
10 Special Issues

10.1 Distance Education and Correspondence Education (Addressed in Standards II.A, II.B, II.C and the Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education)

Recognizing that most institutions must make use of the growing range of systems for delivery of instruction, including various electronic means, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges has adopted a policy based on principals of good practice to help assure that distance education complies with the Higher Education Opportunities Act -- 2008 (HEOA) and is characterized by the same concerns for quality, integrity, and effectiveness that apply to the more traditional face-to-face mode of instruction.

Distance education (DE) is defined as a formal interaction which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. Distance education often incorporates technologies such as the Internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, in conjunction with any of the other technologies.

Correspondence education (CE) is defined as education where the interaction between instructor and students is limited, is not regular and not substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Correspondence education may also use the technologies listed above.

Education delivered through these means may occur on campus as well as off campus. These interactions between the students and the faculty member may be synchronous or asynchronous.

For a complete definition of distance education and correspondence education, refer to the *Guide to Evaluating and Improving Institutions* and/or the Commission's "Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education." The team will determine whether the institution uses the appropriate definition for these alternate delivery modes.

Team evaluators are expected to assess distance learning activities of the college, using both the Accreditation Standards and the "Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education" found in the *Accreditation Reference Handbook*.

In addition, the HEOA 2008 requires that institutions which offer distance education or correspondence education (DE/CE) have processes in place through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a DE/CE course or program is the same person who participates each time in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. This requirement will be met if the institution verifies the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the institution's discretion, such methods as a secure log-in and password, proctored examinations, and/or new or other technologies and/or practices that are developed and effective in verifying student identity. The institution must also publish policies

that ensure the protection of student privacy and will notify students at the time of class registration of any charges associated with verification of student identity.

10.2 Records of Student Complaints **(Addressed in Standard II.B and Policy on Student and Public Complaints against Institutions)**

Teams will review the formal complaints/grievances filed by members of the institution (faculty, staff, students) to determine that relevant policies and procedures are being followed and whether patterns to the complaints are obvious that could indicate a need to be addressed by the institution. The institution is expected to provide, for the team's review, complaint files for the period since the last comprehensive visit. The team will also ascertain whether the college website informs the public how to file a complaint with the ACCJC.

10.3 Off-Campus Sites **(Addressed in Standards II.A, II.B, II.C, and III.B)**

The College should provide a list of off-campus sites, including locations, programs offered, and enrollment. The team should make reference in its report to any new (since the last comprehensive review) sites that have not participated in the Commission's Substantive Change review process. The team needs to carefully review all off-campus sites where 50% or more of a degree, program, or certificate can be earned to assure they comply with Standards. (See Substantive Change Policy in the *Accreditation Reference Handbook*.)

10.4 Institution-Set Standards **(Addressed in Standard I.B)**

As mentioned previously in this *Manual*, the institution must establish standards of success with respect to student achievement in relation to the institution's mission. It will set expectations for course and program completion, student persistence from term to term, degree and certificate completion, State licensing examination scores, job placement, and transfer rates. The institution must demonstrate it gathers data on institution-set standards, analyzes results on student achievement, and makes appropriate changes/improvements to increase student performance, educational quality, and institutional effectiveness. Evaluation teams will identify these institution-set standards, determine their reasonableness, review the data and analyze the college's performance, describe the institution's overall performance, and determine whether the institution is meeting its standards.

10.5 International Programs **(Addressed in Standard II.A, II.B, II.C and Policy on Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals)**

Colleges offering international programs for non-U.S. nationals must include an addendum to the Self Evaluation Report which demonstrates how the program conforms to the Commission's policy on "Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education for Non-U.S. Nationals." Teams must address these programs in the evaluation team report.