

Policies and Procedures Manual for Distance Learning

The policies and procedures described in this manual will be reviewed and updated as needed.

Last update 8/2012. *(Manual is currently under revision.)*

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Purpose	
Organization	
Objectives	
Distance Learning Definitions	3
Curriculum and Instruction	3
Instructional Quality	
Effective Online Instructional Design	
Approval of Distance Learning Courses and Curriculum	
Faculty Support	5
Training and Professional Development Opportunities	
Technical Support	
Library Resources	
Assistance with Copyright Procedures and Clearances	
Course Management Systems and Technical Considerations	
Compensation for Course Development and Instruction	
Student Support	7
Procedural Information Distributed to Online Students	
Minimum Technology Requirements	
Help Desk Services	
Advising Services	
Textbook Resources	
Library Resources	
Support for Students with Disabilities	
Institutional Resources	8
Budgeting	
Fees for Online Courses	
Procedures for Smaller than Expected Enrollment	
Student Learning Outcomes and Program Assessment	9
Appendix 1: Guidelines for Effective Teaching and Learning Online	
Appendix 2: Computer Competency Rubric	
Appendix 3: Distance Learning Agreement – 2009	

Introduction

Purpose: Clinton Community College (CCC) recognizes that there are important reasons for organizing the distance learning initiatives of the institution so that a well-coordinated program can be delivered. Inherent in the College's mission is providing access to higher education to all persons with the ability to benefit. In addition, one of the College's goals is aimed at "reaching out to non-traditional student populations and expanding their opportunities for higher education, and providing courses, programs, and scheduling activities and services which respond to various interests and needs." Providing online access to credit courses expands opportunities by offering "any time, any place" learning environments to those who cannot easily come to campus for a variety of reasons.

Organization: A coordinated effort is needed to provide adequate resources for faculty and specialized support services for distance learning students, to provide clear contact points for information and assistance, to maximize the use of College resources in a fiscally responsible manner, and to ensure consistent and fair policies and procedures related to faculty and students. A well-coordinated program also facilitates marketing and promotion strategies locally and regionally; and strengthens the College's image as a technologically strong institution and a quality provider of distance learning instruction.

The Distance Learning Program at CCC is coordinated through Academic Affairs with assistance and essential support services drawn from numerous other campus organizational units, including, but not limited to, the offices of the Learning Resource Center, Admissions, Registrar, Counseling/Advisement, Financial Aid, Bursar, Bookstore, Academic Assistance Center, and marketing staff. The Distance Learning Advisory Committee, appointed by the Vice President for Academic Affairs, has the responsibility of developing, reviewing and revising the policies and procedures in this manual. The manual has the approval of the Faculty Council, and the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Council reviews any curricular matters. A Distance Learning Coordinator who reports to the VPAA provides coordination of all facets of the DL Program. Ongoing evaluation of the DL Program is conducted through the College's regular assessment procedures.

Objectives: Since the mission of the Distance Learning Program is to deliver high-quality and affordable educational services to learners any time, any place, it is important to ensure that the academic quality of distance learning programs is a high priority. To help accomplish this objective, the program is committed to the principles set forth in the "Guidelines for Effective Teaching and Learning Online" (Appendix 1). Online/hybrid courses and programs undergo the same academic review and scrutiny as those offered on CCC's traditional campus. In addition, the College provides the same level of support services that faculty and students receive on campus. The program is fully integrated into the College's policies and procedures, consistent with the governance structure. The College has the administrative infrastructure (guidelines and policies for instruction), technology infrastructure (Internet access, computing/networking standards, help desk services), faculty support (including access to and training in a variety of instructional media, library and other required resources), and student

support services (advising, placement testing, library support, technical support) necessary to meet the needs of distance learning students.

Distance Learning Definitions

Types of distance learning formats can be viewed on a continuum, from totally online courses to those which use the web to enhance traditional face-to-face courses. Faculty who wish to use a course management system (CMS) in any of these ways must complete the training for online course development.

Asynchronous courses are defined as those for which all learning and assessment activities are conducted online. No on-campus time is required for the students. **Hybrid courses** are those courses for which some percentage of learning and assessment activities are conducted online. Combined time spent on coursework online and on campus is equivalent to seat time and out-of-class homework of the same course taught on campus. **Web-enhanced courses** use a course management system to deliver limited outside activities and homework. No reduction in seat time is given.

Curriculum and Instruction

Instructional Quality

Faculty who have agreed to develop an online/hybrid course must complete "new faculty" training sessions related to effective online teaching/learning and related to the course management system. Faculty must also complete training to stay current with new or revised course management systems.

In every case possible, the College is committed to staffing online courses with full-time faculty. When full-time faculty are not available, qualified adjunct faculty may be hired to develop and teach online/hybrid courses. Academic divisions will retain control of faculty selection for their courses. Unless an exception is agreed upon between the VPAA, Distance Learning Coordinator, and the academic department chair, full-time and part-time faculty must have experience teaching the course in a traditional classroom before developing the course for online delivery.

Effective Online Instructional Design

Successful online courses will use a variety of teaching strategies that take advantage of the unique resources of the Internet and are specially adapted to encourage student interaction through the online delivery system. To ensure the quality and effectiveness of online/hybrid courses, faculty should review the document, "Guidelines for Effective Teaching and Learning Online" (Appendix 1) and adhere to the items listed there.

Since CCC asynchronous courses are especially designed to accommodate students "at a distance," they should be planned and designed so they can be successfully completed (including all examinations) without requiring

students to travel to the CCC campus. Hybrid courses, in which one or more campus visits may be required, must clearly be identified as such during the initial administrative approval process for the course. In addition, steps should be taken prior to each registration period to alert students to this requirement through notations made in the class schedule and in any promotional literature.

Approval of Distance Learning Courses and Curriculum

Courses considered for online/hybrid delivery come from approved courses that are already a part of the curriculum. Even though proposed online/hybrid courses have already received curricular approval at some time in the past and are included in the College catalog, they must go through a formal approval process for online development. Online/hybrid courses require approval by the originating division and the Vice President for Academic Affairs in consultation with the Distance Learning Coordinator. In addition, all courses approved for online/hybrid delivery must be offered through the CCC Distance Learning Program. The approval of online/hybrid courses involves four steps as outlined below:

Step One. Prior to developing any course for online delivery, the instructor must seek approval from the division out of which the course will be offered. The division considers the appropriateness of the subject matter for the online environment, and may recommend a hybrid course instead of a totally asynchronous course. The division should also consult the distance learning initiatives in CCC's Strategic Plan to understand how the proposed course complements the initiatives.

Step Two. After the originating division approves the course, the Division Coordinator submits the request to the Distance Learning Coordinator and the VPAA who address scheduling, viability of the proposal, and its relevance to the DL strategic plan.

Step Three. The faculty member developing the online course meets with the Distance Learning Coordinator to discuss the "Guidelines for Effective Teaching and Learning Online" (Appendix 1) and training levels needed to meet computer competency (Computer Competency Rubric, Appendix 2). The DL Coordinator also discusses training workshops for course development and delivery, support services for faculty and online students, copyright approval requirements and procedures, and contingencies in the case of enrollment shortfalls.

Step Four. The Distance Learning Agreement is an agreement between the faculty and Clinton Community College. The DL Agreement, which is used for all CCC online/hybrid courses, specifies course ownership, released time, training, and other compensation. Developers of online courses agree to follow all CCC distance-learning guidelines (Distance Learning Agreement, Appendix 3).

Faculty Support

It is important to recognize that the support of distance learning is different than that for traditional courses. To develop, market, and implement online courses as effectively as possible, a wide range of College resources must be used. The conversion of a traditional course to an online course is a team effort where the faculty member serves as the content expert. In this process, the faculty member receives assistance from an instructional designer in designing the course so that it can take full advantage of the unique characteristics of Internet delivery. The faculty member may also draw on media and graphic resources facilitated by a media production staff, and may rely on other support provided by Network and Information Services (N&IS). Some online courses target specific student population groups, which may require specialized marketing initiatives.

Training and Professional Development Opportunities

In keeping with the College's instructional technology goals, faculty are encouraged to expand and strengthen their instructional technology skills. In addition, recognizing that the development/delivery of online courses involves a significant time commitment, compensation is provided in accordance with the Faculty Association Contract. The College also provides ongoing faculty development opportunities related to the use of instructional technology tools.

Technical Support

Through a Help Desk housed in the N&IS Center, faculty will have access to a wide range of technical support services, including some emergency services after normal business hours. The SUNY Learning Network also provides help desk services to faculty

Library Resources

A wide range of electronic resources is available from the CCC Library for use by faculty. These include electronic access to the Library's catalog, reference resources, course reserve materials, and licensed commercial citation and full-text databases.

Assistance with Copyright Procedures and Clearances

New technologies, especially those related to computers, computer networks, and the Internet, raise novel and sometimes confusing copyright issues. Nevertheless, all College employees are required to abide by state and federal copyright laws.

Faculty members who use copyright materials bear legal responsibility for the use of such materials and for understanding the law. The college has the responsibility to inform faculty of current copyright law. Although the faculty member has the responsibility to be sure that written copyright permissions are obtained, the DL Coordinator is available to provide assistance in obtaining required copyright permissions for online courses. In

order to be assured of staff and financial assistance, faculty members must comply with the deadlines required for final identification of materials needing copyright approvals, and be sure that the division has approved the total cost of copyright fees.

Course Management Systems and Technical Considerations

Numerous technical support and computer software issues need to be taken into consideration when developing and implementing a quality, user-friendly online/hybrid course. Many course management systems exist, and the technology is changing rapidly. Two important criteria for determining which CMS is most effective are consistency of appearance and use for students, and the ease and efficiency of training faculty. Whenever possible, it is desirable for online students to avoid having to learn a new CMS for each course they take. Secondly, CCC staff provides training, design, and technical support for faculty, as well as ongoing technical support for online students. In order to do this most effectively, it is important to limit the number of CMS's that are being supported at any one time.

The Distance Learning Advisory Committee determines which CMS is acceptable for CCC online/hybrid use based on an ongoing evaluation of CMS and new software programs recommended for consideration. When faculty use the CMS approved by the Distance Learning Advisory Committee, they can be assured that it has successfully passed a thorough review process, that training will be available for its use, and that technical support will be available during the course development and implementation process.

Compensation for Course Development and Instruction

Services to be provided by the faculty member and the College, and the respective rights and responsibilities of the faculty member are delineated in a Distance Learning Agreement between the faculty and the College (Appendix 3). Modified versions of the DL Agreement will also be used for adjunct faculty employed to develop and teach an online/hybrid course. Matters of compensation are negotiable and are set forth in the Faculty Association Contract.

Student Support

Procedural Information Distributed to Distance Learning Students

It is important that online students receive procedural and policy information that is consistent, reliable, and tailored to meet their needs. Students experience difficulties if they receive information from multiple College offices, especially if some of that information is incomplete or in conflict with information from other sources.

As part of the CCC Distance Learning Program, the DL Coordinator provides online students with several information pieces designed to clarify College policies and procedures and to inform distance learning students of special resources that are available. Some of these special resources include orientation materials, several informational letters, and other materials which attempt to give students a broader view of the College and help them succeed in online courses.

Minimum Technology Requirements

Unless specific exceptions are granted, faculty are required to develop and deliver online/hybrid courses that can be successfully implemented by using the minimum technology requirements of the Course Management System. The College must inform students of these minimum configurations prior to their registering for online courses. Any specialized software needed for a particular course must be published online, so students are aware of the requirement. Current minimum technology requirements are found in Appendix 4.

Help Desk Services

The SUNY Learning Network provides help desk services for SLN courses.

Advising Services

Matriculated CCC online/hybrid students have access to all services available to any CCC student through e-mail, toll-free phone service, or face-to-face contact.

Textbook Resources

CCC online/hybrid students are provided with virtual bookstore services designed to meet the special needs of online students. Services include online and toll-free textbook ordering, shipping within 24 hours when payment is made by credit card, and online payment, refund, and book buyback options.

Library Resources

The CCC Learning Resource Center provides equal access to the Library's electronic resources, including the catalog, reference resources, course reserve materials and licensed commercial citation and full-text databases. Distance learning students may arrange to borrow print material through the Library web site.

Support for Students with Disabilities

CCC is committed to ensuring an equitable academic experience for students with disabilities and will be responsive to requests for reasonable accommodations, regardless of the type of instructional delivery system being used. Web pages of CCC online/hybrid courses are developed so that they are accessible for students with disabilities in accordance with College policies and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines.

Institutional Resources

The College has a well-defined budget and financial plan that provides for necessary and appropriate equipment, regular faculty training, and other resources essential to the continued effectiveness of the Distance Learning Program. This plan includes frequent technological updates. The College provides the training and technical expertise to maintain a quality distance-learning program.

Budgeting

The VP for Academic Affairs serves as financial administrator for online/hybrid courses, including approving distance learning budgets and providing an accounting of program activity. The VPAA consults with the DL Coordinator in order to construct a budget and for assistance in maintaining fiscal accountability.

Fees for Online/Hybrid Courses

In order to support the cost of offering online/hybrid courses, additional fees are assessed on a per-credit-hour fee basis. All fees for online/hybrid courses must be consistent with Board of Trustees policy. For a list of current fees, see the Clinton Community College Tuition and Fee Schedule.

Procedures for Smaller-than-Expected Enrollments

Enrollment minimums are established for each course and may vary from course to course. Curricular, pedagogical, and financial considerations inform the decisions about minimums. For new courses, these enrollment minimums are established during the course approval process. Enrollment minimums for courses that have been offered previously are established prior to the course being advertised. A contingency plan is developed to address cancellation decisions in the event that course enrollments turn out to be smaller than anticipated. If course enrollments are marginal, a major effort is made by Academic Affairs to avoid canceling the course. However, in cases where enrollments fall far short of expectations, or a pattern of marginal or low enrollments has developed over time, the course may be cancelled unless some form of external funding is available. The VPAA and Division Coordinator, in consultation with the DL Coordinator and the course instructor, will make a final cancellation decision.

When an academic division has agreed to offer a CCC online/hybrid course which is intended to function as part of a complete degree or certificate program, the division accepts an obligation to see that the course is offered as scheduled. If the appropriate academic division cannot offer the online/hybrid course as originally planned, the Office of Academic Affairs then has the option to work with the academic division to locate another instructor with online training to teach the course. The faculty member identified to teach the course must be approved by the appropriate academic division.

Student Learning Outcomes and Program Assessment

In accordance with the "Guidelines for Effective Teaching and Learning Online" (Appendix 1), all distance learning courses and degree programs are assessed and evaluated on a regular basis. All CCC online instructors are expected to support and assist with data collection designed to evaluate academic rigor, educational effectiveness, and student satisfaction.

Distance learning courses and degree programs undergo the same assessment procedures as other courses and programs on campus, including the SUNY General Education Assessment Plan, regular Program Review processes, Middle States Accreditation Self-Study, and general curriculum reviews.

Individual courses are evaluated each semester in several ways. Students evaluate the course and instruction, using an evaluation tool chosen by the instructor or division. The results of these evaluations are used to improve the courses. In addition, learning outcomes are examined and compared to those of on-campus sections of the same course.

Student satisfaction with distance learning in general is evaluated using a common instrument across all course offerings. Data are gathered and reported by the Distance Learning Coordinator. The reported outcomes are used to guide strategic planning of distance learning initiatives and to inform training of new and experienced faculty.

Approved by Faculty Council

02/06/03

Updated 08/11

Appendix 1

Guidelines for Effective Teaching and Learning Online

General

1. Direct students with technical questions to the appropriate help desk.
2. Make minimal use of e-mail in and outside of the course. Instruct students to ask questions about the coursework in the public spaces of the course.
3. Create a variety of places in each module for students to interact with you and each other.
4. Designate a private space for students to discuss personal matters with you.
5. Use a consistent design throughout your course.
6. Create course documents as though you are speaking to students, not about them.
7. Develop clearly defined goals and objectives.
8. Be very literal and concrete in your assignments, and tell students how they'll know when they have completed them.
9. Create learning activities with repeated instructions.
10. Let students know when and how often you'll be logging on to the course.
11. Provide feedback quickly.
12. Have your course completely developed before the semester begins.
13. Have a test user who is not familiar with your course review it before it opens.

Developing Learning Activities

Discussions:

1. Make discussion responses a significant part of the overall course grade.
2. Provide structure for the discussions.
3. Provide clear guidelines and models for quality discussion responses.
4. Guide discussions, but don't answer questions outright. (This often kills a discussion.)
5. Keep the discussions focused.
6. Provide discussion-grade feedback to help students improve their performance.

Lectures:

1. Use lectures sparingly, to add information to the readings, not to replace them.
2. Lecture documents should be no more than 2 screens in length.
3. Break up large blocks of text with section headers, keywords, graphics, etc.
4. Do not simply place your lecture notes online.

Other Learning Activities:

1. Develop a variety of learning activities, taking advantage of the functionality of the course management system.
 - a. small group projects
 - b. peer critique workshops
 - c. self-quizzes
 - d. lab reports
 - e. student-led discussions
2. Use tests and quizzes sparingly. These assessments do not function online the same way they do in the classroom.
3. Create writing assignments that require rough drafts before the final draft is submitted.

Pacing of the Course

1. Create an "icebreaker" first module to get students familiar with each other and the kinds of activities the course will require.
2. Keep later modules of the course closed to keep students in the current discussions and activities for full participation.

3. Allow sufficient time, (at least a week, usually two) for discussions to fully develop.

Getting Started

1. Strongly encourage students to create a profile to begin forming a sense of community for the class.
2. Welcome each student individually via course email.
3. Require students to complete the orientation or tutorial provided by the course management system.
4. Use the first week to familiarize students with the course functions and any software you are using.
5. Create opening week activities that emphasize community building rather than course content.
6. Post announcements and change “newsflashes” frequently.

Appendix 2

**Guiding Rubric For Clinton Community College
Online Course Developer's Computer Literacy**

	Not Meeting (1 point)	Approaching (2 points)	Meeting (3 points)	Exceeding (4 points)
Word-processing	No use of a word-processing application.	Create a text document that demonstrates the appropriate use of the following functions and/or features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Font size • Margins • Spacing • Save • Print 	Create a text document that demonstrates the appropriate use of the following functions and/or features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Font size • Margins • Spacing • Save • Print • Font style • Text alignment • Spell checker • Page numbers 	Create a text document that demonstrates the appropriate use of the following functions and/or features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Font size • Margins • Spacing • Save • Print • Font style • Text alignment • Spell checker • Page numbers • Other (e.g. tables, graphics, envelopes, labels, etc.)
Presentation	No use of a presentation application.	Create a presentation file that demonstrates the appropriate use of the following functions and/or features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save • Print handouts 	Create a presentation file that demonstrates the appropriate use of the following functions and/or features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save • Print handouts • Clear text • Spell checker • Slide numbers • Visual aids (charts, tables, graphics, or diagrams) 	Create a presentation file that demonstrates the appropriate use of the following functions and/or features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save • Print handouts • Clear text • Spell checker • Slide numbers • Visual aids (charts, tables, graphics, or diagrams) • Other (e.g., audio, video, etc.)

GUIDING Rubric For SUNY CourseSpace Faculty Developer’s COMPUTER LITERACY (Continued)

	Not Meeting (1 point)	Approaching (2 points)	Meeting (3 points)	Exceeding (4 points)
E-mail	No use of an e-mail application.	Create an e-mail message that demonstrates the appropriate use of the following functions and/or features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To, From, and Subject fields • Send • Save • Print 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create e-mail messages that demonstrate the appropriate use of the following functions and/or features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To, From, and Subject fields • Send • Save • Print • Font size • Spell checker • Reply • Reply to all • Forward • Attachment 	Create e-mail messages that demonstrate the appropriate use of the following functions and/or features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To, From, and Subject fields • Send • Save • Print • Font size • Spell checker • Reply • Reply to all • Forward • Attachment • Other (e.g., listserv, background, signature, address book, etc.)
Web-browsing	No use of a Web-browsing application.	Access Web pages and demonstrate the appropriate use of the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address field • Print 	Access Web pages and demonstrate the appropriate use of the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address field • Print • Save files, images or Web pages • Favorites (or bookmarks) • Search engines/directories 	Access Web pages and demonstrate the appropriate use of the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address field • Print • Save files, images or Web pages • Favorites (or bookmarks) • Search engines/directories • Other (e.g., chat, threaded discussion, etc.)

Scoring and Standard

Subcategory scores will be computed to form an average score.

Exceeds standard: an average score of 3.5 or higher

Meets standard: an average score of 3 or higher but less than 3.5

Approaches standard: an average score of 2 or higher but less than 3

Does not meet standard: an average score of less than 2

Appendix 3

Distance Learning Agreement

1. The faculty member agrees to participate in course development training, including technology training and curriculum design workshops and seminars. The College provides any direct cost of training.
2. The faculty member agrees to conduct course evaluations at the end of each semester and to participate in any research or assessment of distance learning outcomes.
3. A faculty member will be compensated in the following ways for development and teaching of online or hybrid courses:
 - a. The faculty member will receive a course load reduction or overload pay equal to the number of credits of the new course being developed. No additional compensation will be paid for revising a course or offering the course in subsequent semesters.
 - b. A \$375 lump sum stipend is provided to online faculty each semester (Fall or Spring) or academic session (Winter or Summer) they teach one or more online courses. Faculty members are responsible for purchasing and maintaining their own computer, operating system, virus protection, system upgrades and internet service. Additional course-specific software will be purchased by CCC for an online faculty member through the same process followed for on-campus instructors. Online faculty are provided the same technical support provided to on-campus instructors, including assistance from an instructional designer, the faculty help desk, media support, and NIS.”
 - c. Compensation for teaching of the online or hybrid course will be equal to the faculty member’s regular teaching salary and will be calculated as part of the faculty member’s load or overload.
4. Class size for the first-time online or hybrid instructor will be capped at 15. All subsequent distance format courses taught by that instructor will be capped at 20.
5. If a newly-developed course is cancelled by the College before it is taught, the faculty member will still be compensated for developing the course. When the faculty member offers the course in a subsequent semester, it is understood that no further compensation for development will be paid.
6. On-campus office hours may be reduced when a faculty member teaches asynchronous or hybrid courses. The reduction will be based on the number of on-campus/online credits being taught. For example, a faculty member teaching 4 courses on campus and 1 course online would have the required on-campus office hours reduced from 5 to 4.