



American River College Guidelines for Web-Based Instruction

The American River College Guidelines for Web-based Instruction¹ apply to courses reliant upon online instruction. The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines to faculty and administrators for these courses, including pedagogical, technical, legal, and organizational best practices. These guidelines do not provide recommendations concerning the content of online courses, which is the purview of the ARC Curriculum Committee.

American River College recognizes two basic types of Web-Based instruction²:

Online course – An online course is a course that is offered over the Internet using a variety of web-based tools and activities. If 51% or more of class meetings, assignments, lectures, and assessments are online, then it is considered to be an online class.

Hybrid course – A hybrid course is a course that is taught online using similar web-based tools and activities as an online class. Some portion of the course meeting time is conducted online, and the remaining percentage of the class is conducted in a traditional classroom. If less than 51% of class meetings, assignments, lectures, and assessments are conducted online it is considered to be a hybrid class. Where appropriate, the same guidelines for web-based instruction apply to the online portions of a hybrid course as apply to a fully online course.³

1. **Getting Started: Preparing to Teach an Online Course**

Instructors are encouraged to:

- a. complete a certificated preparation program in online teaching such as:
 - [The ARC Online Teaching Institute](#)
 - An appropriate individualized program of study with comparable content to the Online Teaching Institute at ARC, for example, [UCLA's Instructional Design for Online Program](#) or [@One Teaching Certification](#).
- b. Review the official course outline in Socrates.
- c. Discuss effective best practices with colleagues who are experienced online instructors and consider observing their online classes.

¹ These guidelines were originally adopted by the Academic Senate in April 2005. They were revised by the IT Committee beginning in 2008 and adopted by the Academic and Classified Senates, and approved by PCC in December 2009.

²For accounting purposes, the State Chancellor's Office only recognizes two types of instruction, distance or non-distance. Distance instruction exists where 50% or more of instructional time (activities) are conducted by any type of distance format. Non-distance instruction is everything else (per Attendance Accounting Manual, January 2001)

³ A third classification is Web-Enhanced– any class that is taught face-to-face in a classroom for 100% of the course hours, but with classroom assignments and materials that are supplemented with web-based activities.

- d. Use an online course best practices checklist or rubric to assist in course design (e.g. [Course Design Rubric for the Online Education Initiative](#); [Rubric for Online Instruction](#))
- e. Be sure that their course content is compliant with ADA standards⁴ and accessible to all students. [Here is a handy accessibility checklist from Penn State](#). Meet with the campus Instructional Technology Center staff and become acquainted with the training and technology opportunities available to faculty.

2. **Responsibility of Area Deans**

Area Deans who offer courses in their area in an online or hybrid format will ensure that:

- a. The course has been approved to be taught online or as a hybrid by the Curriculum Committee.
- b. The course is listed in the schedule of classes.
- c. The course is listed as online or hybrid on the [ARC Online/Hybrid Course Contacts website](#) so that students can get information about the course both before and after enrolling.
- d. An instructor has sufficient experience and/or understanding of online pedagogy and has completed a certificated program of study in online teaching (see 1. a. above).
- e. The instructor has a copy of the Guidelines for Web-based Instruction.
- f. The instructor has selected a secure learning management system/course shell with a method of authentication that is in compliance with District policy and regs. 8831, that requires every student to log in with a student specific ID and password.
- g. Faculty wishing to use non-district and non-publisher resources for their course sites have discussed their plans with their area dean. If the area deans have questions or concerns, they may wish to consult with the DE Coordinator and/or the Dean of Planning, Technology, Research and Professional Development. Important issues and policies concerning Non-District Websites for Course Materials are explained at [ARC's Guide to Web Services](#).
- h. The instructor's course is in compliance with privacy guidelines consistent with [FERPA](#).
- i. The instructor's course is in compliance with [ADA regulations](#)

3. **Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights**

- a. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to ensure that any materials used on a course-related website do not infringe copyright. More specific guidelines can be found on [Penn State's Copyright Portal](#)
- b. Faculty members' intellectual property rights concerning course content are protected under Section 28 of the [Los Rios Community College District Collective Bargaining Agreement with Los Rios College Federation of Teachers contract](#)

4. **Orientation Meetings**

- a. All online/hybrid instructors will provide an orientation that covers the basics of the online environment and the specific content of the course. This may include either an in-person and/or online orientation. Recommended are the [D2L Free Sample Class for](#)

⁴ The Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), California Bills AB422, and AB386, and Section 11135 of the California Codes, require that online students with disabilities have access to the same level of services, support, and assistance as general population students.

[students](#) and the [D2L Orientation Module](#).

- b. Student attendance at an in-person orientation is at the discretion of the faculty member. Special arrangements may need to be made for remote students or those with special needs.
- c. Instructors may use students' completion of an online orientation as evidence of attendance and may drop students from the course who do not complete the orientation.

5. **Office Hours**

The percentage of office hours spent in alternative delivery modes is stipulated in the faculty contract. Online office hours should be posted clearly in the professor's syllabus. There are a variety of ways to conduct online office hours including email, chat rooms, web-conferencing, and other electronic communication methods. For specific contract language regarding office hours, see [The Los Rios Community College Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers](#), 4.7.2 and 4.10.11.

6. **Student/Faculty Interaction**

- a. For a course to meet ACCJC guidelines for quality distance education, and not be designated as correspondence education, it should include instructor-initiated contact information in the syllabus, regular substantive interaction activities between students and the instructor as part of the final student grade, and demonstrable activity or records of regular interaction between students and the instructor in the course management system. More information is available in the [Guide to Evaluating Distance Education and Correspondence Education](#).
- b. The minimum number of instructional contacts that a single student may typically expect to have with the professor is determined by the curriculum course outline. Types of contacts may include emails, discussion boards, text messages, videoconferencing, and telephone calls. [The American River College Curriculum Committee Standards for Regular Effective Contact and Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online Classes](#) is intended to be a guide for instructors to ensure that their online courses fulfill the requirements for regular effective contact.
- c. The statewide Academic Senate recommends that faculty respond to student questions and requests with deliberate speed, and the same day if possible. Faculty may wish to include in their course syllabus or orientation a time frame in which a response is to be expected.

7. **Attendance**

- a. Attendance is governed by District policy and is measured by student participation in assigned activities. In general, students are expected to participate actively in the online course for a minimum of three hours per week to meet the attendance requirement for a 3-unit class. Instructors will specify how online attendance is measured, but is commonly determined through a student's participation in activities such as quizzes, discussion board postings, or assignment completion. In accordance with ARC catalogue language, a student may be dropped by the instructor for excessive absences when those absences meet or exceed 6% of the course meeting time.
- b. A student who does not attend class during the first week of the semester may also be

dropped in accordance with campus enrollment policy. Instructors may determine attendance based on such factors as participation in or completion of assigned activities.

8. Examinations

- a. When seeking approval for delivery of online classes through the curriculum process, a department must indicate whether or not examinations will be conducted in person.
- b. If proctoring is required for an in-person exam, the institution will accept appropriate off site testing locations that meet the varied needs of online students. Proctoring could be made available through shared community college resources, community partnerships, or inter-segmental relationships.
- c. Faculty may offer on-campus review sessions and labs though online students should not be penalized for being unable to attend either of these options.
- d. Given the level of concern about cheating in online exams, instructors may consider alternative grading activities such as group projects, performance based activities, discussions, etc. that accomplish the same learning outcomes and objectives as exams.

9. Evaluation of Student Learning

Although delivery methods may differ, faculty members will ensure that the standards, expectations, and student learning outcomes for the online course are the same as for the on-site classroom course.

10. Evaluation of Faculty Teaching Online Courses

The process to be used for evaluating online faculty is determined by the contract.⁵
The following process for online course evaluation is recommended:

- a. Typically, administrators and peer faculty evaluators are given student level access for an amount of time determined by the peer review team to visit online classes, and equivalent to a single class visit for a face-to-face course, in performance of the peer review evaluation.
- b. An online version of the student survey has been developed and is administered online in a confidential manner. Area Deans provide the District with a list of all faculty teaching online to be evaluated each semester.
- c. A peer evaluator will tabulate the results of the student surveys and provide them to the peer review team.

11. Student Support Services

Accreditation guidelines stipulate that online students have access to the same level of services, support, and assistance as on-campus students. The following list includes services for which online students may wish information and have ready online access:

- a. [ARC Bookstore](#) will ship textbooks that are ordered online. It also has eBooks textbooks available from certain publishers for downloading.
- b. [Learning Resources Center](#)
- c. [Career Center](#) has many online services. They include career assessment sites,

⁵ The Los Rios Community College Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers is located at <http://www.lrcft.org/contract.aspx>, 8.9.

- internship referral services, and documents and links to websites to help in the job-finding process. http://www.arc.losrios.edu/Support_Services/Career_Center.htm
- d. **Counseling.** Counseling is currently allowing for telephone appointments. http://www.arc.losrios.edu/Support_Services/Counseling.htm
 - e. **Disabled Student Programs & Services (DSPS).**⁶
Students who are eligible for services through DSPS must provide the instructor with the proper forms authorizing accommodations. http://www.arc.losrios.edu/Support_Services/DSPS.htm
 - f. **EOP&S.** Has online forms for program participants. http://www.arc.losrios.edu/Support_Services/EOPS.htm
 - g. **eServices.** Applications for admission and enrollment in classes are available online. https://ps.losrios.edu/psp/direct/STSELFSESV/HRMS/c/SA_LEARNER_SERVICES_SSS_STUDENT_CENTER.GBL?&
 - h. **Financial Aid.** Financial Aid offers fully online services and include creating a FAFSA application, and BOGW fee waiver request. They provide links to important financial aid information sites. http://www.arc.losrios.edu/Support_Services/Financial_Aid.htm
 - i. **Library.** <http://www.arc.losrios.edu/arclibrary.htm>
 - j. **Los Rios Help Desk.** Available Mon-Fri, 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. excluding District holidays by phone at 1-855-321-3232 and by email at lrohlp@losrios.edu for assistance with D2L, iMail, or eServices.
 - k. **Campus Life Center.** http://www.arc.losrios.edu/Support_Services/Campus_Life.htm

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