



**To:** The Workforce System

**From:** Indiana Department of Workforce Development

**Date:** April 17, 2018

**Subject:** DWD Policy 2017-14  
Distance Education

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## Purpose

This policy provides requirements for distance education for adult education programs.

## Rescissions

DWD Policy 2014-08 Distance Education

## Content

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and Indiana Adult Education support distance learning as part of its commitment to increase participation in and access to adult education (AE) services. Moreover, the integration of technologies in distance education supports student development of fundamental computer and technology skills needed to thrive in a complex and rapidly changing technological society.

## *Defining Distance Education*

The United States Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) defines distance education for AE programs in the *National Reporting System (NRS) Implementation Guidelines*, as:

- **Distance Education**—Formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both, for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to, print, audio recording, videotape, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs, and other online technology. Teachers support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, e-mail or online technologies, and software.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> NRS Implementation Guidelines (February 2016); p. 50

## ***Measuring Instructional Hours for Learners in Distance Education***

There are two types of contact hours for distance education: direct contact hours and proxy contact hours.

- **Direct contact hours** for distance education learners can be a combination of in-person interaction and telephone, video conferencing, or online communication, where student and program staff can interact and where the learner's identity is verifiable. Students must have at least twelve (12) direct contact hours for official enrolment in an AE or Integrated English Literacy & Civics Education program. These direct contact hours may include both orientation and instructional hours.
- **Proxy contact hours** are the hours students spend on distance learning activities. These hours may be measured using one of three models:
  - *Clock-Time Model*, which assigns contact hours based on the elapsed time that a learner is connected to, or engaged in, an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.
  - *Teacher-Verification Model*, which assigns a fixed number of hours of credit for each assignment based on teacher determination of the extent to which a learner engaged in, or completed, the assignment.
  - *Learner-Mastery Model*, which assigns a fixed number of hours of credit based on the learner passing a test on the content of each lesson. Learners work with the curriculum and materials and when they feel they have mastered the material, take the test. A passing score on the test earns the credit hours attached to the material.

AE providers must be able to provide documentation of proxy contact hours and how the logs were measured upon request. Some examples of acceptable documentation include: software generated reports, screen shots, or teacher logs.

## ***Approved Distance Education Curricula***

The following distance education curricula are approved for use: ITTS, Plato, WIN, GED® online, and SkillsTutor. Other curricula may be approved; contact the regional adult education coordinator.

## ***Instructional Delivery Model and Assessment***

DWD encourages the use of a hybrid instructional approach that combines distance learning hours with some degree of on-site interaction.

Pre- and post-testing must be conducted on-site, and must be administered to students enrolled as distance education learners following the same guidelines applicable to all other students. For additional assessment guidance, see Indiana's Assessment Policy for Adult Education Programs.

## ***Reporting Requirements***

For all students, the sum of both proxy and direct contact distance education hours will be entered in InTERS as attendance hours. These hours must be designated as distance education by selecting the "Distance" option. At separation or at the end of the fiscal year, DWD will classify a "blended" student as either a traditional classroom student or a distance education learner for purposes of NRS reporting. Student hours from both online instruction and in the adult education center will be reported according to the NRS Guidelines for Distance Education Learners.

**Effective Date**

Immediately

**Ending Date**

Upon rescission

**Contact for Questions**

[Policy@dwd.in.gov](mailto:Policy@dwd.in.gov)

**Action**

Indiana's adult education system will follow the guidance contained in this policy.