

Instructor needs to send a copy of the completed and signed form to the Distance Learning office where it will be attached to the Online Course Approval form for the course listed above.

## **Distance Education Policy**

Faculty teaching via Distance Education modalities (online, video-conferencing, hybrid, e.g.) must be aware of and fulfill the requirements of SWTJC “Distance Education Policy”:

### Southwest Texas Junior College Distance Education Policy

#### **I. Institutional Policies**

##### **A. Mission**

To provide quality education to students who prefer or require an alternative classroom setting. To accomplish this, SWTJC makes use of online, interactive video, and other technologies either singly or in combination.

##### **B. Definitions**

1. **asynchronous**: the use of learning technologies to deliver course material to students that are at a different time and place than the instructor
2. **blended (hybrid)**: more than 50% and less than 85% of content delivered online resulting in some reduction in the number of seat days
3. **distance education/learning**: a form of learning where the learner is physically separate from the instructor and other learners; methodologies include online, blended (hybrid), web-facilitated, and interactive video
4. **interactive video (or video-conference)**: an interactive delivery mechanism which uses 2-way audio and video to facilitate synchronous (real time) interaction between presenters and learners who are separated by significant distance
5. **online**: more than 85% of course content delivered in an asynchronous internet-based format resulting in a significant reduction in the number of seat days
6. **synchronous**: the use of learning technologies to deliver course material in real time to students who are at a different place than the instructor

##### **C. Distance Education Standards and Practices**

Distance Education courses, certificates, and degree programs adhere to Best Practices, as established by the accrediting agencies and educational organizations that govern SWTJC. These include:

1. **Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges**

[Best Practices For Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs](#)

[Distance Education Policy Statement](#)

## **2. Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board**

[Principles of Good Practice For Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered Electronically](#)

[Guide for Incorporating the Principles of Good Practice into Electronically-Based Courses](#)

### **D. Evaluation of Distance Education Policy**

The responsibility for evaluation and revising distance education policy resides with the college's Distance Education Committee. Revisions are presented first as recommendations to the college's Curriculum Committee and then to the President's Cabinet for approval.

### **E. Support and Training for Distance Education**

The college will:

1. provide training and support to enhance the added skills required of distance education faculty.
2. provide administrative and technical support for the delivery, supervision, and evaluation of distance education.
3. utilize effective evaluative and screening measures to match student needs and abilities with distance education requirements.
4. provide empirical data to assist in the evaluation of distance education success, student and faculty satisfaction, effectiveness of course design, retention, and faculty effectiveness in order to assure continuous distance education improvement.
5. inform faculty and staff of current distance education policies and procedures.
6. provide distance education students with academic advising, personal counseling, technical support services, library and learning resources, and financial aid (if eligible).

## **II. Curriculum and Instruction**

### **A. Academic Quality of Distance Education**

Distance education instruction will meet the quality standards applicable to traditional instruction, as outlined in the faculty handbook in the faculty regulations and procedures section. In addition, distance education courses will comply with all descriptions, policies, and uses as stated in the current college catalog. These include, but are not limited to:

1. syllabi
2. textbooks
3. grading
4. assessment of learning outcomes

### **B. Oversight of Distance Education Courses**

As with all academic activities, distance education courses are subject to approval and review by the Curriculum Committee, the Vice President of Academic Affairs,<sup>39</sup>

and the President's Cabinet. All distance education instructional content shall be administered by the same department administering the corresponding traditional instruction.

### **C. Approval of Distance Education Faculty**

Distance education faculty will be selected and evaluated by the same standards, review, and approval procedures used by the institution to select and evaluate faculty responsible for traditional instruction. Faculty who desire to teach distance education courses must demonstrate knowledge and skills related to best practices in distance education.

### **D. Approval of Distance Education Courses**

All distance education courses must be approved by the Vice President of Academic Affairs for delivery.

Prior to scheduling a distance education course, faculty must submit a Course Approval form to the Director of Distance Learning.

The Course Approval Form must be reviewed and approved by the:

- Director of Distance Learning
- Division Chair
- Instructional Dean
- Vice President of Academic Affairs

### **E. Delivery of Distance Education Courses**

1. Faculty assigned to teach a distance education course will be responsible for the design and delivery of instruction. As with traditional courses, distance education faculty are responsible for the following:

- a. Maintaining the rigor and quality of the course.
- b. Making reasonable efforts to guarantee the authenticity of student work.
- c. Planned interaction and timely feedback between students and faculty that is detailed in the course syllabus. Faculty response to student e-mail inquiries will be made within 24 hours during normal business days.
- d. Evaluating courses every semester to revise content and delivery to improve student success.
- e. A customized Portal class page to include course information, delivery method, access point, syllabus, introduction and orientation.
- f. Providing for appropriate interaction between faculty and students. This interaction may occur during faculty office hours, or it may take place via telephone, email, electronic chats, on-site meetings, video teleconference or other methods. Appropriate interaction for a course depends upon the course delivery mode and the technology used by faculty
- g. The number of on-campus posted office hours held per week equals the number of hours of traditional courses. In addition, faculty teaching an online course shall make themselves available to students for additional office hours equivalent to the contact hours of the course. For example, an online class which would have met on campus for 2½ hours per week requires the instructor to be available to students 2½ additional hours per

week.

- h. 5 hours of a faculty member's office hour requirement may be designated as online office hours and may be held off campus. Online courses with extensive student contact via email, electronic chats, or additional activities, may have the required additional on-site office hours reduced by submitting a Conversion of Posted On-Campus Office Hours to Electronic Office Hours form to the Director of Distance Learning.
- i. A proctored mid-term and final examination for online courses during the Fall and Spring semesters; during summer terms and any other shortened semester, only the final examination for online courses will be proctored.

## 2. Student Responsibility

- a. Before taking an online course, a student must be assessed to determine readiness to benefit from the online mode of instruction.
- b. Students must take two proctored exams. Students must submit a reservation request for all proctored examinations and present a valid picture identification card at the time and location of their reserved examination.
- c. Students may be required to sign an affidavit declaring their understanding of ethical uses of technology.

### F. Accessibility (ADA)

As with traditional courses, students taking distance education courses may request accommodations to meet individual needs of the learner. In distance education courses, special arrangements may be made to deliver the course in an alternative format as needed.

### G. Copyright Compliance

Faculty are expected to understand and adhere to the copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code), as updated by the Technology, Education, and Copyright Harmonization Act (TEACH Act). Copyright law must be followed when performances, displays, copies or other reproductions of copyrighted material are made available to students. This includes the posting of copyrighted material on any college learning management system. Under the TEACH Act, it is permissible to make copyrighted materials available to students, providing that such materials (1) do not exceed an amount or duration comparable to that typically displayed in a live classroom setting; (2) are directly related to the course content; (3) are an integral part of the teaching content; (4) are intended solely for and are available only to students enrolled in the course; and (5) are retained only for the class session. The students must be notified that the materials may be subject to copyright protection.

## Student Support

### A. Student Complaints/Grievance Procedure

Any student who wishes to make a formal complaint to the college should refer to the Student Handbook, which is available online:

<http://swtjc.edu/pages//about-swtjc/handbooks/student-handbook>