



# ANGELINA COLLEGE Handbook for Distance Education

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# Distance Education at Angelina College

## Mission Statement

The mission of Angelina College (AC) is to provide quality educational opportunities and services to aid students in reaching their full potential. Distance education courses at AC expand access to higher education opportunities to students throughout the service area and beyond.

The Office of Distance Education assists faculty to better serve a diverse student population through coordination of off-campus teaching centers and the delivery of internet courses through the College's learning management system (LMS). Additionally, the office oversees the delivery of courses to dual credit high school and Early College High School (ECHS) students.

## Angelina College Distance Education Options

Angelina College currently offers two types of distance education courses:

**Online (internet) Course** – According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), an online course is defined as "a course which may have mandatory face-to-face sessions totaling no more than 15 percent of the instructional time. Examples of face-to-face sessions include orientation, laboratory, exam review, or an in-person test."

Students enrolled in online courses must have access to a computer with stable internet connection and must obtain any additional materials or supplies required by the instructor. Online course learning materials and assignments are typically provided via the College's LMS. Online courses may be delivered synchronously or asynchronously.

- Synchronous courses have online class meetings that occur on set schedules and during specific timeframes, usually through Blackboard and/or Collaborate. Students must be online at the exact time of each class meeting in order to participate in the course.
- Asynchronous courses are online courses that do not have scheduled class meetings. In asynchronous courses, the instructor provides all course materials, lectures, tests, and assignments through Blackboard. The instructor of an asynchronous course will require students to complete coursework by published deadlines and/or to engage in course material or activities in Blackboard with a certain level of frequency.

Hybrid Course – The THECB defines hybrid courses as “a course in which the majority (more than 50% but less than 85%) of the planned instruction occurs when students and instructor(s) are not in the same place.” Hybrid courses combine asynchronous online instruction with conventional in-person class meetings. Typically, the instructor will deliver approximately half of the coursework online in an asynchronous format through Blackboard, and half of the coursework during scheduled in-person class meetings that all students enrolled in the course are required to attend.

Instructors teaching hybrid courses must integrate both the face-to-face and online components such that the required time and work are equivalent to the contact hours required by the face-to-face format of the same course. Omitting the online component is no different from failing to hold required class meetings in a face-to-face class.

### **Responsibility for Quality**

Courses offered in online and hybrid formats are comparable to face-to-face courses and have the same student learning outcomes. They use comparable syllabi, assessment measures, and course materials. Faculty members are responsible for ensuring each course covers the required student learning outcomes (SLOs) and program learning outcomes (PLOs). The Academic Administrators oversee the quality of instructional programs, including programs offered either online or through hybrid instruction. The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA), with assistance from the Academic Administrators, ensures the quality of all Angelina College courses, including online and hybrid courses, through the observation and evaluation processes described in section [DLA](#) of the Angelina College Policy and Procedures Manual. The Office of Distance Education assists the VPAA and Academic Administrators with oversight of Distance Education courses as needed.

### **Faculty Credentials and Course Development**

All faculty must meet the same required credentials as described in section [DBA](#) of the Angelina College Policy and Procedures Manual.

### **Course Development and Approval Process**

Instructors planning to teach or develop an online or hybrid course for the first time must follow the process below to gain approval prior to teaching a distance education course. This process applies to each course the instructor plans to teach in an online or hybrid format (e.g. ENGL 1301, ENGL 1302).

1. Instructors must submit a request to the appropriate Academic Administrator.
2. Upon approval, the Academic Administrator will notify the Office of Distance Education.
3. The Office of Distance Education will provide training for the interested instructors and facilitate the use of the College's LMS in the development of the new online or hybrid course.
4. Upon successful completion of the required training, the Office of Distance Education will issue a certificate to the instructor.
5. The instructor may start designing the course.
6. The instructor will submit the course to the Office of Distance Education for review and approval.
7. The course will be reviewed using the [6<sup>th</sup> edition of the Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric](#).
8. The Office of Distance Education will send the results of the review to the appropriate Academic Administrator and the instructor.
9. If needed, instructors may revise their courses and re-submit to the Office of Distance Education for another review.

### **Responsibility for Course Content**

It is the responsibility of the instructor to provide, maintain, and update all materials used in a distance education course or any course that uses Angelina College's LMS. The Office of Distance Education and the IT Department can assist with deploying instructor-developed content upon request; however, the Office of Distance Education and the IT department are not responsible for developing course content, deploying publisher-developed resources, or trouble-shooting any third-party software packages, including E-Packs, links to external web sites, and publisher-provided content. An instructor who wishes to use third-party materials, including publisher-provided materials, is responsible for the use of said materials and is encouraged to obtain training in the use of these materials from the provider.

The Office of Distance Education and the IT Department will assist with problems that may arise with Angelina College's LMS, train instructors in the use of the college's LMS, and facilitate the use of the LMS in online and hybrid courses. The Office of Distance Education provides specialized training sessions upon request.

### **Faculty-Student Communication**

Communication between students and faculty is critical for student success and retention. Faculty must communicate with students through email,

telephone, or other means frequently to support student learning. Instructors are expected to respond to messages from students within 48 hours Monday through Friday. Some night and weekend communication is strongly encouraged and is left to the discretion of the faculty member.

## **Intellectual Property**

Angelina College's policy on intellectual property applies to all materials that are developed as a result of employment at the College. The policy can be found in section [DBD](#) of the Angelina College Policy and Procedure Manual.

## **Fair Use and Legal Use of Copyrighted Materials in Distance Education Courses**

Copyright guidelines related to Distance Education follow the copyright laws (U.S. Copyright Act, the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, Fair Use Policy and the 2002 TEACH Act) and College copyright policies. Instructors are responsible for ensuring that all instructional material and delivery methods are in compliance with copyright laws and College copyright policy.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act**

Federal law (section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990) mandates "reasonable accommodations" for post-secondary students with disabilities that substantially limit major life activity. Compliance with these laws is mandatory in all courses regardless of delivery modality. Students must self-identify with the Office of Student Success and Inclusion to obtain accommodations. All questions about accommodations should be addressed to the Office of Student Success and Inclusion ([ossi@angelina.edu](mailto:ossi@angelina.edu)).

## **Instructional Oversight**

Issues involving instruction, including enrollment, student conduct, pedagogy, or any other area involving instruction, should be reported to the appropriate Academic Administrator. Issues related to technology, including the College's LMS, equipment failure, or any other area related to delivery of instruction should be reported to the IT department. If necessary, IT will coordinate with the Office of Distance Education to resolve technical issues with the LMS. The Office of Distance Education will offer training for instructors regarding the use of the LMS. Issues involving classes at off-campus instructional sites should be reported to the appropriate director or coordinator, if available, or to the Office of Distance Education. If the issue is instructional, students should contact the instructor or the relevant Academic Administrator as appropriate.

## **Identity Verification in Distance Learning Courses**

The identity verification process for online courses protects student's privacy through the use of a secure portal, with a secure login and password. Access to distance learning courses shall only be granted via secure password to students who are properly enrolled.

## **Security, Privacy, and Academic Integrity**

Student identification procedures will be instituted to ensure academic integrity on all assignments. Instructors will administer online assessments in a manner that ensures academic integrity.

## **Instructor Responsibilities**

Instructors and staff understand and carry out a commitment to confidentiality, integrity, and security to protect the privacy of students participating in distance learning activities. Students' records, both in digital or analog forms, are kept private by the instructor, except in cases where the administration or College staff must access the course for legitimate educational interest under FERPA guidelines.

## **Student Responsibilities**

It is the student's responsibility to keep his or her password and other personal information confidential. This includes the student identification numbers, usernames, passwords, or any other information which could conceivably compromise their privacy or lead to identity theft.

## **Dual Credit Students**

Dual credit students have the same rights and responsibilities as all other Angelina College students with the following limitations:

1. Angelina College instructors, staff members, and administrative officials *may not* comment on student performance to the parents of any dual credit student without a signed release. All employees of Angelina College are bound by the rules set forth by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).
2. Angelina College instructors, staff members, and administrative officials *may* discuss dual credit student performance with the student's high school counselor or other designated administrator.
3. Angelina College instructors, staff members, and administrative officials *may* discuss dual credit student performance with the Director of Concurrent Enrollment.

## **The Establishment of New Distance Education Sites**

The College has clear policies and timelines that facilitate the establishment of new off-campus instructional sites. All courses must be pre-approved by the Assistant Vice President of Academic Affairs prior to being scheduled at any off-campus instructional site that is not already approved by SACSCOC to offer 50% or more of an instructional program. Section [EF](#) of the Angelina College Policies and Procedure Manual addresses the timelines required for adding off-campus instructional sites and for changing the status of pre-existing sites. The Vice President of Academic Affairs must be notified about the potential need for a new off-campus instructional site or a change in the status of an existing site as follows:

- October 1 for implementation in fall of the following year
- February 1 for implementation in spring of the following year