ACCJC Determination of Regular and Effective Contact

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What do teams look for?

Lots of things are evaluated related to DE that are NOT related to R&E contact including:

- SLO data
- disaggregation
How is DE defined by ACCJC?

“Distance education is defined, for the purpose of accreditation review, as a formal interaction 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.
Negotiated rulemaking definitions

**Substantive**

A list of activities that qualify for substantive interaction includes:

- Direct instruction
- Assessment
- Feedback on student work or course content
- Facilitating group discussions

**Regular**

Scheduling substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; or

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.
Purpose of thought paper:

Through conversations both with institutions and with chairs of peer review teams, the ACCJC has become aware of different ways in which institutions make distance education courses available for team review and different levels of scrutiny practiced by peer review teams during comprehensive visits to colleges. The differences lead to inconsistencies in evaluation processes and in the results of those evaluations.
Noted inconsistencies

1. Inconsistency in **how institutions select courses** to be observed
2. Inconsistency in **the number of courses** that teams observe
3. Inconsistency in **the level of access** that peer review teams receive
4. Inconsistency in **the basis of evaluation**
5. Inconsistency in **the recommendations** that teams write as a result of their observations and evaluations
6. Inconsistency in **the types of courses** that teams review
When institutions select courses to be observed, they may

- select **courses that reflect their best practices** in distance education
- select only those **courses that faculty have given permission** for the team to observe
- select a **random sampling of courses**
- allow the peer review team **complete discretion** over which courses to select for observation.
Inconsistency in the number of courses that teams observe
Inconsistency in the level of access that peer review teams receive
Inconsistency in the basis of evaluation
Inconsistency in the **recommendations** that teams write as a result of their observations and evaluations.
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From ACCJC Thought Paper
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Inconsistency in the types of courses that teams review
ACCJC Recommendations

In the college’s ISER

- Include the policy for ensuring DE content and methodology are equivalent to F2F
- Include the policy (definitions, guidelines, best practices, etc.) for R & E interaction

In preparation for the team visit

- Inform DE faculty that the team will “observe” a randomly-selected cadre of DE classes
- Select no fewer than 15 separate sections, but no more than 10% of the total number of DE sections offered in one semester, quarter, etc.
- When possible, provide access to these sections in an archived term so reviewers can see full term
- Give reviewers Instructor (Teacher) or Teaching Assistant access level
ACCJC Recommendations for review teams

- Appoint 1-2 team members to observe DE classes
- Observe no fewer than 15 separate sections, but no more than 10% of the total number of DE sections offered in one semester, quarter, etc.
- Conduct observation of archived classes before actual visit
- Use the college’s definitions and expectations for R & E interactions for all MOI
ACCJC Recommendations for review teams (cont.)

When writing recommendations, the team should consider:

- Using a numerical rubric in order to determine whether the college meets the standard, should receive a compliance recommendation, or should receive a recommendation for improvement.

- Crafting recommendations related to DE should not be driven only by a low % of online classes with evidence of R & E interaction. The team will want to explore the roots of the low percentage, document any challenges carefully in its findings, and write recommendations appropriate to the severity of the deficiencies.
How can we help standardize this process?

One idea – create a Canvas Report that looks at courses in a previous (archived) semester and lists:

- All sections determined to be part of the randomized selection
- All relevant interactions in those sections, such as
  - Instructor announcements
  - Instructor discussion posts
  - Instructor gradebook feedback
- Use the college’s policies to determine quantity or quality standards
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Announcements</th>
<th>Inst. Disc. Posts</th>
<th>Gradebook Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro to Accounting</td>
<td>Welcome to class! If you haven’t yet crea</td>
<td>You make a great point, Mark. I’ve alw</td>
<td>Excellent work, Rion! Next time, be sure to a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art History 101</td>
<td>Don’t forget we have a quiz on Wed</td>
<td>Has anyone thought about the fact that m</td>
<td>This was a good start, Nadia, but you’ll want t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy 5</td>
<td>Hope everyone had a good break. Next</td>
<td>I see there’s some significant disagreeem</td>
<td>Consider revising this to show more detailed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are your thoughts and ideas?