

## Motivation

Foothill-De Anza has a strong history and reputation for leadership in innovative online education, and our students have benefitted from accessing courses in multiple modalities for over 25 years. New this accreditation cycle, “Regular Substantive Interaction” (RSI) is a collection of teaching practices that must be implemented and documented in our Distance Education courses, to meet the needs of our ACCJC accreditors and the federal student financial aid program. The regulatory standards around ADA accessibility have also risen in recent years.

Furthermore, online instructors at Foothill-De Anza reaffirm our personal commitment to the continuous improvement of our course offerings. Through professional learning and engagement, we maintain high standards for our teaching practices such as ongoing communication, educational effectiveness, and stimulation of student interest.<sup>1</sup>

## Equity:

### Uniform Standards and Diverse Professional Development Experiences

Distance Education takes many forms and serves many purposes in our institution. Online, virtual, and hybrid courses fit into the workload and career path of our faculty in diverse ways. We strive to offer uniformly excellent distance education courses across the disciplines. The professional development and support appropriate for each instructor will vary.

This document establishes the uniform standards our institution adopts for “Regular Substantive Interaction” and accessibility. It also calls for development of professional development pathways that will be appropriate to many instructors.

### Uniform Standard Policies for RSI and Accessibility of Distance Education courses

Instructors of distance education courses shall clearly specify the date(s) and method(s) for providing regular substantive interaction on their syllabus (use the heading “Course Interaction Plan” and “Student Progress Monitoring Plan” to support the accreditation team). Instructors submit syllabi to the division office by the first week of the course, in accordance with division procedures.

Instructors of distance education courses shall generate an Accessibility Dashboard report for each Canvas course, showing no errors. ([Information page](#); [information video](#).) If alerts are present in the report, these should be documented by type and the instructor should address how each of these have been checked for accessibility. Instructors submit this report to the division office by the first week of the course, in accordance with division procedures.

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<sup>1</sup> Agreement between Foothill-De Anza Community College District and the Foothill-De Anza Faculty Association, 2022-25, Appendix J1.B

## Definitions

### RSI Rubric

<p>Course communication plan: Weekly substantive interaction</p>	<p><b>Meets the standard:</b> Interaction plan outlines how substantive interaction (at least two instances weekly) will take place throughout the quarter. The type of interaction may vary as the course progresses. Substantive interaction is defined below</p>	<p><b>Developing:</b> Interaction plan is not present or does not outline how at least two instances of substantive interaction will take place weekly. Substantive interaction is defined below.</p>
<p>Student progress monitoring plan: Monitoring student engagement prior to census and monitoring course progress after census</p>	<p><b>Meets the standard:</b> A plan is present to monitor student engagement prior to census and periodically (at least two times throughout the course) proactively engage with students about their course progress.</p>	<p><b>Developing:</b> A plan is not present or does not adequately outline steps that the instructor will take to monitor student engagement prior to census and periodically (at least two times) proactively engage with students about their course.</p>

### Regular Substantive Interaction<sup>2</sup>

- 1) Interaction: Instructors initiate interactions on a predictable schedule throughout the course, including at least two of the following types of interaction:
  - a. Direct, synchronous instruction (such as a virtual modality course<sup>3</sup>);
  - b. Instructor-authored feedback on a student’s coursework;
  - c. Providing information or responding to questions about course content (such as scheduled office hours);
  - d. Facilitating a group discussion about course content.
- 2) Progress Monitoring: Instructors monitor student academic engagement and success; promptly and proactively engage with individual students when needed on the basis of such monitoring; and promptly engage upon student request.

<sup>2</sup> ACCJC [Policy on Distance Education and on Correspondence Education](#)

<sup>3</sup> [March 10, 2022 letter to WCET from Department of Education](#)

## Roles and Responsibilities

Collaboration across our district supports high-quality course offerings.

### Academic Senates, FHDA, and Faculty Association

Our representative and negotiating bodies establish policies and procedures that are clear and easily understood, and which reflect current regulatory requirements and local campus culture.

### Instructors

Each instructor is responsible for keeping current in instructional practices, including those associated with online learning; submitting departmental documentation including syllabi; providing ADA-compliant course materials; and providing regular and substantive interaction for teacher-student interactions.<sup>4</sup> Instructors of distance education courses who need more information, professional development, and/or assistance with implementation are responsible for reaching out to the Office of Online Learning and/or their Division Dean for resources.

### Division Deans

A faculty employee's schedule shall normally be established by mutual agreement between the employee and their Division Dean or appropriate administrator.<sup>5</sup> Only faculty employees who possess the appropriate campus training, preparation and skills in online pedagogy and course design shall be assigned an online learning course.<sup>6</sup> In particular, Division Deans are responsible for establishing a process for collecting course syllabi and accessibility reports, and verifying that the standards have been met for each course.

### Offices of Online Learning

Our campus Offices of Online Learning provide leadership through a variety of professional development opportunities, to support faculty learning and course improvement. For example, at Foothill there is an **Accessibility workshop every Thursday at noon**, and there are instructional designers and faculty liaisons who provide individual help. The Office of Online learning may support the Division Deans in collecting and verifying course syllabi and accessibility reports, and in providing additional training to faculty who have not yet met the standards or appropriate preparation.

Each Office of Online Learning shall develop a 4-hour training which includes RSI, accessibility, and guidance on completing the documentation step. Each Office of Online Learning shall develop a pathway for faculty who need assistance putting the standards into practice: Peer discussion and review cohort: synchronous or asynchronous discussions totaling six hours over two quarters providing discussion on effective practices and guidance to complete the documentation; individual work with Online Learning mentors to complete documentation.

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<sup>4</sup> *Agreement*, article J1.B

<sup>5</sup> *Agreement*, article 10.4.

<sup>6</sup> *Agreement*, article 34.1