

LBHC's Distance Education Policy

For institutions incorporating distance education into educational programs, to remain accredited by Northwest Commissions on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), those institutions must adhere to NWCCU.

LBHC adopts the distance education definition as defined by NWCCU: That “distance education is a means of providing educational programming to students physically separated from the instructor. While the processes used to deliver the education may differ from face-to-face delivery to on-campus students, distance education programs are expected to be of high quality and effective, i.e., regardless of the modality used to deliver educational programs, they must result in positive student outcomes.”

LBHC adheres to the distance education definitions and requirements as described in the [United States Department of Education's \(USDE\) regulation on distance education](#). The USDE defines Distance Education [34 CFR 600.02] as follows: “Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (2)(i) through (iv) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors and to support regular and substantive interaction (see USDE definition) between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously.”

According to the NWCCU glossary, distance education is “a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ correspondence study, or audio, video or electronically mediated technologies.”

Through this policy LBHC further defines the following terms to fit NWCCU guidelines...

1. Synchronous instruction includes real time instruction whether in the classroom or via audio, video, or electronically mediated technologies.
2. Asynchronous instruction does not require direct real-time interaction with students.
3. A hybrid course is a course in which instruction and content incorporate both synchronous and asynchronous instruction.
4. LBHC's credit hour equivalency is fifteen hours of direct faculty instruction and student engagement for an academic semester per credit. The equivalent amount of work for student engagement is in the form of internships, laboratory work, research, projects, and assignments – whether synchronous or asynchronous.

LBHC will adhere to NWCCU policies on distance education, which are listed below: LBHC will...

1. Ensure that the institution's faculty have a substantive role in developing the curriculum.
2. Ensure quality of educational programming via program assessment.
3. Monitor student success measures to improve student success.
4. Seek authorization from NWCCU when first establishing a distance education program (first academic program available 50% or more via distance education).
5. Notify NWCCU when 50% or more of additional academic programs are to be offered via distance education.

Substantive interaction: Engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:

1. Providing direct instruction (synchronous online meetings through scheduled class times)
2. Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework
3. Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency
4. Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency
5. Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency

Regular interaction: An institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency:

1. Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency.
2. Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

Regular and substantive interaction between instructor(s) and students requires...

1. The institution's online instruction is delivered through appropriate media.
2. The instructors meet the requirements of the institution's accrediting agency for instruction in the subject matter.
3. Instructors engage in at least two forms of substantive interaction meeting the regulatory requirements for the course or competency (see definition above of substantive interaction).
4. The institution has established scheduled and predictable opportunities for substantive interaction between students and instructors and created expectations for instructors to monitor each student's engagement and substantively engage with students on the basis of that monitoring.
5. Instructors are responsive to students' requests for instructional support.
6. In order to ensure regular and substantive interaction, LBHC faculty will initiate meaningful exchanges with students to ensure the faculty get to know their students and their work early in the semester.

Evaluation of regular and substantive interaction

1. The dean of academics, department head, or online faculty will conduct a [peer review](#) between the instructor and students using a checklist of regular and substantive interaction, and provide a short reflection.
2. Prior to the evaluation the faculty will review themselves using the same checklist indicating where the evidence is located for regular and substantive interaction, and provide a short reflection.
3. Instructors who are currently teaching online will meet once a semester to share strategies that are working and strategies that could be improved and present findings to the faculty council.