

Mt. San Jacinto College
Regular Effective Contact Policy

In response to Title 5 Section 55204: Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students. MSJC proposes the following Regular Effective Contact policy to address this requirement.

Regulations:

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

55200. Definition 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).

Guideline for Section 55202

This section emphasizes the extent to which course quality depends upon the full involvement of faculty in the design and application of DE courses. It discusses course quality standards for distance education and combines language formerly found in section 55207 and 55209 which it replaces. Language is added to clarify that normal course quality standards apply to any portion of a course conducted through distance education.

55202. Course Quality Standards.

The same standards of course quality shall be applied to any portion of a course conducted through distance education as are applied to traditional classroom courses, 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.

NOTE: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Section 70901, Education Code.

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 effective contact between instructor and students, and among students, 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. Regular effective contact is an academic and professional matter pursuant to sections 53200 et seq.

(b) 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.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 66700 and 70901, Education Code. Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code.

MSJC Regular Effective Contact Policy:

Title 5 & CCC DE Guidelines require colleges to develop a policy regarding regular effective contact that addresses “the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to teach a distance education (DE) course section or session”.

All DE courses at MSJC, whether hybrid or fully online will include regular effective contact as described below:

- **Initiated Interaction:** 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. Areas within the learning management system (LMS) shall be provided to allow for community building between students. Students shall be provided opportunities within the design of the class to interact with their instructors and other students. Instructors may also opt to use other appropriate tools that facilitate student to instructor and student to student interactions. Implementing a variety of

accessible and appropriate software tools, apps, and publisher resources to create interactions is also desirable. Some tools can be brought into the MSJC designated LMS and some external tools can be linked from the LMS.

All adopted tools must be accessible to all students.

- **Frequency of Contact:** The number of instructor contact hours per week shall be equivalent to the hours available for face-to-face students in the same or similar courses. Instructor to student contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure that regular effective contact is maintained not only over the course of each week, but also for the duration of the course. The quantity and frequency of instructor initiated announcements and response times for student initiated questions shall be established by each instructor. While communication should occur as is appropriate for the course, instructors are expected to be responsive to student inquiries within a 24-72 hour time frame excluding holidays. Faculty office hours are not included as fulfilling the regular effective contact requirements and are a separate requirement for full-time faculty members.
- **Establishing expectations:** A 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.
Within the syllabus instructors shall share their expectations of student participation in group and/or whole class discussions or other related activities developed to facilitate interaction between students, the content of the course and the instructor. Instructors are required to monitor the discussions and related activities to provide guidance and direction.
- **Managing unexpected instructor absence:** If an instructor must be out of contact for three or more days, excluding holidays, then the instructor will notify students in the announcements area of the course. The announcements must also include information regarding when students can expect regular effective contact to resume. If the time away will be more than three days, excluding holidays, then the department chair and appropriate dean shall be informed of the absence. A substitute instructor may be sought to assist students while the instructor is unavailable.

Required Types of Contact: MSJC DE course instructors, will, at a minimum, use the following resources to initiate contact with students:

- Content related discussion forums within the designated LMS including appropriate instructor participation.
- Weekly announcements posted within the designated LMS

- Timely feedback on student work, which may include comments and/or rubrics, used within the Grades area of the designated LMS.

DE course instructors will, at a minimum, use the following resources to allow students to initiate contact with the instructor and/or other students:

- Open ended discussion forum within the designated LMS with appropriate instructor participation
- Content related discussion forums within the designated LMS
- MSJC administered communication tools (such as email or the designated LMS communication tools)

Contact Considerations:

- Instructors may opt to use additional forms of communication to enhance regular effective contact opportunities, as mentioned in Section 55204 of Title 5. (e.g. group or individual meetings (virtual or f2f)), orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminars or study sessions, physical and/or virtual field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, text messaging, etc.
- Student record information should only be shared in accordance with AP 3721.

Approved by ETC and Academic Senate 11/2019