

SKYLINE COLLEGE

DISTANCE EDUCATION HANDBOOK

2023 - 2024



Welcome Online and Hybrid Faculty!

The Skyline College's Distance Education Faculty Handbook was developed and updated to be a resource that provides information about regulations and best practices for online and hybrid teaching and learning. This handbook lists guidelines and the support available through the Skyline College Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning (CTTL). [The CTTL web page](#) contains contact information for personnel, workshops and resources to help faculty develop and create an online environment that helps students achieve success in their coursework.

The goals of this handbook are:

- Provide technical and pedagogical support and resources for faculty teaching online and hybrid courses.
- Furnish information about training and mentoring for online and hybrid course delivery methods.
- Inform faculty about the mandatory policies and procedures that relate to distance education courses.
- Define best practices in distance education and how those should be incorporated into course design and delivery.
- Offer comprehensive resources for ongoing faculty development.

The policies and guidelines in this handbook are updated regularly. Faculty who facilitate online courses for Skyline College are expected to remain aware of the policies and guidelines summarized in this handbook.

Table of Contents

Welcome Online and Hybrid Faculty!	1
Table of Contents	2
Skyline College Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals	3
Defining Online and Hybrid Learning	3
The Difference Between Online and Hybrid Learning	4
Curriculum Development & Online Teaching Certification	5
Distance Education Addendum Approval Process	4
Online Teaching Certification	6
Online Teaching Recertification Every Three Years	6
Responsibilities of an Online Instructor	7
Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)	8
Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in Practice	9
RSI Example 1: Welcome Letter	10
RSI Example 2: Communication Plan	11
Copyright Materials Usage Guidance	13
Student Support Services	16
Online Resources	16

Skyline College Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals

Mission

To empower and transform a global community of learners.

Vision

Skyline College inspires a global and diverse community of learners to achieve intellectual, cultural, social, economic and personal fulfillment.

Values

Education is the foundation of our democratic society.

College Goals

1. Develop the scope, quality, accessibility and accountability of instructional and student service offerings, programs and services to lead the San Francisco Bay region in transferring students, awarding degrees and certificates and reflecting social and educational equity.
2. Enhance institutional effectiveness in planning and decision-making processes through cooperative leadership, effective communication and participatory governance.
3. Fulfill the college's role as a leading academic and cultural center for the community.
4. Provide human, physical, technological and financial resources to ensure excellent educational programs and student services in order to support students in attaining their educational goals and improve institutional effectiveness.
5. Recruit, retain and support a world-class faculty, staff and administration that is committed to ongoing improvement through access to opportunities for professional growth and advancement.
6. Play a central role in the preparation of the region's workforce and expand networks and partnerships with businesses, the community and non-profit organizations.
7. Establish and maintain fiscal stability and alignment of programs and services to the core Mission - Vision - Values of the college.
8. Internationalize the educational experience by enriching the college with a diverse community of learners representing the collective resources of humanity and engaging in a vibrant dialogue that engenders an understanding of others.

With the understanding that faculty should have primary responsibility for developing courses that are student ready, effective engagement, and a humanizing learning experience, the Distance Education Team at Skyline College supports the mission of the college by supporting the faculty in delivering a comprehensive selection of college courses, degrees, and certificates via online classes.

Defining Online and Hybrid Learning

According to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Western Association of Schools and Colleges, online/hybrid learning is an approach to learning where instruction takes place outside the traditional classroom setting. Instead of teaching face-to-face, instructors use electronic or a blend of face-to-face and electronic delivery methods to develop and furnish content for instruction and interaction with students. Students in online and hybrid courses are required to ‘attend’ class and participate just as if they were in a face-to-face course. Attendance is based on documentation from “regular substantive interaction.” Instructors establish guidelines for how much each lecture, reading assignment, discussion or project qualifies as a meeting during the course of a week or course learning module

Online Course

An online course is delivered via the Internet using a campus-supported Learning Management System (LMS). Some classes may require on-campus meetings for orientation or test sessions. Students are required to use a computer with Internet access as the primary technology and may be required to use other available technologies to acquire and learn course content. Through regular substantive interaction, instructor and students interact to complete assignments and assessments and to demonstrate Student Learning Outcomes. An online course will be designated as Online in published campus materials and defined as 51% or more online student contact hours.

Hybrid Course

A hybrid course replaces some face-to-face class time with online instructional time. Any distance education course that requires students to attend on-campus orientations, assessments, scheduled class meetings, or other required activities is a hybrid course. A campus-supported LMS is used to provide course content replacing face-to-face time. Students must have access to a computer and the Internet. A hybrid course will be designated as Hybrid in published campus materials and defined as 50% or less online student contact hours

Multimodal Course

The term HyFlex gained traction due to the pandemic creating an interest in a conflation of synchronous on campus and online modalities. The San Mateo Community College District has chosen to use the term multimodal to provide accuracy and clarity to this form of instruction. The term multimodal is defined as a combination of teaching modalities. Multimodal is an umbrella term that includes, but isn’t limited to, teaching modalities such as HyFlex, Hybrid, Partially Synchronous, and teaching different modality cross-listed sections. The multimodal instructional approach gives students more options and flexibility in what modalities they have to choose from for their courses. As we await forthcoming legislation, deans and faculty are required to consult and work in tandem with the Distance Education Coordinator to ensure optimal instruction, flexibility, and alignment with accreditation.

Curriculum Development & Online Teaching Certification

To ensure that our course delivery is high quality, consistent, student-success focused, and integrated, the following criteria is necessary for faculty members who plan to design, adopt, teach or continue facilitating online courses.

Distance Education Addendum Approval Process

To ensure that our course delivery is high quality, consistent, student-ready, and integrated, all courses new to the online or hybrid modality must be met before a faculty member designs, adopts or teaches an online course. This process takes 2 semesters to complete.

New Course with Online/Hybrid Modality

- New courses must also go through the new course approval process. This process begins by completing all parts of the course approval forms and submission through CurricUNET.
- Division Dean must approve the submission before it is forwarded to the Skyline College Curriculum Committee.
- After the final approval by the Curriculum Committee, the Design of the actual course can begin. The faculty member must have completed the required training to develop the course.

Existing Course with addition of Online/Hybrid Modality

- The Course Outline of Record must be current when submitting the distance education addendum.
- A DE addendum must be submitted to through Curricunet, and Approved by the Curriculum Committee that designates the following:
 - Demonstration that Sufficient planning has been given to adaptations of methods of Instruction and methods of evaluation to ensure regular and effective contact as required in Title 5 and the SMCCCD Regular Effective Contact Policy
 - Demonstration that necessary technical requirements are available.
 - Demonstration that Accessibility is ensured as required by Section 508 guidelines.
- Division Dean must approve the submission before it is forwarded to the Skyline College Curriculum Committee.
- After the final approval by the Curriculum Committee, the Design of the actual course can begin. The faculty member must have completed the required training to develop the course.

Online Teaching Certification

Faculty teaching an online/hybrid course must complete the San Mateo Community College District's Quality Online Teaching and Learning training. Faculty who received training from another higher education institution must provide a certificate of completion and documentation that indicates the content covered in the training to ensure that both district approved LMS tools and Online Pedagogy were part of the professional development.

Upon completion of Learning Management System (LMS) and Online Pedagogy Training, faculty who plan to teach an online/hybrid must prepare a course for the Consultative Review. The course design submitted for consultative review must be 80% complete following online pedagogy best practices and ensure that all materials in the course follow the federal, state, and district mandated accessibility requirements.

Faculty members developing an online course need to work in tandem with the Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning (CTTL) which may include the following: Accessibility Specialist, Instructional Designer, Instructional Technologist, and Distance Education Coordinator along with other successful Online/Hybrid teaching faculty.

Online Teaching Recertification Every Three Years

Every three years, faculty will need to renew their commitment to teaching online/hybrid courses by demonstrating completion of recertification. Online teaching is relatively new in comparison to other teaching modalities and therefore faculty will need to remain current in technology literacy, online pedagogy, federal, state, and local policies. This ongoing professional development recertification for online instructors will provide an opportunity for faculty to improve skills, deepen knowledge, and develop innovative approaches to teaching in the online modality.

Recertification Options

Quality Online Teaching and Learning (QOTL) 2

QOTL 2 is a 5-week advanced online teaching training offered fully online asynchronously that builds on QOTL 1 and goes beyond the content in that course. The goal is to invite faculty to look at one of their existing courses and re-imagine any components that could be improved upon and/or enhanced. This training is designed to fit each of instructor's individual needs by utilizing a Choose Your Own Adventure format. Participants receive 25-hr of compensation at the applicable special rate.

Responsibilities of an Online Instructor

Faculty teaching online/hybrid courses are responsible for the same administrative functions as those teaching in the classroom on the Skyline College campus. These include: developing curriculum, choosing textbooks (Preferably Open Educational Resources), verifying course rosters, adding and dropping students, entering grades at the prescribed times, creating and uploading syllabi, creating and uploading assignments and assessments to Canvas, and ensuring that all features of the course are up-to-date and currently working.

In addition to the administrative functions that are similar to the in-person on campus courses. Online instructors have other administrative and facilitation obligations and student ready responsibilities. These include: Attendance and Participation Policy, Ongoing Professional Development, and Regular and Substantive Interaction.

Attendance and Participation Policy

Recent examples of Financial Aid fraud have caused the Federal Department of Education to require last date of attendance information and tracking of student attendance for Online courses. Therefore, it is up to the instructor to closely monitor student participation in Online and Hybrid courses. Participation is more than just logging in.

Attendance: The course Check-In Assignment, mandated by the Department of Education (Reg. 66592), is a requirement for all distance education classes. If a student does not complete the course check-in assignment, the instructor may drop him/her/them from the class for being absent.

Participation: Simply having the student login for the first day of class is not enough. New Federal guidelines to prevent financial aid fraud state that student logins no longer count as participation. Participation means actively completing course activities in the LMS (Canvas) such as assignments, assessments, posting on discussion forums, etc. Participation policies must be clarified in the online syllabus. It is not enough to evaluate a student's attendance based solely on the number and frequency of logins or through course statistics on the Learning Management System.

Ongoing Professional Development

Ongoing professional development is crucial for online instructors because technology is always changing. Additionally, online teaching is relatively new and therefore the pedagogy is being updated and revised to better meet the needs of all students. For this reason, both adjunct and full-time faculty who teach online are encouraged to participate in the professional development offerings available through Skyline College's Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning (CTTL). Other venues for professional development include the Peralta Online Equity Conference and the Online Teaching Conference (OTC).

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

Regular and Substantive Interaction requires early, continuing, and consistent communication and instructions from the instructor of record. Paramount to the development and actualization of Online and Hybrid courses is the responsibility of the instructor to ensure regular and substantive interaction with students. This challenge is often equated as parity with traditional courses. This means that interaction and content delivery must parallel a face-to-face class. The Canvas course “shell” must be developed to be more than a “container for lectures” and multiple-choice tests. An Online/Hybrid instructor must create active interactions between instructor and student and between student and student. Online tools can provide methods for achieving both synchronous (real time) and asynchronous interaction.

The US Department of Education issued “Final Rules on Distance Education and Innovation” in September 2020, with the rules going into effect on July 1, 2021. The terms Regular and Substantive Interaction were key components to clarify the difference between distance education courses and correspondence courses.

Including regular and substantive interaction in courses is more than a federal requirement. It is also a hallmark of effective teaching. Decades of research have established that teacher-student interactions are an essential component of learning. So, while it may be tempting to see the U.S. Department of Education’s mandate as a burden imposed from outside the college, the reality is that ensuring regular and substantive interaction is entirely consistent with the best practices of online course design and delivery.

Substantive Interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following:

1. Assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework;
2. Providing information or responding to questions about the content of the course or competency;
3. Facilitating a group discussion regarding content of a course or competency

Regular Interaction between a student and an instructor during the entirety of the course is ensured by the following:

1. Providing the opportunities for substantive interaction with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency;
2. Monitoring the student’s academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed or upon request by the student.

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in Practice

Establishing and maintaining effective regular and substantive interaction is an important aspect of delivering an online and hybrid course. It is not only a Title 5 requirement, but is also a practice that encourages and facilitates student-centered instruction and increases student learning outcomes.

- **Faculty teaching Online/Hybrid courses may only use Canvas** and the tools within the Canvas environment as the Course Management system for Online /Hybrid & Web-assisted course delivery.
- **Instructor Presence:** Instructors need to create a sense of “presence,” meaning that students are aware of and can interact with the instructor. Presence is the most important best practice for an online course (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, p. 53). Research has shown that an important component in students’ performance in and satisfaction with their online course is the active participation of the instructor within their course (Picciano, 2002; Rovai, 2002; Swan & Shih, 2005)
- **Regular contact hours** should be listed through published [office hours](#) (whether virtual or face-to-face) and availability for answering questions and giving feedback that includes both synchronous and asynchronous modes.
- **Timely feedback** that replicates the contact of face-to-face courses must be provided, with communication between faculty and students occurring no less frequently than in a comparable face-to-face course. Instructors should clearly indicate when they will be available to students, and when they will not be available (i.e., weekends, vacations, holidays, if appropriate), how often they will respond to student work, and in what manner they will respond to student work (i.e., email, text message, phone, online chat). SMCCCD best practice guidelines suggest instructors should answer student questions within 24 to 48 hours.
- **Interaction between faculty and students should use multiple channels**, besides just Conversations (e-mail tool in) Canvas. Discussions, and regular announcements, are an added but minimal way to connect with students. **Best practices:** Faculty should use the variety of synchronous and asynchronous communication tools available in Canvas in their classes such as Announcements, Chat, Discussion Boards, Frequently Ask Question (FAQ), Video Conferencing
- **Collaborative tools** within Canvas are often good ways to achieve student to student interaction, in addition to Discussions.
- **Best practice for the application of FERPA guidelines** requires single sign-on and that assignments and grade are only kept within Canvas, the District required Course Management System. Use of publisher’s materials compromises student’s private data if faculty send the student of CANVAS to publisher’s sites. Canvas enables LTI integration of publisher content with a single sign on. This integration allows faculty to keep all student data within the course shell on District Servers and therefore not violate FERPA.

RSI Example 1: Welcome Letter

In order to establish rapport with your students and to incorporate general best practices for online learning, faculty are encouraged to construct a Welcome Letter and email all enrolled students via both WebSmart and the district approved LMS announcement 2-5 days prior to the start of the course.

What is the rationale for a welcome letter?

- The welcome letter helps students unfamiliar with the distance education environment understand course expectations.
- The welcome letter tells students how and where to login.
- The welcome letter lets students know where to go for technical help and support.
- The welcome letter establishes rapport and promotes regular effective contact with the students early on.

The welcome letter should include:

- **Course Information-** Course name, section number, Course dates, Instructor name/information, contact information: phone number & email, required textbook(s), attendance and drop policies, link to the syllabus
- **Login Information-** Login information/link: LMS URL, Login Instructions, district approved LMS support link, Getting started/orientation links.
- **Additional Information-** Course Check-In Assignment, Distance education student resource(s)/website, Information about accessibility & link to DSPS website, Self-assessment for online learning links
- **Contact Information-** Instructor Email, Phone Number, and information regarding using the LMS inbox system for communication Course related communication between instructors and students must originate from within the LMS. This is so that Skyline College can provide documentable evidence of regular effective contact and student participation in learning activities.

RSI Example 2: Communication Plan

Effective communication with students is essential when teaching online. If you can bridge the gap of distance, it will foster a sense of community in your class and will allow your students to feel connected to you.

A great way to ensure you are providing effective communication is to plan ahead of time how, when, and why you will communicate with your students online. Online instructors are encouraged to develop a communication plan and share it with their students in the syllabus.

Consider the following when creating your communication plan:

Communicate regularly: Let the students know how often you will communicate. Be sure that the communication is consistent throughout the duration of the course so students come to expect and look for your announcements.

Communication should be multifaceted: Outline the methods you will use for communicating. This may include email, Canvas Inbox, Canvas Announcements, Video Messages, Videoconferencing, or feedback via Speedgrader. Consider using a couple different methods for different types of communication.

1. To outline what topic(s) will be covered in a week and what tasks students will need to complete, perhaps you can make a video to add to each Canvas module as you go.
2. Canvas Announcements are good for reminders, schedule changes, and updates, because they both send an email and create a persistent post in Canvas.
3. Speedgrader is great for text or video feedback on assignments, and you can annotate many types of submissions for greater clarity, as well.

Set guidelines for communication: Give the students expectations regarding how they can communicate with you and the response time. Clarifying boundaries and times you plan to check their messages and the times you will not be available.

Notify in cases of absence: Inform students immediately should an illness, family emergency or other unexpected event prevent continuing communication for a prolonged period of time. Also let students know when contact and communication will resume.

Accessibility & Universal Design

To ensure that all students have the same opportunity, Online/Hybrid courses must be designed to provide “built-in” accommodation, known as Universal Design. This means instructional materials and resources are ready for industry standard assistive computer technology commonly used by students with disabilities. Specific guidelines are available at the System Office Regulations and Guidelines for Distance including: documents, video closed captioned, transcripts for audio, tags for all images.

The [Skyline College CTTL website page on Accessibility](#) provides extensive information on accessibility requirements and resources. The CTTL provides information with “Do it Yourself” (DIY) aids on how to do video captioning. For training and specific support about accessibility contact Ricardo Flores floresr@smccd.edu

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA also referred to as the Buckley Amendment) is a federal law designed to: Protect the privacy of student education records; to Establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records.

What are student Education records?

Education records are records that are directly related to a student and that are maintained by an educational agency or institution or a party acting for or on behalf of the agency or institution. These records include but are not limited to grades, transcripts, class lists, student course schedules, health records (at the K-12 level), student financial information (at the postsecondary level), and student discipline files. The information may be recorded in any way, including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, computer media, videotape, audiotape, film, microfilm, microfiche, and e-mail.

Source: 34 CFR § 99.2

“Education Records” and “Record”

Use of publisher materials compromises a students’ private data if faculty send the students outside the District required LMS (Canvas) to publisher’s sites. Canvas enables LTI integration of publisher content with a single sign on. This integration allows Faculty to keep all student data within the course shell on District Servers and therefore not violate FERPA.

Copyright Materials Usage Guidance

Copyright

Copyright covers "original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression." *Those notes you scribbled on a napkin at the coffee shop are a fixed tangible medium of expression.* Copyright protection is automatic from the moment of creation.

Copyright lasts from the moment a work is created until 70 years after the death of the author, except for works produced by a company/employer or other "works for hire" in which case the copyright lasts 95 years from the date of publication or 120 years from creation, whichever expires first. Works created and published prior to 1978 may be protected for different lengths of time. Works no longer protected by the copyright law automatically pass into the public domain. For more information, see the [Copyright Status Chart](#) by the Cornell Copyright Information Center.

Resources

- [Copyright](#) by UMKC University Libraries ([CC BY-NC 3.0 International](#))
- [Exceptions for Instructors interactive guide](#) ([CC BY-NC-SA](#))

Fair Use

Fair use is a flexible doctrine that permits some uses of copyright-protected material without permission from the original copyright holder, such as for use in news reporting, criticism, teaching, and other reasons. Fair use had evolved over time as judges made case-by-case exceptions to copyright to accommodate uses that seemed legitimate and justifiable regardless of the copyright holder's apparent rights.

Alternatives to Fair Use

There is a growing movement in technology, research, and education to allow and encourage free access to information and open collaboration. Instead of navigating the complex copyright laws and fair use doctrine, educators can take advantage of platforms such as Open Educational Resources (OER), Creative Commons (CC), open access (OA), and public domain materials; as well as Library owned or licensed materials. Materials published under CC and OA license are protected by the U.S. copyright law but the licensing structures allow users to use and share those works without having to request permissions or make fair use determinations.

- **Open Educational Resources (OER)** are free learning materials that are licensed, often under a Creative Commons license, to allow users to retain copies of OER content, as well as reuse, revise, remix and redistribute the content. OERs include textbooks, videos, tests, entire courses, course modules, and syllabi. To locate OERs, visit the [Creative Commons Compendium of OER](#) and Skyline College's [OER repository](#).

- **Creative Commons (CC)** is a nonprofit organization that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools. It uses free legal tools (such as creative commons licenses) to provide a simple, standardized way to give the public permission to use and share your work. For more information, visit Skyline Colleges [Creative Commons licenses](#).
- **Open Access (OA)** license allows users to have immediate, unrestricted, digital access to content published under that OA license. To locate open access resources, visit Skyline College's [ZTC Resources](#)
- **Public Domain** works may be used without seeking the copyright holder's permission or paying a license fee because the content owner's exclusive intellectual property rights to that content may have been expired, forfeited, waived, and/or deemed inapplicable.
- **Electronic Resources at SMCCD Libraries** that include scholarly databases, online journals, e-books, newspapers, magazines, videos and image databases, and reference databases. These resources are governed by license agreements, most of which allow the licensed material to be used for educational purposes by "authorized users."

Resources

- [Fair Use Evaluator \(CC BY-NC-SA\)](#)
- [OER by Subject Research Guide \(CC BY 4.0\)](#)
- [Is This in the Public Domain? Digital Slider \(CC BY-NC-SA\)](#)
- [Skyline College Library](#)

Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998

The DMCA was written to address intellectual property in the digital environment.

Anticircumvention under the DMCA

- It is illegal to circumvent or decrypt technological protection measures (TPMs) that protect digital intellectual property even if your use is a fair use.
- It is also illegal to manufacture and to traffic any technology or service that is designed to circumvent a TPM.
- The DMCA prohibits removing the copyright management information contained on a copyrighted work.

Section 403 of the [Digital Millennium Copyright Act](#) of 1998 (DMCA) required the Register of Copyrights to submit recommendations to Congress on "how to promote distance education through digital technologies, while maintaining an appropriate balance between the rights of copyright owners and the needs of users." [1] In their 1999 report "[Report on Copyright and Digital Distance Education](#)" the U.S. Copyright Office provided a number of recommendations after consultation with representatives of copyright owners, nonprofit educational institutions, and nonprofit libraries and archives. The original TEACH Act bill implemented a number of the

recommendations set forth in the Copyright Office's report. (OSU, [Navigating the TEACH Act in Distance Education](#), CC BY)

Resources

- [DMCA](#)

TEACH Act, 2015

Displays and performances in distance education ([The TEACH Act, 2015](#))

Though the performance or display of copyrighted works in digital formats are allowed in face-to-face classroom environments, such use of copyrighted digital content has several restrictions in online teaching environments. Digital materials are more vulnerable to copyright infringement as they can be easily reproduced and widely distributed.

The TEACH Act passed in 2002 enables performance or display of copyrighted works in distance online education settings by accredited, non-profit educational institutions. However, there are several requirements that the educational institutions intending to implement the TEACH Act are required to meet including the use of technological protection measures that prevent retention and unauthorized distribution of the work. **SMCCD is in the process of satisfying TEACH Act requirements. Until those requirements are met, SMCCD faculty may not display or transmit copyrighted works in online teaching environments.** For more information about the TEACH Act and its requirements, please read [Copyright Basics: The TEACH Act](#).

Resources

- [TEACH Act, 2015](#)
- [Navigating the TEACH Act in Distance Education \(CC BY\)](#)

*Nothing in this handbook is to be construed as legal advice. These pages are intended to provide information and guidance in the application of copyright law, please refer the the [Skyline Library Copyright Issues](#) & [Skyline Bookstore Copyright Resources](#) webpages, or reach out to a Skyline Librarian, the Bookstore Manager, or a SMCCCD Legal Representative for additional information and guidance.

Attributions

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Student Support Services

Counseling and Student Services

In addition to our regular on-campus advising and counseling, Online/Hybrid student can use Skyline's Electronic Counseling Service to receive limited counseling on schedule planning, transferring, and GE and Certificate questions. Students can access the [Electronic Counseling Service](#) or can access [the general page for Skyline Counseling](#).

Library

Our library supports remote access for both faculty and students, including remote access to search tools, library catalogs, and a remote helpline via email. Additionally, library faculty are available for designing custom library resource pages for distance courses. For more information regarding the library's services, visit [Skyline Library Distance Education website](#).

Learning Center

The Learning Center (TLC) supports student success by providing tutoring, workshops and a variety of academic resources, by a team of student assistants, peer and graduate tutors, and knowledgeable faculty and staff who are ready to empower students

Online Resources

[Online Education Initiative](#)

[Online Learning Consortium](#)

[Bloom's taxonomy for the digital age](#)

[The American Distance Education Consortium \(ADEC\)](#)

[Edudemic](#)

[Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching \(Merlot\)](#)

[Community College Consortium for Open Educational Resources:](#)

[@one](#)