Updated November 2024

Contents

SECTION I: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SUPPORT

A.   Citadel Online

Citadel Online is herein defined as an online portal that incorporates The Citadel's approved Learning Management System (LMS), virtual conferencing, and other distance learning technologies. Citadel Online is managed by the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching, Learning, and Distance Education (CEITL & DE), under the Office of the Provost. CEITL & DE serves faculty, students, and staff to support best practices in teaching and learning in all delivery formats (face-to-face, online, hybrid, hi-flex, etc.). Appendix A includes Distance Learning Policies (DLP) that will be referenced throughout this document. Definitions for delivery formats can be found in Appendix D.

B.   Institutional Commitment to Quality Online Education

The Citadel is committed to excellence in all of its academic offerings, including the design and delivery of courses offered in hybrid and online formats. Maintaining a unified institution-wide quality assurance system for all hybrid and online offerings is critical to the academic success of students, the academic reputation of the college, and the success of The Citadel's regional and specialized accreditation efforts.

Citadel faculty who teach online, hybrid, or hi-flex courses must first be certified by completing the Quality Online Teaching (QOT) program offered by CEITL & DE (DLP I.A. and DLP II.F.). This program includes LMS training, best practices in teaching online, curriculum design/course alignment, and assessment.

The Citadel's quality assurance program provides for the application of the Quality Matters (QM) rubric during the course design process, as well as review by department chairs, deans, and CEITL & DE. Course design validation procedures include a mandatory internal peer review process and an optional external Quality Matters review. The Citadel also ensures the quality and comparability of its online courses to its face-to-face courses by evaluating instructional parity, student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction.

C.   Faculty and Student Support

CEITL & DE offers the required QOT training for faculty members who teach online, as well as a number of workshops and online tutorials. CEITL & DE has the responsibility to provide distance learning faculty members with:

1. Training and certification to teach online.
2. Online course review, final certification, and subsequent compliance monitoring.
3. Assistance with the development and conversion of instructional materials to a format suitable for online delivery including instructional contact hour parity.
4. Training in the use of Citadel-approved technologies, including the LMS.
5. The dissemination of best practice methodologies for distance learning.

SECTION II: DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE DEVELOPMENT

A.   Requirements for Developing Distance Learning Courses

New distance learning courses approved by the Curriculum Committee are subject to a related set of standards. Specifically, before a single course can be offered in an online format, it should meet all criteria detailed in Appendix A, Section II (DLP II.A-I).

B.   Approval Process

The online course approval process compliments the college's curriculum committee process for the approval of new courses, potential substantive change approval associated with SACSCOC, and state authorization for out-of-state educational activities. The procedures below only apply to the review of online course design and do not replace other college review processes. Only courses approved through the college committee process will be considered for approval in an online format. The faculty, through ongoing assessment and evaluation, will regularly update courses and programs. Online courses are subject to the same institutional effectiveness practices as traditional offerings.

The development of an online course is not a simple task; sometimes the process takes as long as three to six months to complete. Review of the design of all new online courses will be conducted at least one semester prior to when they are scheduled to be offered (DLP I.C.).

During the initial consultation, CEITL & DE will provide the faculty member with specific resources to use throughout the course design process, including but not limited to the required online course template and parity table.

Instructors will be required to submit their online course for review unless the course has been awarded the designation of *Fully Approved* through the Online Course Review Process (see below). This includes courses with multiple instructors and co-teachers. If an instructor submits a *Fully Approved* course taught by a different instructor and does not change any content, the instructor may request an *Expedited Review*. If an instructor fails to submit their online course for review the instructor will not be allowed to move forward with teaching the course online.

The review assesses evidence of compliance with The Citadel's Credit Hour Policy and internal standards (based on QM Standards). Once submitted, online courses are categorized into one of the three categories as outlined below:

1. *In progress*: The course has been submitted and is waiting for review.
2. *Conditional*: The course has been reviewed but has standards that were rated as Developing. The faculty member will need to revise standards that are rated as Developing and resubmit for full approval prior to teaching the course online again. Conditional approvals expire after 1 year. After that time, faculty are required to complete a full new submission.
3. *Fully Approved*: The course has been reviewed and all standards have been rated as Met. The course is approved for 5 years from the semester of review unless significant changes are made.

C.   Faculty Evaluation

Department chairs, directors, and/or deans will conduct annual evaluations, including observations of hybrid and online courses, in a manner consistent with face-to-face teaching and as outlined in the Faculty Manual.

The department head(s)/chair(s), program director(s), peer reviewer(s), and/or deans will have access to online courses in their department/school to evaluate course design and faculty

teaching and address student concerns, in accordance with faculty review and class observation procedures in the Faculty Handbook. Reviewers will provide notice to faculty in advance of the period in which the course review occurs. CEITL & DE and faculty fellows will also have access to Citadel courses to review course design as outlined in Citadel policy. (DLP III.A.)

SECTION III: DISTANCE LEARNING COURSE DELIVERY REQUIREMENTS

A. Faculty Online Presence

Faculty are expected to have an online presence throughout the week comparable to a face-to-face course, engaging with students via discussion boards, email, and other communication methods (i.e., a 3 credit-hour course equals a minimum of 3 hours of faculty online presence per week in the LMS). (DLP III.B.)

Regular and substantive instructor interaction is required in every course. The term regular is defined as taking place on a "predictable and scheduled basis" and built into course design. The term substantive refers to interaction with a student that is relevant to the academic subject matter in which the student is engaged through teaching, learning, and assessment as well as at least two types of activities. Appendix B details regular and substantive interaction requirements in online courses.

Online courses require a minimum of one graded assignment or assessment with specific feedback per week for the length of the course. Online courses all require one instructor-student interaction per week that is not limited to the grading of assignments (e.g. providing direct instruction, assessing or providing feedback on a student's course work; providing information or responding to questions about the content, course or competency, facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency, or other instructional activities approved by CEITL&DE) (DLP III.D.)

B. Course Parity

The design of online courses must reflect the importance of student interaction and engagement. Accordingly, students will interact with the course content, faculty member(s), and other students through asynchronous discussion boards, synchronous online communication tools, or through an approved equivalent instructional activity based on the Instructional Contact Hour Parity Table. Adherence to the Instructional Contact Hour Parity Table ensures that online, hybrid, and hi-flex courses meet the federal definition of a credit hour and provide the opportunity for direct, substantive interaction and collaboration (DLP I.D.). The Instructional Contact Hour Parity Table provides a list of instructional activities and their estimated duration, enabling faculty to ensure they provide opportunities for student-to-instructor, student-to-content, and student-to-student interaction. Online courses require a minimum of one graded content-specific discussion board per week for the length of the course (a course introduction board can be included in this count) (DLP III.C.).

C. Attendance Policy

Online students are subject to The Citadel's attendance policy. Attendance in an online course is defined by active participation. Logging into The Citadel's approved LMS does not qualify as sufficient evidence of attending as per federal financial aid guidelines, and nonattendance may affect financial aid and/or veterans' benefits. Completion of tests, submission/completion of assignments, and participation in discussion forums are activities used to document enrollment. (Note: logging into the course does not qualify as participation and will not be counted as

meeting the attendance requirement). Students who have not documented enrollment and participation by the end of the official drop/add period will be administratively dropped from the roll as "never attended." (DLP III.E.)

If a student has not participated in a class or stops participating, the Registrar's Office shall be notified in writing by the instructor. Prior to notifying the Registrar's Office about non-participation, faculty should notify the student in writing of the lack of participation. If nonparticipation continues, the faculty will report when a student never participates (NP) or stops participating (SP) to ensure that The Citadel is compliant with the US Department of Education's Title IV regulations regarding student enrollment. (DLP III.E.)

If a cadet's lack of attendance results in a reduction of credits below full-time status, they will be ineligible to remain in the barracks and must withdraw from the College.

Any change in a student's enrollment may impact Title IV funding. Financial Aid will be notified when a student is impacted by this policy and may adjust a student's financial aid. Students who receive VA benefits will need to coordinate with the Veteran Student Service Center.

D. Continuity of Instruction

In the event of a temporary suspension of classes due to a hurricane, natural disaster, or other unforeseen event, The Citadel's Continuity of Instruction Plan (COIP) provides resources and a platform for courses to move to an online format. As per the university's COIP, all faculty are required to upload their syllabi and maintain their grade books within The Citadel's approved LMS every semester. (DLP I.K.) Please visit the COIP website for current policies and procedures.

E. Academic Integrity and Authentication

To assure academic integrity, distance-learning students taking online classes at The Citadel gain access to course materials and educational resources by means of secure login authentication (DLP I.G.). Upon admission to the college, each student creates a unique, password-protected electronic identity. All assignments are managed through the secured LMS, including collaboration with peers, submission of assignments, and accessing grades.

All student work, grades, and assignments will be housed in The Citadel's approved LMS including assignments, assessments, and grades from third-party vendors. The use and integration of third-party vendors for online courses is subject to approval by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, the Director of CEITL & DE, and the LMS Administrator (DLP I.H.).

CEITL&DE offers consultations on pedagogical strategies and instructional technologies that promote academic integrity in distance learning (online and hybrid environments). The Center also collaborates with instructors and campus partners (e.g., Student Success Center, the Daniel Library, Information Technology Services, and related service providers) to foster a climate of academic integrity campus-wide.

F. Exam Proctoring

The Citadel will require a process of authentication during online-proctored exams (DLP I.I.). Faculty who teach distance education courses and give closed-book exams are required to use a CEITL&DE approved online proctoring service.

G. Confidentiality, Privacy, and Accessibility Policies

The Citadel strives to treat all personal information with the strictest confidentiality and will err in favor of confidentiality whenever possible. It complies with the Family Educational Rights and

Privacy Act (FERPA), as outlined in 1718 Memorandum 2-2, Privacy of Student Records (FERPA). Faculty members are expected to comply with the Citadel's policies on student privacy at all times, across all platforms. In particular, faculty members teaching online courses are expected to (a) use the Citadel's collegewide learning management system to administer all student assignments in order to ensure the security of student work and grades; (b) use the Citadel's collegewide learning management system or email system for all communications with distance education (online) students; (c) keep student work and grades confidential; (d) keep passwords secure and avoid sharing passwords; and (e) follow all applicable FERPA policies and procedures (DLP III.F.).

All accessibility and privacy policies must be posted on the syllabus or within the course and also emailed to CEITL&DE (DLP II.H.).

Closed captioning or transcripts are required for recordings and videos used in online, hybrid, and hi-flex courses (Fall 2021). (DLP II.I.).

Text and images should be accessible in online, hybrid, and hi-flex courses (Spring 2024). (DLP II.I.).

H.   Copyright

The use of course materials in online courses and programs will adhere to all applicable legal and regulatory requirements, including copyright policies (DLP II.H.).

I.   Library Policy

In support of students currently enrolled in online classes through The Citadel, the Daniel Library welcomes and encourages online students to use the library and check out items. Electronic versions of books, streaming media and journal articles may be accessed through the Daniel Library Catalog or the Daniel Library databases. Online students may use the Daniel Library's Interlibrary Loan Service or their local public library to request items. Online students also have access to any South Carolina academic library that is part of the PASCAL Consortium to check out their materials with a copy of their Citadel ID card.

Appendix A. Distance Learning Policies (DLP)

I. **Citadel Online General Policies**
    A. Citadel faculty who teaches online, hybrid, or hi-flex courses must be certified by completing the Citadel's approved Quality Online Teaching (QOT) program offered by the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching, Learning, and Distance Education (CEITL & DE). The QOT program is a series of 4 one-hour synchronous virtual sessions.
    B. The Citadel's quality assurance program provides for the application of the Quality Matters (QM) rubric during the course design process, as well as review by department chairs, deans, and CEITL & DE. Course design validation procedures include a mandatory internal peer review process and an optional external Quality Matters review.
    C. Review of the design of all new online courses will be conducted at least one semester prior to when they are scheduled to be offered.
    D. Adherence to the Instructional Contact Hour Parity Table ensures that online, hybrid, and hi-flex courses meet the federal definition of a credit hour and provide direct, substantive interaction and collaboration.
    E. The use of course materials in online courses and programs will adhere to all applicable legal and regulatory requirements including copyright and accessibility.
    F. Upon admission, online students are automatically enrolled in the Citadel Online Student Resource Course offered by the CEITL & DE. Students remain in this course throughout the duration of their enrollment at The Citadel.
    G. To ensure academic integrity, distance-learning students taking online classes at The Citadel gain access to course materials and educational resources by means of secure login authentication.
    H. All student work, grades, and assignments will be housed in The Citadel's approved LMS including assignments, assessments, and grades from third-party vendors. Use and integration of third-party vendors for online courses is subject to approval by the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, the Director of CEITL & DE, and the LMS Administrator.
    I. The Citadel will require a process of authentication during online-proctored exams.
    J. In support of students currently enrolled in online classes through The Citadel, the Daniel Library encourages online students to use the library and check out items students. Electronic versions of books and journal articles may be accessed through the Daniel Library site or requested through normal interlibrary loan channels. Please contact the Daniel Library for more information.
    K. As per the university's COIP, all faculty are required to upload their syllabi and maintain their grade books within The Citadel's approved LMS every semester.

II. **The following criteria must be met before a course can be offered in an online format:**
    A. The proposed course meets demonstrable needs and does not negatively impact existing undergraduate or graduate offerings at The Citadel.
    B. The online course meets all relevant degree program requirements.
    C. The online course will be comparable in quality and instructional contact hours (parity) to the on-campus version.
    D. The integrity of the student's work and the credibility of degrees and credits are ensured.
    E. The program adheres to the SACSCOC guidelines on distance and correspondence education.

F. The faculty member teaching the course has completed the necessary training with CEITL & DE.

G. All online courses must be delivered via the Citadel's approved LMS using the course template. This includes assignments, assessments, and grades related to third-party vendors.

H. The use of course materials in online courses and programs will adhere to all applicable legal and regulatory requirements, including copyright, accessibility, and privacy policies. All accessibility and privacy policies must be posted on the syllabus or within the course. A master list of all accessibility and privacy policies will be posted online by CEITL&DE.

I. Closed captioning or transcripts are required for recordings and videos used in online, hybrid, and hi-flex courses.

J. Text and images should be accessible in online, hybrid, and hi-flex courses.

III. **Once the course is approved for online delivery, the following procedures will become effective:**

A. The department head(s)/chair(s), program director(s), peer reviewer(s), and/or deans will have access to online courses in their department/school to evaluate course design and faculty teaching and address student concerns, in accordance with faculty review and class observation procedures in the Faculty Handbook. Reviewers will provide notice to faculty in advance of the period in which the course review occurs. CEITL & DE and faculty fellows will also have access to Citadel courses to review course design as outlined in Citadel policy.

B. Faculty are expected to have an online presence throughout the week, comparable to a face-to-face course engaging with students via discussion boards, email, and other communication methods (i.e., a 3 credit-hour course equals a minimum 3 hours of faculty online presence per week in the LMS).

C. Online courses require a minimum of one weekly content-specific discussion board for the length of the course (the course introduction board is included in this count).

D. Online courses require a minimum of one instructor-student interaction per week that is not limited to the grading of assignments (e.g., instructor-facilitated peer feedback groups, synchronous interactions with asynchronous options for students who are unable to attend sessions, video presentations and responses, additional discussion boards, other interactive activities approved by CEITL&DE reviewers).

E. Online students are subject to The Citadel's attendance policy. Attendance in an online course is defined by active participation. Completion of tests and assignments, and participation in discussion forums are activities used to document attendance enrollment. Instructors are responsible for monitoring online student attendance and contacting the Registrar's Office to administratively drop students as per the online attendance policy. If a student has not participated in a class or stops participating, the Registrar's Office shall be notified in writing by the instructor. Prior to notifying the Registrar's Office about non-participation, faculty should notify the student in writing of the lack of participation. If nonparticipation continues, the faculty will report when a student never participates (NP) or stops participating (SP) to ensure that The Citadel is compliant with the US Department of Education's Title IV regulations regarding student enrollment.

F. The Citadel strives to treat all personal information with the strictest confidentiality and will err in favor of confidentiality whenever possible. It complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), as outlined in 1718 Memorandum 2-2, Privacy of Student Records (FERPA). Faculty members are expected to comply with the

Citadel's policies on student privacy at all times, across all platforms. In particular, faculty members teaching online courses are expected to (a) use the Citadel's college-wide Learning Management System to administer all student assignments in order to ensure the security of student work and grades; (b) use the Citadel's college-wide learning management system or email system for all communications with distance education (online) students; (c) keep student work and grades confidential; (d) keep passwords secure and avoid sharing passwords; and (e) follow all applicable FERPA policies and procedures.

Appendix B. Meeting the "Regular & Substantive Interaction" Standard in Online Courses

One of the factors that the U.S. Department of Education (DoE) looks at when auditing distance education classes is evidence of "regular and substantive instructor interaction." Without evidence of this, the class runs the risk of being labeled a correspondence course (which renders them ineligible for federal financial aid and could result in colleges having to pay back the federal financial aid already awarded).

What Counts as Regular and Substantive Interaction

1. The term regular is defined as taking place on a "predictable and scheduled basis" and built into course design.
2. The term substantive refers to interaction with a student that is relevant to the academic subject matter in which the student is engaged through teaching, learning, and assessment as well as at least two of these five activities:
   - providing direct instruction;
   - assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
   - providing information or responding to questions about the content, course, or competency;
   - facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency;
   - or other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program accrediting agency.

Examples of RSI include but are not limited to:

- Participation in regularly scheduled learning sessions (where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the student and the qualified instructor).
- Provide personalized comments (in any medium) for an individual student's assignment or exam.
- An instructor-moderated online discussion forum.
- Instructor posts announcements, emails, or social media check-ins about academic aspects of the class.
- Regularly set office hours initiated by the instructor are considered substantive interaction, even if students do not take advantage.
- Provide an overview video to accompany recorded lectures.
- Identify students struggling to reach mastery through observation of discussion activity, assessment completion, or even user activity and offer additional opportunities for interaction.
- Use of small working/study groups that are moderated by the instructor

What does not constitute RSI?
- Pre-recorded video lectures available for students to watch at their own pace not associated with an assignment, discussion, quiz, etc.
- Only student-solicited office hours are offered.
- A student logging into a live webinar with no opportunity for interaction.
- Asynchronous courses *without* at least two of the methods listed for substantive interaction.

- Assignment of recorded webinars, videos, and reading materials if the course design does not require the students to review the assigned material and then interact with the instructor
- Contact with instructors not related to the course subject matter.
- Adding numeric grades to the course gradebook.
- A student submits a quiz that is automatically graded.
- Sending a welcome message during the first week of class and another around mid-semester.
- Encouraging students to participate in an optional, one-time online review session before the final exam.
- Reminding students of the course attendance policy.
- Posting an announcement about an upcoming assignment deadline.
- Providing an open-ended online forum that is not moderated by the instructor.

Appendix C. Citadel Online Committee (Faculty Senate)

Mission Statement and Charter: Online Education

Mission

The Online Education Committee will monitor and update policies for online teaching. It will also ensure compliance with accrediting bodies, standards, and policies adopted by The Citadel regarding online teaching.

The Online Education Committee members guide the Center for Excellence and Innovation in Teaching, Learning, and Distance Education (CEITL&DE) in areas such as services, training/workshop offerings, decisions on the adoption of new technologies, promotion of CEITL&DE events, and Citadel Online.

Charter

I. **Membership**
   A. **Representation**
      The Online Education Committee consists of one faculty representative from each school and the Department of Leadership Studies that has an online undergraduate or graduate program. The library also will have one member on the committee, and the CEITL&DE Director will also serve as a member. All members other than the library member shall have taught a fully online semester course at The Citadel in the past two years.
   B. **Tenure on Committee**
      Academic faculty members will serve three-year rotating terms, staggered so that at all times up to two-thirds of the committee have a collective memory of past decisions. An academic faculty member may request a second consecutive three-year term; no faculty member may serve on the committee for more than six years consecutively. If a faculty member cannot complete a term, the Senate Executive Council will select another member to fill the unexpired term. Time spent filling the term of another faculty member will not count toward the "six-year rule" outlined above.

II. **Structure**
   A. **Chair**
      The committee shall have a chair selected by the vote of the Committee at its first meeting of each academic year. The term of the chair lasts until the next election. A member may not serve as committee chair for more than three years consecutively. The chair is responsible for scheduling and presiding over committee meetings, representing the committee before outside bodies, and producing an annual report of committee activities.
   B. **Senate Liaison**
      The committee shall have at least one member who is a sitting senator on the Faculty Senate. This person will coordinate pertinent information to and from the Faculty Senate. He or she may bring the committee reports and actions to the Senate or invite another committee member to do so. Yearly, the Senate Liaison will report the name of the Committee Chair to the Senate Executive Committee.
   C. **Subcommittees**
      The committee may form subcommittees to perform specific tasks. Subcommittee members do not need to be members of the standing committee. Subcommittees report their actions to the Committee. The Senate Executive Committee may be asked to help staff subcommittees.

D. **Meetings**
The committee must meet at least twice during the academic year [once in the Fall and once in the Spring]. The chair must hold a meeting if requested in writing by at least one-third of the voting members. A quorum consists of one-half of the voting membership.

III. **General Activities of Standing Committees**
A. **Information**
The Online Education Committee will update and amend the Distance Learning Handbook as necessary and at least once every two years. The committee disseminates information by means of
1. a response (report) to a department or committee based upon a request for information
2. reports generated from within the committee
3. periodic status reports to the college as specified in its charter

B. **Annual report**
The Online Education Committee will prepare an annual report summarizing its activities over the previous academic year. The report must include all decisions of the committee, excluding confidential matters. Copies of this report will be posted to the Faculty Senate SharePoint folder allocated to this committee and made accessible to all Citadel faculty, staff, and students.

C. **Other reports**
The committee is responsible for the timely dissemination of all reports to the Citadel community. Committee reports shall be made available as directed by the Faculty Senate. Reports may contain recommendations or proposals. For the purposes of gathering information (see above), all reports are to be considered published information.

D. **Tasks**
The Online Education Committee will meet regularly to hear concerns and ideas related to online education. The Committee will, as appropriate
1. Update and review online teaching policies and manuals (including the Distance Learning Handbook and Faculty Manual as required).
2. Review accreditation and internal quality controls
3. Review and update evaluation and assessment of online teaching
4. Review and update requirements for online faculty onboarding and training.
5. Review and recommend technologies and activities to support online students
6. Review and recommend ways to create a community via Citadel Online

IV. **Specific Activities of the Online Education Committee**
The committee will consider all matters concerning online teaching, including but not limited to:
1. Review and update the Faculty Handbook and procedures for online instruction.
2. Review and update evaluation and assessment of online teaching in accordance with accreditation and internal quality controls.
3. Review and update requirements for online faculty onboarding and training.
4. Meet on a regular basis at least once per semester and generate a report of outcomes.
5. Brainstorm activities and research technologies to support online students.

V. **Autonomy**
To ensure the efficiency and quality of committee work, the committee is granted a degree of autonomy over its own operations. Upon receiving a request from another college body, the

committee will vote to accept or reject the request. A request for information can be rejected for the following reasons:

1. The request is unclear; the committee chair will ask the requesting body to clarify any ambiguities and resubmit the request
2. The committee's workload is currently too great to perform the task in the requested time frame; the chair will return the request and suggest a date for re-submittal
3. The task falls outside the scope or sphere of interest of the committee; the chair will ask the requesting body to either submit the request to another committee or (if the task falls within the scope of more than one committee) divide the task between the committees
4. The committee does not have the resources or the authority to complete the task; the chair will explain which parts of the task cannot be completed, and the requesting body may resubmit a modified request

VI. **Amending the Charter**

The Online Education Committee may modify its charter in consultation with the Senate Executive Council. Proposals for changes in the committee charter should be sent to the Senate Executive Council, which negotiates the changes with the standing committee and with any affected administrative departments. Consensus requests are forwarded to the Faculty Senate for approval. In case of a lack of consensus, competing proposals may be sent to the Senate for consideration.

Revision Dates
Created: February 15, 2018
Revised: October 18, 2021

Appendix D. Definitions

The Citadel uses the Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and Online Learning Consortium's (OLC) definitions for face-to-face and distance learning courses and programs as outlined below.

Asynchronous- *Not at the same time.*

Distance Education Program- The Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) defines a "distance education" program as "any credit-bearing educational program (degrees, certificates, and diplomas) where 50% or more of the credit hours are delivered through distance education modes." Academic programs meeting this definition will require additional approval and reporting for accreditation purposes. In a distance learning class, "The delivery of some or all of instructional content is reliant upon an alternative delivery method in addition to or in place of traditional face-to-face instruction where students and the instructor meet in the same place and at the same time. If any one student receives instruction (contact hours) through an alternate delivery method, then the course by default may be termed as a distance learning course."

Face-to-Face Course- Students meet with the instructor at regularly scheduled times (synchronous learning), primarily in a classroom. Students in face-to-face courses will normally be expected to be physically present for the term/semester.

Hi-flex- A Hi-flex course gives students the ability to choose to attend class sessions either face-to-face or online synchronously through video conferencing. In a hi-flex course, the instructor provides instructional structure, content, and activities to meet the needs of students participating both in class and virtually. In compliance with the US Department of Education credit hour definition, the combined face-to-face and online instructional time remains equivalent to a traditional face-to-face course as evidenced by completion of The Citadel's Instructional Contact Hour Parity Table.

Hybrid Course- Hybrid courses meet 50% on-campus, face-to-face, and 50% online asynchronously. In this model, face-to-face instruction is reduced, but not eliminated. In compliance with the US Department of Education credit hour definition, the combined face-to-face and online instructional time remains equivalent to a traditional face-to-face course as evidenced by completion of The Citadel's Instructional Contact Hour Parity Table.

Online Course- Courses in which instruction is conducted solely in an online learning environment within the Citadel's approved learning management system. For a course to be considered an online class, 100% of the content must be delivered online either synchronously or asynchronously, or a combination of both. If synchronous online instruction is required, the specific dates and times of the online meetings must be listed in the schedule of classes. The course must go through The Citadel's Online Course Review process which includes completion of The Citadel's Parity Table.

Synchronous- *At the same time.*

REGULAR AND SUBSTANTIVE INTERACTION (RSI) IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Department of Education issued final rules for Distance Education to ensure quality and protect students who enroll in courses in higher education. A particular focus relates to the regulation of regular and substantive interaction (RSI) in distance education. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation of degree-granting higher education institutions in the Southern states and also provides guidelines on RSI.

Who does it impact?
- All online classes in which students use Title IV funds (federal financial aid).

Risks:
The U.S. Department of Education and SACSCOC has the authority to review distance learning offerings at institutions that receive federal funds. An institution offering distance education risks losing access to federal student aid if failing to meet the regular and substantive requirements.

DEFINITIONS

Distance Education (Synchronous or Asynchronous)- is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or other digital media if used as part of the distance education course or program.

Definition of Correspondence Courses- are part of a formal educational process under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; courses are typically self-paced.

Regular Interaction is defined as occurring with some reasonable frequency considering the length of the course.

Substantive interaction is defined as engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion.

The above definitions are from SACSCOC policy statements.

WEEKLY INSTRUCTOR INITIATED DISCUSSIONS

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS EXPLAINING CONTENT

SCREENCAST VIDEO LECTURES

WEEKLY GRADED ASSIGNMENTS/ ASSESSMENTS WITH SPECIFIC FEEDBACK

FOLLOW ONLINE ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES (DROP AFTER 2 WEEKS WITH NO SUBMISSIONS)

THE CITADEL
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN TEACHING, LEARNING, AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

TO BE IN COMPLIANCE WITH RSI REGULATIONS COURSE INTERACTIONS MUST BE:

I. INITIATED BY THE INSTRUCTOR

This does NOT include interaction that is optional or initiated primarily by the student.

Examples:
- Individualized emails.
- Personalized feedback on assignments.
- Instructor-facilitated discussion forums.
- Scheduled virtual office hours.

II. "REGULAR" AND FREQUENT

Interaction between students and the instructor is regular (<u>at least once weekly</u>) and interaction is of an academic nature. The interaction should occur with reasonable frequency considering the length of time the course is run.

Examples:
- Weekly course announcements.
- Weekly summaries or highlights of discussion posts.
- Regularly schedule online reviews or help sessions.

III. "SUBSTANSIVE" AND ACADEMIC

Students are engaged through teaching, learning, and assessment. In addition, the course must involve **at least two** of the following activities:

- Facilitate a weekly group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency.
- Provide direct instruction.
  - This does NOT include lectures or recorded webinars.
- Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework.
  - **Limited feedback such as posting good job or just entering a numerical grade does not qualify as substantive.**
  - **Feedback should be meaningful, both when a student is doing well, and in areas where they could improve.**
- Provide information or respond to questions about the content of a course.