Distance and Correspondence Education Policy

The Distance Education program at Central Alabama Community College offers students the opportunity to choose quality, affordable courses that conveniently fit their lifestyle. Courses offered by distance education are the same quality as those taught traditionally in a classroom setting. Tuition and fees are equivalent to those for traditional courses. Students may enroll in distance education courses in the same manner they enroll in other classes. Distance education classes follow the same semester timelines as other courses.

Three primary forms of distance education courses are available at Central Alabama Community College: hybrid, online (asynchronous), and online (synchronous):

- **Hybrid**: Courses will be delivered both in-person and online through the College's learning management system (LMS). For example, one week the class may meet in person; the next week, it may have online-only activities. Students should expect to meet in-person or online at the published times provided by the instructor in the course syllabus. A hybrid course must include a minimum of 30% face-to-face instruction and a minimum of 30% online instruction (either asynchronous or synchronous).
- **Online (asynchronous)**: Courses will be delivered electronically through the College's learning management system (LMS). There are no required on-campus meetings. Students complete work (watch recorded lectures, exams, essays, discussion posts, video submissions, etc.) according to information provided by the instructor in the course syllabus.
- **Online (synchronous)**: Courses will be delivered electronically through the College's learning management system (LMS) with live instruction at scheduled class times exclusively through video conference meetings at the published times provided by the instructor in the course syllabus. Students complete work according to information provided by the instructor in the course syllabus.

Students enrolled in distance education courses should have access to a reliable off-campus computer running an updated operating system and capable of downloading software applications necessary for completing their course. Computers must be equipped with a working webcam and microphone and connected with high-speed internet service. The use of mobile devices for completing course requirements is not recommended. Completing courses by distance education requires computer literacy and reading comprehension.

Blackboard Learning Management System and Other Course Technologies
The Blackboard Ultra Learning Management System is utilized for all Central Alabama Community College courses. Blackboard is used entirely in the delivery of many distance education courses. In a traditional classroom, Blackboard does not replace regularly scheduled class meetings; instead, it is used as a supplement to the class. Students in any Central Alabama Community College course may be required to use Blackboard and other forms of technology to complete course requirements.

Every Central Alabama Community College campus/center has an open computer lab with Internet access for student use during operating hours. The College provides high-speed Wi-Fi service on each campus for students to connect their personal computers while completing coursework.

Laptops are available for loan on an individual basis. If interested in a laptop loan, contact the library on the Alexander City Campus and Childersburg Campus, and the front office at the Talladega Center and Prattville Campus.

Students may access the Blackboard LMS through a link at www.cacc.edu and use their CACC student e-mail address and password to log in to Blackboard. After registration, each course which the student is registered will appear in Blackboard by the published first day of class for the semester. Students are responsible for accessing Blackboard courses on the published first day of class.

Faculty Virtual Office Hours

Faculty (full-time) who teach online courses (asynchronous or synchronous) may take a portion of their required thirty-five on-campus office hours as virtual hours in order to be available for online students during the time periods in which these students are working in coursework and need assistance. Faculty must indicate the virtual office hours on the faculty member's schedule card and in the learning management system (LMS). Faculty may take up to two (2) hours of virtual office time per week per three or four-credit hour course, not to exceed six (6) hours in any given term. Summer is no exception.

Faculty (full-time and part-time) who teach online courses (asynchronous or synchronous) are required to hold one (1) virtual office hour per week after 5 pm CT, Monday-Friday, or any time Saturday or Sunday. This meeting is to be held at the same time each week unless there are unforeseen circumstances where the instructor adjusts the virtual office hour and students are notified of the change. The meetings will be held exclusively through video conference software at the published times provided by the instructor in the course syllabus and in the learning management system (LMS). During the virtual office hour, faculty are expected to have an open meeting through video conferencing software for one hour. Faculty are not expected to plan a lesson/activity or take attendance during the virtual office hour. It is designed for online students to have a designated time where they can meet with the instructor live, if needed. Faculty are not required to hold multiple virtual office hours. For example, if an instructor teaches two online courses, the instructor will hold one virtual office hour each week where both classes are invited to attend.

If students indicate to division chairs, directors, and/or instructional deans that their instructor is not responsive to their queries, and the instruction dean determines the faculty member is not responding in a timely manner, the faculty member's virtual hours may be revoked.

Faculty (full-time) who teach hybrid courses may take a portion of their required thirty-five on-campus office hours as virtual hours in order to be available for online students during the time periods in which these students are working in coursework and need assistance. Faculty must indicate the virtual office hours on the faculty's schedule card and in the learning management system (LMS). Faculty may take up to one (1) hour of virtual office time per week per three or four-credit hour course, not to exceed six (6) hours in any given term. Summer is no exception.

Faculty (full-time and part-time) who teach online or hybrid courses will respond to student inquiries within twenty-four hours. More flexible response times (forty-eight hours) are extended for inquiries received on longer holidays such as Thanksgiving and Spring Break. Any time

instructors anticipate their response time to a student to exceed forty-eight (48) hours, an announcement will be posted in the learning management system.

Security and Procedures for Student Privacy Protection in Distance Education Courses
Upon enrollment in any college course at Central Alabama Community College, a user account is created in the Blackboard LMS for students to use to complete course requirements. Each student is issued a unique student number and e-mail address to use in accessing student accounts. It is the student's responsibility to keep this information secure and avoid sharing login information with anyone. Students are advised to change the default password for additional security.

CACC is fully compliant with the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the College provides every employee of CACC with a written procedure to protect the privacy of students. In addition to FERPA, the privacy of students enrolled in distance education courses is protected using the following practices:

- Faculty will not publicly post any grades or personal information for any student.
- All grades must be posted securely, visible only by each individual student, in his/her password-protected student grade book located in the College's learning management system.
- All faculty must contact students using either the College e-mail account or secure Blackboard messaging.

Testing Policies and Procedures
CACC requires every distance education course to have at least one assessment supervised by a proctor: either the instructor/an approved proctor or proctoring software. Students unable to download the software on their computers are given an opportunity to schedule onsite proctoring sessions, a proctor from the College can be provided, and computers, with the proctoring software downloaded, can be loaned to students. To schedule an onsite proctoring session, students are provided with contact information for all locations' libraries and/or testing labs through CACC's learning management system. These sessions are scheduled as needed, per student request. To schedule a proctor from the College, the school should contact their Dual Enrollment Specialist. To loan a computer(s), students are provided with contact information for the on-campus and online proctoring formats. Students are required to show proof of identification before starting their required assessment(s).

Students Residing Outside of Alabama
Many states have regulations that require Central Alabama Community College to seek authorization to offer distance education courses to students who reside in those states. To assure that Central Alabama Community College meets these regulations, the College is a member of NC-SARA (www.nc-sara.org). At this time, all of United States, except California and some territories, have entered into a reciprocity agreement through NC-SARA. Students residing in a location that is not an NC-SARA member should contact the Distance Education department before enrolling in online classes.

Professional Licensure Notice
Students who reside outside of Alabama and are seeking professional licensure (i.e., nursing, cosmetology, etc.) in a different state should be aware that Central Alabama Community College cannot confirm whether a course or program of study meets requirements for professional licensure in that state. Therefore, the student should contact the appropriate state licensing board to determine if Central Alabama Community College's course and/or program meets requirements for licensure in that state.

Video Conference Courses
Video conference courses use remote conferencing technology that allows students to enroll in a course hosted on another campus. Interactive video conference courses are conducted like traditional courses with regularly scheduled class meetings. The video conference system enables users at multiple locations to interact as if the instructor and all classmates are in the same room.