

DISTANCE EDUCATION HANDBOOK

Best Practices in Teaching Online at Ventura College
Version 2021

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

The Ventura College Distance Education Handbook is a supplemental guide to the Ventura College Faculty Handbook. The purpose of this handbook is to provide resources to new faculty and to update current faculty on policies, procedures, and best practices at Ventura College.

The Ventura College Distance Education Handbook was prepared by the college's Instructional Technology and Design Team, Distance Education Faculty, the Dean of Distance Education, the Librarian, an Academic Counselor, the Distance Education Committee, the Educational Assistance Center, and the Academic Senate.

INTRODUCTION

The distance education and instructional technology department provides support for faculty teaching distance education courses. We maintain a web site, an online portal called "the DE Faculty Hub", teach courses in best practices, hold workshops, and provide just in time support and resources. We train faculty so that they are certified in online instruction, recertified in online instruction, and other topics.

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1 WELCOME

Ventura College offers convenient, expanded access to higher education and learning opportunities via distance education. Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and /or time and interact through the assistance of communication technology. Distance Education courses are ideal for independent, self-directed, and motivated students who have functional computers at their home or office and have access to broad band internet on an ongoing basis. Distance Education has become a common learning method for students who are seeking to achieve their educational goals.

Online Education

Distance education is defined by the California Title 5 educational code as “ a means of instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by time and/or distance and interact through the assistance of technology” ([5 CCR § 55200](#)) the Accrediting Commission for Junior and Community Colleges describes Distance Education “as a formal interaction designed for learning in which the interaction principally occurs when the student is separated by location from the instructor, resources used to support learning, or other students.” At its very basic, distance education is instruction in which the student and the instructor are separated by distance and/or time and interact through online means. ACCJC further defines it as that which “uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and which supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously.”

There are multiple methods of delivering a course, or any part of it, from a distance. Distance education often incorporates technologies such as the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; in conjunction with any of the other technologies.

There are various types of online learning.

- Online Classes offer 100% of the seat time off-campus with all classroom time moderated via a computer and the internet.
- Hybrid classes offer 1%-99% of the seat time in a campus-based, in-person classroom setting, and the remainder of the class time occurs outside of a traditional classroom with the instructional class time moderated by the use of a computer and the internet.
- HyFlex (hybrid-flexible) classes are defined as classes that allow each student to choose whether they wish to attend class online or in person – classes are “live-steamed” for students to access remotely. Students can choose their preferred method of learning on a daily basis.

There are various modes of online learning.

- Asynchronous – does not integrate scheduled or optional live (Zoom) sessions. Structured, interactive online learning takes place in a Learning Management System (i.e., CANVAS) but lessons are not scheduled to occur live in which class participants engage in the learning activity at the same time. This is the most common type of online class.
- Asynchronous + Optional Synchronous – Includes structured, interactive, online learning within the LMS as well as optional live (Zoom) sessions.
- Asynchronous + Required Synchronous – Includes scheduled, live (Zoom) sessions as well as structured, interactive online learning within the LMS that takes place in the LMS.

“Scheduled” refers to live sessions listed in the official, online schedule of classes. Faculty can only require live attendance at synchronous sessions if they appear on the schedule of classes, allowing students to know the days and times of live sessions at the time of registration.

- Hybrid (Partially online) Classes In-person + Asynchronous – Classes meet in a traditional classroom setting for 1-99% of the allotted time, and the remainder incorporates structured, interactive learning activities within the learning management system (LMS). This is the most common type of hybrid class.
- In-person + Synchronous - Classes meet in a traditional classroom setting for 1-99% of the allotted time, and the remainder incorporates required or optional synchronous sessions.

Success Rates

Ventura College takes pride in its success rates. As an early pioneer in online education, we have been demonstrating high [success rates](#) and transfer potential on our campus. Please take a moment to better understand our rates by going to Office of Institutional Effectiveness. You may also want to examine [enrollment](#) and our distance education [demographics](#).

Best Practices

The following resources are available to you and throughout this document and are considered best practice usage at Ventura College.

Training: We believe in training our faculty to do the job that they are required to master. We created the Online Teacher Training course in Canvas and hold additional workshops on a variety of topics throughout the year.

Rubrics: We have adopted the statewide California Virtual Campus rubric, and we have a pre-semester checklist that highlights commonly addressed needs for

Ventura College Courses. We are also starting to implement the Peralta Colleges Equity Rubric for online education.

Workshops: We continue to offer workshops in a variety of topics such as screencasting, video recording, graphic creation, lesson design, intrusive design, equity enhancements, and designing for every learner workshops. We want to reach all learners.

Faculty Hub: Ventura College maintains a [distance education faculty hub](#). All are encouraged to join to stay current, find valuable resources, and research great educational technology tools.

Training Studio: The state-of-the-art training and recording studio, located in Learning Resource Center (LRC) Room 136, is available to instructors for video creation and online teaching needs. It is also used for live training sessions. You can reserve the Training Studio for video or podcast recording and/or demonstrations for your students. Contact VCDEFacultyHelp@vcccd.edu for a tour of the space and to reserve time in the Studio.

CVC Consortium: Ventura College is a member of the [CVC Consortium](#) and we actively participate in meetings across the state to determine what is best for Ventura College as well as the State of California in Online Education. Professional development resources are available at the [CVC Professional Development website](#).

2 REGULAR EFFECTIVE CONTACT

Title 5 regulations do not make a distinction between face-to-face and distance education courses beyond the need to have a [separate curriculum approval process](#) and the need to ensure [regular effective contact](#). DE Courses are considered the “virtual equivalent” of face-to-face courses. Therefore, the frequency of contact will be at least the same as it would be in an equivalent face-to-face course. In addition, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) requires that Distance Education courses ensure that there is “regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor.”

As per Title 5, section [55204](#), and AP 4105, “Any portion of a course conducted through distance education includes regular effective contact between instructor and students, and among students, either synchronously or asynchronously” which Ventura Community College Distance Education defines as follows:

Instructor-Initiated:

The Instructor will create an environment of academic integrity that discourages fraud in the form of student misrepresentation and constitutes a means for the following:

- Monitoring satisfactory progress, defined as earning grades consistent with a final course grade of a "C" or better OR "Pass."
- Tracking student attendance
- Determining the last day of attendance for students who drop the course via the following methods:
- Prior to the first census date, the instructor will initiate an activity that requires.
 - student participation

The instructor will include various robust assessments and assignments on a frequent basis throughout the semester.

Instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine whether they are accessing, comprehending, and participating in course activities. At the very least, the number of instructor-initiated contact hours per week available for face-to-face students will also be available in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode with students in the DE format. The Ventura College Distance Education Committee has approved a standard of instructors establishing a minimum of 1 hour of synchronous interaction per week in addition to regularly scheduled office hours.

The following list is intended to be a guide for instructors to ensure that their online courses fulfill the requirements for regular effective contact.

- Course contact page describing how contact will occur
- Course Announcements (e.g., videos, weekly summary, weekly review)
- Personalized Feedback (e.g., assignment comments, rubrics, email)
- Discussion Boards (e.g., question and answer forums, Flipgrid , Canvas Studio, VoiceThread)
- Videoconferencing (e.g., Confer Zoom, Microsoft Teams Skype, CCC Confer)
- Collaborative Projects (e.g., group blogs, group discussions, peer review, wikis)
- Instructor-Created Modules
- Lectures (e.g., recorded, streaming, slides with audio narration)
- Podcasts
- Webinars
- Screencasts
- Virtual Office Hours
- Email (district provided course email must be used)
- Private Messaging through district provided Learning Management System or Phone systems
- Chat

Student – Student Contact

Facilitating Student to Student Contact: Instructors are required to facilitate regular substantive conversations between students. This contact can be synchronous or asynchronous. This type of communication is very effective in providing opportunities for collaborative learning among students.

Student-Initiated:

Asynchronous Communication: When contacted via voicemail or email by a student, the instructor responds in a timely manner clearly outlined in the class syllabus, so the contact with the student is reasonably prompt, albeit not instantaneous. This contact is effective because it responds to specific concerns and questions of individual students.

Moderating a Discussion Forum: When a student posts a message in an open, public space in an online class the instructor responds in a timely manner clearly outlined in the class syllabus, so the contact is reasonably prompt, albeit not instantaneous. This contact is effective because it responds to specific concerns and questions of individual students, yet the responses are shared in a public arena, so all students can benefit from the question of one student.

Synchronous Office Hours: Faculty must include in their syllabi a specific hour(s) of specific days when a student can interact with an instructor. These can be physical synchronous office hours where the instructor is present on campus in a specific office. These synchronous office hours can also be times when the instructor is available via various technologies, including but not limited to telephone, email, audio conferencing (i.e., ConferZoom), video conferencing, and chat rooms. This contact is effective because it responds to specific concerns and questions of individual students.

Frequency

Contact shall be distributed in a manner that ensures that regular contact is maintained over the course of a week and should occur as often as appropriate for the course. The Ventura College Distance Education Advisory Group has approved a standard of instructors participating in each course a minimum of 3 times per week.

Online instructors are responsible to respond to students in a timely fashion. The Ventura College Distance Education Advisory Group has approved a standard of instructors generally responding to students emails within 24 hours of an established 5-day work week.

Expectations

The instructor's specific policies regarding the frequency and timeliness of instructor-initiated contact and feedback will be part of the syllabus or other course documents made available to students at the start of the course.

Instructor Absences

If an illness, family emergency, or other unexpected reason prevents the instructor from continuing regular contact, the instructor will inform students and their division office when regular contact stops and is likely to resume. Protocols for cancelling class, substitutes, doctor's notes for absence, etc. will follow the guidelines of face-to-face courses.

3 Faculty Preparation and Trainings

Course Approval to Teach Online Overview

Before a course can be offered online, it must go through a separate curriculum process. First, all information will be input into our course information management system. The course then goes through several rounds of approvals. After the course receives its final approval from the entire committee, the course is ready to be taught. In some cases, it can take up to two years. Work with your faculty curriculum representative to follow due dates. There is a sample template for DE approval available.

Note: During the Pandemic, many courses were accepted for emergency only online instruction while others were approved for future online instruction.

The Online Teacher Training Course in Canvas

Instructors teaching any online or hybrid class at VCCCD are required by title 5 and the AFT Contract to complete training in online teaching and best practices including regular effective contact and course LMS tools. The Online Teacher Training Course in Canvas is a four-week course that instructors complete in order to be put on the list of certified instructors. Instructors that have not taught online for a certain period of time since they were last certified will be asked to re-certify in order to stay up on the tools and techniques required to conduct an online class.

How are instructors assigned to teach a class?

Instructors are assigned online classes the same way they are assigned other classes at campuses. The Dean has the right of approval. The AFT contract (Article V) lays out the process by which instructors are assigned courses. Faculty are not required to teach online classes and can be offered an on-campus class instead of an online class based on right of assignment.

Peer Online Course Review (POCR)

Trained VC faculty and Distance Education team members are available to review online and hybrid courses for alignment with effective practices in quality online teaching that increase student success. Peer review is a collaborative process between teaching faculty and DE team members to ensure alignment with Course Outline of Record (COR)

objectives, the [CVC Course Design Rubric](#), and accessibility requirements. Faculty who complete the Ventura College POQR process can also submit their fully online courses for “Quality Reviewed” badging on the [CVC.edu](#) cross-enrollment platform. For more information, please contact VCDEFacultyHelp@vcccd.edu .

Equity Review

Our instructional designers and Online Faculty are trained in Conducting a Cultural Curriculum Audit. This process ensures that authentic assessment and student choice are at the forefront of creating course materials. Lead mentors will guide new faculty through the process of conducting the audit.

Recertification

As per the faculty contract, if you have not taught an online course within the past three semesters you are due for the recertification process. This involves taking the most recent version of the Online Teacher Training Course in Canvas or taking our Course Review based recertification process.

4 Course Quality Standards

Online / hybrid courses according to state requirements should provide the same quality, content and substantive contact as an in-person class. Faculty creating courses should use the following types of rubrics as they create and edit courses:

- [OEI CVC Self-Check Rubric](#)
- [OEI CVC Course Design Rubric](#)
- [Ventura College Pre-Term Course Check List](#)
- [Peralta Colleges Equity Minded Rubric](#)

5 Recommended Computer Equipment and Software

The Ventura College Distance Education program recommends that online instructors have adequate technology and equipment that supports online teaching and learning. a computer that was built within the past three years. The following additional equipment is recommended as a best practice:

- Computer (or laptop) built within the past three years
- Extra Monitor
- Web Cam
- Microphone (or headset with microphone)
- Adequate lighting (e.g. Ring Lights)

- Office Software
- Creative Software
- Quality Screencasting Software (e.g. Camtasia, Canvas Studio, Screencast O Matic)

Full Time Instructors: You may be given a laptop with an extra monitor from our Informational Technology department. Please contact them directly at (805) 289-6285 or via email vchelpdesk@vccd.edu.

Licensed software includes the MS Office 365, Adobe Suite, Camtasia, Canvas Studio, Screencast O Matic, and other specialized software for various departments should be loaded to the computer by our Ventura College Informational Technology Department.

6 Content Delivery

Good Instructional Design is a process. There are currently many design processes in existence in the field of educational technology. One easy process to remember is called ADDIE where the instructor constantly analyzes, designs, develops, implements, and evaluates a portion of the course to make it better. A good course is in constant review. The following are additional course design and development concepts to consider.

Design & Development	DESCRIPTION
Course Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to developing your course, determine whether a face-to-face component should be considered in place of, addition, or as part of the online course. • Certain departments require testing be given in person. Please check with your department chair to find out if this applies to your course. • In determining the need for a new distance education course, it is important to identify the audience. What is the demographic of the students anticipated to take the proposed distance education course? How will they benefit from taking this distance education course? What type of distance education course will best fit their needs— online or partially online?

Course Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create the content outline for your course. What topics and information will be covered in this distance education course?• Review what materials, such as textbooks, exist that might be used with the course. Keep in mind instructional materials that may work well in a traditional, face-to-face course may not work well in distance education mode. It is important to determine the most appropriate learning materials given a particular audience (determined above) in shaping the course. When developing or adopting course materials, use the Ally function in Canvas to determine accessibility of specific content. For instance, consider the accessibility of pdf and word documents in your online course. These may work well in a face-to-face environment as printouts but may not be accessible as a digital file. Additionally, make sure that any video content has closed captions and check your Canvas pages with the immersive reader tool for appropriate content delivery for students using screen readers.• As you develop your syllabus make sure you address the following: How will students learn the course material – will there be independent reading? Discussion questions to answer? What topics will be covered each week? While the first step in the development process is a general outline, this step involves creating a semester-long lesson plan.• Consider the different tools within Canvas. Which tools would be useful in delivering the content and meeting the student learning outcomes and course outline of record for your course? Which tools might not work as well? (Please see the next page
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	for a list of tools available within the Canvas learning management system.)
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In addition to basic course design, the following are school approved software applications that you can use for best results.

Learning Management System

Canvas is our learning management system from which all content is delivered. There are trainings in Canvas throughout the year from our Instructional Designers. We take seriously the organization of the content into **modules** so that our learners can

manipulate the materials well. **Discussions, Assignments, Announcements, Quizzes** and the **Calendar** are also good tools to know well.

Video Conferencing

Confer Zoom is our communications software allows us to video conference. ConferZoom sessions should be advertised with context inside of canvas.

Video Lessons

We also use **Canvas Studio, Camtasia, Screencast o Matic,** and **YouTube** to build and deliver video content that is ADA compliant. Please check out our Training Studio housed in the basement of the LRC. The Training Studio can be reserved so that you can design on a green screen, develop on a smartboard, video tape a lesson, bring in a class for an experiment, and edit your creation on the above software tools. It is state of the art.

Office Tools

The **Microsoft Office 365** is available from the Informational Technology Department as well as the **Adobe Suite**. Please call (805) 289-6285 or contact via email vchelpdesk@vccd.edu to have it installed on your computer.

ADA Compliance Tools

For ADA compliance we use **Ally** for documents, **Canvas Accessibility** for HTML Pages, Closed Captioning processes from **Canvas Studio, Youtube,** and **3CMedia**.

It is up to the Instructor to make sure that their publisher materials are ADA Compliant and we have a process to follow should it be needed.

Third Party Applications

Third party tools such as Voice Thread, Padlet, Flipgrid, and Nearpod are available. We also encourage departmental software for more specific needs.

Equality of Design

Ventura College is committed to equality of design. We are preparing our materials with the best intentions for our students. We believe in cultural curriculum audits, equity in online education, and humanizing the online course. We will have additional trainings in these areas.

7 Assessments and Assignments

Providing students with resources that evaluate their understanding of the materials is key to teaching in an online environment. The following tools are available to you.

TOOL	DESCRIPTION
Discussions	<p>The Discussions tool is used for online discussions between the instructor(s) and students as well as for discussion among students. Instructors and students can post messages, link to external websites, embed audio visual content, and attach documents to their messages. Discussion topics can be locked by date and time restrictions and can remain unpublished until a specified date.</p>
Assignments	<p>The Assignments tool can be used to organize Quizzes, graded Discussions, and online assignment submissions in the form of media uploads (i.e., files, images, text, URLs, video). Assignments in Canvas can be used to challenge students' understanding and help assess competency by using a variety of media. The Assignments page shows all assignments the instructor created. The Assignments page supports keyboard shortcuts. To view a window with a list of keyboard navigation shortcuts, press the Shift+Question Mark keys simultaneously on your keyboard. Assignments will only be permanently deleted in this view. Assignments that are removed from modules are only removed from the module and need to be deleted in Assignments to be permanently removed from the course.</p>
Quizzes	<p>The Quizzes tool allows instructors to create a variety of assessments for their students. While labeled Quizzes, this tool can be used for exams, surveys, and/or homework assignments. The Quizzes tool can be used to create following kinds of questions:</p> <p>Multiple choice, Multiple answer, True/false, Fill-in-the-blank, Matching, Essay answer, and more</p> <p>Assessments except for essay questions will be graded automatically and sync up with the Grades tool. Quiz answers can be conditionally released based on date and time. Instructors can either add quiz questions as part of groups or link to previously created quiz banks that allow instructors to randomly pull a subset of questions.</p>
Check in Points	<p>Throughout your course you will have a series of check-in points that measure understanding of the material. These should be at frequent intervals and are also a way to measure attendance. It keeps the student honest and allows you to better understand what needs further review and what has already been clearly understood. It is a delicate art.</p>

Assessing Students in Online Classes

For equity in online learning the CVC and the Chancellor's Office recommend Authentic Assessment to evaluate students in online learning. If you believe a conventional assessment with proctoring software is necessary, you must request the proctoring software from your Dean. The requested tool may be provided if funding exists.

Authentic assessments provide opportunity of student choice, student voice, and supports the idea of student engagement in the classroom. You can learn more about Authentic Assessments from our Instructional Technologist Designers during Office Hours and/or specialized trainings. There are also links in the Faculty Hub to state-wide webinars.

8 Zero Textbook Cost Materials

Faculty have academic freedom and are expected to select the course materials needed based upon the Course Outline of Record. For those who would like to explore the use of Zero (or Low) Textbook Cost materials, there are a variety of methods and resources you can employ to achieve lower textbook costs for your students.

Library Resources

There are many library database subscriptions and collections free for students that instructors can leverage. These include articles, eBooks, and streaming media/video services. Librarians are also available to assist with the creation, curation and integration of Library resources into your instructional modules. (see Library Resources for more detail).

Open Educational Resources

Open Educational Resources (OER) include openly licensed textbooks and other material, much of which are under "CC BY" licensing which allows adaptation or remixing of work (with attribution to the author). The VC Library has created a comprehensive guide of popular resources for OER/ZTC materials that includes open textbook collections, OER repositories, and resources for diverse images. It also includes OER materials by Subject. Visit [Open Educational Resources: Overview](#). For more information or assistance, please contact Linda Kennedy: 805-289-6399, linda_kennedy1@vccd.edu.

Pre-Made Canvas Modules

In addition, during the COVID-19 shift to online instruction, many departments submitted Canvas Modules to share among faculty for "hard-to-convert" courses. Check with your department to see what pre-made Canvas materials might be available for importing into your course.

Instructor Created Materials

Faculty may also want to create their own materials to reduce textbook costs for students and provide their own customized course material. These materials may include instructional videos, podcasts, and other textual content. The Distance Education team is available to work with faculty on projects for online course material development.

9 Library Resources and Instructional Support

Library Resources

The VC Library collection is designed to support the research and instructional needs of all VC courses, disciplines, and modes of instruction. The collection includes both print and digital materials, including electronic subscription databases that provide access to articles and eBooks, as well as streaming media/videos. The [Library website](#) provides access to these resources through [OneSearch](#), the [Databases A-Z page](#), and the [Streaming Media page](#). Submissions of requests, recommendations or comments are always welcome. Send your suggestions and requests to: vclibrary@vccd.edu.

LMS Support and Resource Integration

Librarians are available to assist with the creation, curation and integration of Library resources into your instructional modules. Should your needs extend beyond what is available through current Library collections / subscriptions, support is also provided for OER and ZTC requests. Librarians regularly work within Canvas and can be a helpful resource for troubleshooting issues with integration of library content.

Permalink vs. URL

Please note that when linking to content from within a Library database into your course shell, you cannot simply copy and paste the URL. Unfortunately, copying and pasting the URL will lead to broken links as soon as you paste this address. Instead of pasting the URL, instead copy and paste the permalink for the source you have found. Each subscription database has the permalink found in a slightly different location; if you can't find the permalink, a librarian would be happy to help.

Instructional Workshops

The VC Librarians and the Instructional Technologist / Designers are continually working to provide innovative and engaging instructional content. Available instruction includes but is not limited to Library orientations (physical and virtual) and Information Evaluation workshops. The information evaluation workshops can be conducted in one

session or be a collaborative effort between course instructor and Librarian(s), that culminates in a final deliverable that would demonstrate competency in specified skill sets. In addition, there are courses and trainings offered via the Instructional Technologist / Designers Offices.

Library Remote Services

45-Minute Scheduled Research Appointments

Students may schedule 45-minute appointments with librarians to receive one-on-one help with everything from becoming familiar with the library website to developing a research strategy. The request form is available on the Library Homepage. Librarian schedules vary each semester; however, every effort is made to provide time slots for a variety of days and times.

Point of Need Support Through Library Chat

Librarians are available to provide live, real-time assistance through Library Chat. This function is accessible through the Library Homepage (main page and lower-level pages) and Library Guides. Library Chat hours are posted on the Library Homepage and include evening and weekend hours.

Library Videos

Library videos are available on the Library's YouTube Channel. The channel contains videos designed to walk students through the research process, including step-by-step instructions for accessing and utilizing library resources. Videos covering information literacy topics such as the information cycle and information evaluation are also available. Contact a librarian to request custom videos that address topics or concepts specific to your assignments or courses.

Circulation of Physical Materials

While distance education rarely requires the use of physical materials. The Library does provide access to physical copies of material when needed. With the events of the 2020 Pandemic, the Library has developed a no-touch system for circulating physical items and will retain this service should access to the Library be restricted.

COPYRIGHT AND FAIR USE INFORMATION

Many instructors are concerned with copyright and fair use rules, regulations, and laws, and rightfully so. There are limitations to what can be freely distributed. It is safe to assume that an entire textbook cannot be reproduced and distributed over the internet, or in person, without the author's consent. But what about the idea of "fair use"? How

much is too much to use to supplement student learning? What is “fair” is open to debate among instructors and distance education faculty; however, the US Copyright Office has issued four factors that should be used when determining whether the inclusion of outside materials is fair or not. These four factors are:

- the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of commercial nature is or for nonprofit educational purposes;
- the nature of the copyrighted work;
- amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and
- the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Fair use is not dictated by a certain number of lines, words, pages, or percentages. While there are some general guidelines and suggestions available from reliable sources (see the link provided below), there is no set number or amount. Rather, using the four criteria above, it is up to the instructor to determine for what purpose outside resources will be used; what kind of copyrighted work will be utilized and distributed (textbook, novel, etc.); the portion of the work to be used; and what impact, if any, the use of copyrighted material will have on the work’s potential market or its value. Fair use also only protects the specific way an author has expressed him or herself (their words or pictures), but not their ideas or any factual information present in the work.

10. Accessibility Practices and Contacts

Accessible course content is content that all students, including students who may be using assistive technology, can access with minimal to no barriers. (Assistive technology is any device, software, or equipment that helps people work around their challenges. - [Understood.org](https://www.understood.org/)) Common assistive technologies are screen readers, such as JAWS, NVDA, Window Eyes, etc., text-to-speech software, text-to-speech apps, braille display, etc. Accessible course content is not only a best practice but is mandated by federal and state law - Section 508, etc...

VCCCD Board Commitment

The Board of Trustees of the Ventura County Community College District, believes that higher education should be available to everyone and we support a diverse community that includes people with disabilities. We are committed to increasing access and opportunity for all students, faculty, classified professionals, and our community.

Ally is an external tool integrated into Canvas. When turned on, Ally scans the content you add to your Canvas course and assigns an “accessibility score”, which appears as a colored dial – red (0-33%), yellow (32-66%), and green (67%-100%). The higher the score the fewer accessibility issues found in your course content.

Ally currently checks the following file formats:

- PDF files
- Microsoft® Word files
- Microsoft® PowerPoint® files
- OpenOffice/LibreOffice files
- Uploaded HTML files
- Image files (JPG, JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP, TIFF)
- WYSIWYG/VTBE content (results can be found in the [Institutional Report](#) and [Course accessibility report.](#))

Microsoft Office Accessibility Checker

[Microsoft Office](#) is committed to accessibility and ensuring content is easy for people of all abilities to read and edit. When creating a document (Word, Excel, Powerpoint, OneNote, etc.) or composing an email in Outlook, run the accessibility checker to identify potential accessibility issues prior to distributing. The **accessibility checker** identifies potential issues and provides suggestions for resolving the issues.

You'll see a list of errors, warnings, and tips with how-to-fix recommendations for each. View the [Rules for the Accessibility Checker webpage](#) more information.

Adobe Acrobat DC – Accessibility Checker

If your course content is in PDF, [Adobe Acrobat DC](#) has an accessibility checker and a Make Accessible Action Wizard to ensure your PDF is accessible prior to distributing or posting. If creating a PDF from a Word document, PowerPoint, etc., run the accessibility checker and resolve any accessibility issues prior to exporting as PDF. If creating a PDF from a scan, ensure your scan is clean, not grainy or marked up with underlines, highlights, etc. Be sure to OCR (or text recognize) the PDF and ensure the text is selectable and searchable. It should not be an image only PDF. Run the accessibility checker and resolve any accessibility issues prior to distributing or posting.

Listen to your PDF

- Open PDF with Adobe Acrobat Reader or DC
- Select VIEW – READ OUT LOUD
- Select ACTIVATE
- Go back to VIEW – READ OUT LOUD
- Select READ THIS PAGE or READ TO END OF DOCUMENT

Google Accessibility Checker

If you've created your own course website, use the following tools to evaluate if your website is accessible to students who may be using assistive technology:

[Google Accessibility Checker – Chrome Add-on](#)
[Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool \(WAVE\)](#)

Video Captioning

[The World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\)](#) describes captions as a “text form of audio information in video and animations. This includes the words that are spoken, who is speaking when it is not evident, and important sounds like music, laughter, and noises. Captions must be synchronized with the visual content to contextualize them.”

Video captions benefit viewers who may be deaf or hard of hearing and cannot hear some of the content, viewers whose native language may be different, and/or viewers who may need to see and hear the content to better understand it.

Commonly used products that provide video captioning:

- [Camtasia](#)
- [Canvas Studio](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [3CMedia](#)

11. ONLINE STUDENT SERVICES

Online Student Services and Distance Education Modalities

Student Services offer support to distance education learners via the implementation of various asynchronous and synchronous modalities. Online Student Services at Ventura College and their respected staff members can be accessed via email inquiry, phone, and video conferencing tools such as Zoom and ConferZoom.

Distance Education Student Help Desk

Students can contact our Student help desk with questions about Canvas, ConferZoom, General Online Classes Questions, and third party tools. Hours vary from term to term based upon the student workers' schedules. It can be referenced by contacting VCDEStudentHelp@vccd.edu | (805) 289-6452.

Protection of Student's Personal Information and Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) uphold that student's personal information and records are protected and confidential with use of these modalities. Online Student Services adhere to FERPA by maintaining and protecting personally

identifiable information (PII) from students' education records from unauthorized disclosure (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Ventura College and Student Services comply with FERPA by maintaining that student's personal information and records are not shared with any unauthorized parties and are for the sole use of the individual student and institutional records.

Student personal information and records are kept in secure Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software databases such as Ellucian Banner. Also, students are verified of their identity by use of Ventura County Community College District (VCCCD) Student Identification Numbers (900 number); VCCCD login credentials, and VCCCD generated email addresses. For more information regarding privacy of personal information and student records, please visit the VCCCD Administrative Procedure Manual and specifically [AP 5040](#).

Student Services

Ventura College offers online student services consisting of various offices and resources designed to assist distance education students in reaching their personal, career and educational goals. These services/resources range from: Admissions, Articulation, Assessment, Basic Needs, Financial Aid, Scholarships, Student Health, Student Business, Transfer, Academic Counseling, and more. Please visit the [Student Services Website](#) for more services/resources offered at Ventura College. Below highlight some of the Student Services that assist student's in reaching their educational goals.

[Admissions and Records](#)-We provide comprehensive services to prospective and continuing services to current students and alumni. These services include in person and online methods aimed at delivering streamlined assistance with applying for admission, registering for classes, awarding degrees and certificates, and information on official transcripts. In addition to the first point of inquiry for students, the Admissions and Records Office supports and helps the College's overall enrollment management strategic plan. The Admissions and Records Office processes and maintains records of transactions of student registration, develops and implements policies and procedures to assure the integrity, security, and preservation of each student's official academic record. The Admissions and Records Office staff conduct student contacts via in-person, phone, email inquiry or by ConferZoom.

[CalWORKS](#)- We are a welfare reform program designed to help head of households become self-sufficient through a variety of educational and work-related activities, including attendance at Ventura College. The CalWorks staff conduct student contacts via in-person, phone and email inquiry.

[Counseling](#)-Our mission is to assist students to identify and succeed in achieving their educational, career and personal/life goals. All counselors have the expertise to assist students with course selection, educational planning, and questions concerning requirements for majors, general education, graduation, or transfer to a four-year college or university. Students can meet with a counselor during a scheduled 45-minute appointment or call for same day drop-in counseling. Drop-in counseling is only for quick 5–10-minute questions such as class recommendations for next semester, questions about your current schedule and to request a transcript evaluation from outside vcccd transcripts. The Counseling staff conduct student contacts via in-person, phone, email inquiry or by ConferZoom.

[Educational Assistance Center \(EAC\)](#)-We promote the educational and vocational potential of students with disabilities by supporting each student's integration into the mainstream of college life. Students with learning disabilities, mobility, visual, hearing, speech, or psychological impairments, acquired brain injuries, or other health impairments, such as seizure disorders or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, are eligible for support services and special classes that are needed to fully participate in the educational process. The EAC staff conduct student contacts via in-person, phone and email inquiry.

[Educational Opportunity Programs and Services \(EOPS\)](#)-We are a Support Services Program designed to help Low-Income AND Educationally Disadvantaged students in reaching their goals. The focus of the EOPS program at Ventura College is to provide the necessary resources to students, so that they may successfully complete their educational objectives. The EOPS staff conduct student contacts via in-person, phone, email inquiry or by ConferZoom.

[Financial Aid](#)-We are dedicated financial aid professionals committed to providing all students with information to secure their necessary financial resources so they can meet their educational goals. Ventura College students have a variety of financial aid programs available. These programs vary in eligibility criteria, award amounts, and repayment options. The types and amounts of financial aid Ventura College awards or recommends are also subject to availability of funds, eligibility for funds, enrollment status and financial need. The Financial Aid staff conduct student contacts via in-person, phone, email inquiry or by ConferZoom.

12. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (needs review)

Is it easy to teach online?

Teaching a distance education course is different than teaching a tradition on-campus course. We have an Online Teacher Training Course that teachers take before teaching online at Ventura College. Online Teaching requires some knowledge of computers and the internet, a learning management system, excellent communication skills, a unique online pedagogy, engaging learning online learning activities, and creative troubleshooting. You can always ask an Instructional Technologist / Designer for help.

Why do I need to have office hours?

Office hours are essential to provide students with real time feedback, study resources, and overall student success strategies. Section 508 as well as Title 5 of the California Education Code requires that instructors provide their students with regular personal contact. Instructors should give their students several different ways that they can be reached as one method does not meet the needs of all students. Face-to-face contact, such as on-campus office hours, should be provided as an additional means of communication whenever possible so students unable to use email or the telephone can still have personal contact.

For clarification per the VCCCD Board Administrative Procedure 4105, faculty office hours are not included as fulfilling the regular effective contact requirement and are a separate requirement.

Where can I go for additional help?

Faculty can attend trainings, workshops, and consultations with the instructional technologists/designers. The ITDs also hold office hours and open studio hours. Please contact them for an updated schedule.

Students should first refer first to the Faculty member to clarify if the question is a course content question. If there is a technical issue identified, students can contact the VC DE Student Help Desk on the web site. There are trainings held at the beginning of each term for an introduction to the LMS.

Do I have to use the college's LMS for Distance Education Courses?

Yes, currently the entire Ventura County Community College District is using one of the VCCCD approved LMS systems for online and partially online classes as per school policies. By using this system, the school identifies your students and protects their identities in compliance with FERPA. Faculty should always use the district provided LMS

for communication with students in a secure environment via emails, gradebook, course content, and other LMS and district tools.

How do I use the LMS?

Trainings are provided on the LMS every semester. The dates and times are found on the college website. Consultations can be made, and drop-ins with the instructional technologists are welcome.

Can I still set deadlines for my students, or do they just have all semester to do their work?

Yes, you must set deadlines for your students as these are distance education courses and not correspondence courses.

Can I talk to someone who has already taught online?

Yes, and we encourage the collaboration. If you would like to speak with other distance education instructors, please contact the Instructional Technologist at Ventura College or just ask a colleague. We can help facilitate this process.

Can I schedule my time specific final any time during finals week?

No, online finals have a specific time schedule each semester and it is posted each semester. Any exam that is time specific must be scheduled during those times. Be careful that you do not set an exam time for an overlapping exam. This is very difficult on the student.

13. GLOSSARY

Accessible

All programs and multimedia used in online courses must be useable by all students with the aid adaptive technology if needed prior to the start of class; includes all multimedia and course content.

Adobe Creative Suite

Faculty have access to the adobe creative suite to edit photos, create animations, and create ADA compliant materials.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Requires programs and services, including educational programs to be accessible to qualified persons with disabilities. Requires also that all telecommunications must be equal and equally effective.

Audio Descriptions

These describe the visuals that are portrayed in the video. Examples of what can be included in an audio description are if the video includes diagrams or charts.

California Virtual Camps (CVC)

A place for students to search for common online classes across the state at 115 California Community Colleges. Faculty can participate in professional development including alignment with the CVC Course Design Rubric and course quality badging on the [CVC.EDU exchange](#). Ventura College is a member of the [CVC-OEI Consortium](#) which has been working to address online achievement gaps and increase student access to quality online courses. See the [About the CVC-OEI](#) for more information.

CalWorks

CalWORKs is California's welfare reform program designed to help head of households become self-sufficient through a variety of educational and work-related activities, including attendance at Ventura College. The CalWorks staff conduct student contacts via in-person, phone and email inquiry.

Camtasia

Camtasia is an advanced video editing tool and the district can add a copy to your machine. Please contact the information technology department.

Canvas

The learning management system currently used by the Ventura County Community College District.

Canvas Studio

A video editing tool that connects to canvas and allows easy access to edit, caption, and share your video creations.

Captioning

A process of converting audio content (narration, dialogue, music, sound effects, etc.) of a video into text that is displayed on a screen, monitor, or other visual display system

Chrome

A Google browser that works the best with all of our products. We highly recommend using this browser instead of rival products such as Apple Safari, Microsoft Edge, and Mozilla Firefox. In fact, in some cases the later three just don't work.

Closed Captioning

A user level feature that can be turned on and off by the user

DDEAC

District-Wide Distance Education Advisory Committee

EAC

Educational Assistance Center.

Ellucian Banner

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software for storage of student records

EOPS

Extended Opportunity Programs and Services

Face to Face Course

A Course that meets on campus, face to face.

Fair Use

Part of the United States copyright law that allows for minimal reproduction of copyrighted works without gaining permission from the author(s).

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

Hybrid Course (partially online)

A course that is offered both online and on campus.

ITAC

Information Technology Advisory Committee

Learning Management System (LMS)

A program used in training for delivering content. We currently use Canvas as our LMS.

LRC

Learning Resource Center.

LRC Training Studio

The LRC Training studio is available for creating videos, editing videos, recording videos, and experimental classrooms. You can be placed on the schedule by contact a Distance Education representative.

Microsoft Office

Our faculty have access to MS Office for word processing, excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations.

Online Courses

A Distance Education course that is fully online

On campus course

A traditional course on campus.

Open Captioning

The captions that remain on video; cannot be turned off

Proctor

A proctor is a person supervising a quiz, test, or exam. The proctor typically works in some role at a university or community college.

Proctorio

A software that we use to simulate having a proctor in the room.

Real-time Captioning

When captions that are simultaneously prepared and transmitted. If lecturing or presenting live via video, use a videoconferencing tool like Zoom, and you may also want someone else to handle the captions

Screencasting

A process in which the area on your monitor is either presented live or copied live while you are speaking and/or presenting your lesson.

Screencast O Matic

Is a very reliable low cost video / screencasting tool. This is wonderful for part-time instructors. Many faculty are using it at Ventura College.

Section 504

Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in educational settings which receive federal dollars. To learn more about Section 504, please explore the information found at <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>.

Section 508

Part of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 requires equal access to telecommunications for students with disabilities. This applies to students with disabilities enrolled in distance education courses. For more information regarding Section 508, please review the information available at <http://www.section508.gov/>.

Subtitles

Captions displayed at the bottom of a movie or television screen that translates or transcribes the dialogue or narrative. This is user level controlled.

Title 5

Title 5 is the part of the California Code of Regulations that deals with education in California.

Transcripts

A text version of the video or audio recordings; typically, useful for viewers to download and have access to the text of the media

Web-enhanced course

Canvas is our district approved Learning Management System. Instructors are provided a Canvas shell for all on courses. Teachers teaching on campus are encouraged to web-enhance their course by providing material, context, and grading feedback.

VCDEAG

Ventura College Distance Education Advisory Group

VC Tech Committee

Ventura College Technology Committee

Video Recording

This process differs from screencasting in that you are only video recording the teacher.

YouTube

We support those who are using YouTube creations. Please check out our LRC Training Studio.

Zoom

A video conferencing software that is used at VCCCD. The version is called ConferZoom that we use.