



AIJS Policies for Distance Education during the COVID Pandemic

AIJS has been granted temporary authority by the US Department of Education to allow its accredited schools to utilize distance education modes of instruction during the COVID pandemic. To do so, AIJS must create the necessary policies to be followed by its accredited schools. This authority will allow member schools to develop distance education plans which meet the AIJS criteria. Once a school's plan has been approved by AIJS, it may provide distance education to its students during the time that schools are mandated to cease face-to-face operations during the COVID pandemic.

Schools that wish to apply for approval for distance education learning should read the following policies carefully, and submit written plans to AIJS for review and consideration of approval.

Generally, courses that a school previously offered for credit in face-to-face settings may be offered in approved distance learning modes for the duration of the COVID crisis.

AIJS Distance Education Policies during the COVID Pandemic:

1. Learning Takes Place in the Framework of AIJS Approved Courses

The relaxation of distance education rules only changes the mode or style of instruction and not the actual content of the learning. Each school has a list of courses that are on file at AIJS and are listed in the institution's catalog. Each of these courses has a syllabus outlining the major topics to be covered, the required reading of source materials, learning goals, and assessments. Only those existing courses may be offered for credit through distance education modes of instruction.

2. Hours of Educational Activity

The number of hours of educational activity required per credit in distance education is similar to those required in a face-to-face instructional setting. However, the configuration of those hours is more flexible and relaxed. Generally, face-to-face instruction requires 15 hours of direct classroom-type instruction per credit with an assumption of an additional 30 hours of preparation, research and homework. Distance education requires the same 45 hours of educational activity per credit, but the educational activity can include a flexible mix of many different modes of



instruction and activities. Examples of educational activities include lectures and *chavrusa* learning via teleconference or videoconference, written assignments, *chaburahs* and study groups via teleconference or videoconference, research, and reading assignments.

3. Significant Interaction

Best practices in education describe three interactive relationships, or forms of engagement, which foster student learning. They are:

- Students with the instructor,
- Students with the content, and
- Students with each other.

Instructors must have significant documented interactions via phone, video, email or other remote interaction. Learning activities should also include students collaborating with each other. *Chavrusos*, *chaburos*, and study groups all fall under this category. Learning activities should be listed in the syllabus. Schools should update their syllabi if needed.

4. Student Assessment

Just as in a face-to-face instructional setting, each course offered via distance education must be graded through the use of learning assessments. This can include written and oral tests, written assignments, oral presentations or other learning interactions with instructors. Schools may utilize a standard letter grade or a pass-fail grading model.

5. Course Outcomes

Attendance logs, participation in learning activities, and assessments will determine whether students successfully earned credit for the course.

6. Documentation – Reporting Requirements

All learning activities offered in the distance education mode must be properly documented. This should include:



- a. Attendance records with detailed information, including student name, date and the type of interaction (i.e., lecture, *chavrusa*, group discussion, private mentoring session, other).
- b. Samples of assignments and tests.
- c. Texts, reading lists, research assignments, and study guides for each course.
- d. Any modifications made to an original course outline should be included in an updated syllabus.