

Berkeley College Distance Learning Policy

Purpose

The United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA) defines distance learning as “[t]he acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance.” Consistent with Berkeley’s Mission to “empower[] students to achieve lifelong success in dynamic careers” and its Strategic Goal to “create a culture that embraces innovation,” this policy seeks to facilitate compliance with the applicable laws and regulations, as well as the Guidelines of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education governing distance education programs, by providing for the development and delivery of online instruction using the Blackboard learning management system.

Scope

This policy applies to all associates, processes, and technology that affect online teaching and learning at Berkeley College.

I. Academic Equivalency

A. Comparable Academic Content

The academic content, requirements, activities and performance expectations for Berkeley College Online courses shall be comparable to the those featured in Berkeley College on-site courses.

B. Teaching Requirements

Faculty members assigned to teach distance education courses shall have qualifications comparable to instructors teaching similar courses on-site. In addition, prior to teaching an instructor’s first online course, the instructor shall be required to complete training specific to the online environment, including

- Effective pedagogical uses of specific instructional technology
- Effective use of the Blackboard Learning Management System
- Course Readiness and Design
- Content Development
- Online Delivery and Course Management.

C. Academic Support

All online faculty shall receive the following ongoing support:

- Instructional design and pedagogical support from the Online Faculty Support Team
- Technical support from the HelpDesk
- Professional and pedagogical support from Online Chairs
- Training and professional development opportunities from the Online Faculty Support Team and the Teaching and Learning Commons.

II. Equivalent Student Support and Activities

All Berkeley College online students receiving instruction through distance learning shall receive equivalent access to the student support services offered on Berkeley's physical campus locations. These include, but are not limited to, admissions; academic advisement; academic support; library services; financial aid; student accounts; career services; student development and campus life; and other programs, resources and services, as applicable.

III. Application of Other Policies

The College shall maintain appropriate policies and procedures governing distance education including, but not limited to, the following:

- the Online Student Identity Verification Policy
- procedures for handling state online regulation issues
- procedures for monitoring "meaningful academic activity" (for Title IV purposes)

In addition, to the extent practicable, all Berkeley College academic and conduct policies and procedures shall also apply to Berkeley College distance education. Those policies and procedures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- the Electronic Information Archiving Policy
- the Credit Hour Assignment Policy
- the Computer Access for Students Policy
- procedures for classifying students who are taking both online and onsite courses
- appropriate methods of communication between faculty and students
- procedures for providing appropriate accommodations to students with auditory and visual challenges
- the Copyright Policy
- the Faculty Handbook, including but not limited to provisions concerning online assessment and proctored examinations, and intellectual property rights to courses developed by online instructors
- the Student Handbook, including but not limited to individual rights and responsibilities; satisfactory academic progress; equal opportunity (non-discrimination and protection from harassment based upon various listed criteria); financial aid; and various other matters.

IV. Periodic Policy Review

The College shall periodically review and make appropriate modifications to its online programs and courses, along with its policies and procedures applicable to distance learning.