



Procedure 304-01 Online Learning Compliance

Sponsor: Academic Affairs

Purpose

The intent of this document is to provide an initial set of procedures for Coconino Community College (CCC) Distance Education Program that align with Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC).

Definitions

HLC Definitions for Distance or Correspondence Education Courses and Programs:

<http://www.hlcommission.org/Monitoring/distance-delivery.html>

HLC uses the following definitions for the purpose of applying its policy on distance or correspondence education to its accredited and candidate institutions:

1. Distance or correspondence education courses are those in which all or the vast majority (typically 75% or more) of the instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication, correspondence, or equivalent mechanisms, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other.
2. Distance or correspondence education programs are those certificate or degree programs in which 50% or more of the required courses may be taken as distance or correspondence education courses.

The following are the Federal definitions (2009) of distance and correspondence education:

Correspondence education means:

1. Education provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor.
2. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.
3. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced.
4. Correspondence education is not distance education.

CCC is not nor has it ever been accredited to teach correspondence courses. The College is currently accredited to teach distance education.

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 and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may 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 conferencing; or
4. Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in 1-3 above.

CCC utilizes several instructional modalities, including In-Person, Hybrid, Online, and Interactive Television Receiver (ITVR). However, the following procedures are intended to address only Online Instruction.

Procedure

Alignment to College Mission and Purpose

Online learning is appropriate to the College's mission and purposes.

The College's focus on a learner-centered institution and quality education is evidenced in the College's mission, vision, valuing people: diversity statement, guiding principles found in Policy 01-00 Vision, Mission, Valuing People: Diversity Statement, and Guiding Principles, and in the strategic plan goals. CCC has the same high standards for educational excellence in all courses regardless of modality. Online student learning is imperative to the learners in the rural areas of Coconino County and expands the reach of the college to over 18,000 square miles. CCC has implemented a variety of support systems to ensure that students who take online courses receive the online support that equalizes the learning opportunities for all delivery methods necessary to the mission of a learning-centered college.

Planning and Evaluation of Online Learning

The College's plans for developing, sustaining, and expanding online learning offerings are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes.

The College's intentions for distance education follow the same processes as in-person instruction. Specifically, committees consisting of faculty, staff, and administrators draft and review planning documents and assessment that ensures an appropriate level of quality.

Shared Governance and Academic Oversight

Online learning is incorporated into the College's systems of governance and academic oversight.

The College's Faculty play an integral role in the design and implementation of online classes through participation in the curriculum development process, policy and procedure review, creation of lesson plans and educational content, course reviews, and the evaluation of tools used in the design and delivery of online course offerings. (Policy and Procedure 301 Curriculum Development)

Engagement and Rigor of Online Curricula

Curricula and engagement for the College's online learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.

Online courses at CCC must adhere to the same prerequisite, course goals, course outcomes, course content, course assessment, and level of rigor as the corresponding in-person class. (Procedure 303-03 Class Syllabus)

There are clear guidelines for instructor presence and engagement expectations for in-person instruction. Equivalent expectations for online instruction are clearly outlined in the Online Course Contact Hour Verification Form found in the Distance Education Departmental Guidelines.

Online Course Evaluation

The College evaluates the effectiveness of its online learning offerings, including the extent to which the learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals. The College regularly performs evaluations to determine the effectiveness of online offerings. Assessment of student learning in online courses follows the processes used with in-person courses and programs and are directed by the CCC Assessment and Faculty Development Coordinator and the CCC Assessment Committee to assure best practice in assessment methods. (Policy 302-00 Assessment). These assessments include student-based course evaluations each semester. The resulting information from the assessment processes are compiled into reports and distributed to Academic Deans and Faculty for analysis. Compiled information from the assessment processes are used to develop strategies for course improvements. CCC evaluation strategies are conducted in a manner to ensure communication between faculty members who design curriculum, interact with students, and evaluate student learning.

Faculty Qualifications

Faculty responsible for delivering the online learning curricula and evaluating the students' success in achieving the learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.

All faculty must be fully credentialed and meet the defined thresholds, regardless of the modality they teach. (Policy and Procedure 310 Faculty Credentialing). Faculty preparation for teaching online courses includes a CCC training certification process which is outlined in the Distance Education Departmental Guidelines.

The Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) supports faculty in the effective use and navigation of the current learning management system. The College has multiple support mechanisms in place as outlined in the Distance Education Departmental Guidelines.

Student Supports for Online Learning

The College provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in online learning offerings.

Current and prospective online students at CCC have access to the same or equivalent support services that in-person students have. This includes student Learning Management System orientations and advising specific to online students who cannot come to campus. Further details can be found in the Distance Education Departmental Guidelines.

Continuous Improvement

The College provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its online learning offerings.

CCC prepares annual budgets and long-term ten-year financial plans that include online learning resources for curriculum development, instructor evaluation, faculty and staff development, program assessment, library and information resources, and technology infrastructure.

Cybersecurity

The College assures the integrity of its online learning offerings.

CCC has procedural guidelines in place to ensure that the student who registers in an online course is the same student who participates in and completes the course and receives the academic credit. (Procedure 503-01 Student Code of Conduct, Procedure 303-11 Academic Integrity)

All students are required to complete the College Admission Application wherein the student's identity is verified through submission of one or more pieces of documentation. After proof of identity is provided, a unique ID ("Comet ID") and temporary password is provided to the student. (Policy and Procedure 140 Acceptable use of Technology). This password is the College's primary procedure for ensuring that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and is supported via a central authentication service (CAS).

Student identity authentication is also conducted with CCC students applying for Federal Student Aid. Approximately half of students are involved in this process. All student records are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Some instructors have used in-person proctored exams. The college is moving towards requiring all instructors to use proctored exams in their online courses. When students are not able to, or choose not to attend an in-person proctored exam, the college is currently exploring virtual validation tools.

Academic Integrity

Issues of academic integrity are discussed during student orientation. Student Code of Conduct and the College's Policies and Procedures outline what constitutes academic dishonesty and how to appeal grades. (Procedure 503-01 Student Code of Conduct, Procedure 303-11 Academic Integrity, and Procedure 303-06 Academic Appeals)

CCC Distance Education students, who have completed the internal institutional grievance process and the applicable state grievance process, may also choose to appeal non-instructional complaints to the Arizona State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) Council. For additional information on the complaint process, please visit the AZ SARA Complaint page <http://azsara.arizona.edu/complaint-process>.

Course Content and Assessments

CCC monitors online courses to assure compliance to Copyright Laws and regulations. (Policy and Procedure 142 Copyright Law Compliance). Faculty receive training and assistance to design online courses that employ assessments unique to the course and that support academic integrity.

Additional identity verification requirements may be required in some classes.

References

Arizona Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)
Higher Learning Commission
Policy 01-00 Vision, Mission, Valuing People: Diversity Statement, and Guiding Principles
Policy and Procedure 140 Acceptable use of Technology
Policy and Procedure 142 Copyright Law Compliance
Policy and Procedure 301 Curriculum Development
Policy 302-00 Assessment
Procedure 303-03 Class Syllabus
Procedure 303-06 Academic Appeals

Procedure 303-11 Academic Integrity
Policy and Procedure 310 Faculty Credentialing
Procedure 503-01 Student Code of Conduct

Procedure History

08/09/2017 New and Adopted by College Council (by electronic vote)
10/17/2017 Renumbered from 303-17
07/14/2025 Revised **Sponsor from Academic and Student Affairs to Academic Affairs**

Legal Review

None