

Glossary of Digital Learning Terms

LEARNING

Asynchronous Learning: Students participate in digital learning activities at different times. Asynchronous learning requires students to complete the course requirements according to published course expectations and deadlines, and engage in learning activities independently, without real time instructor-led interaction, and in different physical locations from the instructors and students. Course activities and assignments typically facilitate asynchronous engagement with other students. Instructors provide substantive formative and summative feedback at regular intervals within the defined academic term to promote development that aligns with the published course expectations and deadlines.

Digital Synchronous Learning: Students participate in digital learning activities simultaneously in real-time. Digital synchronous learning requires students to complete the course requirements according to published course expectations and deadlines and engage in learning activities together at scheduled times, yet in different physical locations from the instructor and/or students. Course activities and assignments typically facilitate synchronous engagement with other students. Instructors provide substantive formative and summative feedback in real time and at regular intervals within the defined academic term to promote development that aligns with the published course expectations and deadlines.

In-Person Synchronous Learning: Students participate in in-person learning activities simultaneously in real-time. In-person synchronous learning requires students to complete the course requirements according to published course expectations and deadlines and engage in learning activities together at scheduled times and in the same physical location with the instructor and students. Course activities and assignments typically facilitate synchronous engagement with other students. Instructors provide substantive formative and summative feedback in real time and at regular intervals within the defined academic term to promote development that aligns with the published course expectations and deadlines.

DELIVERY

Curriculum Delivery: The program's determination of the tools it will use, and to what degree, to deliver its curriculum.

Correspondence Delivery: Course delivery that typically involves 100% asynchronous learning with no formative, substantive feedback at regular intervals, and no real-time interaction or engagement between the instructor and student unless initiated by the student. The student completes learning activities in different physical locations from the instructor and all participants. Course activities and assignments do not facilitate engagement with other students. The student typically completes the learning activities independently and then submits the work for grading and feedback. CACREP does NOT accredit correspondence programs or programs that include correspondence courses.

Digital Delivery: Program curriculum that delivers, collects, evaluates and/or stores any portion of its curriculum and learning activities using software and/or tele-communications tools. These tools are also used to facilitate regular and substantive interaction or engagement among students and between students and instructor(s).

In-Person Delivery: Program curriculum that delivers, collects, evaluates and/or stores its entire curriculum and learning activities with no software and/or tele-communications tools. Regular and substantive interaction or engagement among students and between students and instructor(s) occurs in-person.

PROGRAM/COURSE CATEGORIES

The additions to the glossary are in response to feedback received through the counseling profession. These definitions are intended to bridge some of the gap between the federal government's new understanding of distance education and the "in-process" updating of policy, procedures, and definition for institutional accreditors (previously regional accreditors). Our intention is to offer increased clarity in the language used to describe the paradigm shift to a more inclusive understanding of education and curriculum delivery.

Distance Education (aka Online) Program/Course - An academic program or course that offers any amount of its curriculum using digital tools as part of or wholly for regular and substantive interactions between students and faculty.

On-ground Program/Course - An academic program or course that offers all of its curriculum through in-person delivery for all the regular and substantive interactions between students and faculty.

Hybrid Program/Course - An academic program or course that offers its curriculum using a combination of both digital delivery and in-person delivery for regular and substantive interactions between students and faculty (the federal government has removed this term from its definitions. CACREP will use this term temporarily until the 2024 CACREP standards go into effect. Hybrid courses and programs are considered distance education by the federal government).

Curriculum Pathways: the different routes by which learners can access and complete their program of study. Pathways are most often associated with curriculum delivery methods (as per definitions above).

ENGAGEMENT

Regular Interaction: A program ensures a recurring pattern of interaction between a student and instructor(s) throughout the course by: 1) Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and consistent basis commensurate with course requirements according to published course expectations and deadlines; and 2) Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success, and promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student.

Substantive Interaction: An instructor engages students in all learning activities such as: 1) Providing direct instruction; 2) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework; 3) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency; 4) Facilitating student interaction regarding the content of a course or competency; and/or, 5) Engaging in other instructional activities approved by the institution or program's accrediting agency.

TOOLS

Digital Communication Platform: A software or web-based product that supports the use of audio and video technology (both hardware and software) to create a synchronous digital meeting space between two or more people in different physical locations. Participants can see and hear each other through this technology.

Learning Management System: A software application designed with the intentional purpose to plan, execute a learning process, and assess student learning outcomes. The software application allows for curriculum delivery and learning activity collection, evaluation, and storage. The LMS allows for regular and substantive interaction engagement among students and between students and instructor(s)*.

* Instructor is defined as any individual who is responsible for delivering course content and meets institutional, regional and/or specialized accreditor qualifications/standards for instructors established by those accrediting agencies.