated with work, family responsibilities, transportation issues, or just prefer the online learning environment, are able to continue or complete their college education remotely.

As a result of the closures that colleges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, EVC revised definitions of the types of distance education courses available. The definitions are as follows, starting with pre-pandemic traditional online methodologies.

**Asynchronous Online:** An asynchronous online course is offered 100% online with no mandated scheduled in-person meetings. Online courses require the same amount of course work and hours outside of the classroom as traditional on-campus courses. Instructors do not require students to meet face-to-face in a physical classroom at any time, including, but not limited to office hours, homework, tests, and distribution of resource materials. There is a required orientation for course(s) and students are given the option to attend in-person or virtually. The instructor will post a recorded video version of the orientation to both meet students' scheduling needs and to allow for review by all students as the course progresses. Any in-person (either on campus or web conferenced) orientation dates and times are published in the syllabus and the schedule of classes prior to the beginning of the semester.

The fully online courses are also required to have at least 30% of coursework to be proctored either virtually or on campus and the dates and times of the proctored exams are listed in the syllabus and schedule of classes prior to the beginning of the semester.

All online courses utilize features of the Canvas learning management system (LMS) such as course documents, announcements, emails, discussion boards, real-time communication, virtual classrooms, groups, assignments, external links, digital drop boxes and grade books, etc. All course instructions, materials, assignments, and discussions are posted and submitted online.

**Partially Online Courses Known as “Hybrid” Courses:** Versions of courses with some distance component and some required on-campus / face-to-face meeting(s) are referred to as “Hybrid” and they are offered in several formats. A

hybrid course also utilizes features of the Canvas LMS, such as course documents, discussion boards, real-time communication, virtual classrooms, groups, assignments, external links, digital drop boxes and grade books, etc. The course can be offered during regularly scheduled class times or with online components that replace some of the regularly scheduled class meetings. When a combination of face-to-face class sessions and online course work are being employed, information about the meeting times will be given by instructors both in their syllabi and in the schedule of classes.

**New types of distance education courses:** The COVID-19 pandemic led to the development of additional modalities other than just the pre-pandemic asynchronous, and hybrid online options as described below.

**Virtual Hybrid Course: (partially synchronous online meetings using web conferencing):** Virtual hybrids combine planned synchronous and asynchronous activities. Synchronous online whole class meetings are required (at least 1 hour per week) and days and times are posted in the schedule of classes prior to registration. The online portion in Canvas will have regular and effective contact between faculty and students, and interactivity from student to student. The online portion will also meet accessibility requirements for disabled students and provide enough instructional activities to meet the requirements of the course outline of record. It is still the virtual equivalent of the on-ground course. For additional, class-specific requirements, please email the course instructor.

**Synchronous (live) Online Course:** Regular whole-class meetings are scheduled to fulfill the 54-hour (3.0 unit) requirement using web conferencing tools such as Zoom. Components of the Canvas learning management system to augment synchronous online courses and are syllabi, additional resources, submission of assignments, quizzes, and exams. Email is accomplished via the Canvas inbox and a Q&A discussion forum may be created for student online use.

**Real-time On-campus and Livestream Combination:** This synchronous class meets during the scheduled class meeting time listed above in two formats: Livestream via Zoom and on-campus, with limited seating capacity to allow for social distancing. Instructor of record will determine any additional, class-specific requirements.

**Modified Hybrid (sometimes referred to as “Hyflex”):** This format is a combination of online, on-campus, and livestream, which is broadcast from the on-campus classroom. This type of hybrid class incorporates the use of Canvas and may also include the use of live-stream via Zoom and/or scheduled meetings on-campus, with limited seating capacity to allow for social distancing. Instructor

of record will determine any additional, class-specific requirements.

All online courses are credit and content equivalent of on-campus courses, and a large majority of the courses meet general education and transfer requirements. Please see the section on “Distance Education” in the Schedule of Classes for a listing of available courses and enrollment procedures.

## **Characteristics of Distance Education (DE) Courses at EVC**

The course *must* adhere to the approved course outline in terms of depth and breadth of content and student learning outcomes. Methodologies, assignments, interaction and evaluation methods should be comparable to the equivalent on-campus class.

All-College Curriculum Committee (ACCC) has determined that methods of evaluation used should ensure the same level of integrity, security and scrutiny associated with equivalent on-campus classes. Depending on the assessment method designed for each course, this may require that testing be done in a proctored environment or on-campus, rather than online.

Since any change in the load value of a course from that stated on the approved course outline is subject to collective bargaining, all distance education class maximums must be the same as those for the equivalent on-campus classes, except if otherwise specified in the contract.

On-campus or synchronous online meetings are generally not required for asynchronous online courses but are required for hybrid courses at formally scheduled times as listed in the Schedule of Classes.

## **Orientation**

A common rationale for requiring students to attend an online course orientation (live or recorded) is that students often require reviews and refreshers of orientation content in order to fully internalize the information. Therefore, an online version of the orientation can provide the opportunity to review information. Virtual orientations can include audio/video material (e.g., instructor’s presentation or screen captures, etc.). Most DE faculty utilize the service of Confer Zoom to conduct the online orientation or record their live orientation for later use.

**EVC Blank Course Template:** Faculty are encouraged to use the [EVC Blank Course Template](#) to build their courses. The Orientation Module is pre-built for all faculty to use and customize.

Orientation meeting for online courses is mandatory; however, it can be offered via web conference or orientation video. The following are suggested examples for items to be

included in an orientation meeting and/or syllabus:

1. Course access information (Username and password)
2. Instructor e-mail
3. Hardware and software requirements
4. Guidelines for how to prepare for the online course.
  - Electronic resources available at EVC
  - Helpdesk support
  - Content support

## Proctored Exams

A common rationale for requiring students to take proctored exams is so that the integrity of tests can be guaranteed, along with the authenticity of the student who is taking the exam. However, such exams, typically used in on-campus courses, may not be appropriate for the online modality. Instead, remote proctoring software that ensures test integrity may be used if it has not been already replaced. Faculty may also use an alternate method(s) of assessment.

### Evergreen Valley College Proctored Exam Policy:

1. Online courses must have at least one proctored exam
2. The exam(s) proctored must have a substantial weight (**30% or more**) of the overall class grades.

## Proctoring Center

On-campus or proctored testing situations may be required, depending on the evaluation methodologies comparable to on-campus classes. The EVC Proctoring Center (LE-204) provides a secure location for test administration for Distance Education courses at the request of the EVC instructors. They may proctor their exams in LE-204 or contact the Academic Skills and Tutoring Instructor to book a slot during the listed hours for their online classes. All online students are required to take proctored exam(s) to establish the integrity of the courses and the authenticity of the students. If students cannot attend the proctored exam(s) on campus, it is the student's responsibility to find a suitable proctor and make arrangements with the proctor and the instructor of the course. There is an [Online Proctored Exam Request Form](#) that must be received one week prior to the exam test date.

## Curriculum Committee DE Course Approval Process

Title 5 requires that all distance learning courses be separately reviewed and approved by local curriculum committees. The purpose of this review is to verify that such courses are comparable in terms of rigor, scope, and conduct, to equivalent on-campus classes.

The Distance Education Addendum is a component that exists in CurriQunet (the curriculum management system). Instructors requiring access to CurriQunet would need to request their deans to inform the Curriculum Specialist to provide them access so that they can complete the Online Supplement proposal in CurriQunet. The Online Supplement enables instructors to complete information needed to propose online or hybrid courses. Once in the CurriQunet system, this will follow the standard ACCC procedure and timeline for instructors to teach the course in online or hybrid mode. [Appendix D]

*Note: Similar to regular courses, the DE online/hybrid addendum needs to be revised every six years.*

**Distance Education courses are required to be equivalent and comparable to their on-campus version in all but the delivery modality.** Distance education instruction is viewed as an alternative instructional methodology only. Therefore, the existing course outline's expectations and parameters establish the requirements of the course quality for this proposal. Separate approval is required for each type of a Distance Learning course (online or hybrid). [Appendix C]

Acting on the recommendations of the Distance Education Committee on distance learning courses, the Curriculum Committee approves the information requirements set forth in the Distance Education Addendum form, which is part of the course documentation materials reviewed by the ACCC. It is the intent of this documentation to clearly identify how the distance class is comparable to on-campus classes.

Title 5 requires that *all* types of distance learning courses be separately reviewed and approved. This includes both new courses and courses already offered in the traditional mode. The Chancellor's Office require that the curriculum for each DE course and its associated materials and resources be reviewed and revised, as necessary, when the course undergoes curriculum review pursuant to title 5, sections 55002 and 55206, every six years as part of the accreditation process.

**Emergency Blanket Addendum.** The process established in Summer 2020 whereby all courses had to establish separate approval to be offered as Distance Learning during emergency. [Appendix D]

## **Instructor Certification (Distance Education Faculty Requirements)**

Teaching a DE course requires both pedagogical and technical knowledge. In January 2016, EVC joined the Online Education Initiative (OEI). The aim of the Distance Education program is to ensure that faculty build quality courses following the rubric standards. The DE Coordinator at EVC ensures that all instructors assigned to teach online/hybrid courses have the required qualifications. The Technology Resource

Center offers a variety of workshops for faculty who are new to teaching distance education courses. Training is also offered virtually using web conferencing tools.

## **Faculty Training Process and Registration**

### **New or Continuing Distance Education Instructors**

**A. Certification:** Faculty who are new to distance education and would like to teach an online or hybrid course at EVC will need to become DE Certified. Certification is attained by taking EVC's EDIT 022 **OR** the 12-week @One Online Teaching Certificate (OTC) courses.

### **B. Training Waivers and Postponements:**

- **Previous Online Teaching Experience:** Faculty members who have continuously taught DE courses the past 3 years may be eligible to waive some of the faculty training requirements for initial DE certification. Faculty applying for a training waiver need to submit a narrative detailing their online teaching experience and present a course (or courses) taught in the past to the DE committee by providing necessary documentations using the [Faculty Online Teaching Recertification](#) form. Faculty who initially qualify for waiver status, are also encouraged to complete a series of professional development courses. It is highly recommended that refresher training be taken to maintain skills with changing technologies and to meet State legal requirements for online instructor certification and submitted through the [Faculty Online Teaching Recertification](#) form. [Appendix A]
- **Previous Online Training/Certification:** Faculty who have not taught online but have taken the equivalent training coursework within the past 5 years may be eligible to waive some or all of the training requirements. Faculty applying for certification need to submit appropriate evidence of the completion of the coursework/certificate and course descriptions to the DE committee. Since technology changes so quickly, any training coursework that was finished more than 5 years ago needs to be repeated.
- **Emergency Hires:** In the case that an emergency hire does not fulfill the training requirements prior to teaching online, the faculty member must complete the training requirements within their first semester of employment. Even if some of the training requirements have been waived, faculty will need to go through Peer Online Course Review (POCR) process by using the [Request POCR for Online Teaching Eligibility](#) prior to being cleared to teach. Additionally, Canvas training is highly recommended. [Appendix B]

### **C. Maintaining Certification**

- In order to maintain DE certification, the faculty member shall demonstrate

continued professional growth through such distance education related activities such as, but not limited to course work, attendance at workshops, seminars, professional meetings, professional reading and study, publications, and conference presentations. These activities must be documented and completed at least once every two-year period and be approved by the DE Committee.

**Minimum Qualifications:** (Subject to approval by the DE Coordinator)

- EDIT022 (3.0 unit fully online course offered at EVC) **or** Online Teaching Certification from @ONE
- Completed 10 hours of course development training sessions with EVC DE Coordinator
- Faculty teaching DE courses at EVC are required to offer:
  - Orientations
  - Proctored exams
  - Office hours

## **Local Peer Online Course Review Committee (POCR)**

As CVC-OEI (California Virtual Campus – Online Education Initiative) cohort, EVC has established a local POCR as a faculty resource to implement OEI Course Design Rubric adopted by the EVC Academic Senate, Spring 2019. The rationale for establishing local POCR is that it positively influences student success in courses that have been reviewed and redesigned using OEI Course Design Rubric. Research shows that OEI Pilot courses that have been through the POCR process are performing at +4.9 percentage points above the statewide average of online success (Appendix D)

### **A. Qualification:**

DE committee faculty who has taught online and completed the four-week POCR online workshop facilitated either by @One or EVC based POCR program, to support best practices in online course design.

### **B. Duties and Responsibilities:**

- The local POCR serve as resource for professional development of new and experienced online faculty.
- In light of accreditation requirements, POCR will review and assess fully online courses for Regular Effective Contact elements in Section B of OEI Rubric Standard
- Create a community of practice among peers in which they share their challenges, develop new approaches, and support one another.
- The goal is to have more aligned "Quality Reviewed" courses, certificates and degrees from EVC in the CVC Exchange.

## **Instructor--Student Contact and Student-Student Contact in Distance Learning Courses**

DE courses require frequent communication with students. Research shows that instructor's contact is the most important factor contributing to DE student success. Title 5 requires that instructor-student contact should be both "effective and regular" (section 55204.) Instructors and departments proposing the course should implement this regulation in a manner that is equivalent to the on-campus course. Any portion of a course that is taught at a distance must include regular and effective instructor-student communication, as specified below. A hybrid course would demand regular communication not only during the on-campus portion of the course, but also in each distance portion of the course. The established meeting time for a hybrid course will be formally scheduled in the Schedule of Classes.

### **Regular and Effective Instructor-Student Communication**

Instructors are expected to communicate with their students through (1) individual email and (2) on the discussion forums in response to students' posts on specific pre-designed topics, and (3) via general announcements to all the students (4) Timely feedback to assignments using the speed grader.

#### **E-Mail**

- a. **Prior to the beginning of the course** - Instructors are expected to send a "welcome" email to all registered students. An orientation file needs to be attached to the email providing the students access information, as well as information regarding the course. **During the first two weeks of the course** - instructors are expected to initiate contact with all students who did not contact them at least once a week, to verify that they were able to access and navigate the course properly, and to remind the students of their expected activities for that week, as well as to help with the required assignment(s) and discussion(s).
- b. **During the rest of the course** - instructors are expected to respond to individual email message within 24 hours. Individual reminders of class assignments and required activities are best if both are sent individually and announced on the course Announcement page. This form of individual attention has been proven to have a direct effect on students' attitudes and consequently in their success.

#### **Discussion Forums**

- c. Instructors are expected to read all of their students' posts in each module

and to mark them as part of the grade as determined in each course. While instructors do not have to respond to each student post, they are required to monitor that students stay on the discussion topic designed for the class, and that they respond to other students' posts in addition to responding to the instructor's topic. Students appreciate when instructors comment on their post as it helps them clarify content and / or validate their comprehension and analysis of the material they are learning.

## **Announcements**

- d. Announcements on the course Announcement page are used to address all students at once, for general information such as additions made to learning modules, test date reminders, etc. An e-mail distribution list can be used for the same purpose, but should not replace the Announcement page, since some students may access the course without reading their email first.

Add: Timely feedback for assignments and discussion posts (as needed) using the speed grader.

## **Distance Education Course Reports**

Distance Education courses require the same reports as on-campus courses (such as first census or grade sheets).

To ensure that students attend class and access the material designed for the class, instructors are expected to **include at least one content-specific assignment due before first census date** (first census date is the Monday nearest one fifth of the course). If a student does not hand in the assignment (or enter a content-related post to the discussion forum) by first census date, s/he should be considered a No Show and dropped from the course. While initial contact for class management purposes and posting of a student bio indicate the student had some involvement in the course, these parameters are not content-specific and thus are insufficient to determine first census attendance in the class.

## **Accessibility to Students with Disabilities**

Both State and Federal law require community colleges to operate all programs and activities in a manner, which is accessible to students with disabilities. Accordingly, as the system develops its capacity for creation of technology-based instructional resources and the delivery of distance learning, it must proceed with the needs of all students in mind, including the needs of students with disabilities. Under the CCC DE

Access Guidelines, Chapter 6, Standards and Criteria for Courses, Section 55200 ("Definition and Application"), CA Code 11135, and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended in 1998, the Access Board has established standards for electronic and information technology. The regulations require that electronic and information technologies developed, procured, maintained or used are accessible to students with disabilities. The college provides the necessary training and resources for faculty to ensure accessibility in Web-mediated courses. Beginning Spring 2021, EVC has been offering a 3.0-unit college credit course to all called EDIT023: Accessible Course Content.

## **Resources for Distance Education Instructors and Students**

- Instructor: [List of Resource Guides](#)
- Student: [List of Resource Guides](#)
- General Distance Learning Program information: (408) 274-7900 X6426
- District Helpdesk for Technical Support (M-TH: 7:00 am to 7:30 pm; Fri. 7:00 am to 5:30 pm)
  - Phone: (408) 270-6411
  - e-mail - [helpdesk@sjeccd.edu](mailto:helpdesk@sjeccd.edu)
- Evenings and Weekends Helpdesk for Technical Support
  - Phone: (844) 303-5596
  - Email: [support@instructure.com](mailto:support@instructure.com)
- Online Library – [Evergreen Valley College](#)
- Tutoring Center: [Tutoring Center of Evergreen Valley College](#)
- Online bookstore- [Evergreen Valley College Bookstore](#)
- Online Financial Aid – [Financial Aid Office](#)

## **Resource Links**

- Detailed link for Distance Education Program: [Distance Education Program](#)
- Detailed Information Link for Technology Resource Center (TRC): [Technology Resource Center \(LE-227\)](#)

# Appendices

## Appendix A

### [Online Teaching Eligibility Application](#)

All faculty members teaching fully online courses at Evergreen Valley College (EVC) must have an [online teaching eligibility application](#) on file. **Please review the eligibility standards authorized by the Academic Senate in December 2016,** then complete and submit this form. Use this form if you are new to online teaching\* or if you have not taught an online course using the current version of the Course Management System (CMS).

## **Appendix B**

Peer Online Course Review (POCR) process use the [Request POCR for Online Teaching Eligibility](#)

# Appendix C

[CVC-OEI Consortium College in 2018 a special focus on student equity.](#)

## **Appendix D**

CurriQunet: Online Supplement approval needed from College Curriculum Committee to offer distance education courses.

## Appendix E

[OEI Rubric Standards](#) adopted by the EVC Academic Senate in December 2016.

# Appendix F

## ACCJC Requirement

<b>Regular Effective Contact Hours Feedback</b>				
Semester:				
Faculty Member:				
Course:				
Categories	Excellent	Average	Need Improvement	Comments
1. Instructor initiated contact reflected in course syllabus.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor specifies policies regarding the frequency and timeliness of instructor-initiated contact and feedback as part of the syllabus or other course documents, which are made available to students at the beginning of the course.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor initiated contact and feedback as part of the syllabus or other course documents made available to students at the beginning of the course but does not specify policies regarding the frequency and timeliness of contact and feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor does not initiate contact and feedback as part of the syllabus or other course documents made available to students at the beginning of the course.	
2. Instructor initiated synchronous and asynchronous communication.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor regularly initiates interaction with students to determine whether they are accessing, comprehending, and participating in course activities using wide variety of communication tools (email, chat, phone, Zoom, CCCConfer, Skype, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor occasionally initiates interaction with students to determine whether they are accessing, comprehending, and participating in course activities using mainly asynchronous communication tools (email, and perhaps discussion)	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor does not initiate regular interaction with students. The following examples are <b>not</b> considered instructor initiated effective contact hours: <i>For example</i> , an ice breaker with no comments or an instructor email to students with assignment due	

Categories	Excellent	Average	Need Improvement	Comments
3. Graded discussion based on a rubric or equivalent document to explain how participation will be evaluated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor provides graded discussion in CMS based on well-defined criteria that is part of the rubric or equivalent document to explain how participation will be evaluated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor provides graded discussion in CMS with no rubrics or equivalent document to explain how participation will be evaluated.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor does not provide graded discussion in CMS	
4. Feedback on assignments and assessments.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor engages in regular effective contact with students that includes detailed comments and the expected time frames for feedback on assignments and assessments.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor provides students with bare bone feedback on assignments and assessments with no expected time frames or plans to engage in regular effective contact.	<input type="checkbox"/> Instructor does not provide students with any feedback on assignments and assessments, and grades are auto generated.	

### Accessibility

Instructors need to verify that content they create or add to their courses is accessible to all students.

<p>Heading Styles</p> <p>Lists</p> <p>Links</p> <p>Tables</p> <p>Images</p> <p>Video</p> <p>Live Captions</p>
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