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DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Marion
Technical
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Marion Technical College's (MTC) Distance Learning Program exists to support the mission of MTC and involves providing access to quality educational opportunities that extend beyond traditional offerings.

Distance
Learning
Policy



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

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DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY**Introduction & General Principles**

MTC's Distance Learning Program exists to support the mission of MTC and involves providing access to quality educational opportunities that extend beyond traditional offerings. Distance Learning is the instructional delivery method.

Definitions

Distance learning is defined as instruction between a teacher and students when separated by physical distance, and one or more technological media accomplish communication.

MTC offers **traditional** (entirely face-to-face), **hybrid** (makes available less than 100% of its required instructional hours via distance education), and **distance education** (wholly conducted and exclusively via the course management system accessible from the Internet Canvas courses).

Academic Calendar

All distance learning course timelines will comply with the MTC academic calendar. Any exceptions must seek administration approval.

Accreditation Definitions

Hybrid courses makes available less than 100% of its required hours via distance education. Distanced education makes available 100% of its required instructional hours via distance education.

Admissions

Admissions to distance learning courses will be the same as those for admissions to regular MTC courses.

Procedures to verify online students' compliance with MTC's admission requirements include the collection of original documentation and official transcripts from all prospective online students.

Assessment

Assessment of distance learning content will be conducted similarly to traditional or as described in the MTC policy manual.

Online instructors are also required to monitor and assess the consistency of student coursework regularly.

Suppose student submissions are late, depending on the late policies announced to the class. In that case, the instructor can contact the situation to see if exceptional circumstances require emotional or logistic support and encourage the student to make them aware that they are behind.

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Program managers and teachers monitor analytic reports to help students in completing course work.

Student Support and Information

Distance Learning courses shall allow interaction between students and the instructor responsible for the coursework so that students can receive prompt responses to their questions. Students should expect instructors to respond to student queries and requests promptly, in most cases within 24 hours. The response time will be done during the contract hours of a teacher. The weekends and holidays do not include the 24 hour response time.

Class Schedules and Catalogs shall clearly and in a uniform manner identify programs with a significant online component through the use of footnotes and symbols or in other appropriate ways so that students have access to this information before enrolling in a program.

Criteria for student success in MTC online coursework shall be as rigorous and comprehensive as that used in classroom-based coursework, and these criteria shall be communicated to students.

Students enrolled in online programs are subject to the same MTC policies and procedures applicable to students attending traditional programs. Academic standards regarding cheating, plagiarism, and appropriate behavior shall be communicated to students in online programs.

A student will be issued a device to utilize outside of the school campus for educational purposes. The equipment and agreement to the terms is issued by the school secretary.

Student Issues & Services

Students enrolled in online programs shall be informed of available instructional support, student services, and support services for all students. These services may include, but are not limited to, academic advisement, enrollment/registration, financial aid, library, technical help, and tutoring. Instructors are encouraged to apprise students of available services. It is expected that personnel providing these services make appropriate and reasonable efforts to reach out to and accommodate distance learning students, as is done for all students

Student Training

It is essential to ensure that students understand how the Learning Management System (LMS) interface works so that the technology does not present students with unnecessary barriers to learning. Therefore, instructors teaching distance learning programs should provide their students with an orientation to the particular interface being used, either in person or through the distance learning format.

Academic Integrity

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Students are expected to comply with the current MTC policy on Academic Integrity. Instructors are encouraged to familiarize their students with the policy and the concept of academic integrity.

Student Identity Verification

The verification of student identity in MTC programs is an essential and continuous process. When a student applies for admission to MTC, the identity verification begins and continues through their program completion, transfer, or withdrawal from the institution. The activities related to student identity verification include but are not limited to: the registration process, advising and transcript procedures, and our Learning Management System login and security functions which require the creation of a unique username and password for each student. Password changes are required methodically. This unique set of login credentials consists of data that the student is likely to know and others are unlikely to know. The student is forced to use these credentials to access our Learning Management System and reset their password to an entirely confidential one. Data transmission of login information is secured using standard encryption technology.

BioSig is an add-in application to Canvas online Learning Management System. BioSig allows a teacher to place verification sections in their courses. The verification signature is performed with the mouse and set up with a code and signature that the student creates. The teacher places the “signature code check” before a student takes a test or submits an assignment to ensure the registered student is the individual submitting.

BioSig Biometric Signature ID Product provides authentication of students’ participation and verification.

BioSig-ID™ – Authenticates student ID before any assessment. Ensures the registered student is the only person able to log in and open the evaluation. No software downloads or special hardware is required—Verifies ID in about 6 seconds. Flat rate pricing allows continuous use throughout the course in front of any conditional release item. Cheating is prevented since easy sharing of passwords is stopped because “for hire” helpers must duplicate students’ unique signature patterns. Each license allows unlimited user use in courses and ID verifications during the 12-month contract period. Full training supplied.

Safe Exam Browser – A free, open-source web browser environment to conduct online assessments with integrity and change any computer into a secure workstation. It prevents students from accessing third-party apps, secondary screens, and any website with information that could be used to help aid them during a quiz or exam.

Instructor Support and Responsibilities

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Instructors shall have the same control and ownership of their online content by the provisions of MTC policies.

In hybrid programs, online sections shall meet all program objectives typically covered in the traditional delivery method.

MTC shall offer appropriate training and support to instructors to prepare them in developing and teaching online programs. Instructors should avail themselves of these services and training.

Any programs that use online instruction shall indicate so in the course syllabus. In addition, the following information shall be included:

- How participation in online activities will be assessed and graded (e.g., participation in chat sessions, frequency of web access, postings, etc.);
- Whether and how the instructor will track student online activities, for example, by maintaining a copy/log of online discussions and chat sessions, etc.;
- Weekly deadlines for posting and due dates need to be stated (dates and times);
- How students may contact the instructor;
- Technical competencies expected or required of the students;
- Minimum computer hardware and software specifications, and course website access requirements;
- Who to contact in case of technical problems;
- And on-campus meeting requirements, if applicable.

Design & Development

The instructional design of the program is the responsibility of the instructor. In general, instructors will use institutionally supported technologies for developing and delivering distance learning courses. Resources are available for those who seek guidance in developing distance learning courses.

Instructors developing their first distance learning course must contact the Canvas Administrator, who will connect the instructor with the appropriate academic technology.

MTC instructors must employ features such as message boards, email, telephone numbers posted on the site, office hour type question/answer forums, etc., for students to have easy methods by which to contact their instructors. Also available are discussion boards, virtual classrooms with chat rooms, blogs and journals, wikis, email, messaging, etc. Instructors are also required to post in their program menu a direct link to their personal contact information

Instructor Office Hours/ Presence

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Faculty presence is an integral component of quality instruction and a leading indicator of student satisfaction. Instructors will inform students in the program syllabus of the days or times that students may expect the instructor to be active or present in the course.

MTC instructors are also required to use several strategies to establish and maintain their online presence. Among these is the requirement for instructors to respond to student email and phone messages within 24 hours.

Protection of Course Materials

Anyone requesting access to distance learning course material must obtain documented permission from the course instructor.

Institutional Governance & Policy Review

The rules governing distance learning, and any future changes to them, will be approved by the MTC administration.

Intellectual Property & Copyright

Regarding intellectual property and copyright for distance learning program materials, the definitions, guidelines, and policies of MTC and the Federal Copyright law shall be followed.

Program Completion

Access and availability to distance learning programs after completion should be similar to traditional programs. Existing MTC policies concerning deadlines for program completion and incompletes will apply equally to distance learning programs.

Distance learning programs will be stored in an "archived" electronic format for at least one year following their completion. Instructors can request access to these archived formats at any time.

Online Program Evaluation

MTC's standard program evaluation form will be provided within the course. Questions and items that do not apply to a distance-learning format may be removed. The instructor may add additional questions and items specific to the course modality. Distance learning courses should be evaluated using existing course evaluation policy and procedure.

NOTES:

Please note any comments for changes.