

Attendance & Participation

What is this?

Students in distance education courses are required to ‘attend’ class and participate just as if they were in a face-to-face course. This means that instructors need to set guidelines for how much each lecture, reading assignment, discussion or project qualifies as a **meeting** during the course of a week/learning unit/course module.

Why is this important?

Let’s look at what you need to understand about distance education attendance & participation policies:

- ⇒ **IT’S THE LAW.** Title 5 guidelines for distance education state that online & hybrid courses must provide the **number of instructor-student contact hours** and **the same quality of instruction** as face-to-face classes. Instructors must also have **regular and effective contact** within the Learning Management System (LMS) with their students. This means that instructors must have documentable evidence that they are interacting with their students with students on a **consistent** and **timely** basis to both ensure the quality of instruction and verify their performance and participation status. (http://online.pasadena.edu/faculty/hb/coursequality/#Section_55204_Instructor_Contact).
- ⇒ **IT HELPS TO PREVENT FINANCIAL AID FRAUD.** Because of the potential for financial aid fraud in online programs, the US Department of Education recently determined that there **MUST be “regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty”** in online courses (http://wcet.wiche.edu/wcet/docs/lastday-april2010/LDAIssuePaper%284_15_2010%29.pdf). It is not enough to evaluate a student’s attendance based solely on the number and frequency of logins or through course statistics on the LMS. The new guidelines are meant to protect an institution from students who receive financial aid assistance but who do not participate in class.
- ⇒ **IT’S A BEST PRACTICE IN DISTANCE EDUCATION.** Having **regular effective contact** with students in the LMS encourages and facilitates student-centered instruction and increases student learning outcomes. This is also something that accreditation will look for as evidence of quality in our online and hybrid courses.

Who should be responsible for this?

STUDENTS

Students need to understand course attendance and participation policies as stated in the course syllabus as well as any guidelines for course communication with their instructors. Students must also understand that logging into a course **DOES NOT** constitute course participation. See **the end of this handout for links** to related policies & procedures.

INSTRUCTORS

Instructors must have clearly stated course policies on attendance, participation, add/drop and late work guidelines in the online course syllabus (**which MUST be posted in the CANVAS LMS**). Courses must follow best practices for online instruction, i.e. course activities must provide ample opportunities for interaction among course participants. See the **PCC Distance Education Attendance & Participation Policies & Procedures link** at the end of this handout.

DEANS

Administrators should make certain that their faculty members have clearly stated course guidelines in the online course syllabus (and that it is posted in the CANVAS LMS). Instructors must also be made aware of both the Federal and state issues that relate to attendance & participation in distance education courses and how those relate to the current PCC Policies. See **the end of this handout for links** to related policies & procedures.

What steps can you take?

Where can you find out more?

PCC Distance Education Department

1570 East Colorado Blvd.
LL Building
Pasadena, CA 91106
Phone: (626) 585-7189
Email: pcconline@pasadena.edu

STEP 1

Make certain that the online course syllabus posted in the CANVAS LMS has clearly stated policies for attendance, participation, add/drop and late work.

STEP 2

Determine how much participation will be worth in a course and require a set number of **course activities** for each week that equate with the **equivalent face-to-face contact and homework hours in the on-ground course**.

STEP 3

Create guidelines for what constitutes late work and/or if late work will be accepted.

STEP 4

Create a course **Check-In Assignment** — a required assignment which **must be completed within 24-36 hours** from the beginning of the course — that **actively engages** students in an interactive task using the CANVAS LMS.

STEP 5

Notify students who do not participate in class, that is, who consistently do not complete assignments, quizzes, respond to forums or turn in other work, that they **will be dropped from the class for non-participation**, following **PCC's Enrollment & Attendance in Classes Policy #4025** (see link below).

PCC Distance Education Attendance, Participation & Add/Drop Policies: <http://online.pasadena.edu/faculty/hb/pcccoursepolicies/>

PCC Enrollment & Attendance in Classes Policy #4025 http://www.pasadena.edu/IPRO/Policies/documents/pcc_4025.pdf

DE Welcome Letters & Syllabus: http://online.pasadena.edu/faculty/hb/coursedelivery/#Welcome_Letter_and_Online_Syllabus

Course Check-In Assignment: http://online.pasadena.edu/faculty/hb/coursedelivery/#Course_Check-In_Assignment

Course Quality & Standards: <http://online.pasadena.edu/faculty/hb/coursequality/>

WCET Issue Paper: http://wcet.wiche.edu/wcet/docs/lastday-april2010/LDAIssuePaper%284_15_2010%29.pdf

The Distance Education Department is dedicated to serving the diverse needs of the faculty and student populations at Pasadena City College by providing high-quality educational experiences that utilize the latest emerging technologies in electronic course delivery methods. This includes faculty and student support for online and hybrid course offerings at PCC.

Visit us online at <http://online.pasadena.edu/faculty>