



Distance Education

Faculty Handbook

Fullerton College

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The mission of the Distance Education Department is to support the success of Fullerton College students who use educational technology in face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses

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About this Handbook

The Fullerton College Distance Education Handbook has been developed based on the recommendations of the Distance Education Advisory Committee. The goals of this handbook are to:

- Articulate the mission and goals of the Distance Education program, especially as they pertain to the Fullerton College Educational Master Plan.
- Provide technical and pedagogical support and resources for faculty teaching online and hybrid courses.
- Furnish information about training and mentoring for online and hybrid course delivery methods.
- Inform faculty about the mandatory policies and procedures (Title IV, V, Ed. Code, ADA, etc.) that relate to Distance Education courses.
- Define best practices in Distance Education and how those should be incorporated into course design and delivery.
- Offer comprehensive resources for ongoing faculty development.

Mission

The mission of the Distance Education is to support the success of Fullerton College students and faculty who use educational technology in face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses.

Preparation to Teaching Online

FC Definitions and Terminology

Fullerton College offers courses in three modes: in-person, online, and hybrid. For the purpose of this handbook, the two modes that use online technology are defined below.

Online

The class is conducted ENTIRELY and does not require in-person, on-campus class meetings.

OR

The class is conducted primarily online and may require some in-person, on-campus meetings or testing.

Hybrid

The above course requires students to meet on campus and has pre-arranged online coursework

OR

The course requires students to meet on campus every week at the day and time listed in addition to completing online coursework

Curriculum Approval

All courses that use distance education as a modality for instruction in lieu of face-to-face instruction must go through the curriculum approval process by completing a DE Addendum and have it approved by the curriculum committee.

Approval of distance education addendums follows the Fullerton College curriculum procedures.

Training Process

In order to teach distanced education courses, faculty must receive sufficient training to meet Title 5 requirements, particularly in the areas of regular effective contact and accessibility. Training can be achieved by the following means:

Online Teaching Certification

Fullerton College has five different options for faculty to receive online teaching certification. All options have been approved by the Distance Education Advisory Committee.

Option 1: Equivalency

If you wish to submit materials that demonstrate completing an Online Teaching Certificate from another college or educational organization, download and fill out this [OTEC form](#). Directions for submission are on the form.

Option 2: FC Online Teaching Certificate

The [Fullerton College Online Teaching Certificate](#) builds faculty capacity to use Canvas—the Fullerton College Learning Management System (LMS)—according to the key guiding principles of online pedagogy and also includes training in regular and effective contact and accessibility.

Option 3: Online Learning Consortium Course Path

Enroll in the two approved courses: [Fundamentals: Increasing Interaction & Engagement](#) and [Designing with Accessibility in Mind](#). Refer to the [FC Online Learning Consortium Institutional Membership page](#) for additional information. Faculty can be reimbursed for these courses. Contact [Staff Development](#) for more information.

Option 4: @ONE Course Path

Enroll in the two approved courses: [10-10-10 Communication that Matters](#) & [Creating Accessible Course Content](#). Faculty can be reimbursed for these courses. Contact [Staff Development](#) for more information.

Option 5: ACTE CTE Course Path

Offerings certified by the Association for Career & Technical Education (ACTE) were researched to select courses that cover all requirements for the Fullerton College Online Teaching Certificate Equivalency.

Required courses: [EL 103 – Teaching Online: A Student-Centered Approach](#); [EL 111 – Assistive Technologies for the Online Learner](#); [EL 113 – Active Learning in an Online Environment](#); [EL 201 – Online Communication: Engaging & Retaining Online Learners](#). Contact [Staff Development](#) for sign up information.

Recertification

After obtaining initial online teaching certification through one of the options listed above, faculty must do the following every three years to remain certified:

- Three hours of professional development focused on online teaching is required every three years.
- Professional development options can include:
 - Fullerton College-sponsored professional development

- @One course(s)
- Third-party professional development that may be approved on a case-by-case basis by the DE Director and DEDR

Faculty will be notified when it is time to recertify and will be added to the OTC Recertification Canvas shell in order to complete recertification.

Faculty Preparation

Technological Readiness

Faculty members who wish to teach online should not only possess basic proficiency with computer skills but should also be acquainted with and feel comfortable using more advanced programs and applications. The following technical skills, listed least to most complex, are examples of what would be recommended to teach online and hybrid courses.

Computer skills

- File management
- Using multimedia
- Audio recording (microphone)

LMS Specific

- Creating a basic LMS page
- Managing content to include assignments, assessments, modules, and discussions
- Creating accessible content
- Importing and exporting content
- Creating and manage multimedia files
- Using a publisher plugin

Presentation

- Create, edit, and save presentations
- Close caption recorded presentations

Software

- Adding multimedia to presentation
- Recording audio narration for presentation
- Understanding of word processing software
- Creating accessible .pdf and PowerPoint files

Email

- Sending and receiving email
- Attaching documents and images
- Creating and managing contact groups

Internet

- Understanding of and ability to use different browsers
- Familiarity with social media applications

- Understanding the use of online databases

Pedagogical Readiness

The appropriate pedagogy for a course is determined by the Division, Department and Discipline faculty respecting the individual faculty's rights of academic freedom. The following pedagogical skills may be considered appropriate to teach online and hybrid courses:

Fundamental Principles

- Understand the differences between face-to-face and online instruction
- Utilize learner-centered pedagogy where concepts of interactivity, instructor-led facilitation and feedback are core elements
- Create learning activities that actively engage students and which encourage top-down cognitive learning
- Accommodate a variety of learning styles and strategies in both content delivery and learning activities

Management & Interaction

- Follow guidelines for regular effective contact with students in both synchronous and asynchronous modalities
- Communicate and maintain learning objectives
- Cultivate and develop learning communities through group activities
- Create and maintain an atmosphere of trust
- Communicate clear participation requirements, facilitate and monitor interaction accordingly
- Lead discussions rooted in inquiry that challenge students to question and develop their own conclusions
- Provide ongoing personalized feedback and suggestions for improving student performance
- Make additional resources available for learning
- Use culturally inclusive and responsive practices in all class interactions

Technology Integration

- Identify the most appropriate technologies for content and learning outcomes
- Determine the modalities that are best used for course communication, discussion and assessment
- Present content that is easily navigable and accessible to all learners
- Integrate multimedia content that meets the learning styles and needs of all students as well as accessibility requirements
- Encourage cooperative learning through activities that utilize current technology

Assessment

- Provide multiple opportunities for ongoing authentic assessment that measure both student understanding of course content and participation
- Ensure that assessment tools are linked to learning objectives
- Use a variety of asynchronous assessment techniques in which students are able to demonstrate higher-order critical thinking skills
- Employ multiple assessment strategies to maintain active student engagement

- Make use of data from the assessment tools in the LMS to evaluate the validity and reliability of the various assessment instruments
- Incorporate surveys to receive regular constructive student feedback and integrate it into the course structure
- Understand the unique challenges that affect academic integrity and student authentication in the online environment
- Provide rubrics to support student learning and aid in reaching set outcomes

Accessibility

- Follow Universal Design for Learning best practices
- Create or modify all course content so that it is accessible to students with disabilities
- Design the course layout so that it is easily navigable and readable and has alternate options for students with special needs

Emergency Shift to Online Learning

Occasionally, in times of emergency such as a pandemic, classes will need to shift to fully online or partially online with synchronous virtual meetings. In this case, faculty will need to follow District instructions and guidelines. General guidelines are as follows:

- Course content will be delivered through the campus approved LMS
- Faculty will not need to have full online teaching certification
- Faculty will need to comply with Title 5 guidelines for regular and effective contact and accessibility
- Faculty are highly encouraged to complete the Title 5 training offered through Distance Education

Principles of Online Learning

Fundamental teaching and learning standards for undergraduate education also apply to teaching online and hybrid courses. This means that the following components, based on California Community Colleges Online Education Initiative, should guide Distance Education courses.

Components of Online Learning

There are five components that FC uses as a basis for successful distance education courses. Links to supporting documentation can be found on the [Distance Education Principles](#) webpage.

Component 1: Course Design

Course design addresses elements of instructional design. Course design includes such elements as structure of the course, learning objectives, organization of content, and instructional strategies that foster student-centered learning.

Component 2: Regular and Effective Contact

Interaction and Collaboration can take many forms. These criteria place emphasis on the type and amount of interaction and collaboration within an online environment. “Interaction” denotes communication between and among learners and instructors, synchronously or asynchronously. “Collaboration” is a subset of interaction and refers specifically to those activities in which groups are working interdependently toward a shared result. Students should have a sense of belonging to a group,

rather than each student perceiving himself/herself studying independently. This can be accomplished by using Discussions, Collaborations, Groups, shared documents, or other Canvas/third-party integrations that facilitate collaborative learning.

Regular effective contact is a California requirement for distance learning which states that instructors must initiate contact with students, individually and as a whole class, on a regular and timely basis both to ensure the quality of instruction and to verify performance and participation standards. This can be accomplished by class announcements, individual assignment comment feedback, “Message Students Who,” or other communication tools.

Component 3: Assessment

Online assessments should measure progress towards learning outcomes and provide feedback to students and instructor. Instructors should use assessments as an ongoing means of measuring and assessing student learning.

Component 4: Learner Support

Distance education instructors should engage all types of learners by providing content and assessments that respect and accommodate the different needs, learning styles and strategies of each student. In addition, instructors should address the support resources available to students taking the course. Such resources may be accessible within or external to the course environment.

Component 5: Accessibility

Instructors should make certain that their courses meet all the necessary accessibility requirements (508 compliance). They should also create course content and assessments that are user friendly in terms of technology and provide alternate means of access to the course material should there be problems with the Learning Management System. This can be achieved by using tools on [the Accessibility at Fullerton College webpage](#).

Title 5

Title 5 refers to the Official California Code of Regulations governing the state of California. The section covering Education is called Title 5.

Title 5 Section 55200: Definition and Application

What this means at FC: This section provides a general definition of Distance Education. At Fullerton College, the term Distance Education applies to online and hybrid but not to web-enhanced courses. Section 55200 also specifies that all Distance Education content and delivery need to be accessible to all learners.

Title 5 Section 55202: Course Quality Standards

What this means at FC: Online and hybrid courses should have the same course quality standards as face-to-face instruction. Instructors are encouraged to use the [CVC-OEI Rubric for Online Instruction](#) to develop, teach, modify, and reevaluate their courses to ensure that best practices in instructional design and implementation are followed.

Title 5 Section 55204: Instructor Contact

What this means at FC: Instructors need to make certain that there are measures for instructor-initiated regular effective contact incorporated into online and hybrid course design and delivery. Regular effective contact means that instructors must keep in contact with students in a consistent and timely basis (at least weekly) to both ensure the quality of instruction and verify their performance and participation status.

Title 5 Section 55206: Separate Course Approval

What this means at FC: All online and hybrid courses need to be approved by the Curriculum Committee via a separate approval process.

Title 5 Section 55205: Faculty Selection and Workload

What this means at FC: All faculty teaching Distance Education courses should be trained in best practices for online and hybrid instruction. This means that faculty teaching Distance Education should complete one of the options for [Online Teaching Certification](#).

Assigning a general “STAFF” to any Distance Education course section in the schedule of classes should only occur under extenuating circumstances and according to the right of assignment of Deans at the college per the United Faculty contract.

The LMS and Distance Education Best Practices

The Learning Management System (LMS)

Fullerton College has selected Canvas as the campus approved LMS. Faculty who teach online or hybrid course(s) will use the college’s approved LMS to conform with student privacy issues. Canvas has a robust collection of [guides and videos](#) that support faculty and students.

OEI Rubric

The Distance Education Advisory Committee chose to use the [OEI Course Design Rubric](#) as a guide for online instructors developing their online course(s). It also serves as a valuable tool for current online instructors to assess their course design to determine whether they meet existing regulations and accreditation requirements. Since the Course Design Rubric has been implemented at a large majority of the California Community Colleges, we believe it has been strongly vetted as an evaluation tool.

Faculty are encouraged to compare their courses to the OEI Course Design Rubric to evaluate course design and pedagogy. We encourage full adherence to all sections of the OEI Course Design Rubric with an emphasis on “exemplary” examples and practices in the areas of accessibility and regular and effective contact.

Regular and Effective Contact

Establishing and maintaining regular effective contact is an important aspect of delivering an online and hybrid course. It is not only a Title 5 requirement but is also a practice that encourages and facilitates student-centered instruction and increases success on student learning outcomes. The design and facilitation of communication activities are responsive to the variety of cultures and communication styles in the learning community.

Types of Contact

Instructor-Student

Examples of Instructor-Student contact:

- Course announcements
- Messaging via the LMS
- Personalized feedback
- Discussion boards
- Chat/IM
- Videoconferencing/Skype/Zoom
- Phone/voicemail

Student-Student

Examples of Student-Student contact:

- Messaging via the LMS Discussion boards
- Collaborative projects: group blogs, wikis, assignments
- Chat/IM
- Pronto Messenger
- Canvas Chats
- Conference Chats
- Discussion boards
- Emails
- Group projects
- Group Work
- Peer reviews

Student-Content

Examples of Student-Content contact:

- Modules on the LMS
- Lectures (recorded/streaming)
- Podcasts/webinars/screencasts
- Videoconferencing/TechConnect Zoom
- Discussion boards

Student-Interface

Examples of Student-Interface contact:

- Computer hardware
- Internet browsers
- Software applications
- Modules on the LMS

Syllabus Requirements

All faculty members must provide students with a course syllabus specific to the course. The syllabus is an agreement with the students in the class. A clear and detailed syllabus will lead to fewer misunderstandings. Instructors often include detailed descriptions of assignments and rubrics for evaluation. A course syllabus is required and available to students the first day of class. Faculty must submit a copy of their respective course syllabi to their division office.

Syllabus Contents

Since the online syllabus is the main source of information about the course, it should include a greater amount of detail including the following:

- Expected response time from professor (1-2 business days as a response time is a suggestion)
- Information about course assignments, course schedule, and texts
- Information about the Learning Management System
- Introduction to the tools used within the Learning Management System
- Guidelines for class participation and grading criteria
- Important dates during the semester
- Course materials

Drop policy

Your drop policy must be stated in your course syllabus. This drop policy should also include when to drop the course without receiving a “W”/Withdrawal on the transcript. Students who do not show engagement on or before the census should be dropped as no shows.

Examples of drop policies:

- Students must logon during the first week of classes or they will be dropped for non-attendance.
- Students must complete a check-in exercise or participate in the Week #1 discussion board by (day determined by instructor) or they will be dropped.
- Students must participate on the course site with discussion board posts, online quiz submissions, project submissions or other online interactions for that week (blogs, wikis, chat, discussions). If two consecutive weeks of non-participation is observed by the instructor, the student may be dropped.
- Students must drop/withdraw classes by the appropriate deadline date through myGateway in order to not receive a “W” on their transcripts.

Please note:

- Faculty may not keep a student enrolled in a course if there is no academic engagement and regular and substantive interaction.
- Faculty should attempt to contact students who have stopped all academically related activities to explain that they will be dropped unless they reengage in substantive assignments within the defined time period.
- Login statistics, such as “Last Access”, are not considered evidence of substantive student participation.

Course Expectations

A best practice is to set clear expectations for students and faculty. Here is an example:

What I Expect from You

To be successful in this course, you are expected to:

- Complete the **Course Contract** by Friday of the first week.
- Read the entire **Course Orientation** section. Ask questions if you are confused about anything.
- Consistently check **Announcements**, your school email account, and Canvas Inbox.
- Review the **Calendar** for due dates.
- Participate in **Discussions** (post weekly and respond to your classmates).
- **Submit** your own work that's been thoughtfully completed. Proofread for errors in spelling and grammar.
- **Communicate** with your instructor with any problems or confusion well in advance of the due date.

What You Can Expect from Me

As your instructor, I will

- Communicate to you via your school email address, announcements, and Canvas Inbox.
- Respond to your email or phone message within 1-2 business days.
- Monitor all discussions and provide feedback to the entire class where needed at least weekly.
- Provide individual feedback on assignments/papers/projects within one week of the due date (or as appropriate for course).
- Work with you so you will have a successful learning experience in this course!

Course Materials

The materials used in your course should be included in the course syllabus. All course materials should be designed to be accessible to students who are visually or hearing impaired. This may include captioned videos, alternative text for images, the use of Headings, and properly formatted tables and lists. Course materials come in many forms: work sheets, traditional books, e-packs, or open education resources (OER). Particular care in terms of accessibility should be taken when using selecting e-packs and OER. You can read more about selecting or adopting OER at the [OER guide](#) on the Library website.

Office Hours

Your office hours and mode of interaction should be stated in your syllabus. Online classes should offer an online means of attendance.

Best Practices to Consider

- Send a Welcome Letter one to two weeks before the first day of class. Core elements to include are:
 - Welcome to student
 - Instructor contact information
 - Class specifications
 - Course materials

- Computer software requirements
- College and course policies
- Accessing the LMS
- Student readiness and time commitment
- Require a check-in activity generated in the LMS to be completed the first week. Some examples of check-in activities are:
 - Posting to an introduction forum
 - Creating an LMS profile with an avatar
 - Taking a syllabus quiz
 - Completing an online readiness quiz
- Include a course agreement using a survey or email that ensures students understand course expectations.

Accessibility and 508 Compliance

To ensure that all students have the same opportunity, Online/Hybrid courses must be designed to provide “built-in” accommodation, known as Universal Design. This means ALL instructional materials and resources must be accessible to “industry standard” assistive computer technology commonly used by students with disabilities.

Minimum requirements include:

- Canvas materials utilize Headers and text.
- All documents (doc, docx, pdf, pptx) to be set with Header and Styles.
- All video must be Closed Captioned.
- All audio must have a transcript.
- All images need ALT (alternative text) tags.

Fullerton College is committed to the idea that accessibility is everyone’s responsibility. Responsibility for accessibility is neither “mine” nor “yours”; it is *ours*. The information, tips, and tutorials on the [Accessibility](#) page of the Distance Education website will guide you toward building accessibility into your courses and day-to-day work.

Section 508 addresses the purchasing and creating of accessible course materials and media and applies to an online environment. Meeting Section 508 guidelines is a campus-wide responsibility. Instructors should be familiar with Section 508 requirements and use resources inside and outside of the College to avoid violations. Some common problems are missing ALT tags for pictures, using text color to indicate differentiation, and linking to outside sites that are not Section 508 compliant. Affirm that links to videos and “outside” media provide closed captioning.