**Criteria for Expedited SPOT (Skills and Pedagogy for Online Teaching) Process**

**Distance Learning Committee (DLC) Recommendation**

**Fall 2021**

**Recommendation:**

The DLC recommends an expedited SPOT review process for professors who have completed certifications from other community colleges when both of the following criteria are met.

1. The faculty member received online training from a DLC-approved training program.
2. The faculty member submits a course shell for an expedited review by a Mt. SAC SPOT reviewer, who verifies that key criteria for distance learning at Mt. SAC are met.

**Rationale:**

Title 5 regulations require “Instructors of distance education shall be prepared to teach in a distance education delivery method consistent with local district policies and negotiated agreements.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Our accrediting commission, ACCJC, states that for distance education “For purposes of this definition, an instructor is an individual responsible for delivering course content and who meets the qualifications for instruction established by an institution's accrediting agency.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Both AP 4105 and the faculty contract designate SPOT as Mt. SAC’s preparation and qualification for teaching in distance education.

SPOT is a self-paced, asynchronous, competency-based program through which faculty demonstrate knowledge of distance learning principles by creating four online modules in our institution’s LMS. SPOT is unique in that it results in a deliverable product. SPOT courses receive an extensive interactive evaluation to ensure key criteria and standards are met. The six learning modules in SPOT are based on key quality metrics as represented in the California Virtual Campus (CVC) Course Design Rubric.

1. Distance Learning Regulations
2. Welcoming Students
3. Course Design, Content Presentation, and Resources
4. Regular and Effective Contact
5. Grading and Assessments
6. Accessibility and Learner Support

Distance education is highly regulated. Regulations change often. To successfully design an online course, faculty must understand these regulations and requirements. Training programs across colleges are highly variable. Faculty may receive minimal training in specific elements that SPOT addresses or they may have only engaged in the material passively without a requirement to demonstrate knowledge in an applied way. For this reason, it is important that other colleges’ training offers the same depth as Mt. SAC’s, and that the professor demonstrate knowledge of requirements.

**Recommendation Part 1: Program Approval**

The DLC recommends that assessment of other college training use the following four criteria.

* **Accessibility:**  To be granted SPOT equivalency, certification programs must have a module, learning objective, or workshop on accessible design in online learning.
* **State and Federal Regulations—Regular and Effective Contact/ Regular Substantive Interaction:** To be granted SPOT equivalency, certification programs must include a module, learning objectives, or workshop on meeting regulations regarding regular and effective contact.
* **Course Design & Navigation:** To be granted SPOT equivalency, certification programs must include a module, learning objectives, or workshop that presents course content design and/or online pedagogy. It should include content that follows CVC recommendations, including how to create a comprehensive course orientation module, how to set up intuitive navigation, how to chunk units in Modules, how to incorporate a variety of course materials, and how to provide complete and descriptive instructions.
* **Hours:** Mt SAC’s SPOT certification program requires 16 hours of training. To be granted SPOT equivalency, other Colleges’ certification programs will be a minimum of 16 hours of training.

**Determining Approved Programs**

SPOT-trained peer reviewers will review course objectives, syllabus, and/or unit descriptions of other college training programs. Recommendations will be brought to DLC. The SPOT certification webpage will list approved colleges' training programs. The list will be updated regularly as training programs are approved.

**Recommendation Part 2: Course Review for Equivalency**

To best reflect SPOT criteria and meet Mt. SAC’s process, the DLC recommends that faculty who have completed an approved certification:

* submit a certificate or badge to indicate completion of the training
* submit a course shell for an expedited review by a SPOT reviewer.

After contacting the Assistant Distance Learning Coordinator, the faculty will enable review in a recent course sandbox and complete an accessibility review. See Appendix B.

The SPOT reviewer will evaluate the course shell to determine: course orientation/no show instruction; student resources; intuitive course design; evidence of regular substantive interaction opportunities; and accessibility compliance. For more information, see Appendix A.

If any of these criteria are not present, the SPOT reviewer will work with the faculty to ensure that the criteria are met.

This recommendation best approximates the SPOT process, in which faculty demonstrate knowledge in an applied way and includes interactive evaluation of an actual course shell.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Impara

Distance Learning Faculty Coordinator

## **Appendix A: SPOT Equivalency Review Sheet**

**Faculty**

To submit your course, follow these instructions:

1. **Make sure your college’s training has been approved by checking here [link to webpage].**
2. **Contact the Assistant Distance Learning Coordinator, Catherine McKee, to inform her you want an expedited SPOT review. She will assign you a SPOT reviewer.**
3. **Add your SPOT reviewer’s email to the People section of the course shell you wish to submit for review.**
4. **Embed the badge, certificate, or other indication of your completion of an approved training into the course shell you share with your SPOT reviewer.**
5. **Complete the Accessibility Checklist and upload it into your course shell.**

**SPOT Reviewer:**

**Faculty Name:**

**Course Identifier:**

**Which college training was completed?**

**Course demonstrated the following:**

* Course Orientation present
* Method of determining No Shows described
* Student and technical resources provided
* Course is set up in Modules that present course material and assessments
* Evidence of REC - Professor to student contact – multiple methods in each week
* Evidence of REC - Student to student contact - at least one method most weeks of the semester
* Accessibility check
  + DLC Accessibility Checklist with elements checked
  + Random module check of 4 modules

Results:

## **Appendix B: DLC Accessibility Checklist**

**Place a checkmark next to the items your submitted DL course includes *and indicate where in the course a reviewer can find them*.**

**Faculty:**

**Course Identifier:**

### **TEXT**

**Color Contrast** **–** There is sufficient color contrast between the foreground text and background. [More Information on Color Contrast.](https://webaim.org/articles/contrast/)

**Color and Meaning –** Color is not used as the only means of conveying information, adding emphasis, indicating action, or otherwise distinguishing a visual element. [More Information on Color and Meaning.](https://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/visual-audio-contrast-without-color.html)

**☐ Heading Styles –** Styles are consistently used for headings. Heading levels (Heading 1, Heading 2, etc.) are in sequential descending order. Heading levels are not skipped. [More Information on Headings.](https://webaim.org/techniques/word/#headings)

**☐ Links –** Links are identified with meaningful and unique text in place of displaying the URL. [More Information on Links.](https://webaim.org/techniques/word/#links)

**☐ Lists –** Lists are created using the bullet or numbered list tool instead of being formatted manually. [More Information on Lists.](https://webaim.org/techniques/word/#listCol)

**☐ PDFs** **–** Any PDF files will be text-based, not scanned, and use true headings (e.g. created with the styles menu in MS Word). [More Information on PDFs.](https://www.adobe.com/accessibility/pdf/pdf-accessibility-overview.html)

**☐ Reading Order –** Reading order is correctly set so that content is presented in the proper sequence. [More Information on Reading Order.](https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20-TECHS/PDF3.html)

**☐ Slides –** Slides are created using built-in accessible slide layouts with each slide having a unique title. [More Information on Slides.](https://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/)

**☐ Spreadsheets –** Spreadsheets include labels for the rows and columns, detailed labels for charts, and are accompanied by textual descriptions that draw attention to key cells, treads, and totals. [More Information on Spreadsheets.](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-excel-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6cc05fc5-1314-48b5-8eb3-683e49b3e593)

### **IMAGES**

**☐ Images** **–** All images have appropriate alternative text, either explaining instructional value or indicating the image is decorative. [More Information on Images.](https://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/)

**☐ Flashing Content** **–** Blinking or flashing content, including gifs, should only be used if instructionally needed and not merely for decoration or emphasis. Flashing content must not flash more than three times in any one second period or exceed the general and red flash thresholds. [More Information on Flashing Content.](https://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/seizure-does-not-violate.html)

### **TABLES**

**☐ Table** **–** Column and/or row header cells are designated. Rows are not merged. Repeat table headings across pages. A table caption is included for more complex tables. [More Information on Tables.](https://webaim.org/techniques/word/#tables)

### **VIDEO and AUDIO**

**☐ Video –** All video must have accurate captions. If a video has no audio or instructionally relevant soundtrack, a note explaining that should accompany the video. [More Information on Video.](https://www.w3.org/WAI/perspective-videos/captions/)

**☐ Auto-play –** Audio and video content should not be set to auto-play. [More Information on Auto-Play.](https://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/visual-audio-contrast-dis-audio.html)

**☐ Live Captions** **–** Live broadcast and synchronous video conferences must include a means for displaying synchronized captions if requested. [More Information on Live Captions.](https://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/media-equiv-real-time-captions.html)

**☐ Audio –** Audio files must be accompanied by complete and accurate transcripts. [More Information on Audio.](https://www.w3.org/TR/UNDERSTANDING-WCAG20/media-equiv-av-only-alt.html)

### **PUBLISHER CONTENT**

**☐ Accessibility** – If any component of the course is conducted via a publisher application in Canvas or a website outside of Canvas, the component must meet [Section 508 requirements](https://www.epa.gov/accessibility/what-section-508).

Mt. San Antonio College Accessibility Resources: [Faculty Accessibility Center Canvas Course](https://mtsac.instructure.com/courses/59718); [Accessibility at Mt. SAC web page](https://www.mtsac.edu/accessibility/); [Captioning Services at Mt. SAC](https://www.mtsac.edu/fclt/captions.html)

1. Title 5**, § 55208. Faculty Selection and Workload. https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/california/5-CCR-Sec-55208** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. ACCJC, Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education, Revised June 2021, https://accjc.org/eligibility-requirements-standards-policies/#accreditation-standards [↑](#footnote-ref-2)