# Santa Ana College
# Regular and Substantive Interaction Policy

## Regulations:

Please refer to Westlaw for the source of the following information.

Title 5 and the Distance Education Guidelines for the California Community Colleges state:

### 55200. Definition and Application.

(a) "Distance education" means education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor(s) and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor(s) either synchronously or asynchronously. Technologies that may be used to offer distance education include:
   (1) The internet;
   (2) One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
   (3) Audio conference; or
   (4) Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this subdivision.
(b) The definition of "distance education" does not include correspondence courses.
(c) "Accessible" means a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use. The person with a disability must be able to obtain the information as fully, equally and independently as a person without a disability. Although this might not result in identical ease of use compared to that of persons without disabilities, it still must ensure equal opportunity to the educational benefits and opportunities afforded by the technology and equal treatment in the use of such technology.

Credits

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code; Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12100 et seq.); section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 U.S.C. § 749d; title 29 United States Code section 794d; and title 34 Code of Federal Regulations section 600.2.

### 55202. Course Quality Standards.

The same standards of course quality shall be applied to any portion of a class conducted through distance education as are applied to in-person classes, in regard to the course quality judgment made pursuant to the requirements of section 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 section 53200) of chapter 2.

### 55204. Instructor Contact.

In addition to the requirements of section 55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district governing boards shall ensure that:
(a) Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular and substantive interaction between the instructor(s) and students, (and among students, if described in the course outline of record or distance education addendum), either synchronously or asynchronously, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities.
(b) "Substantive interaction" means engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:
   (1) Providing direct instruction;
   (2) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
   (3) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;

(4)  Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
(5)  Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.

(c)  Regular interaction between a student and instructor(s) is ensured by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency:

Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

(d)  Regular and substantive interaction is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.

(e)  For purposes of calculating instructional time in the context of asynchronous distance education, a week of instructional time is any week in which:

(1)  The institution makes available the instructional materials, other resources, and instructor support necessary for academic engagement and completion of course objectives; and

(2)  The institution expects enrolled students to perform educational activities demonstrating academic engagement during the week.

Credits
NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code; and title 34 Code of Federal Regulations sections 600.2 and 668.3.

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## Regulations:

Title 5 and the Distance Education Guidelines for the California Community Colleges can be found on the Westlaw site, linked below.
Title 5, Article 1. Distance Education

## Background:

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. In an on-campus course the instructor is present at each class meeting and interacts via all class announcements, lectures, activities and discussions that take a variety of forms. For example, discussions can be held as part of a lecture format, group work scenarios, or content review sessions. The instructor also serves as a content advisor when he or she answers questions both as they come up in class and as they arise in individual situations. These types of questions are dealt with via the telephone, email, face-to-face office visits, or live electronic interaction utilizing tools within the LMS for virtual conferencing.

Title 5 regulations do not make a distinction between regular and distance education courses beyond the need to have an approved curriculum approval process and the need to ensure Regular and Substantive Interaction. The guidelines do say that quality assurances within the regulations apply to all DE courses, which include online, hybrid and remote instruction courses. Therefore, it is assumed that those qualities of Regular and Substantive Interaction described above for the on-campus environment, should also be applied to the distance education situation. The DE Guidelines require colleges to develop a policy regarding Regular and Substantive Interaction that addresses "the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each DE course/section or session".

## Santa Ana College Policy:

All DE courses at SAC, whether fully online, hybrid or remote instruction will include the Regular and Substantive Interaction as described below:

### *Regular and Substantive Interaction*

- **Instructor-Initiated interaction**: Instructor-initiated contact refers to instructors contacting their students. Examples of instructor-initiated contact are, but are not limited to, providing regular 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. Other aspects of instructor-initiated contact are providing timely assignment feedback, regularly clearing the roster of students who are not attending (attendance definition below), regularly participating in class discussions, and contacting students with additional feedback, such as recognition or helpful critiques of course participation or assignment rigor, assignment feedback timelines, examples, and other instructor-initiated contacts may be clearly defined in the syllabus and where relevant or helpful in the course.
- **Student-Initiated Contact:** Student-Initiated contact refers to students' ability to contact their instructor or other students in the course.  Clear instructions should be provided by the instructor for preferred contact methods

and expected response times.

- **Student-to-Student Interaction**: Student-to-Student Interaction refers to students' ability to contact each other in the course. Student-to-Student Interaction is required in online classes at SAC unless it is not practical or possible for a specific class. If student-to-student contact is not required in a class, the rationale must be described in the Distance Education Addendum. Instructors are responsible for providing Student-to-Student interaction, such as group work, peer reviews, discussions, chats, study groups, etc.  in the Course Management System.
- **Frequency**: DE Courses are considered the "virtual equivalent" to on-campus courses. Instructors will have regular contact throughout the week with students. Communication methods such as, discussions participation, assignment feedback, or live or asynchronous communication may be used.
- **Establishing Instructor Communication Expectations** An instructor and/or department established policy describing the frequency and timeliness 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. Including a Regular and Substantive Interaction policy in the syllabus is strongly encouraged.

## Sample Types of Contact:

Regarding the type of contact that will exist in all SAC DE courses, instructors may use any the following types of resources to initiate contact with students and among students:

- Interactive tools, such as regular discussions, blogs, wikis, and chat, within the course management system, with appropriate active instructor participation.
- General email/messages
- Meaningful announcements in the Course Management System
- Timely and meaningful feedback for student work.
- Instructor prepared e-lectures or introductions in the form of e-lectures to any publisher created materials (written, recorded, broadcast, etc.) that, combined with other course materials, create the "virtual equivalent" of the on-campus class.
- Instructor-created videos with helpful information, instruction, and/or with the intent of humanizing the classroom.