

Approved By: President and Faculty

Date Approved: February 10, 2026

Effective Date: February 10, 2026

- 1. Summary:** This policy establishes instructional requirements that are specific to online education at Criswell College.
- 2. Rationale:** Online education at Criswell College is governed by institutional policies applicable to all courses and by policies specific to online instruction. These policies comply with the standards and requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), including the *Principles of Accreditation* and the *Policy Statement on Distance and Correspondence Education*.
- 3. Entities Affected:** instructors of online courses, students who register for online courses, Educational Technology staff, Registrar

4. Definitions

asynchronous: a method of online content delivery in which the student accesses that content at her or his own convenience, though assignment due dates pace the student throughout the semester/term.

Canvas: Canvas is a web-based Learning Management System (LMS) used to support instruction for all Criswell College courses.

Online education: education that uses internet technology to deliver instruction to students and to support regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors, whether synchronously or asynchronously.

online course: a course in which the instructional content is delivered exclusively via internet technology.

synchronous: a method of content delivery in which instructors and students enrolled in an online course meet “live,” or “real time,” using video-teleconferencing technology. Typically, neither the instructor nor students are in the same physical space during synchronous sessions.

Synchronous-online courses: courses in which instructors and all enrolled students meet at scheduled times throughout the semester using synchronous sessions. The remaining direct faculty instruction is delivered using other means specified in this policy that students access asynchronously. Criswell College has two formats of synchronous-online courses:

- 1. Traditional Synchronous Courses:** This hybrid design delivers the majority of course content asynchronously via video-based instructional materials. In addition, instructors must meet synchronously at scheduled class times throughout a semester/term to meet at least 25% of the direct faculty instruction required by the College’s Credit Hour Policy to promote student engagement and instructor presence. These sessions are recorded and made available for subsequent review.
- 2. CrisFlex Courses:** This hybrid design includes two components: (1) an on-campus section that meets at designated times and days, and (2) an online section that permits students to participate through video-teleconferencing technology at the scheduled class time or to access the recorded class sessions

asynchronously. Enrollment in CrisFlex courses is limited to students admitted to a master's-level program. Students must also pay the designated online fee to access this option.

Zoom: A video-teleconferencing application that integrates with Canvas.

5. Policy

- a. Criswell College offers distance education courses within approved graduate programs, and all such courses are equivalent in content and assessment to on-campus offerings (SACSCOC Standard 2.0).
- b. Criswell College employs qualified academic and administrative officers and faculty whose credentials and expertise are appropriate to their assigned roles and responsibilities, including the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Director of Educational Technology, and Program Directors for each academic degree program. (SACSCOC Standard 5.4, 5.5, 6.2.c)
 - The Vice President of Academic Affairs is responsible for approving courses to be taught online.
 - The Director of Educational Technology is responsible for training and working with instructors to develop, implement, maintain all online courses and create procedures according to best practices for synchronous online education.
- c. **Faculty**

Criswell College employs sufficient full-time faculty to ensure the quality and integrity of distance education programs. These faculty oversee curriculum, assess learning outcomes, advise students, and meet scholarly and service obligations within their assigned workload. (SACSCOC Standard 6.2.a)
- d. **Institutional Effectiveness Concerning Curriculum and Instructional Quality**

The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its online learning offerings through end-of-term student course evaluations and program-level oversight, in which program directors review assessments and content to ensure alignment with online learning goals established in the Credit Hour Policy (SACSCOC Standards 8.1, 8.2b, 10.4).

Specifics include:

Canvas must be used to deliver all instructional materials, discussions, assessments, and links to approved external resources to ensure the security and integrity of student work and grades.

Activities that satisfy the direct faculty instruction required by the College's Credit Hour Policy consist of substantive interaction between the instructor and students and/or among students related to course subject matter. Acceptable forms of engagement include, but are not limited to, responding to discussion boards, providing substantive feedback on assignments, and conducting synchronous class meetings or review sessions. Faculty office hours do not count toward this instructional requirement.

- 1) All synchronous courses will contain these elements:

- A. *CrisFlex Courses*:

- i. On-Campus Format

On-campus courses provide scheduled, direct instruction and student–faculty interaction, supported by standard assessments (assignments, quizzes, and exams), in accordance with the College's Credit Hour Policy.

ii. **Asynchronous Format**

The asynchronous format allows master's students to participate either in the live class session or through recorded instruction while completing all required assessments. Instructional time and student work meet the College's Credit Hour Policy and are equivalent to on-campus expectations, consistent with SACSCOC Standard 10.6.

B. *Traditional Synchronous Course*

- i. Recorded lectures/instruction which students watch asynchronously.
 - ii. The instructor and all students enrolled in an online course must meet synchronously at scheduled class times throughout a semester/term to meet at least 25% of the direct faculty instruction required by the College's Credit Hour Policy.
 - iii. Instructors are free to schedule additional synchronous sessions as desired/required to meet course objectives. If these sessions are included as a graded course requirement, then the sessions must be recorded for students who cannot attend, and/or alternate direct instructional activities must be offered for them.
 - iv. Assignments, tests, quizzes, and discussion boards for which the instructor provides feedback.
2. Courses must be published in Canvas no later than two weeks before the start of the semester or term. At minimum, the syllabus must be available at publication. Additional materials may be required earlier when mandated by course-sharing agreements or other institutional arrangements.
 3. Criswell College allocates and maintains sufficient resources to support and, as appropriate, expand its online learning offerings in accordance with institutional needs and SACSCOC Standard 13.7.

e. **Identity Protection**

The institution protects student identity through multifactor authentication and FERPA-compliant procedures. Students must upload a valid photo ID to their Canvas profile before the first synchronous session.

Instructors must verify each student's identity at least once per semester/term by confirming that the individual participating in the course matches the photo in Canvas and, for enrolled Criswell students, the ID photo in SONIS. Instructors may determine the method of verification (e.g., synchronous meetings, video submissions, or scheduled video conferences). Students enrolled in online courses are required to complete this verification. Instructors must maintain a record of the verification method and date. Moreover, any charge for online courses and/or identity verification will be posted in the Catalog. (SACSCOC 10.6)

f. **Equitable Access to Student Services**

Criswell College ensures that online learners have equitable access to academic, student, and technical support services through the College website and Canvas, including library resources, student complaint procedures, technology requirements, and other essential student services.

g. **Compliance with Existing Policies and Procedures**

While presenting situations not typically encountered in on-campus classes, online instruction must nevertheless comply with policies and procedures established by the College related to class conduct, student management, and overall professionalism required by those policies and procedures. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Academic Appeals Policy
- Academic Honesty Policy
- Attendance Policy (including Faculty Census Verification - SONIS procedure)
- Credit Hours Policy
- Faculty Employment Policy (e.g. office hours, student requests for information, etc.)
- Faculty Final Grades Input – SONIS procedure
- Graduate Education Policy
- Institutional Email Policy
- Professional Standards and Workplace Expectations Policy

h. **Responsibility for Compliance:** Vice President of Academic Affairs

i. **Notification:** This policy will be published on the College’s website. A summary of excerpts from this policy will be published in the College’s *Academic Catalog*.

j. **Policy Review:** This policy will be regularly reviewed according to the College’s policy review procedure.

For the Office of the President only:

Policy version: 2.0	Policy number: 3.019
Related policies: Attendance Policy Course-Sharing: Teaching Institution Policy Credit Hours Policy Faculty Employment Policy Institutional Email Policy	

Policy History

Version 1.0	October 29, 2025
Version 2.0	February 10, 2026