



Academic Policy

Policy Type:	Distance Learning Courses
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Office Responsible:	Academic Dean
Reviewing Committee:	Academic Council
Related Policies:	NA
Related Laws:	HLC – Accreditation Requirements for Distance Delivery

Policy Summary:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and structure for development and delivery of Distance Learning (DL) at JC.

Scope: This policy applies to all College departments, programs, faculty and staff involved in DL-mediated instruction.

Definitions:

Distance Education: As defined by the Higher Learning Commission, Distance Education is education where the instructor(s) and student(s) are physically separated and that use the Internet, television broadcast formats, audio conferencing and other media along with the aforementioned media to support regular and substantive interaction between the student(s) and instructor(s).

Regular and Substantive Interaction: Regular and Substantive Interaction is required in Distance Education as a regular scheduled part of the learning “commensurate” with the content and time frame of the course. Such interactions may be direct instruction, assessment related, informational, part of group discussions and other approved instructional activities.

Distance Education Course: As defined by the Higher Learning Commission, a distance education course is one in which at least 75% of the instruction and interaction occurs using one or more of the technologies listed in the definition of distance education with the instructor and students physically separated from each other.

Totally Online Course: Course taught 100% online, all required contact hours are done online with no required face-to-face component. Such a class may or may not have synchronous online learning components. Synchronous sessions should be designed in such a way that students who are unable to attend the live session are able to receive the same content and educational intent asynchronously. The instructor and the student shall have regular faculty-initiated interactions including but not limited to instruction and feedback.



Totally Online Synchronous Course: Course taught 100% online with specific required synchronous meeting dates and times. Such required meeting dates and times must be included in the course schedule in the same way a face-to-face class is scheduled.

Virtual Learning: Circumstances may require a face-to-face class to move online for a period of time. Such a class is conducted in a way that is similar to the face-to-face class with synchronous contact between the instructor and students along with asynchronous supports such as are used in web-assisted, hybrid and totally online courses. Because Virtual Learning is online it is a form of Distance Education.

Hybrid Course: Courses taught with some required contact hours facilitated in a mode other than face-to-face. The out-of-class portion is most often online but may involve other modes of learning.

Web-Assisted Course: A face-to-face class that uses the institution's Learning Management System (LMS) or other online platform to provide access to supplementary materials, discussion boards, and other online learning activities, with all contact hours being conducted face-to-face, and, therefore, not considered Distance Learning.

Learning Management System (LMS): A Learning Management System (LMS) is an online platform provided by the institution to host course materials and facilitate interactions between teachers and learners.

Asynchronous Learning: By its nature, most DL is asynchronous, meaning that instructors and students need not be engaged in the learning activities at the same time. Threaded discussions or student discussion boards embedded in a course are examples of asynchronous learning.

Synchronous Learning: Some learning activities in online or hybrid classes may be synchronous, meaning that the instructor and students are engaged in the learning activity at the same time. An example would be interaction via an online teleconferencing tool for purposes such as online office hours, guest speaker, group meetings etc.

Distance Education Program: As defined by the Higher Learning Commission, a Distance Education is one in which 50% or more of the courses may be taken as distance education course.

Online Program: Online programs at Jackson College are cohesive plans of study which result in a certificate or degree or are intended to prepare students for licensure or certification and are designed to be completed primarily online via Totally Online Courses. An online program may require physical participation in some required components such as orientation, practicums and/or clinical experiences.

**Policy Statement:**

While specific learning assessments may vary, all sections of a course must use and assess the same learning outcomes at the same level and offer and assess identical General Education Outcomes, if applicable.

The appropriate lead faculty, department chair, and dean must ensure consistency as distance learning courses are developed.

Once a specific course has been approved for delivery online by the Dean, it can continue to be offered, scheduled, and taught by all faculty who meet the minimum faculty qualifications for their discipline and have met online certification by JC.

All Totally Online classes must have a course shell developed by the lead faculty in charge of the course (or designee) which has been peer reviewed using the Jackson College review process designated by the Instructional Designer. The course shell must then be approved by the Instructional Designer or Dean.

All online, hybrid or web-assisted courses must be designed to meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility guidelines. Anyone developing an online, hybrid or web-assisted course must provide evidence of knowledge about creating accessible learning materials.

Change Log:

Date Of Change	Version	Description of Change	Responsible Party
04/10/2012	2.0	Update to include all types of distance learning instructional formats	T. Butler
02/01/2017	3.0	Update to include online learning orientation program.	R. Woods
04/10/2019	4.0	Updated definitions and process; included ADA guidelines	K. Thirolf & B. Newberry
05/25/2022	5.0	Updated definitions and process.	T. Butler
04/28/2023	6.0	Updated summary, definitions, and policy statement.	H. Ruttkofsky
3.24.2025	7.0	Updated Summary, Definitions,	Academic Council