

Alabama Southern Community College

Distance Education Policy Manual

Definition of Distance Education

According to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission of Colleges, distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use 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; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program.

Alabama Southern Mission Statement and Distance Learning Strategy

Alabama Southern Community College provides comprehensive educational opportunities and services in diverse learning environments to enhance community and economic development for the citizens of southwest Alabama.

Distance Education – Provide access to high quality instruction and support services through distance education and ensure that the learning environment is comparable to the traditional formal educational process without the need for students to be in a specific location at a set time.

Distance Education – Student Policies

1. Alabama Southern Community College will demonstrate that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, (a) a secure login and pass code and (b) proctored examinations.

a. Secure Login and Pass Code

Alabama Southern uses the Canvas LMS (Eagles' Web) for distance learning enabled courses. The Canvas system uses a Hyper Text Transfer Protocol with a Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) which helps ensure that the connection between the student's computer or mobile device and the Canvas LMS server is a

secure and safe transaction. As such, students use their student number as the secure login and are assigned a unique pass code.

Students that forget their pass code may request help by selecting “Don’t know your password” on the login screen. A Canvas Support Ticket will be created and immediately mailed to college IT support personnel for resolution.

b. Proctored Examinations

To assure integrity, each online course must have at least one proctored examination (midterm or final) ***supervised by the instructor, an approved proctor, or through Respondus Monitor and Lockdown Browser***. Students unable to travel to campus must take the exam under the supervision of an approved proctor. Instructors and approved proctors shall require students to show a valid photo ID. (See page 6 of this document for guidelines as to what constitutes an approved proctor.)

Alabama Southern use the *Respondus Lockdown Browser* and *Respondus Monitor* for proctored quizzes and examinations. *LockDown Browser* is a system that locks down the testing environment with the respective LMS. Specific features of the *Respondus LockDown Browser* are

- Integrates with Blackboard, ANGEL, Brightspace by D2L, *Canvas*, Moodle, and Sakai
- Assessments are displayed full-screen and cannot be minimized
- Assessments cannot be exited until submitted by users for grading
- Task switching or access to other applications is prevented
- Print, Print Screen, and capturing functions are disabled
- Copying and pasting anything to and from an assessment is prohibited
- Screen capture, messaging, screen-sharing, virtual machine, and network monitoring applications are blocked from running
- Right-click menu options and function keys are disabled
- Browser menu and toolbar options are disabled, except for Back, Forward, Refresh and Stop
- Source code for the HTML page cannot be viewed
- The browser automatically starts at the login page for the institution’s learning management system

- URLs cannot be typed by the user
- External links don't compromise the locked testing environment
- Pages from the assessment are not stored on the computer after exiting
- Assessments that are set up for use with *Respondus LockDown Browser* cannot be accessed with other browsers
- Localized for multiple languages, including English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese
- Available for both Windows and Mac computers, as well as iPad (Respondus 2014, 1)

Coupled with the *Respondus LockDown Browser*, Alabama Southern uses the *Respondus Monitor* system which interfaces with a webcam so that video and snapshots of the student and his or her testing environment can be seen. Through this system, faculty and college administrators "ensure student identity and exam integrity in distance learning environments" (Respondus 2014b, 1).

2. In order to protect the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs, the faculty will not publicly post any grades or personal information for any student. Grades must be posted securely, visible only by each individual student, in his/her password-protected Eagles' Web (Canvas) student grade book.

To further protect the privacy of students, all faculty must contact students using the secure email system in Eagles' Web (Canvas). Students may adjust the settings in their password protected Eagles' Web (Canvas) account to only receive email in their Canvas Inbox or receive email in their Eagles' Web (Canvas) Inbox and other designated private email accounts. Students have the ability to view their entire email history in their Eagles' Web (Canvas) Inbox and delete emails as desired. As with any other password protected email account, other individuals cannot access and view the message history.

3. Alabama Southern Community College does not charge any **additional** fees for the costs that may be directly incurred with the verification of student identity for students enrolled in distance education (online) courses.

Distance Education – General Policies

- 1) ASCC distance education courses are online asynchronous courses that use the Internet.
- 2) All college policies and administrative functions for registration and maintenance of student records that apply to traditional courses will apply in the distance education domain. This includes admission, prerequisites, grade requirements, course enrollment verification, application of financial aid, posting of grades, etc.
- 3) Distance education courses operate under the purview of the Dean of Instruction.
- 4) Student services, library services, and other academic support services are accessible to students in the distance education program, just as they are to traditional students.
- 5) Distance education courses taught by the College will use the standardized college syllabi format.
- 6) Credit hours granted for courses delivered through distance education will be the equivalent to the credit hours for the same courses delivered traditionally.
- 7) Course enrollment in distance education courses will follow the same guidelines used for determining sufficient enrollment for all courses.

Distance Education – Faculty Policies

- 1) Faculty contact information will be prominently displayed on the course page. Faculty will also provide students with specific times of availability, and contact information in Eagles' Web (Canvas).
- 2) In determining faculty teaching load, a distance education course will be considered the equivalent of an on-campus course that has the same number of credit hours.
- 3) Faculty may schedule up to 2 hours of virtual office time per week per course, not to exceed 4 hours in any given term. Summer is no exception.
- 4) Instructors will respond timely to student email and questions, as outlined in the course syllabi.
- 5) Instructors will correspond with students using their Eagles' Web (Canvas) email account, and/or messages with the Eagles' Web (Canvas) component.
- 6) Each online course will contain a standardized Orientation Assessment to be completed by each student prior to the course roll verification deadline.
- 7) There should be a minimum of three assessments for each course. An assessment may consist of an exam, a paper, a presentation, a speech, or a project.
- 8) Instructors should offer multiple testing sessions at various campus/center locations. All online course exams are scheduled by the individual online instructor. The campus location, time and dates of all exams are the responsibility of the online instructor. All students taking an online course should get their exam information from their specific online instructor. If a student has a conflict in taking an online exam due to a scheduled

class meeting or a scheduled exam in a traditional class, the online instructor will make arrangements to give the student an alternate time to take the exam, provided that the student has notified the instructor prior to the conflict.

- 9) The instructor will clearly post all exam dates and deadlines within the course and syllabus.
- 10) A minimum of two announcements or reminders should be sent weekly to the entire class.
- 11) The Last Date of Attendance (LDA) must be recorded for any student who receives a grade of F or U. In an online course, this is either the date of the in person final exam OR the last date that the student completed any graded course activity in Eagles' Web (Canvas).
- 12) All new online instructors are required to attend a training session before teaching an online course.
- 13) An online course must be developed and approved before an online course will be offered.
- 14) Professional development activities will be offered on campus to support distance learning skills development for all full-time and part-time Alabama Southern faculty.
- 15) All instructors teaching online are required to attend three clock hours of online professional development training annually.
- 16) Distance education faculty members must deliver accurate and current information in course content. Faculty shall not include in the content or delivery of a course any information that he or she knows to constitute libel, invasion of privacy, infringement of copyright or other literary rights, or otherwise violates the legal rights of others.
- 17) Distance education courses will be evaluated annually through an institutionally standardized evaluation procedure. Evaluation results for instructors that teach both online and traditional courses will be incorporated into the annual evaluation. Evaluations will be conducted by the respective division chairs and/or the Dean of Instruction.
- 18) Faculty will not publicly post any grades for any student. Grades must be posted securely, visible only by each individual student, in his/her password-protected account.
- 19) Instructors must comply with ADA Standards in the delivery of distance education courses.

Required Components of Online Courses

Meets Requirement	Does Not Meet Requirement	Component
		Standardized Course Syllabus
		Orientation Assessment (to establish initial attendance)
		Instructor Information (office hours, contact info) Email Correspondence – Eagle’s Web or ASCC email
		Student Learning Outcomes – Outlined in Syllabus
		Course Orientation – Navigation, Procedures and Requirements spelled out
		Help Center – Place where general information about the course can be obtained!
		Lecture Notes, Power Points, etc.
		Quizzes/Tests/Assignments/Discussion Forums must be included
		Updated Grade Book – Students should always know their current grade

Recommended Components of Online Courses

Meets Requirement	Does Not Meet Requirement	Component
		Chapter Outlines and Objectives
		Supplemental Instruction (Video Lectures, Links to videos)
		Study Guides
		Links to Additional Resources
		Use of Standard file formats (pdf is universal)
		Aesthetic Appeal/Ease of Navigation

Approved Proctors

- 1) The instructor of the course.
- 2) Other approved Alabama Southern personnel.
- 3) A full-time instructor, testing center staff or library personnel at another regionally accredited Higher Education Institution. (Must be approved in advance by the Dean of Instruction).

Instructions when using an official Proctor

- 1) Instructors will provide the proctor with a sign in list of students who need to be proctored.
- 2) Instructors will instruct students to bring a valid photo ID. **NO Exceptions.**
- 3) Instructors will provide the proctor with clear instructions on how to distribute the exams: Time Limit/Passwords/Use of Textbooks, Notes, Calculators, etc.

Online Instruction Rubric

Instructor _____ Course _____ Term _____

Evaluator _____ Date: _____

Standard	Does Not Meet	Meets	Exceeds
Instructor has the technology skills to teach online.			
Standardized Syllabus is posted according to guidelines			
Mandatory Orientation Assessment is posted			
Material presentation is organized and easy to follow			
Multiple technical tools for course delivery is incorporated			
Student learning is assessed using course standards provided in the syllabus			
Instructor availability and willingness to support is spelled out clearly			
Instructor facilitates and monitors appropriate interaction among students			
Instructor provides and enforces appropriate standards for student behavior: (Netiquette, guidelines for forums, etc.)			
Instructor promotes student participation and interaction as evidenced by student activity reports in CANVAS			
Instructor provides students with feedback and guidance prior to submission of any follow-up assignments.			
Student evaluation strategies are clearly stated, and consistent with course goals and objectives			
Instructor ensures that students' work and data are secure.			
Instructor ensures that students' grades are accurate and up to date.			
Instructor monitors students to ensure academic honesty by requiring proctored activities.			
Instructor coordinates and assists students in understanding course requirements and procedures for working online, as demonstrated in a Course Orientation.			
Instructor guides and monitors students' management of their time via embedded electronic communication and reminders prior to key learning activities/exams.			
Instructor engages students in learning activities and addresses a variety of learning styles and preferences.			