

2024-25 STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: DISTANCE EDUCATION RUBRIC

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Advancing Quality Education – Regular and Substantive Interaction in Distance Education

ACCJC has seen a significant increase in distance education delivery by its members, with 66% of students across our membership taking courses in the distance education modality. As institutions have made the impressive transition to online learning, ACCJC has noted opportunities for improvement through its ongoing monitoring activities, as well as increased compliance and improvement recommendations pertaining to regular and substantive interaction. Federal regulations require a high level of scrutiny of online delivery to maintain Title IV eligibility, and the significant institutional consequences for noncompliance that can occur through Department of Education regulatory audits and actions have prompted questions from member institutions.

ACCJC recognizes that identifying and facilitating quality instruction in distance education, promoting equitable student outcomes in the modality, increasing clarity of ACCJC and federal expectations for institutions undergoing evaluation, and providing a consistent and objective approach for peer reviewers evaluating institutions are essential to ACCJC’s ongoing federal recognition and value as an accreditor.

Request for Feedback: Pilot Distance Education Resources and Rubric

In June 2024, in response to ACCJC’s Call to Action, over 50 members from institutions across the region volunteered their time and expertise in support of the Distance Education Strategic Initiative. In July, the group engaged in discussions to craft a pilot distance education rubric and additional resources to assist institutions in improving quality programming in distance education and to provide peer review teams with guidance for the required validation of regular and substantive interaction per *ACCJC’s Policy on Distance and Correspondence Education*.

September 6, 2024 Update

Please see below ACCJC’s updated distance education resource documents, which include slight modifications in language to provide greater clarity on their implementation and application.


We are very grateful for all the productive engagement and collegial conversations to ensure quality education in this modality, particularly focused on the requirements for substantive and regular interaction as defined in federal regulations and articulated in ACCJC’s *Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education*. This iterative process from resource development to the pilot phase was made possible with the input from the Distance Education workgroup composed of approximately 50 faculty and staff who support instruction in this modality, two listening sessions whereby more than 170 members from the field participated in providing feedback on the draft resources, and comments provided in the Survey Form.

ACCJC encourages all interested parties to continue to provide feedback on the pilot resources in the Survey Form linked below, which will **remain open until November 15, 2024**. Thereafter, ACCJC will consider the feedback, make final modifications, and incorporate the documents into our core resources, such as the Accreditation Handbook. In spring 2025, ACCJC’s efforts will focus on training opportunities for peer review team members engaged in evaluation, and for institutions to consider the resources as they engage in self-evaluation in pursuit of equitable student outcomes.

Pilot Distance Education Resources & Rubric Feedback Survey

Resource	Purpose
<b>Pilot Quality Continuum Rubric for Distance Education</b> ↓	Rubric to support institutions in the continuous improvement process to increase the depth and quality of Substantive and Regular Interaction in Distance Education and promote the achievement of equitable student success; also provides framework for peer reviewers to provide constructive feedback to the institution on areas where the college could improve, or to validate highly developed practices, in the Peer Review Team Report in the context of <b>Accreditation Standard 2.6</b> .
<b>Pilot Addendum to the Protocol for Distance Education Review</b> ↓	Guidance document to assist peer reviewers in conducting their assessment of the quality of distance education that the institution delivers in accordance with ACCJC’s <b>Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education</b> and the Protocol for Distance Education Review outlined in <b>Appendix B in the Accreditation Handbook</b> and to verify substantive and regular interaction. Used to summarize the team’s findings in the course of the peer review process.
Pilot DE Assessment Tool for Peer Reviewers	Excel spreadsheet for peer reviewers to document whether an institution meets the 85% threshold for substantive and regular interaction in the sample of course sections the team reviews.  PDF File Download: <b>Pilot DE Assessment Tool for Peer Reviewers</b>  Excel File Download: <b>Pilot DE Assessment Tool for Peer Reviewers</b>

Fall Listening Sessions Presentations

Webinar Title:	Date and Time:	Description:	Registration Link:
<b>Annual Report and Annual Fiscal Report</b>	Thursday, February 13, 2025, 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. PST	Each spring, ACCJC accredited institutions submit an Annual Report and an Annual Fiscal Report as part of the Commission’s institutional performance monitoring process. In this webinar, ACCJC staff will provide an overview of the contents and submission process for both reports and will leave ample time for attendee questions. ACCJC encourages CEOs, ALOs, chief business officers, research staff, and others who will be involved in the preparation of the reports to attend.	

Call to Action: Developing a Distance Education Rubric to Verify Regular and Substantive Interaction During Comprehensive Reviews

To support our work, we are pleased to announce that ACCJC, in collaboration with its members, will develop a rubric to assist institutions and peer review teams with the required validation of regular and substantive interaction per *ACCJC’s Policy on Distance and Correspondence Education*. Peer review teams and the Commission will utilize this rubric to ensure consistent and objective review of distance education. ACCJC will incorporate the rubric into its *Accreditation Handbook* and develop and deploy an additional training module and workshops to support its use by institutions and peer reviewers in the comprehensive peer review process.

ACCJC plans to pilot the distance education rubric in fall 2024 for colleges undergoing Team ISER Review and for institutions that had a core inquiry on distance education as part of upcoming Focused Site Visits.

This summer and through fall 2024, ACCJC will partner with members of the field who want to ensure quality education in distance education through the development and roll out of the distance education rubric. If you are interested, please complete the short survey to indicate your availability to participate in any of the following ways:

- synchronous Zoom meetings over the summer to draft an initial rubric
- written feedback on the rubric via electronic survey
- fall Zoom webinar listening sessions to provide feedback
- provide examples of policies and/or procedures that have been effective tools at your institution for ensuring regular and substantive interaction (email **Vice President Gohar Momjian** at **gmomjian@accjc.org**).

September 6, 2024 Update: The Distance Education workgroup has completed its work for fall 2024 and the participation survey is closed.

Dates of Completion	Milestones and Mode of Engagement
July - August 2024	Develop draft rubric based on best practices (ALOs, faculty, admin)
August - September 2024	Solicit feedback on rubric and make modifications (webinar, survey)
September - October 2024	Pilot application of rubric, include in workshops and materials for fall 2024 Team ISER Reviews and Focused Site Visits
November 2024 - January 2025	Solicit feedback from institutions and peer reviewers on usefulness of rubric & resources and make modifications for use in spring 2025

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