

# **Distance and Hybrid Learning Policies**

*Patrick Henry Community College*

**Distance Learning** is a formal educational process in which the majority (i.e. more than 50%) of instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not co-located. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. The course may use Internet, closed circuit, cable, fiber optics, DVDs, CD-ROM or other electronic means to communicate. (The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools definition of —distance education.)

A **Hybrid Course** is a formal educational process in which the majority of instruction will occur with the students and instructor in the same location at the same time. However, a percentage of instruction (more than 1% and less than 50%) can occur where the students and instructor are not co-located. PHCC recognizes Hybrid Courses as being Face-to-Face courses.

## **A. Distance Learning Courses and Programs**

Programs offered via distance learning shall be consistent with the mission of Patrick Henry Community College and the academic unit offering the courses or programs. There shall be no distinctions in academic rigor or content between programs offered through distance learning and those offered face-to-face. Development of new online programs and courses will follow the same development and approval procedures as for face-to-face programs and courses. Selection of courses and programs to be offered via distance learning is the purview of the offering academic unit. The academic units shall provide oversight of programs and courses delivered via distance learning to ensure that each is coherent and complete and has learning outcomes appropriate to the level and rigor of the course or program.

## **B. Oversight of Distance Learning**

The Office of the Vice President for Academic & Student Development shall ensure that academic units adhere to the distance learning policies described in this section. The faculty assumes primary responsibility for ensuring the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction offered through distance learning.

## **C. Courses Delivered by Distance learning**

The faculty member teaching a distance learning course shall have the same control of content and instruction as in face-to-face courses, consistent with college and VCCS policies on instruction, academic freedom and intellectual property policies. Proposals for distance learning courses shall be evaluated at the division level. The faculty member, college curriculum committees, and the division dean play a significant role in guiding the development and implementation of distance learning. Only those proposals demonstrating suitable content and sufficient quality and rigor shall be approved.

Faculty members develop syllabi for distance learning courses consistent with the VCCS and PHCC Standards for Online Learning. These standards address learning objectives and other things necessary for student success in distance learning courses. The structure of distance learning courses and programs reflects consideration of the challenges of time management and the risk of attrition for students in these courses. Course design takes into consideration the need for and importance of interaction between faculty and students and among students.

## **D. Faculty Preparation**

All courses offered via distance learning shall be taught by a qualified, credentialed faculty member approved and assigned by the division dean. Faculty who teach distance learning courses and programs shall have the same academic qualifications as faculty who teach face-to-face courses. Each faculty member who teaches one or more distance learning course must complete a training program. Academic divisions that wish to develop their own training program must use the college training program until their own training program is approved by the vice president.

Division deans are responsible for ensuring that each faculty member teaching distance learning courses has the appropriate distance learning training. All faculty teaching distance learning courses will engage in at least one training activity each academic year that addresses advances in the methodologies and technologies used in distance learning. Training is documented in the faculty annual report of each faculty member teaching one or more distance learning course.

Faculty members teaching a distance learning course have access to consultation, implementation, and evaluation support from appropriate supporting units (i.e. Instructional Technologist, BlackBoard Administrator, library services, etc). The college shall provide appropriate equipment, software, and communications access to faculty necessary to provide effective distance education. The college will ensure the availability of continuing faculty education and training to enhance proficiencies in the methodology and the technologies used in distance learning.

## **E. Quality Standards**

Distance learning courses shall comply with the PHCC Standards for Online Learning.

## **F. Evaluation of Distance learning**

DL Courses and faculty members teaching through distance learning are subject to periodic review in addition to the faculty annual evaluation (at a minimum, once every three years). Faculty teaching multiple DE courses will submit only one course for review. Instruction in distance learning courses shall be evaluated according to the instruction evaluation procedures in effect for face-to-face courses with appropriate additions consistent with the delivery method, including use of the college Peer Review Instrument for Online Learning or an approved Peer Review Instrument developed by the division office.

Student opinion of instruction will be evaluated through an online evaluation specific for distance learning courses approved by the Faculty Senate and the college's Planning and Evaluation Standing Committee.

Each distance learning academic degree program shall be assessed in the same manner and the same frequency as the unit's assessment of academic programs offered face-to-face. The division dean shall review assessment results with assigned faculty and the departmental faculty to facilitate the continual enhancement of the unit's distance learning program.

## **G. Peer Review Process**

Effective Spring 2014 all Distance Learning courses at PHCC will be Peer Reviewed. Each instructor teaching DL courses will be expected to review an equal number of DL courses. The division deans will assign the peer reviewers for each course.

The assigned instructor will be informed of their peer reviewer by email. The assigned instructor then must add the peer reviewer to their online course as a “Course Builder”. Course Builders are not allowed to view the grade center, thus ensuring student privacy.

The Peer Reviewer will complete the assigned checklist found in each course shell.

The deadline dates will be published by the start of each term for the self-review, peer review and final report to the division deans and the Office of the Vice President for Academic & Student Development.

## **H. Student Verification**

Each PHCC student who takes courses on campus or at one of the offsite locations is required to get a PHCC Identification Card from the Campus Police Department. The student must provide a photo identification and their printed class schedule to the police department before a PHCC ID will be created. The ID card will have the students name, program of study, expiration date on the front and a barcoded emplid on the back. The PHCC ID cards are valid for two years and are free to the student.

The Virginia Community College System (VCCS) assigns each applicant at PHCC a unique seven-digit numeric identifier (emplid) and a unique username based on their given name and a running number. PHCC uses the VCCS Single-Sign-on system giving the students access to the Student Information System (SIS) and the Course Management System, BlackBoard (Bb). The students must use their unique login and pass code to access their course material in Bb.

Each Distance Learning instructor must require each student to participate in at least two proctored activities that are included in the overall course grade. The current testing policies can be obtained from the College Testing Center in the Learning Resource Center or from their webpage.

Each hybrid instructor must require proctored activities that account for more than 50% of the overall course grade.

## **I. Student Privacy**

All instructors must ensure the privacy of their students in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. (See Attachment A for the PHCC Right to Privacy Policy).

# Right to Privacy

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974 is a federal law that was enacted to protect the privacy of students and their educational records. The intent of the legislation is to protect the rights of students and to ensure the privacy and accuracy of "educational information." Educational Information refers to any record maintained by an educational institution, including files, documents, and materials of any type which contain information directly related to students, and which allows a student to be identified.

## What is *not* considered Educational Information?

- Sole possession records or private notes held by educational personnel which are not accessible or released to other personnel
- Law enforcement or campus security records which are solely for the law enforcement purposes
- Records related to individuals who are employed by the college
- Records related to treatment provided by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist or other recognized professional
- Records of the college which contain only information about an individual obtained after that person is no longer a student at the college (i.e., alumni records)

## Who is protected under FERPA?

Students who are protected under FERPA are those students who are currently enrolled or formerly enrolled, regardless of their age or status in regard to parental dependency. Students who have applied but have not attended the college, and deceased students do not fall under FERPA guidelines.

## Student's rights under FERPA

Eligible students have the right to inspect and review their educational records within 45 days of the day Patrick Henry Community College receives a request for access. The eligible student should submit the request to the Registrar and identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The Registrar will make arrangements for access and will notify the student of the time/place where the records may be inspected.

An eligible student may also ask the college to amend a record believed to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides to not amend the record, the parent or student then has a right to a formal hearing. If, after the hearing, the school still chooses to not amend the record, the eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record commenting on the contested information.

Lastly, a student may formally request that PHCC not release Directory Information on their behalf. This request must be submitted to the Registrar. When this request is made, a notation

will be flagged in the PHCC Student Information System and every reasonable effort will be made to safeguard the confidentiality of such information. **In addition, once this request has been made, the student will not be allowed to request a transcript via the Web in the college's student information system, nor will the college provide employment (or other) authorizations for the student.** If the student wishes for this information to be released, he/she will be required to submit **written authorization, with proof of identify**, to the college Records Office prior to releasing a transcript or other information.

## When is a student's consent not required?

There are several exceptions to releasing information without a student's written approval. Some examples are:

- School officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by Patrick Henry in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom Patrick Henry has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); a person serving on the Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. **Note:** PHCC teachers and other school officials have legitimate educational interests in students' education records to conduct educational research.
- In connection with Financial Aid
- Other schools to which a student is seeking to transfer/enroll
- Parents of a dependent student, as defined by the IRS. The college may release a student's records upon request, but the parent must submit proof of the student's dependency (via most recent federal tax form) prior to receiving the requested information
- Individuals who have obtained court orders or legally issued subpoenas
- Certain government officials in order to carry out lawful functions
- State and local authorities within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific State law
- Health and safety emergencies
- Accrediting organizations or organizations conducting studies for PHCC

## Directory Information

Under FERPA guidelines, a student's record may not be disclosed without written authorization unless the requested information falls under the category of "Directory Information." PHCC may disclose information on a student without violating FERPA if it has designated that information as Directory Information. The following information has been classified as Directory Information by PHCC and may be disclosed without a student's written authorization:

- Student name
- Address or email address
- Telephone number

- Dates of attendance
- Major field of study
- Number of credit hours enrolled
- Grade level
- Degrees received
- Awards and honors
- Photos
- Participation in clubs and activities
- Weight/height of members of athletic teams
- Most recent educational institution

**Please Note: The college reserves the right to publish the names of students who receive academic honors.**

You have the right to request that any or all of your directory information not be released by Patrick Henry. You may contact the Registrar with a written and signed notice not later than 2 weeks of beginning of the semester to withhold the release of any directory information you specify. This request is in effect until you provide written notice to the contrary. It is Patrick Henry's policy not to publish a student directory.

You have the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by Patrick Henry to comply with the requirements of FERPA. You may also call 202-260-3887 or TDD202-260-8956 or visit <http://www.ed.gov/offices/om/ferpa.html>.

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
600 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

For additional information, technical assistance, questions, concerns, or you wish to file a complaint please contact:

Records Office, Walker Student Centre (240B)  
276.656.0311.