

# AP 4105 Distance Learning

## Reference:

*Title 5 Sections 55200 et seq.*

### **55200. Definitions and Application.**

Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology. All distance education is subject to the general requirements of this chapter as well as the specific requirements of this article. In addition, instruction provided as distance education is subject to the requirements that may be imposed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. §12100 et seq.) and section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, (29 U.S.C. §794d).

**Definitions (as referenced above):** Taft College has, through its participatory governance process, defined our distance learning courses as requiring no campus meetings for students, tests may be proctored; hybrid (blended) courses are defined as any course that has some face-to-face time replaced by online activities or courses that require students to come to campus. Distance learning and hybrid courses are identified in the class schedule. An announcement has been added to the class schedule about distance education courses that lets students know how and where they can get assistance.

**Quality and Separate Course Approval (Reference Title 5 sections 55202 and section 55206):** Distance learning and hybrid course content and objectives are the same as face-to-face courses and only the methods of instruction are adapted for web delivery. Evaluation methodology may also be adapted for distance and web delivery. These two types of courses must have approval separate from the general course approval process, to ensure that they are being adapted appropriately for web delivery. Course quality and approval processes are matters of an academic and professional nature and have been developed through the Curriculum and General Education Committee.

**Faculty Selection (Reference Title 5 Section 55208):** Taft College adheres to the section, which states that all distance education faculty meet minimum qualifications for teaching in the appropriate discipline.

**Number of Students (Reference Title 5 Section 55208):** Maximum class size for distance education courses is set as suggested in Title 5 as consistent with other class size determination procedures.

**FTE Computation for Distance Learning Courses (Reference Section 58003.1):** Taft College adheres to the regulations regarding computation of FTE in Distance Education Courses. Most courses are computed using the Weekly Student

Contact Hours Procedure except courses that are late start courses, which are calculated using the Daily Student Contact Hours procedure.

**Tutoring via Distance Learning (Reference Title 5 section 58170):** Tutoring for the Taft College Distance Learning program is done by tutoring staff who meet all Title 5 standards and is done **through** the college's Learning Resource Center.

**Access for the Disabled:** The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the California Government Code section 11135 all require that accessibility for persons with disabilities be provided in the development, procurement, maintenance, or use of electronic or information technology by a community college district using any source of state funds. Taft College requires accessibility requirements to be followed in all distance education courses from the time separate approval is granted through the development and implementation of all distance education programs.

**Supervision:** Taft College's Distance Learning Program falls under the direct supervision of the Vice President of Instruction. Taft College also employs a Distance Education Director who serve as a liaison between faculty and district administration regarding faculty selection, training, curriculum approval, course management software selection and other academic and professional matters related to distance education as needed.

**Authentication:** Taft College complies with Section 495 of the HEOA 2008 requiring institutions that offer distance education to have processes to authenticate students who register are the same students who participate and completes and receives credit for the courses. For student authentication, Taft College uses secure sign-on and passwords for its online learning management system and requires student identification for proctored examinations. Furthermore, BP 3720, Computer and Network Use requires people to refrain from seeking to gain unauthorized access.

In addition to the above mentioned authentication process, faculty is encouraged to use the following preventative measures to ensure academic integrity for distance learning courses:

1. **Use of multiple assessment techniques in place of high stakes exams.**  
Instructors are encouraged to use multi-faceted assessment strategies rather than high stakes proctored exams. Assessments are designed to be frequent, varied, and authentic to the application of learning. Distance learning instructors rely on interactive discussions, writing assignments, quizzes, capstone projects, group work, and online exams if appropriate.
  - a. Assessments are often modified from semester to semester. Students demonstrate learning outcomes through written assignments and

interaction with the instructor via discussions. Instructors become familiar with students' writing styles through online discussions.

2. **Use of test banks, and timed test delivery.** Test questions may be randomly drawn from banks of questions, so each distance learning student gets different set of questions. Many tests are designed to be open-book, but once a student begins a test, they may have a limited amount of time to complete it, and usually only one attempt. The online course management system allows for even tighter testing parameters if the instructor desires. For example, students can be given additional unique passwords to enter an exam or random exam questions can be restricted to one question per page and without the ability to go backwards to review or change answers on an exam.
3. **Raising awareness among students about what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate academic behavior in an online course.** Many cases of academic dishonesty arise from students' lack of awareness, such as when it is acceptable and not acceptable to collaborate on coursework. Distance learning instructors at Taft College include the college's academic honesty policy on their course syllabi with a description of academic dishonesty and information on repercussions for academic dishonesty, links to plagiarism information as well as acceptable sources, and descriptions of permissible and non-permissible collaboration. Many instructors use an honor code approach provided by the online course management system where communities of learners must agree upon honor to proceed with exams or assignments required for their classes.
4. **Plagiarism detection programs.** Taft College encourages distance learning instructors to utilize detection software or program such as Turn-It-In, which can be used for both written assignments and class discussion. Faculty members can simply copy and paste a discussion board post or any written work into the software and sources can be identified, even sources turned in by other Taft College instructors or prior students. This approach is commonly used by instructors in face-to-face courses as well as for online courses.
5. **Physical proctoring centers for exam delivery.** Students and faculty are informed of the proctor procedures through the College website, which can be found on the college website.

## **Regular and Effective Contact Procedure for Distance Education**

### **Purpose:**

In hybrid or fully online courses, ensuring regular and effective 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. The distance education guidelines require colleges to develop a policy regarding regular effective contact that addresses "the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each distance education course/section or session".

#### **Title 5, Section 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:

1. Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular and effective contact between instructor and students, and contact among students through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities. Regular and effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.
2. Any portion of a course provided through distance education is conducted consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors.

#### **Taft College Regular and Effective Contact Procedure:**

All distance education courses at Taft College, whether hybrid or fully online, will include regular and effective contact as described below:

1. **Interaction and frequency of contact:** Distance education courses are considered the "virtual equivalent" of face-to-face courses. The number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face-to-face students, will also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with students in the distance education format. Instructors will regularly initiate 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. Regular and effective contact will be maintained over the course of a week and should occur as often as is appropriate for the course. A response time of 24-48 hours, Monday through Friday is desirable but may vary based on course requirements and extenuating circumstances. The instructor will also provide opportunities for student-student contact.
2. **Establishing expectations and managing unexpected instructor absence:** A statement describing the frequency and timeliness of 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), the Distance Education staff or Office of Instruction will notify the students, via the announcements area of the course and/or via email, and will include information about when the students can expect regular effective contact to resume.

3. **Type of Contact:** Regarding the type of contact that will exist in all Taft College distance learning courses, instructors will use three or more of the following methods to maintain contact with students, and among students:
  - a. Orientation materials.
  - b. Weekly announcements in the course management system.
  - c. Threaded discussion boards within the course management system with appropriate instructor participation. "Questions for the Instructor" forums are good, but should be used in conjunction with other forums.
  - d. Email contact (within or outside the CMS).
  - e. Participation in online group collaboration projects.
  - f. Face-to-face informal meetings (e.g. review sessions).
  - g. Face-to-face formal meetings (e.g. regular, scheduled class sessions).
  - h. Feedback for student work.
  - i. Podcasts.
  - j. Instructor-prepared e-lectures or publisher-created e-lectures or materials (written, recorded, broadcast, etc.) that facilitate the "virtual equivalent" of the face-to-face class.
  - k. Virtual Office hours via the chat function in the course management system or other synchronous systems such as CCC Confer.
  - l. Screencasts.
  - m. Personalized feedback for student work.
  - n. Voicemail and telephone.

- o. Interactive mobile technologies (Chat, Text, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, etc.).
- p. Videoconferencing (Skype, CCC Confer, FaceTime).
- q. Live orientation or review sessions.
- r. Others as appropriate.