

Regular Effective Contact Defined

Regulations:

Title 5 and the Distance Education Guidelines for the California Community Colleges state:

55211. Instructor Contact.

In addition to the requirements of section 55002 and any locally established requirements applicable to all courses, district-governing boards shall ensure that:

(a) All approved courses offered as distance education include **regular effective contact** between instructor and students, through group or individual meetings, orientation and review sessions, supplemental seminar or study sessions, field trips, library workshops, telephone contact, correspondence, voice mail, e-mail, or other activities.

(b) All distance education courses are delivered consistent with guidelines issued by the Chancellor pursuant to section 409 of the Procedures and Standing Orders of the Board of Governors. **Regular effective contact** is an academic and professional matter pursuant to title 5, section 53200.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 70901 and 66700, Education Code.

Reference: Sections 70901 and 70902, Education Code.

Guideline for Section 55211

This section defines what contact must be maintained between instructor and student:

Subsection (a) stresses **the responsibility of the instructor in a DE course to initiate regular contact with enrolled students to verify their participation and performance status**. The use of the term “regular effective contact” in this context suggests that students should have frequent opportunities to ask questions and receive answers from the instructor of record.

Subsection (b) honors the principle that for DE courses, there are a number of acceptable interactions between instructor and student, not all of which may require in-person contact. Thus, districts will need to define “effective contact, “ **including how often, and in what manner instructor-student interaction is achieved**. It is important that districts document how regular effective contact is achieved. Since regular effective contact was declared an academic and professional matter, this documentation must include demonstration of collegial consultation with the academic senate, for example through its delegation to the local curriculum committee. A natural place for this to occur is during the separate course approval process (see section 55213). Documentation should consist of the inclusion of information in applicable outlines of record on the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each DE course/section or session. As indicated in the *Guideline to Section 55219*, districts need to describe the type and quantity of student-faculty interaction in their annual reports to their local governing boards and the State Chancellor’s Office.