



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Marion
Technical
College

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The Marion Technical College (MTC) Distance Learning Program advances the College's mission by expanding access to quality educational opportunities through innovative and accessible learning experiences that extend beyond traditional instructional delivery methods.

Distance Learning Policy

Table of Contents

Introduction & General Principles	3
Definitions.....	3
Academic Calendar	4
Admissions.....	4
Assessment.....	4
Student Interaction, Communication, and Support	5
• Course Identification and Student Information.....	5
• Academic Standards and Student Success.....	5
• Technology Resources.....	5
Student Issues & Services.....	5
Student Training	6
Academic Integrity	6
Student Identity Verification	7
Instructor Support and Responsibilities.....	8
Contracted Courseware and Curriculum Oversight.....	8
Design & Development	9
Instructor Office Hours/ Presence.....	10
Institutional Governance & Policy Review.....	11
Intellectual Property & Copyright.....	11
Program Completion	12
Online Program Evaluation	12



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Introduction & General Principles

Marion Technical College's (MTC) Distance Learning Program supports the mission of the College by providing access to high-quality educational opportunities that extend beyond traditional instructional settings. Distance learning is an instructional delivery method in which teaching and learning occur when students and instructors are separated by time, location, or both, and technology is used to facilitate communication, instruction, and engagement. While MTC does not currently offer fully distance education programs, the College utilizes distance learning technologies in selected hybrid courses that combine face-to-face instruction with online learning components.

MTC is committed to ensuring that all hybrid and technology-enhanced courses maintain the same standards of academic quality, rigor, student support, and learning outcomes as courses delivered through traditional face-to-face instruction. The College promotes accessibility, innovation, and continuous improvement in instructional delivery to enhance student success and meet the diverse educational needs of its community.

The principles outlined in this document provide guidance for the development, delivery, evaluation, and continuous improvement of hybrid courses and the use of distance learning technologies at MTC.

Definitions

Distance Learning is a method of instruction in which teaching and learning occur when the instructor and students are separated by physical distance and communicate through one or more forms of technology

Traditional Course – A course delivered entirely through face-to-face instruction, with all required instructional hours occurring in a classroom, laboratory, or other approved instructional setting.

Hybrid Course – A course that combines face-to-face instruction with online learning activities and delivers less than 100 percent of its required instructional hours through distance learning technologies.

Distance Education Course – A course in which 100 percent of required instructional hours are delivered through distance learning technologies and conducted exclusively through the College's learning management system (Canvas), accessible via the Internet.

These delivery methods are designed to provide students with flexible learning options while maintaining the academic quality, rigor, and learning outcomes established by Marion Technical College.



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Academic Calendar

All distance learning and hybrid course schedules shall comply with the Marion Technical College (MTC) academic calendar. Any exceptions to established academic calendar dates, course timelines, or scheduling requirements must receive prior approval from the appropriate College administration.

Admissions

Admission requirements for students enrolling in traditional, hybrid, or distance learning courses shall be consistent with MTC's established admissions policies and procedures. Students must provide all required admission documentation, including official transcripts and other applicable records, to verify eligibility for enrollment. The College will review and validate required documentation in accordance with institutional policies.

Assessment

Assessment of student learning in hybrid and distance learning courses shall be conducted in the same manner and according to the same academic standards as traditional face-to-face courses, or as otherwise outlined in the Marion Technical College (MTC) Policy Manual. Assessment methods must align with course learning outcomes and program objectives.

Instructors are responsible for regularly monitoring and evaluating student participation, engagement, and academic progress throughout the course. Faculty shall provide timely feedback and assess student coursework in accordance with established course requirements and grading policies.

When student assignments or coursework are submitted late, instructors shall follow the late-work policies communicated in the course syllabus. In cases where students fall behind, instructors are encouraged to initiate communication to determine whether exceptional circumstances exist and to provide appropriate guidance, referrals, or support resources as needed.

Program Managers/Coordinators and instructors shall utilize available Learning Management System (LMS) analytics, progress reports, and other student performance data to monitor student participation and academic progress in hybrid and distance learning courses. Monitoring efforts are intended to support student success, encourage timely course completion, and facilitate appropriate academic interventions when necessary. Student progress may be monitored through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, course participation, frequency of LMS logins, engagement in online learning activities, time spent within course modules, assignment submissions, assessment completion, and the percentage of coursework completed. Information gathered through these monitoring activities may be used to identify students who may be at risk academically and to provide timely communication, support, referrals, and intervention strategies designed to promote student success.

DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Student Interaction, Communication, and Support

Distance learning and hybrid courses shall provide regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor responsible for course delivery. Students must have opportunities to communicate with instructors and receive answers to questions regarding course content, assignments, and program requirements.

Instructors are expected to respond to student inquiries and requests in a timely manner, generally within 24 hours during scheduled contract workdays and hours. Weekends, College holidays, and other non-contract days are not included in the 24-hour response timeframe. Specific communication expectations shall be communicated to students through the course syllabus and/or learning management system.

- **Course Identification and Student Information**

College catalogs, course schedules, and other published materials shall clearly and consistently identify courses and programs that include a significant online or hybrid instructional component. Appropriate footnotes, symbols, or other designations shall be used to ensure students have access to this information prior to enrollment.

- **Academic Standards and Student Success**

Standards for student achievement, participation, and academic performance in distance learning and hybrid coursework shall be equivalent to those established for traditional face-to-face coursework. Course requirements, grading criteria, and expectations for successful completion shall be clearly communicated to students.

Students enrolled in distance learning and hybrid courses are subject to all Marion Technical College (MTC) policies, procedures, and student conduct requirements applicable to traditional instruction. Academic integrity standards, including policies related to cheating, plagiarism, and appropriate use of technology, shall be communicated to all students and enforced consistently across all instructional delivery methods.

- **Technology Resources**

To support participation in distance learning and hybrid coursework, students may be issued a College-owned device for educational use outside of campus. Device distribution, collection, and related documentation shall be coordinated through the School Secretary or designated College representative. Students receiving equipment must acknowledge and comply with all applicable technology use agreements, procedures, and responsibilities established by MTC.

Student Issues & Services

Students enrolled in distance learning and hybrid courses shall be informed of the instructional support, student services, and other resources available through Marion Technical College (MTC). Such services may include, but are not limited to, academic advising, enrollment and



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

registration assistance, financial aid services, technical support, tutoring, and other student success services.

Instructors are encouraged to inform students of available support services and to promote their utilization throughout the course. Personnel responsible for providing student support services shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that students enrolled in distance learning and hybrid courses have access to the same level of assistance and resources available to students participating in traditional face-to-face instruction.

MTC is committed to providing equitable access to academic and student support services to promote student success, persistence, and completion regardless of the instructional delivery method.

Student Training

It is essential that students understand how to effectively use the College's Learning Management System (LMS) and other instructional technologies so that technology does not create unnecessary barriers to learning. Students enrolled in distance learning and hybrid courses should receive appropriate orientation and guidance regarding the LMS, course navigation, communication tools, assignment submission procedures, and other technology requirements associated with the course.

Instructors teaching distance learning or hybrid courses are responsible for providing students with an introduction to the LMS and course-specific technologies, either through an in-person orientation, online orientation materials, or other instructional methods appropriate to the course delivery format.

Students are encouraged to complete all orientation activities and become familiar with available technology resources prior to or at the beginning of the course. Technical support information and access to relevant training materials shall be made available to assist students in successfully navigating the online components of their coursework.

Academic Integrity

Students enrolled in Marion Technical College (MTC) courses, including traditional, hybrid, and distance learning courses, are expected to adhere to the College's Academic Integrity Policy and uphold the highest standards of honesty, responsibility, and ethical conduct in their academic work.

Instructors are encouraged to familiarize students with **the Academic Integrity Policy** and promote an understanding of academic honesty, including expectations related to original work, proper citation of sources, collaboration, testing procedures, and the appropriate use of technology and artificial intelligence tools. Academic integrity expectations shall be



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

communicated through course syllabi, instructional materials, and course discussions as appropriate.

Violations of academic integrity, including cheating, plagiarism, falsification of information, unauthorized collaboration, or misuse of technology, shall be addressed in accordance with MTC policies and procedures. The College is committed to fostering a culture of integrity that supports student learning, personal accountability, and academic excellence.

Student Identity Verification

The verification of student identity is an essential component of Marion Technical College's (MTC) instructional and administrative processes. Student identity verification begins during the admissions process and continues throughout enrollment, program completion, transfer, or withdrawal from the College.

MTC utilizes a variety of procedures and technologies to verify and protect student identity. These procedures may include, but are not limited to, admissions documentation, registration processes, academic advising, transcript requests, and secure access to the College's learning management system (LMS) and other institutional systems.

Each student is assigned a unique username and password to access College resources and online course materials. Students are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of their login credentials and are prohibited from sharing usernames, passwords, or other authentication information with any individual. Password updates are required periodically in accordance with College security protocols. Access to online systems is protected through industry-standard security and encryption technologies designed to safeguard student information and ensure secure data transmission.

For online assessments, MTC may utilize proctoring and assessment security tools, including Safe Exam Browser (SEB) or similar technologies, when appropriate. Safe Exam Browser is a secure web browser environment that helps maintain academic integrity during online testing by restricting access to unauthorized websites, applications, secondary screens, and other resources that could compromise the assessment process. The use of such technologies helps verify student participation and supports the integrity of online examinations and assessments.

Students are expected to comply with all identity verification and assessment security requirements established by the College. Violations of these requirements may be addressed in accordance with MTC policies regarding academic integrity, student conduct, and technology use.

DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Instructor Support and Responsibilities

Instructors shall retain ownership and control of their instructional materials and online course content in accordance with all applicable Marion Technical College (MTC) policies, procedures, and intellectual property guidelines.

Courses offered in a hybrid format shall meet the same program and course objectives, learning outcomes, academic standards, and instructional requirements as courses delivered through traditional face-to-face methods. The use of online instructional components shall not diminish the rigor, quality, or comprehensiveness of the educational experience.

MTC shall provide appropriate training, professional development opportunities, and technical support to assist instructors in the development and delivery of hybrid and technology-enhanced courses. Instructors are encouraged to participate in available training and support services to promote effective instructional practices and student success.

Any course that incorporates online instruction shall clearly identify such requirements in the course syllabus. At a minimum, the syllabus shall include the following information:

- How participation in online activities will be measured, assessed, and graded (e.g., discussion board participation, online assignments, virtual meetings, or other course activities);
- Whether and how the instructor will monitor and document student online participation and engagement;
- Weekly deadlines and due dates for assignments, discussions, assessments, and other required activities, including specific dates and times when applicable;
- Instructor contact information and preferred methods of communication;
- Technical competencies expected or required of students to successfully complete the course;
- Minimum computer hardware, software, internet access, and learning management system requirements;
- Contact information for technical support and assistance;
- Any required on-campus meetings, laboratory sessions, clinical experiences, testing requirements, or other face-to-face components, when applicable; and
- Any additional course-specific expectations related to participation, communication, and successful completion of the online components of the course.

Instructors shall ensure that course expectations, requirements, and assessment methods are communicated clearly and consistently to students at the beginning of the course.

Contracted Courseware and Curriculum Oversight

Marion Technical College (MTC) is responsible for ensuring the quality, accuracy, relevance, and currency of all contracted courseware, instructional materials, and third-party educational

DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

content used in hybrid and distance learning courses. The College shall review contracted courseware on at least an annual basis to verify that content remains current, aligns with program and course learning outcomes, and supports institutional, industry, regulatory, and accreditation requirements.

MTC retains full responsibility for the academic quality and integrity of all courses and programs, regardless of whether instructional materials or course content are developed internally or provided through a third-party vendor. Faculty, program managers, and academic administrators shall maintain oversight of curriculum content, course outcomes, assessments, and instructional effectiveness.

Any agreements involving contracted courseware shall ensure that MTC maintains authority over curriculum decisions, academic standards, program objectives, and student learning outcomes. The College shall regularly evaluate contracted instructional materials and make revisions or require updates as necessary to ensure continued quality, effectiveness, and alignment with institutional expectations.

Through ongoing review and curriculum oversight, MTC ensures that all instructional materials support student success and meet the same standards expected of traditionally delivered courses and programs.

Design & Development

The design and development of hybrid and distance learning course content are the responsibility of the instructor, consistent with Marion Technical College (MTC) curriculum requirements, program objectives, and instructional standards. Instructors are encouraged to utilize institutionally supported technologies and resources when developing and delivering courses that include online instructional components.

MTC provides resources, training, and technical support to assist instructors in the design, development, and implementation of effective hybrid and distance learning courses. Instructors developing their first course with online instructional components shall consult with the Canvas Administrator or designated instructional technology support personnel to ensure appropriate course design, accessibility, and alignment with College standards.

To promote effective communication and student engagement, instructors must provide students with clear and accessible methods for contacting them. At a minimum, instructors shall post their contact information within the course and maintain communication channels appropriate for the course format. Available communication tools may include:

- Course announcements
- Email
- Discussion boards

DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

- Messaging systems within the Learning Management System (LMS)
- Virtual classroom sessions
- Question-and-answer forums
- Telephone or office contact information
- Blogs, journals, and wikis, when appropriate

Instructors shall include a direct link to their contact information within the course navigation or course information area of the LMS. Communication expectations, including methods of contact and anticipated response times, should be clearly communicated in the course syllabus and learning management system.

Course design should encourage regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors and provide opportunities for student engagement, collaboration, and participation through the appropriate use of instructional technologies. All online components of a course should support established learning outcomes and contribute to student success.

Instructor Office Hours/ Presence

Faculty presence is an essential component of quality instruction and a significant contributor to student engagement, satisfaction, and success. Instructors teaching hybrid and distance learning courses shall maintain an active and consistent presence throughout the course and provide regular opportunities for communication and interaction with students.

Instructors shall communicate their availability to students through the course syllabus and/or learning management system (LMS), including information regarding office hours, preferred methods of communication, and the days and times during which students may expect instructor engagement and participation.

To support student success and maintain effective communication, instructors are expected to utilize a variety of strategies to establish and sustain their presence within the course. Such strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- Posting course announcements and updates;
- Participating in online discussions and learning activities;
- Providing timely feedback on assignments and assessments;
- Conducting virtual meetings or office hours, when appropriate;
- Responding to student questions and concerns through approved communication channels; and
- Monitoring student participation and progress throughout the course.

Instructors shall respond to student emails, phone messages, and other course-related communications within 24 hours during scheduled contract workdays and hours whenever possible. Weekends, College holidays, and other non-contract days are excluded from the 24-



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

hour response expectation. Any alternative communication timelines should be clearly communicated to students in the course syllabus.

Regular instructor engagement is expected to foster a supportive learning environment, encourage student participation, and promote successful achievement of course learning outcomes.

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

Institutional Governance & Policy Review

The policies, procedures, and guidelines governing distance learning and hybrid instruction at Marion Technical College (MTC) shall be reviewed and approved by College administration. Any revisions, updates, or substantive changes to these policies shall be subject to the appropriate administrative review and approval process prior to implementation.

MTC is committed to the regular evaluation of its distance learning and hybrid learning practices to ensure compliance with applicable state, federal, accreditation, and institutional requirements. Periodic review of these policies may be conducted to support continuous improvement, maintain academic quality, address emerging technologies, and respond to the evolving needs of students, faculty, and the College.

Approved policies and any subsequent revisions shall be communicated to appropriate stakeholders and incorporated into institutional procedures as necessary.

Intellectual Property & Copyright

The development, use, distribution, and ownership of instructional materials used in hybrid and distance learning courses shall comply with all applicable Marion Technical College (MTC) policies and procedures governing intellectual property and copyright. Faculty, staff, and students are expected to adhere to federal copyright laws, licensing agreements, and fair use provisions when creating, accessing, sharing, or reproducing instructional materials.

Instructors are responsible for ensuring that all course content, including text, images, videos, software, multimedia resources, and other instructional materials, is used in accordance with applicable copyright requirements and licensing restrictions. Appropriate permissions shall be obtained when required.

Ownership, use, and dissemination of instructional materials developed for hybrid and distance learning courses shall be governed by MTC policies related to intellectual property rights. Any questions regarding copyright compliance, intellectual property ownership, or the permissible use of copyrighted materials should be directed to the appropriate College administrator or representative.



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

MTC is committed to respecting the intellectual property rights of others while supporting the creation, protection, and lawful use of educational resources that enhance teaching and learning.

Program Completion

Students enrolled in hybrid and distance learning courses shall be subject to the same academic requirements, completion standards, deadlines, and institutional policies that apply to students enrolled in traditional face-to-face courses. Policies regarding program completion, satisfactory academic progress, course withdrawals, and incomplete grades shall be applied consistently regardless of the instructional delivery method.

Access to instructional support services, academic records, and completion-related resources for students enrolled in hybrid or distance learning courses shall be comparable to those available to students in traditional programs.

Course materials and records associated with hybrid and distance learning instruction shall be maintained in accordance with Marion Technical College (MTC) records retention requirements and applicable state and federal regulations. Distance learning course sites may be archived in electronic format for a minimum of one (1) year following course completion or as otherwise required by institutional record retention schedules.

Instructors may request access to archived course materials for instructional, administrative, accreditation, or program review purposes, subject to applicable College procedures and access controls. MTC will maintain archived course records in a manner that supports institutional effectiveness, program evaluation, and compliance with accreditation and regulatory requirements.

Online Program Evaluation

Marion Technical College's (MTC) standard course evaluation process shall be used to assess hybrid and distance learning courses. Course evaluations may be administered through the Learning Management System (LMS) or other approved evaluation methods to gather student feedback regarding the quality and effectiveness of instruction, course design, student support, and overall learning experience.

Evaluation instruments may be modified as necessary to ensure relevance to the instructional delivery method. Questions that do not apply to hybrid or distance learning environments may be removed, and additional questions specific to the online components of the course may be added when appropriate.

Instructors may recommend or develop supplemental evaluation items designed to assess aspects of the course unique to the instructional modality, including technology use, communication, course navigation, student engagement, and online learning resources. Any modifications shall be consistent with institutional evaluation practices and approval processes.



DISTANCE LEARNING POLICY

Hybrid and distance learning courses shall be evaluated in accordance with existing MTC course evaluation policies and procedures. Evaluation results may be used to support continuous improvement efforts, faculty development, curriculum review, program effectiveness, and the enhancement of student learning outcomes.

NOTES:

Please note any comments for changes.