**PALOMAR COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT POLICY BP 4675 INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES**

**BP 4675 CLASS SIZE Reference:**

No references

Class size (course minimums and maximums) shall be determined through negotiations between the District and the Palomar Faculty Federation (PFF).

**Date Adopted: 11/10/2009** *(Replaces current Palomar College Policies 309 and 309.1)*

PALOMAR COLLEGE CURRENT DE POLICY:

(Note that this is not a Board Policy, but a Curriculum Policy from the Curriculum Committee/Instruction Office, based on Title 5) <http://www2.palomar.edu/pages/curriculum/files/2012/11/Regula> r-­‐Effective-­‐Contact-­‐Policy-­‐Final.pdf

**Palomar College Instructor/Student Contact Policy for Distance Learning Courses Background:**

In hybrid or fully online courses, ensuring **regular effective contact** guarantees that the student receives the benefit of the instructor’s presence in the learning environment both as a provider of instructional information and as a facilitator of student learning. In a face-­‐to-­‐face course the instructor is present at each class meeting and interacts via all class announcements, lectures, activities and discussions that take a variety of forms. For example, discussions can be held as part of a lecture format, group work scenarios, or content review sessions. The instructor also serves as a content advisor when he or she answers questions both as they come up in class and as they arise in individual situations. These types of questions are dealt with via the telephone, email, or face-­‐to-­‐face office visits.

Title 5 regulations do not make a distinction between regular and distance education courses beyond the need to have a separate curriculum approval process and the need to ensure regular effective contact. Therefore, it is assumed that those qualities of regular effective contact described above for the face-­‐to-­‐face environment should also be applied to the distance education situation. The distance education guidelines require colleges to develop a policy regarding regular effective contact that addresses “the type and frequency of interaction appropriate to each distance education course/section or session”.

**Palomar College Policy:**

All distance education courses at Palomar College, whether hybrid or fully online will include regular effective contact as described below:

1. **Initiated interaction and frequency of contact**: Instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to determine that they are accessing and comprehending

course material and that they are participating regularly in the activities in the course. Distance education courses are considered the “virtual equivalent” of face-­‐to-­‐face courses. Therefore, the frequency of the contact will be at least the same as would be established in a regular, face to face course. At **the very least**, the number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face-­‐to-­‐face students, will also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with students in the distance education format. Contact shall be distributed in a manner that will ensure that regular contact is maintained, given the nature of asynchronous instructional methodologies, over the course of a week and should occur as often as is appropriate for the course.

1. **Establishing expectations and managing unexpected instructor absence:** An instructor and/or department established policy describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor initiated contact and instructor feedback, will be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents that are made available for students when the course officially opens each semester. If the instructor must be out of contact briefly for an unexpected reason (such as illness or a family emergency that takes the instructor offline), notification to students will be made in the announcements area of the course that includes when the students can expect regular effective contact to resume. If the offline

Recommended by the Distance Learning Subcommittee 11/10/2009 (Adapted from Mt. San Jacinto College) Curriculum Committee Approval 11/18/2009

Faculty Senate Approval 11/30/2009 Effective 2010-­‐2011 Academic Year

time results in a lengthy absence (a week or more), a substitute instructor should be sought who can assist students while the instructor is unavailable.

1. **Type of Contact**: Regarding the type of contact that will exist in all Palomar College distance learning courses, instructors will, at a minimum, use three or more of the following resources to maintain contact with students:
   1. Website announcements
   2. Participation in a threaded discussion board
   3. Participation in an open-­‐ended discussion board
   4. Opportunity for questions and answers in a chat room
   5. Email contact
   6. Participation in online group collaboration projects
   7. Face-­‐to-­‐face informal meetings (e.g. review sessions)
   8. Face-­‐to-­‐face formal meetings (e.g. regular, scheduled class sessions)
   9. Teacher response to student work in progress
   10. Regular podcasts
   11. Voice enabled messages (e.g. Voice Boards or voice email)
   12. Synchronous virtual meetings
   13. Other

Recommended by the Distance Learning Subcommittee 11/10/2009 (Adapted from Mt. San Jacinto College) Curriculum Committee Approval 11/18/2009

Faculty Senate Approval 11/30/2009 Effective 2010-­‐2011 Academic Year

Palomar Community College District Procedure AP 4105

**INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES**

<http://www.palomar.edu/GB/Procedures%20-%20Administrative%20->

%20Final/Chapter%204%20AP/AP%204105%20Distance%20Education%20SPC%20approved%205-15- 12.pdf

**AP 4105 DISTANCE EDUCATION References:**

Title 5 Sections 55200 et seq.

**Definition**

Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology.

**Course Approval**

Each proposed or existing course offered by distance education shall be reviewed and approved separately. Separate approval is mandatory if any portion of the instruction in a course or a course section is designed to be provided through distance education.

The review and approval of new and existing courses offered through distance education shall follow the curriculum approval procedures outlined in AP 4020 titled Program and Curriculum Development.

**Certification**

When approving courses to be offered though distance education, the Curriculum Committee will certify the following:

* **Course Quality Standards:** The same standards of course quality are applied to the courses offered through distance education as are applied to traditional classroom courses. Areas that are part of the Distance Education Review process include:
* StudentAccesstoResources
* Student Services
* InterventionandRemediationRecommendations o Test Security
* AcademicIntegrity
* **Course Quality Determinations:** Determinations and judgments about the quality of the course offered through distance education are made with the full involvement of the Curriculum Committee.
  + **Instructor Contact:** Each section of the course that is delivered through distance education will include regular effective contact between instructor and students.

**Date SPC Approved: 5/15/2012**

1 of 2

**==========**

<http://www.grcc.edu/distancelearningandinstructionaltechnologies/> teachingonline/distancelearningpoliciesstandardsquality

**Distance Education Policy and Procedures Manual**

Central Virginia Community College

Rev. 11/2013

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1. ***Philosophy, Mission and Goals***

The Distance Education Program at Central Virginia Community College is designed to provide students with opportunities to accomplish their educational goals by taking courses in formats other than the traditional on-campus course offerings. A basic assumption for this program is that a significant portion of the adult population could be served by alternative instructional methods of course delivery. In response to this apparent need, the College offers this program as a means of providing quality, postsecondary education to persons usually not served by traditional, on-campus courses. Courses offered through distance education are designed to augment, not replace, on-campus sections. The course content and requirements are equal to the traditional on-campus sections but because of the format these courses require strong student commitment.

The Distance Education Program is an integral part of the instructional focus at Central Virginia Community College and includes the following in its mission:

* + To provide students easy access to quality, post-secondary education by offering courses using alternative instructional delivery methods,
  + To research and promote the development and use of instructional systems which employ effective and efficient means to improve the distance education program and individual courses, and
  + To respond to the needs of students to provide courses, support services and training opportunities that are flexible, responsive and innovative.

In order to fully and conscientiously carry out this mission, the following are on-going goals of the Distance Education Program:

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* + Offer courses and programs academically comparable to regular, on-campus courses.
  + Provide a range of support services for students who enroll in courses and programs.
  + Utilize instructional delivery systems which provide students maximum flexibility and convenience, yet maintain academic quality.
  + Provide an organized and accessible collection of materials and supportive equipment necessary to meet the instructional and individual needs of students and faculty.
  + Provide leadership and assistance to faculty in the development of courses and associated materials.
  + Communicate to college faculty and staff current research and practices in the VCCS distance education programs as well as nationwide.
  + Ensure the periodic revision of courses to maintain quality and relevance.
  + Manage financial resources associated with the program to insure the quality of the courses and support facilities.
  + Provide for ongoing planning and evaluation of the program to ensure continued productive, efficient, and responsible use of human and material resources.

1. ***Course Selection and Development***

**Criteria for Course Selection**

CVCC offers distance learning opportunities to students in several delivery formats. Although the growth of course development is in the area of online (web-based) instruction, the college also offers courses delivered synchronously using a web-conferencing platform (currently via *Blackboard Collaborate*), and hybrid (blended) courses.

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The following generally defines our instructional delivery formats and is provided in more detail to students (on the college website) to help them in choosing distance education courses appropriate for them.

**Online (web) courses** are designed and developed such that all instruction is delivered via the web. Students might be required to have tests proctored; attend laboratories (science) that require physical presence; or participate in synchronous web-conferencing sessions with the instructor. Those requirements are communicated to students in the footnotes (Special Notes) that appear in the class schedule for each semester.

**Web-conferencing (Blackboard Collaborate) courses** are synchronous offerings delivered to students using their own computer resources at home or at a designated computer lab on

each of the college’s 5 sites. Instruction is live, two-way audio (video option available for students with cameras) and emphasis is placed on the instructor incorporating opportunities for interactivity with students during class sessions. Students login to the sessions through their enrollment in the Blackboard course site. Students

also have access to archived sessions and other instructional activities, content and course requirements posted by the instructor in the Blackboard site.

**Hybrid courses** combine face-to-face (in-class) instruction with online instruction into a single course. A hybrid course meets part of the scheduled time in a traditional classroom environment or real- time using Blackboard Collaborate. The remainder of the course requirements will take place online using Blackboard resources for completion of online activities; assignments and assessments.

Responsibilities for course initiation, development/design, delivery, and assessment involve several individuals at the college. To ensure the most efficient use of all resources as well as the continuation of a planned expansion of Distance Education offerings, criteria for consideration include factors when approving courses to be offered

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through the Distance Education Program. Those factors might include:

**Potential Enrollment**

* Do the topics, title, and segments have high interest?
* Is interest level documented by any data/program needs?
* Is the course of general appeal or does it target a relatively small group of potential students?

**Potential Longevity**

* Will the subject matter become out-of-date too soon to permit long-term (2-4 years) utilization without major revisions?
* Is the course material too topical to allow long-term (2-4 years) appeal?

**Adaptability to Distance Education Delivery Format**

* Can all requirements of the course be translated to a distance education offering format (online/web, web- conferencing or hybrid) to be comparable in academic quality to on-campus offerings?

**Cost**

* Is the estimated cost within reasonable limits in terms of anticipated use?
* Will delivery of the course be cost-effective in terms of the time investment by faculty member; instructional technologist, and others associated with the development and offering?
* Does the proposed course have potential marketability to other colleges?

**Curriculum Relationship**

•Is the course directly related to others?

•Is the course transferrable?

•Is the course a general education requirement, elective course, or completely separate from existing curricula?

•Is the course a prerequisite or lead in some way to another course?

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**Course Development**

When the decision is made to proceed with the development of an online course, a process describes that development (*Online (Web) Course Development*, Appendix A).

Courses offered synchronously using web-conferencing and courses offered in a hybrid format do not have as formal a development process. Decisions made about courses delivered in those formats are planned by the deans and the faculty teaching the courses.

**Standards**

The instructional content of courses offered through the Distance Education Program should be comparable to (meet or exceed) the standards of on-campus classroom courses and include coverage of the common student learning outcomes for that course.

Online (web) courses are reviewed through a process managed by the Distance Education Center and rely on peer review by faculty teams. This process is outlined in the *Online Course Review Process*, Appendix B.

Adopted by CVCC for review of online web courses is a rubric originally developed by the Maryland Consortium and has become a standard for many schools in the VCCS and across the nation. The Peer Review Rubric is based on standards developed by the Maryland Online Consortium and has been developed in an electronic document format for use by peer review teams (*Peer Review Rubric*, Appendix C).

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1. ***Course Administration and Delivery***

**Online (Web) Courses**

CVCC, as part of the VCCS (Virginia Community College System), has a centralized, enterprise system for the management of online courses which is *Blackboard*. The VCCS administers the system and each of the 23 colleges has a Blackboard Administrator (Bb Admin) with rights to manage their local college’s course sites and enrollments. The VCCS’ management of Bb for the system includes decisions made about upgrade dates; inclusion of building blocks; maintaining archives; providing training to all college Bb Administrators in new versions of Bb; among other responsibilities.

This management does include communication and advice from all the colleges via bi-monthly scheduled web-conference meetings.

This cooperation frequently results in shared resources and training among the colleges for use with students and faculty on individual campuses.

At CVCC, a Blackboard course site is created for every course offered in the semester class schedule. All online content for web- courses is developed (and delivered to the student) in the Blackboard site although faculty may use other publisher content that students are given directions for access. All faculty (regardless

of the delivery mode) are encouraged to use their Blackboard course site(s) to post syllabi and other course materials; communicate new/updated information to students; and post grades. In the template for Blackboard course sites, a resource has been developed and is included in a “button” (*CVCC Information*) which includes all of the student resources available to all students in the *CVCC Syllabus* document which is associated with all faculty syllabi.

At the beginning of every semester, the Distance Education Center schedules (optional) face-to-face training sessions for students in the

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use of Blackboard. These sessions are planned for the main campus; however, sessions have been conducted using web- conferencing options to deliver training sessions to students at the college’s off-site centers.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Central to the successful development and delivery of a distance education course is the faculty member. The faculty member has the major responsibility of ensuring the academic integrity of the course and providing for a positive learning experience. Listed below (alphabetically) are others involved in this aspect of course design and delivery.

**CMS (Blackboard) Administrator**

* Create course site (request from faculty)
* Provide individual assistance to faculty related to issues associated with the CMS (Blackboard)
* Maintain “users” in online courses (batch enrollment of students)
* Conduct orientation sessions for students in technical skills/information
* Troubleshoot student/faculty problems and questions related to Bb technical support in course delivery
* Course maintenance – copy courses for next semester; remove old courses
* Serve as liaison with the VCCS for issues related to (Blackboard) and technical issues of online learning
* Manage peer review process

**Coordinator of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning**

* Creation and dissemination of student course evaluations – compilation and dissemination of results to distance education, academic divisions and individual faculty

**Dean**

* In conjunction with faculty, determine need for online course
* Approves *Agreement of Production of a Web-based Course* (Appendix

D) in conjunction with faculty and Vice President of AA/SS

* Notifies Distance Education Dept. regarding new course(s)

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* Includes new course in (future) schedule

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* After course evaluation (end of semester) works with faculty to incorporate improvements based on assessment results

**Faculty**

* In conjunction with Dean, determines need for online course
* Involved in initial orientation session (with Instructional Technologist ) to get course “started
* Request Blackboard Administrator to create course site
* Attend workshops and/or individual training with Blackboard Administrator, and Instructional Technologist to design and develop the course
* Design course “blueprint”
* Develop entire course
* Conduct “self-review” using the peer review rubric as a guide
* Notify Instructional Technologist when course it ready for peer review
* Teach/manage course
* After course evaluation (end of semester) work with Dean to incorporate improvements based on assessment results

**Coordinator of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning**

* Involved in initial orientation session (with faculty) to get course “started” – define expectations, establish timeline, identify media elements, etc.
* Provide individual assistance to faculty related to technical concerns and the integration of technology applications in the course content and delivery
* Participate in the investigation and introduction of new applications of technology – particularly related to online learning
* Train faculty in the development of online media components (or development for them) appropriate for their course design
* Interact and respond to suggestions presented from the course peer review and help the faculty integrate those suggestions into the course
* Manage Distance Education staff and resources
* Maintain communication with deans and Blackboard administrator to ensure all resources are provided and processes followed to support online course development and delivery

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**Peer Review Teams**

* Submit a signed *Peer Course Reviewer Agreement* form
* Attend training (for “new reviewers”) in the application of the Peer Review Rubric
* Adhere to CVCC’s course review process and the timeline established by the distance education department
* Maintain confidentiality (outside of the review team members, the faculty member of the course, and DE department personnel) about any course(s) accessed during the training or review process, including any student information contained in the course(s)
* Not change, copy or modify any instructional material contained within the course(s)
* Observe copyright laws and respect intellectual property rights of the faculty creator of materials

**VP for Academic Affairs and Student Services**

* Work with Dean and faculty on the paperwork/payment associated with the faculty development agreement
* Overall responsibility (through coordination with distance education and other involved academic departments) for ensuring that the needs of distance learning students and faculty are met in terms of services provided and communicated

**Synchronous Distance Learning Courses**

Courses that are delivered at a distance, but meet online at a specific time are considered Synchronous Distance Learning Courses. Synchronous Distance Learning courses are delivered through Blackboard Collaborate. Students can receive online face- to-face meetings from anywhere with a broadband internet connection. Students can also attend online face-to-face meetings in the distance learning computer lab on the main campus or at the off-campus sites. Class sessions are also recorded and may be viewed at a later time.

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Student Requirements:

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* + Students must have broadband internet access or they must be able to attend class on the CVCC campus or an off- campus site.
  + Students are expected to attend class at the time the course is scheduled.
  + Students may be required to visit the main campus or an off campus site for orientation, assignments, and tests.

Faculty Requirements

* + Instructors are required to conduct class for the entire scheduled time.
  + First time instructors must be trained by distance learning staff before the first class meeting.
  + Instructors should have online contact information and be responsive and accessible to students outside of face-to-face meetings
  + Instructors may deliver classes from an off-campus location; however, the instructor is responsible for his or her own hardware, software, and internet connection.

**Hybrid Distance Learning Courses**

Courses that require students to meet less than 50% face-to-face but are not 100% online are considered Hybrid Distance Learning courses. The face-to-face component of the course can be administered in a traditional classroom or through synchronous online delivery.

Student requirements:

* + Students must have internet access. Students can use CVCC computer labs; however, students must be able to complete their coursework during regular computer lab hours.

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* + Students are required to meet during the scheduled face-to- face times.

Faculty requirements:

* + Instructors should use Blackboard or provide equal online services
  + Instructors should have online contact information and be responsive and accessible to students outside of face-to-face meetings
  + Instructors should attend training and/or review training materials and tutorials for online course delivery
  + Courses that meet less than 100% face-to-face may not be offered without the specific approval of the Division Dean.

1. ***General Administrative Policies and Procedures***

The Distance Education Program follows the same policies, procedures and guidelines used for on-campus traditional course offerings. This includes policies related to admissions; placement testing; course pre-requisites; registration; established calendar dates for refunds, assignment of “W” grades and beginning/ending course dates.

**Student-related Policies and Procedures**

Students who enroll in courses through the Distance Education Program have access to all campus services. Procedures for registration; tuition payment; course credit; academic load and other associated issues are the same as for traditional on-campus classes.

CVCC complies with all the requirements of the *Family Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA). The college is committed to protecting the privacy of a student’s educational record regardless of instructional

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delivery method. The Dean of Student Services is the point of contact for all FERPA related issues and all employees are informed and trained of their responsibilities related to unauthorized release of confidential records or information. Because an online environment creates a record of student activity, it is subject to FERPA privacy rights, unlike verbal exchanges in a physical classroom.

The Identity Verification process for accessing distance education courses via Blackboard (The VCCS online course management system) protects student’s privacy through the use of a secure portal with a secure login and student-selected password. Upon application to the college, students are assigned a unique username and a temporary password which must be changed upon initial login.

**Faculty/Course-related Policies and Procedures**

Determination of course offerings for any academic term and associated faculty teaching loads are responsibilities of the division dean. Class cancellation decisions are made by the division dean in consultation with the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services. As decisions are made related the distance education courses, the instructional technologist is involved and kept informed for assistance and support that might be provided by the Distance Education Center staff.

Faculty and staff understand and carry out a commitment to confidentiality, integrity and security to protect the privacy of students who participate in distance learning activities. Students’ records are kept private by the instructor, except in cases where

academic staff or administration accesses the course, with legitimate educational interest under FERPA guidelines.

**Ownership and Intellectual Property Rights**

In matters of ownership and copyright, materials developed or created while employed by the VCCS are subject to Section 12, *Intellectual Property* of the VCCS Policy Manual (Appendix E).

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**Faculty Compensation**

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In matters related to compensation for faculty, course development is considered to be separate from course delivery and revision.

Compensation for course development will vary based on the nature of the course to be developed and is considered on an individual basis with conversation involving the faculty member and his/her dean.

**Full-time Faculty Workload**

Compensation for teaching a distance education course is based on enrollment figures at the end of regular on-campus registration.

Students who enrolled during a semester and received a grade of "I" are not included in enrollment figures for succeeding terms.

Credit Hour Workload Formula for Online (web-based), web- conferencing (Blackboard Collaborate) and hybrid courses

Courses with a funding ratio of 1:10, 1:12, 1:15, or 1:16 having enrollments of 1 to 8 students are prorated. For example: 8 students equals a 88.8%, 7 students equals 77.7%, etc., workload. A course with 9 to 20 students equals a 100% workload. A course with 21 students equals a 110% workload.

Courses with a funding ratio of 1:22 having enrollments of 1 to 8 students are prorated. For example: 8 students equals a 88.8%, 7 students equals 77.7%, etc., workload. A course with 9 to 22 students equals a 100% workload. A course with 23 students equals 110% workload.

The calculation is done for both credits and contacts for courses with labs.

These workloads apply to the first time the course is offered and to all future offerings. The policy applies to both full- and part-time faculty.

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All distance education courses (all delivery methods) will be considered a part of the faculty member’s load. A faculty member cannot be assigned an overload of more than five (5) semester hours per semester or ten (10) semester hours per academic year. The maximum overload that can be assigned to a faculty member during the summer term is three (3) semester hours.

A chart (Appendices F & G) identifies the credit hours associated with workload for both 1:16 and 1:22 ratio credit courses.

**Adjunct Faculty Compensation**

The *Credit Hour Workload Formula* identified above applies to adjunct faculty as well as the following provisions:

The number of credits generated by student enrollment is multiplied by the lecturer hour rate for the adjunct instructor in order to determine the adjunct’s pay.

When more than one distance education course or section is taught in a semester, the enrollments are combined for that semester.

Enrollments of two semesters are not combined since adjunct faculty are appointed on a semester basis.

1. ***Distance Education Evaluation***

As with any course or program, periodic evaluation and review of distance education courses is beneficial to students, faculty, and program administrators.

Each semester for each course offered by the college (regardless of delivery mode), a student course assessment is conducted. The course evaluations are initiated by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Planning and are delivered (electronically) to students using a licensed course evaluation system (*MyClassEvaluation* – IOTA Solutions). Results and data

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collected by this office are shared with the instructor, the division dean, faculty members and collective data used for course and program improvements.

The college has a standard set of questions (16) comprising the core questions for student evaluations. There are additional question

sets associated with courses that are delivered online (web-based); hybrid courses; web-based conferencing courses (*Collaborate*); and courses with laboratory requirements, such as science courses.

These question survey sets are compiled (using *MyClassEvaluation*) and targeted to students specifically based on their enrollments for the semester. Students are to complete an evaluation for each course in which they are enrolled.

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**Appendix A**

**Online (Web) Course Development**

The following outlines the process for the creation of new online courses.

**Faculty member and Dean consult about the need for a (new) online course offering**

* Dean may request that a course be developed to meet programmatic needs
* Faculty member may propose development of a course that meets an unmet service region or program curricular need

**Dean consults with VP about new web-course development**

* VP verifies whether proposed course meets a programmatic or market need
* VP verifies availability of funding for new web-course development

**Instructor, Dean, and VP sign agreement for production of a web- based course**

* Agreement (*Agreement for Production of a Web-based Course*) is completed the semester before scheduled delivery of course
* $1,500 is paid to instructor upon completion of course development and successful review by a peer review team. This (payment) is dependent upon available funding. In the absence of funding (for that fiscal year), all agreements are retained for payment to faculty in the (chronological) order in which they were received.
* Agreement states that faculty course developer agrees to be a peer reviewer as a part of a team for (future) course reviews

**Instructor develops course**

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* Development of course reflects the standards identified in the peer review rubric guidelines to assure online course quality (*Peer Review Rubric*).
* During course development, faculty member has access to support from Distance Education Center

**Course is Peer Reviewed**

* Course is assigned to a Peer Review team. The peer review team(s) follow a process for review (*Online Course Review Process*)
* After “passing” the review, the instructor is paid for the course development and the course is offered

**Course is delivered**

* Feedback from the Peer Review Process is used to make course improvements before offering
* Student feedback can be used to make (future) pedagogical and technological improvements.
* Deans may provide feedback about course improvements from student evaluations

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**Online Course Review Process**

1. Establish Review teams
   1. Teams of three faculty, ideally from at least two different divisions, would be assigned a series of courses to review.
   2. Notification of team makeup would be sent to all involved parties
   3. An “appeal team” consisting of the instructional designer and a different faculty team will be established **when needed** to handle any appeals in the process. This group would only examine unresolved or disputed items in the review.
2. Establish courses to be reviewed
   1. All new online courses will be scheduled for review.
   2. Existing courses would be selected on a volunteer basis as much as possible, and then additional courses would be selected by the deans to be reviewed if additional courses are needed.
   3. Each course would have a “review on” date (volunteered initially or assigned if no volunteers come forward) that would mean that the team would review that course on or after that date.
   4. For sequential classes by the same instructor, the Instructional Technologist, after a review, can approve the subsequent course in the sequence if the original course has been approved by a review team and the structure and design of the course is the same as the first approved. If any questions develop the course, can be referred to a review team.
3. Initial review
   1. Reviewers to look at courses based on a pre-arranged schedule.
   2. Reviewers independently examine the course to determine if it meets the requirements of the rubric
   3. Reviewers compare notes and discuss discrepancies and reach agreement on what items are adequate and which do not seem to meet the requirements of the rubric. If agreement cannot be reached then the item will be considered to have not met the requirements.
   4. Reviewers will make suggestions to improve the course and note items where the rubric requirements are not met.

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* 1. If the class meets all the requirements of the rubric no follow up is required. A congratulatory letter will be sent and the seal of approval attached to the class banner.
  2. If the review team suggests mechanical, design, or minor pedagogical changes, the course can be sent to the Instructional Technologist with the note “passed to administration for appropriate action.” Once the changes noted by the review team are made and approved by the Instructional Technologist, the course will have completed the review process. A congratulatory letter will be sent and the seal of approval attached to the class banner.

1. Follow up review
   1. If items are not in compliance with the rubric, a list of these will be sent to the instructor with a copy sent to the Distance Education Center. The instructor can then either, with or without the assistance of the instructional technologist,
      1. Modify the course and resubmit to the review team for a second review.
      2. Schedule a meeting with the review team (which must be within thirty days of the initial notification) to discuss how the instructor feels that the course does meet those elements of the rubric or seek clarity (from the review team and/or from the instructional designer) on what can be done to meet those requirements.
   2. Once the course is compliant, the congratulatory letter will be sent and the seal of approval attached to the class banner.
2. Outcome of second review
   1. If the course does not pass the second review the instructor can, within thirty days, either:
      1. Modify the course again and submit it to the initial review team or
      2. Appeal the decision and have the course sent to the appeal team for review and, if needed, remediation. The course would stay with the appeal team until approved or withdrawn from course offerings.
      3. The initial review team can, if they so choose, forward a re- submitted course to the appeal team if they feel an impasse has been reached.

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**Appendix C**

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**Peer Course Review Rubric Standards with Point Value and Annotations**

*Online courses will be reviewed using this rubric. Reviewed courses must attain a “yes” to all criteria identified with an asterisk (\*/bold) and receive a combined score of 62 points for certification (approval).*

1. **COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION**

**General Review Standard:** The overall design of the course, navigational

information, as well as course, instructor and student information are made transparent to the student at the beginning of the course.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Specific Review Standards:** | **Points** | **Annotation: What’s the idea?** |
| \***A.1. Navigation within the course is logical and easy to follow.** | 4 | The navigation system is built around the user requirements and convenience, organized in a logical, easy to follow manner with minimal use of the scrollbar. |
| **\*A.2 There is a syllabus introducing the student to the course and how student learning is structured.** | 4 | Look for information provided by the instructor that gives the new student an idea of how the learning process is structured.  The instructor may describe some or all of the following:   * Course Description and overview * The course schedule (self-paced, following a set calendar, etc.) * Course sequencing, such as a linear or random order. * Types of activities the student will be required to complete (written assignments, online self- tests, participation in the discussion board, group work, etc.) * Course calendar with assignment and test due dates |

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|  |  | * Preferred mode of communication with the instructor (email, discussion board, etc.) * Preferred mode of communication with other students * Testing procedures (online, proctored, etc.) * Procedure for submission of electronic assignments * Textbook requirements * Technology requirements |
| *\** **A.3 The self- introduction by the instructor is included.** | 4 | The initial introduction should help to create a sense of connection between the instructor and the students.  **At a minimum** the course introduction should include the instructor’s name, email address, and office phone number.  **A more complete introduction** would include the above plus title, professional experience, and other information and activities pertinent to the subject  matter of the class and to the professional career of the instructor.  **An exemplary introduction** would include the all of the above and would present non-professional information about the professor, such as a picture, teaching philosophy, and personal information such as hobbies, etc. |
| A.4 Navigational | 1 | **Instructions should provide a general course** |
| instructions make | **overview, guide the new student to explore the** |
| the organization | **course website, and tell what to do first, rather** |
| of the course | **than list detailed navigational instructions for the** |
| easy to | **whole course. Instructors may choose to** |
| understand. | **incorporate some of this information in the course** |
| **syllabus. If so, students should be directed to the** |
| **syllabus at the onset of the course. A useful idea** |
| **is a “Read Me First” or “Start Here” button or icon** |
| **on the course home page, linking students to start-** |
| **up information.** |

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|  |  | Examples:   * A course “tour”. * Clear statements about how to get started in the course. * A “Scavenger hunt” assignment that leads students through an exploration of the different areas of the course areas. |
| A.5 Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class. | 1 | The student introduction helps to create a supportive learning environment and a sense of community.  Look for a request that students introduce themselves as well as for instructions on where and how they should do so. Do not evaluate the students’ introductions.  Instructors may ask students to answer specific questions (such as why they are taking the course, what concerns they have, what they expect to learn, etc.) or may choose to let the student decide.  Instructors should consider providing an example of an introduction and/or start the process by introducing themselves. |

1. **LEARNING OBJECTIVES (COMPETENCIES)**

**General Review Standard:** Learning objectives are clearly defined and explained.

They assist the learner to focus learning activities.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Specific Review Standards:** | **Points** | **Annotation: What’s the idea?** |
| **\*B.1-1 The learning objectives of**  **the course describe measurable outcomes**. | 4 | Measurable learning objectives help teachers precisely describe what students are to gain from instruction, and then to accurately assess student accomplishment. Objectives should describe a student performance in specific, observable, terms. If this is not possible, (e.g., internal cognition, affective changes), be certain to check for clear indications that the learning objective is meaningfully assessed.  Examples of measurable objectives: |

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| B. 1-2 |  | * Select appropriate tax strategies for different financial and personal situations. * Develop a comprehensive, individualized wellness action program focused on overcoming a sedentary life-style. * The objectives of the course are departmentally mandated   or   * the objectives were developed by the instructor. |
| B.2 The learning objectives address content mastery as well as critical thinking ability and increased learning skills. | 2 | Examine the learning objectives (course and unit level) as a whole. All three types of skill should be present. Not every single objective will contain all three components.  Critical thinking skills may include the ability to:   * Distinguish between fact and opinion * Distinguish between primary and secondary sources * Identify bias and stereotypes * Evaluate information sources for point of view, accuracy, usefulness, timeliness, etc. * Recognize deceptive arguments Learning skills may include: * Information literacy * Manipulation and organization of information in various ways or using different tools * Understanding what you know and how you know it, and also understanding what you do not know and what you need to find it out. |
| B.3 Specific suggestions on how to succeed in the course are provided. | 2 | Instructions may take various forms (e.g. narratives, bulleted lists, charts) and may appear at different levels within the course (e.g. module-based or weekly assignment sheets.) Instructions should be clear and complete.  Examples: Module-based or weekly assignment |

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|  |  | pages in narrative, bulleted list, or chart form, indicating a list of steps that guide the student to meet learning objectives for each week. |
| B.4-1 The learning | 2 | Students should be able to easily grasp the meaning |
| objectives of the | of the learning objectives. Use of jargon, confusing |
| course are | terms, unnecessarily complex language, and puzzling |
| clearly stated. | syntax should be avoided. |
|  | * The objectives of the course are departmentally |
| B. 4-2 | mandated |
| or |
| * the objectives were developed by the instructor. |

1. **ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT**

**General Review Standard:** Assessment strategies use established ways to measure

effective learning, assess learner progress by reference to stated learning objectives, and are designed as essential to the learning process.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Specific Review Standards:** | **Points** | **Annotation: What’s the idea?** |
| **\*C.1 The types of**  **assessments selected are varied, consistent with course activities, and measure the achievement of stated objectives and learning outcomes.** | 4 | The assessment format used should be a meaningful way to measure the learning objective. Objectives, assessments, and learning activities should align.  Examples of inconsistency:   1. The objective is to be able to “write a persuasive essay” but the assessment is a multiple choice test. 2. The objective is to “demonstrate discipline- specific information literacy” and the assessment is a rubric-scored term paper, but students are not given any practice with information literacy skills on smaller assignments.   Examples of objective/assessment alignment:   * + A problem analysis assessment to evaluate critical thinking skills.   + Multiple choice quiz to test vocabulary knowledge.   + A composition to assess writing skills.   Sometimes you may find assessments that are geared towards meeting objectives other than those |

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|  |  | stated in the course; for example, a course may have a writing component as part of a college-wide “Writing Across the Curriculum” requirement. In that case you may suggest including appropriate objectives in the course. |
| **\*C.2 The grading**  **policy is clearly stated.** | 4 | Look for clarity of presentation to the student here, not the simplicity or complexity of a given grading system itself. A relatively complex grading system can still be unambiguous and easy to understand.  Example:  A list of all activities, tests, etc. that will affect the students’ grade clearly stated at the beginning of the course. |
| **\*C.3 Assessment and measurement strategies are designed to provide feedback to the learner.** | 4 | Students learn more effectively if they receive frequent, meaningful, and rapid feedback. This feedback may come from the instructor directly, from assignments and assessments that have feedback built into them, or even from other students.  Examples:   * Instructor participation in a discussion assignment. * Writing assignments that require submission of a draft for instructor comment and suggestions for improvement. * Self-mastery tests and quizzes that include informative feedback with each answer choice. * Interactive games and simulation that have feedback built in. |
| C.4 Assessment  strategies for the calculation of the final grade include a variety of activities. | 3 | The course must include a minimum of 25% of the final grade coming from activities other than tests and quizzes. |

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| C.5 The types of  assessments selected and the methods used for submitting assessments are appropriate for the distance learning environment. | 2 | In most online courses, the types of assessments used are appropriate for the online environment and assure the integrity of the student’s work. Assume that the course meets the standard unless you find evidence to the contrary.  Examples that DO meet the standard:·   * Submission of text or media files by email or online submission. * Exams given in a proctored testing center.· * Quizzes with time limitations, printing disabled, and other security measures.· * Multiple assessments which enable the instructor to become familiar with individual students’ work and which discourage “proxy cheating” (someone other than the student completing and submitting work)   Examples that do NOT meet the standard:   * Required assessments that cannot be submitted online, such as a lab practicum in a science course.· * A course in which the entire set of assessments consists of 5 multiple choice tests taken online, with no enforced time limit, the print function enabled, and minimal security features in place. |
| C.6 “Self-check” or practice types of assignments are provided for quick learner feedback. | 1 | Students should have ample opportunity to measure their own learning progress. Look for examples of “self-check” quizzes and activities, as well as other types of practice opportunities that provide rapid feedback. These types of assignments should be voluntary or allow multiple attempts.  Examples:   * Practice quizzes· * Games, simulations, and other interactive exercises· |

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|  |  | * Practice written assignments |

1. **RESOURCES AND MATERIALS**

**General Review Standard:** Instructional materials are designed to be sufficiently

comprehensive to achieve announced objectives and learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. (Materials, other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by the instructor or distance educators skilled in preparing materials for distance learning.)

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| **Specific Review Standards:** | **Points** | **Annotation: What’s the idea?** |
| **\*D.1 Resources and materials are easily accessible to and usable by the learners**. | 4 | If some of the course resources, including textbooks, videos, CD-ROMs, etc., are unavailable within the framework of the course website, investigate how students would gain access to them, and examine their ease of use.  Examples:   * If textbooks and/or CDs are used, titles, authors, publishers, ISBN numbers, copyright dates, and information as to where copies can be obtained, are listed. * A navigation button is devoted to “Resources” and appropriately tied in with the overall course design. * Required software plug-ins are listed, along with instructions for obtaining and installing the plug-ins. |
| **\*D.2 A wide variety of learning strategies are utilized to accommodate many different learning styles.** | 4 | Course activities allow the student to learn in different formats. Examples include discussions, student led activities, choices of assessments, materials that are written or auditory, etc. |
| **\*D.3 The instructional function of the** | 2 | Learners should easily be able to determine the purpose of all materials, technologies and methods |

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| **course elements (learning content, instructional methods, technologies, and course materials) is evident**. |  | used in the course. For example: a course may be richly garnished with external links to Internet resources, but students may not know whether those resources are for background information, additional personal enrichment, or whether they are necessary for an assignment  Examples:   * If links to an external web sites are used, the purpose of the links is clearly   explained to students or is completely self- evident.   * The function of animated games or exercises are clearly explained or is completely self-evident. |
| D.4 All instructional  materials are presented in a visual format appropriate to the online environment. | 1 | Students who have the required technical equipment and software should be able to view the materials online. Materials used in a face-to-face class may not work well in an online course  without modification.  Examples of some visual format problems:   * Text size may be too inconsistent for typical View/Text Size setting. * Large text files are presented without table of contents or unit numbering; hyperlinks may improve students’ access to information· * Multimedia files require plug-ins or codecs students do not have. * Science lab courses may include learning activities that are not easy to format for online learning. |

1. **LEARNER INTERACTION**

**General Review Standard:** The effective design of instructor-learner interaction,

meaningful learner cooperation, and learner-content interaction is essential to learner motivation, intellectual

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commitment and personal development.

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| **Specific Review Standards:** | **Points** | **Annotation: What’s the idea?** |
| **\*E.1 The types of**  **activities *required* are consistent with the achievement of stated objectives and learning outcomes.** | 4 | Learning activities include everything from class discussions to practice quizzes, from tests to case simulation exercises. Look for examples of activities that demonstrate consistency with the learning objectives. Try to determine whether most of the objectives can reasonably be achieved by students engaging the learning activities found in the course.  Examples of *mismatches* between activities and objectives:   * The objective has to do with students being able to deliver a persuasive speech, but the activities in the course do not include practice of that skill. * The objective is “Prepare each budget within a master budget and explain their importance in the overall budgeting process.” The students review information about this in their texts, observe budgets worked out by the instructor, and produce only one of the several budgets**.** |
| **\*E.2 The course**  **design provides *a variety of* learning activities to foster**  **instructor- student,**  **content-student, and if appropriate, student-student interaction.** | 4 | The learning activities in the course should foster the following types of interaction:   * Instructor-learner: Self-introduction; discussion postings and responses; feedback on project assignments; evidence of one-to- one e-mail communication, etc. * learner-content: essays, term papers, group projects, etc. based on readings, videos, and other course content; self-assessment exercises; group work products, etc. * Learner-learner (if appropriate): Self- introduction exercise; group discussion postings; group projects; peer critiques, etc. |
| **\*E.3 Clear** | 4 | Students need clear information about how quickly |

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| **standards are set for instructor response and availability.** |  | the instructor will respond and how frequently he or she is available. Informing students about instructor response and availability times prevents unreasonable expectations from developing (such as anticipating a response from an email in the middle of the night).  Look for clear standards for instructor response time for key events and interactions, including e-mail turnaround time, time required for grade postings, discussion postings, etc. Also look for clear standards for instructor availability, including e-mail  response time, degree of participation in discussions, and availability via other media (phone, in-person) if applicable.  It is recommended that turn-around time is 24 hrs. within a (5-7) day period per week and with notification of instructor absence |
| E.4 The requirements for course interaction are clearly  articulated. | 2 | A clear statement of requirements is particularly important when a type of interaction (e.g. participation in a discussion) is not optional. What are the penalties for non-participation? Impact on grade etc.?  Example: Students required to participate in discussions are told how many times each week they must post original comments, how many times they must post responses to other’s comments, what the quality of the comments must be, how the comments will be evaluated, and what grade credit they can expect for various levels of performance. |
| E. 5 Guidelines for  instructor-student communication are clearly articulated | 3 | The course includes evidence of virtual and physical office hours, instructions on scheduling individual meetings, and accommodations for providing flexiblity of students schedules. Information on faculty response time is made clear to the student. |

1. **COURSE TECHNOLOGY**

**General Review Standard:** To enhance student learning, course technology should

enrich instruction and foster learner interactivity.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Specific Review Standards:** | **Points** | **Annotation: What’s the idea?** |
| **\*F.1 The selection and use of tools and media** | 4 | Look for evidence that tools and media used in |

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| **support the learning** |  | the course support related learning objectives, |
| **objectives of the** | and are integrated with texts and lesson |
| **course and are** | assignments. Students should know how the |
| **integrated with texts** | tools and media fit into the assignments and |
| **and lesson** | how they relate to the learning objectives. |
| **assignments.** | Make sure that the technology is not used |
| simply for the sake of using technology. |
| For example: A course might require viewing |
| video materials, but it may not be clear whether |
| some of the video materials illustrate or support |
| any learning objective. |
| F.2 The selection and use | 2 | Look for tools and media in the course that help |
| of tools and media | students actively engage in the learning |
| enhance learner | process, rather than passively “absorbing” |
| interactivity and guide | information. |
| the student to become a | Examples: automated ‘self-check’ exercises |
| more active learner. | requiring learner response; animations, |
| simulations, and games that require student |
| input; software which tracks student interaction |
| and progress; use of discussion tools with |
| automatic notification or ‘read/unread’ tracking |
| feature. |
| F.3 All technologies | 2 | For this standard, the term “technologies” may |
| required for this course | cover a range of plug-ins such as Acrobat |
| are either provided or | Reader, media players, etc. In addition, |
| easily downloadable. | courses may require special software packages |
| (spreadsheets, math calculators etc.). Look for |
| clear instructions on how students can obtain |
| needed plug-ins and software packages. |
| F.4 The selection and use of tools and media are compatible with existing standards of delivery modes. | 1 | As standards of delivery mode change over time (for example, from 28.8 modems to broadband) the reviewers may want to judge as a team whether or not course tools, media, and delivery modes meet current standards for widespread accessibility.  Example: If most students have access to DVD players or use streaming media, use of those delivery modes in an online class meets this standard. If the normal consumer of a course cannot be expected to have access to a technology at their out-of-the box home computer off campus, that technology should probably not be used in the course. |

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| F.5 The course makes use of technologies to deliver media efficiently to all users. | 1 | Innovative technologies appear on the market all the time, and online course technology needs to keep up. Reviewers should to pay particular attention to this standard in the case of courses that have been in use for several years (check the instructor worksheet).  Example:   * Using compressed files to reduce file downloading time. * Delivering Audio files in a common file type such as Windows Media or RealPlayer. |

1. **ADA COMPLIANCE**

**General Review Standard:** Access to course resources is in accordance with the

American with Disabilities Act.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Specific Review Standards:** | **Points** | **Annotation: What’s the idea?** |
| G.1 Course pages  provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content. | 1 | Alternative means of access to course information should be provided for the vision or hearing impaired student. Look for equivalent textual representations  of images, audio, animations, and video in the course website. Presenting information in text format is generally acceptable, because screen reader software (used by the vision impaired) can read text.  Example:   * Audio lecture has a text transcript available.   Video clip, image, or animation is accompanied by text transcript. |
| G.2 Course pages  have links that are self- describing  and meaningful. | 1 | When instructors provide links to Internet content, they should also provide useful descriptions of what students will find at those sites. This enables the vision impaired to use screen reader software to understand links.  Examples: |

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|  |  | * All file names and web hyperlinks have meaningful names. For instance, the link to take a quiz should say “Take Quiz 1”, not “click here”. * Icons used as links should also have HTML tags or an accompanying text link. |
| G.3 Information  conveyed on course pages in color is also available without color. | 1 | To accommodate students who are color blind, color text should also be identifiable by other methods (such as bold, italics, etc.)  Examples:  Use formatting such as bold or italics in addition to color coding text.   * Provide web page in an alternate, non-color- coded format. |

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**Appendix D**

**Agreement for Production of a Web-based Course**

Instructor Name:

Date:

I agree to create and teach the following web-based course (name and course number):

that will be ready for

delivery (semester and term):

I will receive $1,500 for the development of this course contingent upon the course passing peer review of the course’s instructional and organizational design. Furthermore, after this course passes peer review, I agree to serve as a peer reviewer for one web-based course per annum.

As needed, I will participate in training sessions and consult with the instructional designer to prepare this course. The college agrees to supply the instructional and technical support needed for production.

I understand that any content and materials produced in conjunction with this course are subject to Section 12.0.3, Ownership of Intellectual Property, of the VCCS Policy Manual (see website <http://system.vccs.edu/Polcypdf/section/sec12.pdf>) which states that except as otherwise provided by separate written agreement or waiver which is executed by a duly authorized officer of a college or the VCCS, an ownership interest is claimed by the VCCS in any intellectual property produced by a VCCS employee when produced as a result of an assigned duty or with the substantial use of college resources, facilities, or funds.

I further agree to comply with the VCCS Policy Manual requirement that any material developed in full or part through CVCC should acknowledge the contribution of the college and the VCCS.

I understand that any web-based course or course material produced for a distance learning environment should be equal in instructional quality and content to that produced for on-campus use and is subject to approval by the faculty person’s Division Dean.

Instructor

Division Dean

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Services

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**Appendix E**

VCCS Intellectual Property Policy

Central Virginia Community College observes the Virginia Community College System (VCCS) policies relative to intellectual property, copyright issues, and revenue derived from the creation of intellectual property. The VCCS policy found in Section 12 of the VCCS Policy Manual and the Intellectual Property Guidelines established by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) as mandated by the Code of Virginia Sections 23-4.3 and 23-4.4.

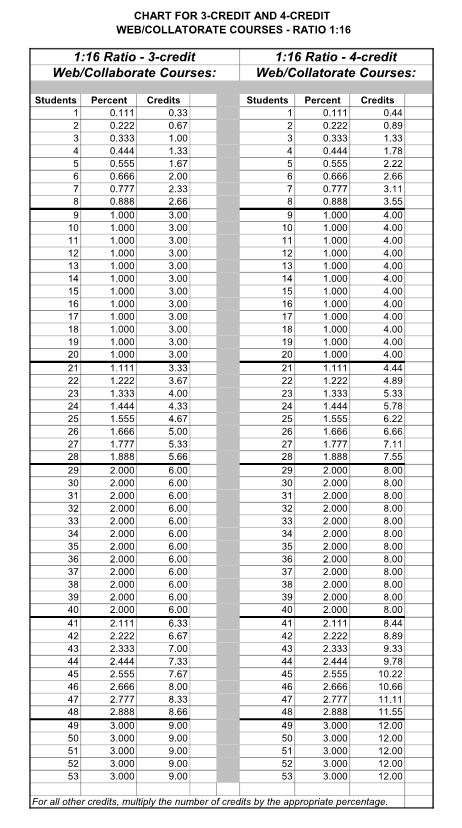
<http://www.vccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/sec12.pdf>

The college may claim interest or ownership of intellectual property in cases of assigned duty and/or significant use of college resources. The college may choose not to exercise intellectual property rights even though it might be legal to do so.

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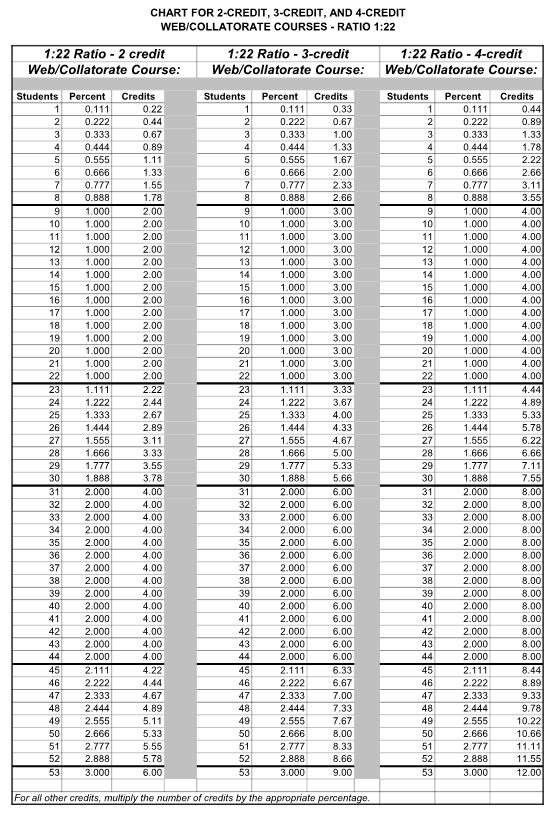
**Appendix F**



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**Appendix G**

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As approved by Academic Affairs Council December 18, 2013



## Distance Education Policy

Purpose Statement

Consistent with the university mission to lead the educational development of southeast Louisiana ([Vision 2017](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/docs/vision_2017.pdf)), the University recognizes that new approaches to instruction must meet the same high quality standards that exist for traditional classroom-bound education. Southeastern Louisiana University recognizes the advantages of providing learning opportunities that are not restricted by time, place, or method of delivery. In an effort to meet and ensure that these standards exist in distance education at the University, the purpose of this document is two-fold:

1. To provide a faculty guide for developing and implementing distance education.
2. To communicate quality standards for the delivery and assessment of distance education at Southeastern Louisiana University.

This document is not intended to supplant any existing policies set forth by the University. The development, delivery, and evaluation of distance education courses and programs take place in the context of the policies and procedures of all existing academic programs.

What is Distance Education?

Distance education is defined as a planned teaching/learning experience in which teacher and students are separated by physical distance and teacher-student interaction occurs through multiple modalities of existing and evolving media.

Distance education requires special techniques of course design, instructional techniques, assessment, and methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organization and administrative arrangements.

Modes of Delivery

A variety of electronic instructional delivery modes are available at Southeastern, including:

1. Online: Courses offered via the internet using a Learning Management System (LMS)
2. Blended or Hybrid: Combines face-to-face classroom instruction with distance education activities.
3. Telecourse: The Southeastern Channel produces and airs telecourses from a variety of academic disciplines for broadcast on the regional television channel and over the web via "Video on Demand" through the LMS.
4. Compressed Video: Occurs in real time and allows the instructor to communicate with remote site sections of the class via two-way audio/video. Instructors and students hear and see each other live from each site.

The University schedule of classes indicates what courses are being offered via distance education and the delivery format (Internet, compressed video, or telecourse). Alpha characters attached to the section number of distance education courses also indicate information about the course.

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Online courses are designated as:

* “I” - courses taught partially on campus in a classroom and 50% or more (but less than 100%) of instructional contact hours by Internet
* “XI” - courses taught partially in an off-campus classroom and 50% or more (but less than 100%) of instructional contact hours by Internet;
* “NT” - courses taught 100% Internet. (NOTE: These courses will NEVER meet)
* “IC” - course taught 50% or more by Internet and a portion taught as compressed video Telecourses are designated as:
* “TV” - courses taught through the Southeastern Channel. Compressed video courses are designated as:
* “C” - a compressed video course taught on campus,
* “XC” - a compressed video class taught off campus.
* “IC” - course taught 50% or more by Internet and a portion taught as compressed video.

Instructional Technology Unit (ITU)

The Instructional Technology Unit (ITU) consisting of administrative, academic, and technological personnel, coordinates the scheduling, infrastructure and delivery of distance learning courses and works closely with the academic department to ensure the quality of distance education at Southeastern. Appropriate members of the ITU or their designees are responsible for posting all electronically delivered courses on the ITU website and submitting course information to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) for publication on the SREB’s [Electronic Campus](http://www.electroniccampus.org/) [website.](http://www.electroniccampus.org/)

The Center for Faculty Excellence, in coordination with appropriate members of the ITU, provides additional support in the area of distance education by providing the following services:

* Professional development opportunities in the areas of teaching and learning
* Workshops, info sessions, discussions, and webinars on a variety of distance education topics
* Instructional and technical support for electronic learning
* The production of audio, video, photographic and graphic media for instructional use
* Assistance with the appropriate pedagogical use of technologies

Requirements and Expectations for Distance Education Faculty

As with traditional courses, Southeastern’s faculty assumes primary responsibility for and exercises oversight over distance education instruction, ensuring both the rigor of courses, curriculum, and the quality of instruction. Blended courses offered less than 50% via distance education may be required to follow the Distance Education Policy at the discretion of the department head. With noted differences between teaching distance education courses and teaching courses using “traditional” methodologies, the decision to use distance learning must be made on a course-by-course basis, with consideration given to the content of the course, the needs of the learners, and the flexibility of the delivery mechanism.

Faculty are encouraged to align distance learning and e-learning with operational outcomes in the relevant organizational context of their specified fields. Instructional design should reflect best practice quality standards, and provide for a consistent environment and learning experience for students.

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Faculty Qualifications

All faculty requesting to teach a 100% online or blended online/face-to-face course in the Fall 2014 and/or subsequent semesters are required to show competence in online instruction by (1) completing the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* online training course OR (2) providing evidence of delivering a previous online class certified through *Quality Matters at Southeastern,* or (3) has completed another online course delivery course deemed equivalent to *Quality Matters at Southeastern* as recommended by the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* trainer and the faculty member’s department head and as approved by the faculty member’s dean. In addition, department heads must consider other factors such as the following in determining whether a faculty member is qualified to teach an online or blended online/face-to-face course:

* Prior annual evaluations of teaching
* Other faculty development or training in teaching online
* Skills associated with teaching online (e.g., basic computer skills, database management, file management, word-processing, presentation software, e-mail, internet, social networking, learning management systems)

Based on national standards of best practice, research and instructional design principles, Quality MattersTM (QM) is a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online and blended online/face-to-face courses. *Quality Matters at Southeastern* employs a modified version of the national QMTM rubric, specific to institutional needs, to guide the review of all distance learning courses. The *Quality Matters at Southeastern* rubric addresses course quality in the following categories:

* Course Overview and Introduction
* Learning Objectives
* Assessment and Measurement
* Resources and Materials
* Learner Engagement
* Course Technology
* Learner Support
* Accessibility
* Professional Communications

Prior to building the Fall 2014 schedule of classes, department heads must continue to consider factors such as the following in determining whether a faculty member is qualified to teach an online or blended online/face-to-face course:

* Prior annual evaluations of teaching
* Proficiency in the online course technology and design
* Preparatory skills associated with teaching online (e.g., basic computer skills, database management, file management, word-processing, presentation software, e-mail, internet, social networking, learning management systems)
* Other faculty development or training in teaching online or teaching via distance education

In determining whether a faculty member is qualified to teach using other distance education technologies, department heads must continue to consider factors such as the following:

* Prior annual evaluations of teaching
* Faculty development/training for teaching using the specific distance education technology
* Faculty development/training for teaching via distance education
* Preparatory skills associated with the distance education technology (e.g., prior experience as a television show host – for telecourses or compressed video)

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Training

For online distance education courses, the Center for Faculty Excellence provides training regarding course design and implementation. Training is provided online, in onsite workshops, and through individual consultations in a format that prepares faculty to develop courses that are in accordance with *Quality Matters at Southeastern* review.

For telecourses and compressed video courses, Southeastern Channel personnel provide information on any technical requirements and guidance on providing effective televised presentations

Course Load, Compensation, Ownership of Materials, and Copyright

Distance learning courses are typically part of the faculty member’s regular teaching load, with the same rate of compensation as traditional courses. Distance learning courses may also be taught as an overload, at the same rate of compensation as traditional courses taught as an overload. Any exceptions (e.g., reassigned time for developing courses using new distance technologies) are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and as per current procedure, must be approved by the department head, the dean, and the provost. See [Southeastern's Teaching Loads policy.](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/policies/faculty_handbook/)

Southeastern follows the guidelines outlined by the University of Louisiana System (ULS) with regard to ownership of materials and utilization of revenues derived from the creation and production of intellectual property found in the ULS [Intellectual Property and Shared Royalties](http://www.ulsystem.net/assets/docs/searchable/boards/FS-III.VI.-1a%20Intellectual%20Property%2010_23_2012.pdf) [Policy](http://www.ulsystem.net/assets/docs/searchable/boards/FS-III.VI.-1a%20Intellectual%20Property%2010_23_2012.pdf) and in Southeastern’s Intellectual Property and Shared Royalties Policy.

Faculty must keep in mind copyright, trademark and licensing issues when designing distance education courses and therefore should be familiar with [Southeastern’s Copyright Policy](http://www2.selu.edu/documents/policies/copyrights_southeastern.pdf). Examples include the use of copyrighted photographs, graphics, text selections, audio clips from a song, or video clips from a movie. As Southeastern’s policy states, the usual permissions must be acquired and documented by the faculty member. When in doubt about copyright ownership, it is preferable to be overly cautious. If copyright permission cannot be obtained or if ownership is questionable, faculty should substitute other resources where copyright permission is clear and obtainable, or substitute resources that are in the public domain.

Evaluation of Faculty Teaching Distance Learning Courses

As indicated in the Approval Process for Distance Delivery, academic department heads ensure that faculty have the requisite skills necessary to deliver distance education courses. It is also the responsibility of department heads to perform annual evaluations of their faculty whether they teach using a traditional format or a distance delivery format. Faculty are evaluated in accordance with the guidelines and procedures outlined in the [Evaluation of Faculty](http://www2.selu.edu/documents/policies/empl/p3_faculty_eval.pdf) policy.

Availability and Communication with Students

**Office Hours**

As indicated in Southeastern’s [Office Hours policy](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/policies/empl/p4_faculty_office_hours.pdf), each faculty member is expected to maintain a minimum of ten office hours a week during a regular term and six hours during a summer session to accommodate student consultations. These hours are posted on the syllabus, the learning management system, on the faculty member’s door, and kept by the department head. Up to five online office hours shall be kept by faculty engaged in 100% online courses. Up to five online office hours may be kept by faculty engaged in other course designations. If online office hours are utilized, the faculty must be available via some mode of synchronous online communication (e.g., online chat, instant messaging, FaceTime, Skype, email, etc.).

Response time

Faculty engaged in 100% online courses shall maintain a 48-hour maximum response time (excluding weekends, holidays, or extenuating circumstances) for returning student emails and are expected to display high levels of social and cognitive presence as well as high quality writing skills.

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High quality social presence is defined as the following:

Instructor accesses forums, etc., several times a week. Instructor posts numerous times a week. Postings are directed toward learners. Instructor demonstrates professional behavior and evidence of respect for diversity and the views of others.

High quality cognitive presence is defined as the following:

Instructor stimulates discussion. Postings are clear, original, and relevant. Reasoning shows well-developed analytical skills and critical thinking. Instructor encourages students to higher achievement. Instructor always provides adequate supporting details and examples. Instructor engages in peer teaching.

High quality writing skills are defined as the following:

All postings are well written and demonstrate accurate spelling and grammar, good organization, careful editing, conciseness and clarity.

Credit Hour Policy

All courses, including those using a distance education delivery method, must adhere to Southeastern’s [Credit Hour Policy.](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/policies/empl/p6_credit_hour_policy.pdf)

Requirements and Expectations for Distance Education Courses

All distance education courses at Southeastern are considered comparable to traditional courses and adhere to the same course standards, prerequisites, and requirements as traditional sections of identical courses.

Approval Process for Distance Delivery

Notes:

* + Effective beginning with Fall 2014 course offerings:
    - To teach any course in a 100% online format or a 50-99% online format, the faculty member must have completed the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* course for *faculty* certification or has completed another online course delivery course deemed equivalent to *Quality Matters at Southeastern* as recommended by the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* trainer and the faculty member’s department head and as approved by the faculty member’s dean.
    - To teach a course not previously offered through a particular distance delivery format, the course as taught by the individual faculty member must be approved via the following procedures.
  + Effective beginning with Fall 2015 course offerings:
    - To continue to teach a course that has already been offered by the individual faculty member using a particular distance delivery format, the course as to be taught by the faculty member must be reviewed and approved in accordance with the following procedures.

To encourage high quality course offerings, proposals for creating new distance education courses and proposals for converting existing courses to a distance format are given careful review. Not only must distance education courses meet the same quality standards as traditional face-to-face courses, but additional review is necessary to ensure the appropriateness and feasibility of the chosen e-learning medium. Distance education courses should be approved in the semester prior to the semester of delivery, to allow for sufficient instructor training and course development. The process for developing a distance education course is outlined below:

1. Faculty reviews and accepts requirements and expectations outlined in Distance Education Policy.
2. Faculty Requests Approval to Develop Course for Distance Delivery
   1. To ensure alignment with strategic goals regarding delivery and quality of degree programs, faculty requests department head approval to develop course for distance

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delivery. Courses that fulfill major degree requirements for multiple degree programs require approval from the department head of each of those degree programs.

* + 1. According to Southeastern’s [Substantive Change Procedures](http://www.southeastern.edu/admin/provost/documents/substantive_change_revision_january_23_2012.pdf), the department head of each degree program is responsible for determining if the addition of a course offered via distance delivery results in 50% or more of the degree program being available via distance education. If so, SACSCOC notification and/or approval may be necessary due to a substantive change.
  1. For each degree program for which the course fulfills a major degree requirement, the department head of the degree program recommends approval or disapproval to the Dean of the degree program. The department head recommendation will include data from Institutional Research regarding the percent of courses required for the major(s) that would be in distance format if the course in question were approved for distance delivery.
  2. The dean of each degree program for which the course fulfills a major degree requirement will review the recommendation and either approve or disapprove the request. The decision will be communicated to the dean of the faculty member if different from the faculty member; the dean of the faculty member will communicate to the department head who will then communicate it to the faculty member.

1. Faculty Distance Education Delivery Training Upon Approval to Develop Course for Distance Delivery
   1. For a course to be delivered online:
      1. Faculty member completes *Quality Matters at Southeastern* training for faculty certification (course certification comes later in the process) or has completed another online course delivery course deemed equivalent to *Quality Matters at Southeastern* as recommended by the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* trainer and the faculty member’s department head and as approved by the faculty member’s dean.

- Faculty *Quality Matters at Southeastern* certification is valid until there are substantive changes in the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* standards.

* + 1. Faculty member meets with Instructional Designer in the Center for Faculty Excellence to discuss feasibility, begin course mapping, and determine technical needs – enlisting appropriate contacts with the Office of Technology (OT), Southeastern Channel, and Library, as needed
  1. For a course to be delivered via compressed video or as a telecourse:
     1. Faculty member meets with Southeastern Channel personnel to discuss feasibility, begin course mapping, and determine technical and communication/presentation needs

1. Development and Review of Course Proposal
   1. For a course to be delivered online:
      1. Faculty prepares Course Proposal (see Appendix A) to submit to appropriate departmental committee which shall include at least one QM *Quality Matters at Southeastern*-trained faculty member to verify *Quality Matters at Southeastern* components.
      2. Distance Education Course Proposal is forwarded to faculty member’s department head for verification of faculty *Quality Matters at Southeastern* certification and approval/disapproval.
   2. For a course to be delivered using other distance technology (e.g., telecourse; compressed video):
      1. Faculty prepares Course Proposal (see Appendix A) to submit to appropriate departmental committee.
      2. Distance Education Course Proposal is forwarded to faculty member’s department head for approval/disapproval.
2. Course Development, Approval, and Delivery
   1. Faculty member works with the designated e-Learning support team (Office of Technology, Southeastern Channel, Library) and, in the case of an online course, the

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Instructional Designer, to design and develop the course.

* 1. Faculty member completes Course Information Sheet (see Appendix B) outlining prerequisites and technical needs of student.
  2. Appropriate members of Instructional Technology Unit and/or designees review the completed course (applying the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* standards to an online course) and the Course Information Sheet. The ITU will notify the dean of the faculty member when the course has met the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* course requirements for delivery. The dean will forward the information to any other deans, as appropriate, and to the department head(s) as appropriate. The faculty member’s department head will notify the faculty member. Course information is posted to the web by the appropriate ITU member(s) or designee(s).
  3. Course is delivered with continued support, as needed, by the Center for Faculty Excellence, Office of Technology, Southeastern Channel, and Sims Library.
  4. After being delivered for two semesters, online courses must be officially reviewed for *Quality Matters at Southeastern* certification within the following academic year. If the certification requirements are met, the course as taught by the faculty member is so certified.

The ability of the faculty member to continue to offer the course using the approved distance delivery method depends on factors including but not necessarily limited to (a) the results of the faculty member’s annual evaluations of teaching, particularly with regard to teaching the course in question and the delivery method in question, (b) student needs, (c) department/college/university goals concerning distance versus face-to-face delivery of individual courses and degree programs, and (d) resource availability. The department head has primary responsibility for overseeing the scheduling of courses offered through the department each semester and summer, and that includes the scheduling of the course delivery format.

Course Design

Faculty will work with the Instructional Designer (for online courses) and the designated e- Learning support team (e.g., Office of Technology staff, Southeastern Channel, Library) to design either an online course that reflects the components of *Quality Matters at Southeastern* or a telecourse or compressed video course that reflects presentations appropriate for televised delivery. To provide a consistent online experience for the student, faculty shall follow the university’s LMS template for online course layout.

Courses designed for distance education delivery must reflect contact hours and instructional time commitments in accordance with Southeastern’s Credit Hour Policy and expected student learning outcomes that are equivalent to those for the same courses delivered through traditional formats.

The Syllabus

The course syllabus must contain the same information as traditional courses (see Welcome Back Memo posted each semester on the [Provost’s website](http://www.selu.edu/admin/provost/)) along with the following components.

* Instructor’s virtual office hours
* Technological requirements for the course including any special software requirements
* Procedure for resolving technical complaints including contact information for technical support
* Preferred method for contacting instructor, e.g. email, phone, text message.
* Netiquette expectations
* Instructor’s response time for student communications [Faculty engaged in 100% online courses are required to maintain a 48 hour maximum response time (excluding weekends, holidays, or extenuating circumstances) for returning student emails).]
* Procedure for determining attendance
* Student participation/interaction requirements
* Information on Distance Learning Library Services

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Student Interaction

Distance education courses must provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students. All students are expected to participate regularly. Multiple means of student-instructor interaction and student-student interaction are expected. This can include instructors requiring and monitoring students' regular participation, scheduling regular group meeting times, and encouraging students to: post messages to one another about the coursework, attach documents to email messages, visit peer websites, and participate in on-going listserv groups and synchronous chat rooms. Increased interaction among students and between students and the instructor promotes involvement leading to discovery, student-driven episodes, and student-defined questions.

Communicating high expectations explicitly and efficiently keeps students on-task and involved. Distance education instructors expect regular connections with students using a variety of interactive modes. Student-instructor interaction may unfold synchronously, during face-to-face meetings, telephone conferences, video conferencing, and online chat rooms; or asynchronously, with regular mail, taped audio-video broadcasts, email, and the Internet.

Faculty should strive to meet the diverse needs of students and insure active learning in distance education coursework by incorporating a variety of course experiences that address diverse learning styles.

Course Materials

As previously outlined in the Approval Process for Distance Delivery, academic departments, through a committee and the department head, must review distance education course proposals for currency of materials. Designers of distance education courses at Southeastern are encouraged to explore creative ideas for best practice through research, communicating with colleagues, and contacting content providers.

Southeastern utilizes textbook rental and retail systems to provide academic texts and supplemental materials. Textbook Rentals accommodates any required hardbound textbooks, which have a useful life of two or more academic years. Books not eligible for adoption by the rental system and support materials such as workbooks, reference manuals, or dated materials are sold by the University bookstore. Instructors communicate their needs to the appropriate personnel in the same manner as for traditional courses. Departments and faculty adhere to the [Selection of Textbooks Guidelines](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/policies/empl/p4_textbk_selection.pdf) for textbook adoption. When students are required to purchase books and/or materials, faculty should make this information available as soon as possible so that students may purchase from any source they choose.

Supplementary materials can be made available in printed or electronic form. Library personnel can assist faculty with electronic reserves, inter-library loans, and online databases that can be accessed electronically. Instructors provide students with directions on how to access library materials such as books, periodicals, journal articles, etc.

Course Assessment

Southeastern evaluates the educational effectiveness of its distance education courses and programs to ensure comparability with face-to-face courses and programs.

Individual courses are expected to adhere to approved course descriptions and have similar expected student learning outcomes, regardless of the course delivery format. Student satisfaction is assessed through the Student Opinion of Teaching surveys administered in each class during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters, regardless of the delivery format of the class. The Office of Institutional Research provides the President and Provost with an annual report on student retention and grade distributions for each course, disaggregated by delivery format.

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For academic programs that provide students with different delivery options for the entire program (e.g., entirely face-to-face; hybrid – 50% to 99% of required programs offered via a particular distance technology; 100% via a particular distance technology), the expected student learning outcomes and measures of those outcomes are identical across all delivery options. In addition, the results of those measures are compared across the different delivery formats.

Requirements and Expectations for Distance Education Students

**Prerequisites and Readiness**

The ability of a student to succeed in a distance education class depends on his or her ability to understand the class structure and technology. Informing students of what skills and technology are needed for particular distance education courses allows them the opportunity to do a self- assessment of their capability to succeed in the course.

Faculty complete the Distance Education Course Information Sheet (Appendix B) outlining general information about the class, including specific skills a student should possess, hardware and software requirements necessary to participate in the course, and faculty contact information. At the time of course registration, students are required to review the Course Information Sheet, which also includes an online student readiness assessment (e.g., SmarterMeasure). Registration for the course constitutes the student’s acceptance of the requirements necessary to participate in the course.

Student Integrity and Authentication

Southeastern uses the SACSCOC-suggested secure login and pass code student identification method as an attempt to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the associated credit for the course or program. At the time of enrollment, students receive a unique username/W# (secure login) and password (secure pass code). This username/W# and password is used for student identification/authentication purposes for distance education course work at no extra cost to the student, with both the username/W# and password used for work submitted online.

In addition to the secure login and pass code method, faculty may use other means or technologies to authenticate the work of distance education students (e.g., proctored exams, special software, web cameras). If a faculty member chooses to use additional means of authenticating the work of distance education students, students must be informed in writing at the time of course registration of any actual and/or projected associated costs (e.g., cost of specialized software, estimated cost of web camera). Any projected additional student costs associated with verification of student identity/authentication of distance education student work must be approved by the Provost following a recommendation from the department head and dean of the course.

Proctored exams requiring the student to be at a Southeastern facility may be used in hybrid courses but not in 100% distance education courses.

Academic Integrity and the Code of Conduct

Students in all classes, regardless of delivery format, must adhere to Southeastern’s Academic Integrity policy as published in the General Catalogue and to all policies and standards published in Southeastern’s [Student Handbook](http://www.selu.edu/admin/stu_affairs/handbook/) .

Student Privacy

Student privacy in all courses and programs regardless of delivery format is protected as per the [Policies and Procedures Relating to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act](http://www.southeastern.edu/admin/rec_reg/privacy/index.html) posted on the University’s web site.

In addition, at the time of employment, all university employees sign a Confidentiality Agreement,

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indicating:

“… a variety of records and information must not be shared with, made available to or accessible by an persons other than professional associates with a need to know in the normal course and scope of work. Confidential information otherwise must not be discussed or shared without appropriate authorization.”

This agreement includes but is not necessarily limited to student course records (e.g., grades, other indicators of student performance), medical and/or personal information revealed by the student.

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Appendix A

**Distance Education Course Proposal Requirements**

Distance education courses should adhere to the same standards, prerequisites, and requirements as traditional sections of identical courses.

Course Proposals for distance education courses must include the following:

* Instructor’s name, course prefix and number
* Justification for the proposed distance education course
* Evidence that the proposed distance education format of the course adheres to the University’s Credit Hour Policy
* Course Classification [A required course, an elective, a general education course, or a major course in a degree program(s)]
* A full syllabus (in the same format as syllabi for a traditional course - see Welcome Back Memo posted each semester on [Provost’s website](http://www.selu.edu/admin/provost/resources/) ). Outlining the topics that will be covered in the course and how contact hours will be addressed. The course syllabus must also contain the following components.
  + 1. Instructor’s virtual office hours
    2. Technological requirements for the course including any special software requirements
    3. Procedure for resolving technical complaints including contact information for technical support
    4. Preferred method for contacting instructor, e.g. email, phone, text message.
    5. Netiquette expectations
    6. Instructor’s response time for student communications
    7. Procedure for determining attendance
    8. Student participation/interaction requirements
    9. Information on Distance Learning Library Services
* Delivery mechanism(s) (e.g., LMS, telecourse, compressed video, etc.)
* Interaction methods and how those methods will provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students
* Source of course materials (e.g., created, textbook publisher, etc.)
* Instructor’s technological expertise including verification *Quality Matters at Southeastern* certification
* Any proposed student authentication method(s) in addition to the required secure login and pass code method and approval through the Provost

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Appendix B Course Information Sheet

Course:

Instructor:

Instructor’s e-mail address: Instructor’s office phone number: Instructor’s office number:

Hardware Requirements:

Software Requirements:

Specific Skills Students Need for Distance Education Delivery Format:

Link to Online Student Readiness Assessment (provided by University at time of course registration)

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## Distance Education Policy

Purpose Statement

Consistent with the university mission to lead the educational development of southeast Louisiana ([Vision 2017](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/docs/vision_2017.pdf)), the University recognizes that new approaches to instruction must meet the same high quality standards that exist for traditional classroom-bound education. Southeastern Louisiana University recognizes the advantages of providing learning opportunities that are not restricted by time, place, or method of delivery. In an effort to meet and ensure that these standards exist in distance education at the University, the purpose of this document is two-fold:

1. To provide a faculty guide for developing and implementing distance education.
2. To communicate quality standards for the delivery and assessment of distance education at Southeastern Louisiana University.

This document is not intended to supplant any existing policies set forth by the University. The development, delivery, and evaluation of distance education courses and programs take place in the context of the policies and procedures of all existing academic programs.

What is Distance Education?

Distance education is defined as a planned teaching/learning experience in which teacher and students are separated by physical distance and teacher-student interaction occurs through multiple modalities of existing and evolving media.

Distance education requires special techniques of course design, instructional techniques, assessment, and methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organization and administrative arrangements.

Modes of Delivery

A variety of electronic instructional delivery modes are available at Southeastern, including:

1. Online: Courses offered via the internet using a Learning Management System (LMS)
2. Blended or Hybrid: Combines face-to-face classroom instruction with distance education activities.
3. Telecourse: The Southeastern Channel produces and airs telecourses from a variety of academic disciplines for broadcast on the regional television channel and over the web via "Video on Demand" through the LMS.
4. Compressed Video: Occurs in real time and allows the instructor to communicate with remote site sections of the class via two-way audio/video. Instructors and students hear and see each other live from each site.

The University schedule of classes indicates what courses are being offered via distance education and the delivery format (Internet, compressed video, or telecourse). Alpha characters attached to the section number of distance education courses also indicate information about the course.

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Online courses are designated as:

* “I” - courses taught partially on campus in a classroom and 50% or more (but less than 100%) of instructional contact hours by Internet
* “XI” - courses taught partially in an off-campus classroom and 50% or more (but less than 100%) of instructional contact hours by Internet;
* “NT” - courses taught 100% Internet. (NOTE: These courses will NEVER meet)
* “IC” - course taught 50% or more by Internet and a portion taught as compressed video Telecourses are designated as:
* “TV” - courses taught through the Southeastern Channel. Compressed video courses are designated as:
* “C” - a compressed video course taught on campus,
* “XC” - a compressed video class taught off campus.
* “IC” - course taught 50% or more by Internet and a portion taught as compressed video.

Instructional Technology Unit (ITU)

The Instructional Technology Unit (ITU) consisting of administrative, academic, and technological personnel, coordinates the scheduling, infrastructure and delivery of distance learning courses and works closely with the academic department to ensure the quality of distance education at Southeastern. Appropriate members of the ITU or their designees are responsible for posting all electronically delivered courses on the ITU website and submitting course information to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) for publication on the SREB’s [Electronic Campus](http://www.electroniccampus.org/) [website.](http://www.electroniccampus.org/)

The Center for Faculty Excellence, in coordination with appropriate members of the ITU, provides additional support in the area of distance education by providing the following services:

* Professional development opportunities in the areas of teaching and learning
* Workshops, info sessions, discussions, and webinars on a variety of distance education topics
* Instructional and technical support for electronic learning
* The production of audio, video, photographic and graphic media for instructional use
* Assistance with the appropriate pedagogical use of technologies

Requirements and Expectations for Distance Education Faculty

As with traditional courses, Southeastern’s faculty assumes primary responsibility for and exercises oversight over distance education instruction, ensuring both the rigor of courses, curriculum, and the quality of instruction. Blended courses offered less than 50% via distance education may be required to follow the Distance Education Policy at the discretion of the department head. With noted differences between teaching distance education courses and teaching courses using “traditional” methodologies, the decision to use distance learning must be made on a course-by-course basis, with consideration given to the content of the course, the needs of the learners, and the flexibility of the delivery mechanism.

Faculty are encouraged to align distance learning and e-learning with operational outcomes in the relevant organizational context of their specified fields. Instructional design should reflect best practice quality standards, and provide for a consistent environment and learning experience for students.

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Faculty Qualifications

All faculty requesting to teach a 100% online or blended online/face-to-face course in the Fall 2014 and/or subsequent semesters are required to show competence in online instruction by (1) completing the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* online training course OR (2) providing evidence of delivering a previous online class certified through *Quality Matters at Southeastern,* or (3) has completed another online course delivery course deemed equivalent to *Quality Matters at Southeastern* as recommended by the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* trainer and the faculty member’s department head and as approved by the faculty member’s dean. In addition, department heads must consider other factors such as the following in determining whether a faculty member is qualified to teach an online or blended online/face-to-face course:

* Prior annual evaluations of teaching
* Other faculty development or training in teaching online
* Skills associated with teaching online (e.g., basic computer skills, database management, file management, word-processing, presentation software, e-mail, internet, social networking, learning management systems)

Based on national standards of best practice, research and instructional design principles, Quality MattersTM (QM) is a faculty-centered, peer review process that is designed to certify the quality of online and blended online/face-to-face courses. *Quality Matters at Southeastern* employs a modified version of the national QMTM rubric, specific to institutional needs, to guide the review of all distance learning courses. The *Quality Matters at Southeastern* rubric addresses course quality in the following categories:

* Course Overview and Introduction
* Learning Objectives
* Assessment and Measurement
* Resources and Materials
* Learner Engagement
* Course Technology
* Learner Support
* Accessibility
* Professional Communications

Prior to building the Fall 2014 schedule of classes, department heads must continue to consider factors such as the following in determining whether a faculty member is qualified to teach an online or blended online/face-to-face course:

* Prior annual evaluations of teaching
* Proficiency in the online course technology and design
* Preparatory skills associated with teaching online (e.g., basic computer skills, database management, file management, word-processing, presentation software, e-mail, internet, social networking, learning management systems)
* Other faculty development or training in teaching online or teaching via distance education

In determining whether a faculty member is qualified to teach using other distance education technologies, department heads must continue to consider factors such as the following:

* Prior annual evaluations of teaching
* Faculty development/training for teaching using the specific distance education technology
* Faculty development/training for teaching via distance education
* Preparatory skills associated with the distance education technology (e.g., prior experience as a television show host – for telecourses or compressed video)

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Training

For online distance education courses, the Center for Faculty Excellence provides training regarding course design and implementation. Training is provided online, in onsite workshops, and through individual consultations in a format that prepares faculty to develop courses that are in accordance with *Quality Matters at Southeastern* review.

For telecourses and compressed video courses, Southeastern Channel personnel provide information on any technical requirements and guidance on providing effective televised presentations

Course Load, Compensation, Ownership of Materials, and Copyright

Distance learning courses are typically part of the faculty member’s regular teaching load, with the same rate of compensation as traditional courses. Distance learning courses may also be taught as an overload, at the same rate of compensation as traditional courses taught as an overload. Any exceptions (e.g., reassigned time for developing courses using new distance technologies) are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and as per current procedure, must be approved by the department head, the dean, and the provost. See [Southeastern's Teaching Loads policy.](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/policies/faculty_handbook/)

Southeastern follows the guidelines outlined by the University of Louisiana System (ULS) with regard to ownership of materials and utilization of revenues derived from the creation and production of intellectual property found in the ULS [Intellectual Property and Shared Royalties](http://www.ulsystem.net/assets/docs/searchable/boards/FS-III.VI.-1a%20Intellectual%20Property%2010_23_2012.pdf) [Policy](http://www.ulsystem.net/assets/docs/searchable/boards/FS-III.VI.-1a%20Intellectual%20Property%2010_23_2012.pdf) and in Southeastern’s Intellectual Property and Shared Royalties Policy.

Faculty must keep in mind copyright, trademark and licensing issues when designing distance education courses and therefore should be familiar with [Southeastern’s Copyright Policy](http://www2.selu.edu/documents/policies/copyrights_southeastern.pdf). Examples include the use of copyrighted photographs, graphics, text selections, audio clips from a song, or video clips from a movie. As Southeastern’s policy states, the usual permissions must be acquired and documented by the faculty member. When in doubt about copyright ownership, it is preferable to be overly cautious. If copyright permission cannot be obtained or if ownership is questionable, faculty should substitute other resources where copyright permission is clear and obtainable, or substitute resources that are in the public domain.

Evaluation of Faculty Teaching Distance Learning Courses

As indicated in the Approval Process for Distance Delivery, academic department heads ensure that faculty have the requisite skills necessary to deliver distance education courses. It is also the responsibility of department heads to perform annual evaluations of their faculty whether they teach using a traditional format or a distance delivery format. Faculty are evaluated in accordance with the guidelines and procedures outlined in the [Evaluation of Faculty](http://www2.selu.edu/documents/policies/empl/p3_faculty_eval.pdf) policy.

Availability and Communication with Students

**Office Hours**

As indicated in Southeastern’s [Office Hours policy](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/policies/empl/p4_faculty_office_hours.pdf), each faculty member is expected to maintain a minimum of ten office hours a week during a regular term and six hours during a summer session to accommodate student consultations. These hours are posted on the syllabus, the learning management system, on the faculty member’s door, and kept by the department head. Up to five online office hours shall be kept by faculty engaged in 100% online courses. Up to five online office hours may be kept by faculty engaged in other course designations. If online office hours are utilized, the faculty must be available via some mode of synchronous online communication (e.g., online chat, instant messaging, FaceTime, Skype, email, etc.).

Response time

Faculty engaged in 100% online courses shall maintain a 48-hour maximum response time (excluding weekends, holidays, or extenuating circumstances) for returning student emails and are expected to display high levels of social and cognitive presence as well as high quality writing skills.

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High quality social presence is defined as the following:

Instructor accesses forums, etc., several times a week. Instructor posts numerous times a week. Postings are directed toward learners. Instructor demonstrates professional behavior and evidence of respect for diversity and the views of others.

High quality cognitive presence is defined as the following:

Instructor stimulates discussion. Postings are clear, original, and relevant. Reasoning shows well-developed analytical skills and critical thinking. Instructor encourages students to higher achievement. Instructor always provides adequate supporting details and examples. Instructor engages in peer teaching.

High quality writing skills are defined as the following:

All postings are well written and demonstrate accurate spelling and grammar, good organization, careful editing, conciseness and clarity.

Credit Hour Policy

All courses, including those using a distance education delivery method, must adhere to Southeastern’s [Credit Hour Policy.](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/policies/empl/p6_credit_hour_policy.pdf)

Requirements and Expectations for Distance Education Courses

All distance education courses at Southeastern are considered comparable to traditional courses and adhere to the same course standards, prerequisites, and requirements as traditional sections of identical courses.

Approval Process for Distance Delivery

Notes:

* + Effective beginning with Fall 2014 course offerings:
    - To teach any course in a 100% online format or a 50-99% online format, the faculty member must have completed the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* course for *faculty* certification or has completed another online course delivery course deemed equivalent to *Quality Matters at Southeastern* as recommended by the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* trainer and the faculty member’s department head and as approved by the faculty member’s dean.
    - To teach a course not previously offered through a particular distance delivery format, the course as taught by the individual faculty member must be approved via the following procedures.
  + Effective beginning with Fall 2015 course offerings:
    - To continue to teach a course that has already been offered by the individual faculty member using a particular distance delivery format, the course as to be taught by the faculty member must be reviewed and approved in accordance with the following procedures.

To encourage high quality course offerings, proposals for creating new distance education courses and proposals for converting existing courses to a distance format are given careful review. Not only must distance education courses meet the same quality standards as traditional face-to-face courses, but additional review is necessary to ensure the appropriateness and feasibility of the chosen e-learning medium. Distance education courses should be approved in the semester prior to the semester of delivery, to allow for sufficient instructor training and course development. The process for developing a distance education course is outlined below:

1. Faculty reviews and accepts requirements and expectations outlined in Distance Education Policy.
2. Faculty Requests Approval to Develop Course for Distance Delivery
   1. To ensure alignment with strategic goals regarding delivery and quality of degree programs, faculty requests department head approval to develop course for distance

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delivery. Courses that fulfill major degree requirements for multiple degree programs require approval from the department head of each of those degree programs.

* + 1. According to Southeastern’s [Substantive Change Procedures](http://www.southeastern.edu/admin/provost/documents/substantive_change_revision_january_23_2012.pdf), the department head of each degree program is responsible for determining if the addition of a course offered via distance delivery results in 50% or more of the degree program being available via distance education. If so, SACSCOC notification and/or approval may be necessary due to a substantive change.
  1. For each degree program for which the course fulfills a major degree requirement, the department head of the degree program recommends approval or disapproval to the Dean of the degree program. The department head recommendation will include data from Institutional Research regarding the percent of courses required for the major(s) that would be in distance format if the course in question were approved for distance delivery.
  2. The dean of each degree program for which the course fulfills a major degree requirement will review the recommendation and either approve or disapprove the request. The decision will be communicated to the dean of the faculty member if different from the faculty member; the dean of the faculty member will communicate to the department head who will then communicate it to the faculty member.

1. Faculty Distance Education Delivery Training Upon Approval to Develop Course for Distance Delivery
   1. For a course to be delivered online:
      1. Faculty member completes *Quality Matters at Southeastern* training for faculty certification (course certification comes later in the process) or has completed another online course delivery course deemed equivalent to *Quality Matters at Southeastern* as recommended by the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* trainer and the faculty member’s department head and as approved by the faculty member’s dean.

- Faculty *Quality Matters at Southeastern* certification is valid until there are substantive changes in the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* standards.

* + 1. Faculty member meets with Instructional Designer in the Center for Faculty Excellence to discuss feasibility, begin course mapping, and determine technical needs – enlisting appropriate contacts with the Office of Technology (OT), Southeastern Channel, and Library, as needed
  1. For a course to be delivered via compressed video or as a telecourse:
     1. Faculty member meets with Southeastern Channel personnel to discuss feasibility, begin course mapping, and determine technical and communication/presentation needs

1. Development and Review of Course Proposal
   1. For a course to be delivered online:
      1. Faculty prepares Course Proposal (see Appendix A) to submit to appropriate departmental committee which shall include at least one QM *Quality Matters at Southeastern*-trained faculty member to verify *Quality Matters at Southeastern* components.
      2. Distance Education Course Proposal is forwarded to faculty member’s department head for verification of faculty *Quality Matters at Southeastern* certification and approval/disapproval.
   2. For a course to be delivered using other distance technology (e.g., telecourse; compressed video):
      1. Faculty prepares Course Proposal (see Appendix A) to submit to appropriate departmental committee.
      2. Distance Education Course Proposal is forwarded to faculty member’s department head for approval/disapproval.
2. Course Development, Approval, and Delivery
   1. Faculty member works with the designated e-Learning support team (Office of Technology, Southeastern Channel, Library) and, in the case of an online course, the

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Instructional Designer, to design and develop the course.

* 1. Faculty member completes Course Information Sheet (see Appendix B) outlining prerequisites and technical needs of student.
  2. Appropriate members of Instructional Technology Unit and/or designees review the completed course (applying the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* standards to an online course) and the Course Information Sheet. The ITU will notify the dean of the faculty member when the course has met the *Quality Matters at Southeastern* course requirements for delivery. The dean will forward the information to any other deans, as appropriate, and to the department head(s) as appropriate. The faculty member’s department head will notify the faculty member. Course information is posted to the web by the appropriate ITU member(s) or designee(s).
  3. Course is delivered with continued support, as needed, by the Center for Faculty Excellence, Office of Technology, Southeastern Channel, and Sims Library.
  4. After being delivered for two semesters, online courses must be officially reviewed for *Quality Matters at Southeastern* certification within the following academic year. If the certification requirements are met, the course as taught by the faculty member is so certified.

The ability of the faculty member to continue to offer the course using the approved distance delivery method depends on factors including but not necessarily limited to (a) the results of the faculty member’s annual evaluations of teaching, particularly with regard to teaching the course in question and the delivery method in question, (b) student needs, (c) department/college/university goals concerning distance versus face-to-face delivery of individual courses and degree programs, and (d) resource availability. The department head has primary responsibility for overseeing the scheduling of courses offered through the department each semester and summer, and that includes the scheduling of the course delivery format.

Course Design

Faculty will work with the Instructional Designer (for online courses) and the designated e- Learning support team (e.g., Office of Technology staff, Southeastern Channel, Library) to design either an online course that reflects the components of *Quality Matters at Southeastern* or a telecourse or compressed video course that reflects presentations appropriate for televised delivery. To provide a consistent online experience for the student, faculty shall follow the university’s LMS template for online course layout.

Courses designed for distance education delivery must reflect contact hours and instructional time commitments in accordance with Southeastern’s Credit Hour Policy and expected student learning outcomes that are equivalent to those for the same courses delivered through traditional formats.

The Syllabus

The course syllabus must contain the same information as traditional courses (see Welcome Back Memo posted each semester on the [Provost’s website](http://www.selu.edu/admin/provost/)) along with the following components.

* Instructor’s virtual office hours
* Technological requirements for the course including any special software requirements
* Procedure for resolving technical complaints including contact information for technical support
* Preferred method for contacting instructor, e.g. email, phone, text message.
* Netiquette expectations
* Instructor’s response time for student communications [Faculty engaged in 100% online courses are required to maintain a 48 hour maximum response time (excluding weekends, holidays, or extenuating circumstances) for returning student emails).]
* Procedure for determining attendance
* Student participation/interaction requirements
* Information on Distance Learning Library Services

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Student Interaction

Distance education courses must provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students. All students are expected to participate regularly. Multiple means of student-instructor interaction and student-student interaction are expected. This can include instructors requiring and monitoring students' regular participation, scheduling regular group meeting times, and encouraging students to: post messages to one another about the coursework, attach documents to email messages, visit peer websites, and participate in on-going listserv groups and synchronous chat rooms. Increased interaction among students and between students and the instructor promotes involvement leading to discovery, student-driven episodes, and student-defined questions.

Communicating high expectations explicitly and efficiently keeps students on-task and involved. Distance education instructors expect regular connections with students using a variety of interactive modes. Student-instructor interaction may unfold synchronously, during face-to-face meetings, telephone conferences, video conferencing, and online chat rooms; or asynchronously, with regular mail, taped audio-video broadcasts, email, and the Internet.

Faculty should strive to meet the diverse needs of students and insure active learning in distance education coursework by incorporating a variety of course experiences that address diverse learning styles.

Course Materials

As previously outlined in the Approval Process for Distance Delivery, academic departments, through a committee and the department head, must review distance education course proposals for currency of materials. Designers of distance education courses at Southeastern are encouraged to explore creative ideas for best practice through research, communicating with colleagues, and contacting content providers.

Southeastern utilizes textbook rental and retail systems to provide academic texts and supplemental materials. Textbook Rentals accommodates any required hardbound textbooks, which have a useful life of two or more academic years. Books not eligible for adoption by the rental system and support materials such as workbooks, reference manuals, or dated materials are sold by the University bookstore. Instructors communicate their needs to the appropriate personnel in the same manner as for traditional courses. Departments and faculty adhere to the [Selection of Textbooks Guidelines](http://www2.southeastern.edu/documents/policies/empl/p4_textbk_selection.pdf) for textbook adoption. When students are required to purchase books and/or materials, faculty should make this information available as soon as possible so that students may purchase from any source they choose.

Supplementary materials can be made available in printed or electronic form. Library personnel can assist faculty with electronic reserves, inter-library loans, and online databases that can be accessed electronically. Instructors provide students with directions on how to access library materials such as books, periodicals, journal articles, etc.

Course Assessment

Southeastern evaluates the educational effectiveness of its distance education courses and programs to ensure comparability with face-to-face courses and programs.

Individual courses are expected to adhere to approved course descriptions and have similar expected student learning outcomes, regardless of the course delivery format. Student satisfaction is assessed through the Student Opinion of Teaching surveys administered in each class during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters, regardless of the delivery format of the class. The Office of Institutional Research provides the President and Provost with an annual report on student retention and grade distributions for each course, disaggregated by delivery format.

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For academic programs that provide students with different delivery options for the entire program (e.g., entirely face-to-face; hybrid – 50% to 99% of required programs offered via a particular distance technology; 100% via a particular distance technology), the expected student learning outcomes and measures of those outcomes are identical across all delivery options. In addition, the results of those measures are compared across the different delivery formats.

Requirements and Expectations for Distance Education Students

**Prerequisites and Readiness**

The ability of a student to succeed in a distance education class depends on his or her ability to understand the class structure and technology. Informing students of what skills and technology are needed for particular distance education courses allows them the opportunity to do a self- assessment of their capability to succeed in the course.

Faculty complete the Distance Education Course Information Sheet (Appendix B) outlining general information about the class, including specific skills a student should possess, hardware and software requirements necessary to participate in the course, and faculty contact information. At the time of course registration, students are required to review the Course Information Sheet, which also includes an online student readiness assessment (e.g., SmarterMeasure). Registration for the course constitutes the student’s acceptance of the requirements necessary to participate in the course.

Student Integrity and Authentication

Southeastern uses the SACSCOC-suggested secure login and pass code student identification method as an attempt to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the associated credit for the course or program. At the time of enrollment, students receive a unique username/W# (secure login) and password (secure pass code). This username/W# and password is used for student identification/authentication purposes for distance education course work at no extra cost to the student, with both the username/W# and password used for work submitted online.

In addition to the secure login and pass code method, faculty may use other means or technologies to authenticate the work of distance education students (e.g., proctored exams, special software, web cameras). If a faculty member chooses to use additional means of authenticating the work of distance education students, students must be informed in writing at the time of course registration of any actual and/or projected associated costs (e.g., cost of specialized software, estimated cost of web camera). Any projected additional student costs associated with verification of student identity/authentication of distance education student work must be approved by the Provost following a recommendation from the department head and dean of the course.

Proctored exams requiring the student to be at a Southeastern facility may be used in hybrid courses but not in 100% distance education courses.

Academic Integrity and the Code of Conduct

Students in all classes, regardless of delivery format, must adhere to Southeastern’s Academic Integrity policy as published in the General Catalogue and to all policies and standards published in Southeastern’s [Student Handbook](http://www.selu.edu/admin/stu_affairs/handbook/) .

Student Privacy

Student privacy in all courses and programs regardless of delivery format is protected as per the [Policies and Procedures Relating to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act](http://www.southeastern.edu/admin/rec_reg/privacy/index.html) posted on the University’s web site.

In addition, at the time of employment, all university employees sign a Confidentiality Agreement,

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indicating:

“… a variety of records and information must not be shared with, made available to or accessible by an persons other than professional associates with a need to know in the normal course and scope of work. Confidential information otherwise must not be discussed or shared without appropriate authorization.”

This agreement includes but is not necessarily limited to student course records (e.g., grades, other indicators of student performance), medical and/or personal information revealed by the student.

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Appendix A

**Distance Education Course Proposal Requirements**

Distance education courses should adhere to the same standards, prerequisites, and requirements as traditional sections of identical courses.

Course Proposals for distance education courses must include the following:

* Instructor’s name, course prefix and number
* Justification for the proposed distance education course
* Evidence that the proposed distance education format of the course adheres to the University’s Credit Hour Policy
* Course Classification [A required course, an elective, a general education course, or a major course in a degree program(s)]
* A full syllabus (in the same format as syllabi for a traditional course - see Welcome Back Memo posted each semester on [Provost’s website](http://www.selu.edu/admin/provost/resources/) ). Outlining the topics that will be covered in the course and how contact hours will be addressed. The course syllabus must also contain the following components.
  + 1. Instructor’s virtual office hours
    2. Technological requirements for the course including any special software requirements
    3. Procedure for resolving technical complaints including contact information for technical support
    4. Preferred method for contacting instructor, e.g. email, phone, text message.
    5. Netiquette expectations
    6. Instructor’s response time for student communications
    7. Procedure for determining attendance
    8. Student participation/interaction requirements
    9. Information on Distance Learning Library Services
* Delivery mechanism(s) (e.g., LMS, telecourse, compressed video, etc.)
* Interaction methods and how those methods will provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students
* Source of course materials (e.g., created, textbook publisher, etc.)
* Instructor’s technological expertise including verification *Quality Matters at Southeastern* certification
* Any proposed student authentication method(s) in addition to the required secure login and pass code method and approval through the Provost

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Appendix B Course Information Sheet

Course:

Instructor:

Instructor’s e-mail address: Instructor’s office phone number: Instructor’s office number:

Hardware Requirements:

Software Requirements:

Specific Skills Students Need for Distance Education Delivery Format:

Link to Online Student Readiness Assessment (provided by University at time of course registration)



A Unit of the Technical College System of Georgia

**Distance Education Policies and Procedures**

**Manual**

Revised: 1/15

*Augusta Technical College*

**Distance Education Policies and Procedures Manual**

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**Introduction**

Augusta Technical College is a higher education institution of the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). Augusta Technical College is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award Associate of Science Degrees, Associate of Applied Science Degrees, Diplomas, and Technical Certificates of Credit. Contact the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097, telephone 404-679-4500, [http://www.sacscoc.org](http://www.sacscoc.org/) for questions about the accreditation of Augusta Technical College.

**Purpose and Scope**

The Distance Education Procedures Manual of Augusta Technical College complements the Technical College System of Georgia Policy Manual and the Georgia State Personnel Board Rules and Regulations. The manual defines general procedures that pertain to faculty responsibilities in the area of distance education. This manual is to be used in conjunction with the Augusta Technical College Policy Manual, college catalog, program standards, program guides, and all appropriate agency and college procedural guides.

**Section I Purpose and Goals**

* 1. **Distance Education and the Purpose of Augusta Technical College**

Augusta Technical College provides distance education programs as part of the overall purpose of the institution. The following Mission and Goals of Augusta Technical College are based on the concept that lifelong education benefits the individual, business and industry, and the community:

**Mission**

Augusta Technical College, a unit of the Technical College System of Georgia, is a public postsecondary institution that promotes and provides the education, economic, and community development needs of its five county service area. Associate of Science Degrees, Associate of Applied Science Degrees, diplomas, and technical certificates of credit are provided through traditional and distance delivery methods. The College achieves its mission by providing academic and technical education, student support services, customized business and industry training, economic development services, continuing education, and adult education services.

**Goals**

* To provide competency-based associate degree, diploma, and technical certificate of credit programs to prepare students for employment.
* To provide adult education services to prepare students for access to postsecondary education.
* To provide learning support courses to prepare students for access to postsecondary education.
* To provide opportunities for lifelong learning through credit and non-credit courses, workshops, and seminars.
* To contribute to the development of business and industry and the community through customized education, job training, and retraining.
* To provide a seamless education system by collaborating with area secondary and postsecondary institutions.
* To provide support services and activities to enable students to develop and achieve educational, personal, and career goals.
* To provide opportunities that allows employees to remain current in their respective positions.
* To provide a planning and management system for the allocation of resources to support programs and services.
* To provide a positive image through marketing and public relations activities.
* To provide an institutional development program to enhance the College mission.
* To provide services and resources to enhance planning and decision-making.

Offering distance education courses allows Augusta Technical College to serve a broader base of citizens beyond the confines of regularly scheduled on-campus classes. The option of taking a distance education course is particularly effective in promoting lifelong learning; people's life circumstances change and they have flexible options for continuing their education. Augusta Technical College offers distance education courses in support of Associate Degree programs, Diploma programs, and Certificate programs.

* 1. **Purpose Statement for Distance Education at Augusta Technical College**

The Distance Education program at Augusta Technical College supports the mission of the college by providing access to high quality, asynchronous educational opportunities to a diverse community of learners through the internet. By providing instruction, learning resources, and

services comparable to campus-based programs, the distance education program seeks to engage the student in the learning process by the effective use of technology.

* 1. **Distance Education Mission Statement**

To provide flexible course offerings and a variety of delivery methods to students seeking an alternative to the traditional classroom environment.

* 1. **Strategic Planning and Distance Education**

The Vice President of Academic Affairs is assigned administrative responsibility for the Distance Education program at the College. The Associate Dean of Distance Education, in conjunction with the Distance Education Steering Council, conducts planning and evaluation activities and reports to the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

The Associate Dean of Distance Education is the liaison between the distance education program at the College and the umbrella organization of Georgia Virtual Technical Connections (GVTC). Responsibilities of the Associate Dean of Distance Education include the following: Provides training and technical assistance for the development of all distance education courses. Provides feedback and assistance to instructional managers and faculty regarding online instruction. Generates evaluations, analyzes data, and calculates statistics for all distance education courses. Purchases, maintains, and trains faculty in new hardware and software to remain technologically up-to-date. Facilitates the creation, organization, and implementation of professional staff development activities related to distance education professional development. Updates and enhances online courses already developed. Reports to the VPAA concerning directives and information from GVTC headquarters. Updates the course list and descriptions for Augusta Tech distance education courses on the GVTC web site. Maintains Institutional Effectiveness documentation for the distance education department. Develops and updates the distance education web page as part of the College web site.

Continues to increase the number and variety of distance education courses offered. Effectively markets distance education courses to the community.

The Distance Education Steering Council consists of a six person committee along with the Associate Dean of Distance Education. The Distance Education Steering Council is composed of faculty who are developing and teaching distance education courses. The Distance Education Steering Council responsibilities include troubleshooting problems that arise in the development and delivery of distance education courses, proposing solutions to problems, and acting as a resource for faculty who are new to the development process. The members are selected

based upon experience, and may be rotated as needed. The Distance Education Steering Council also suggests and reviews distance education procedures for adoption by the College.

Goals for distance education are formulated in accordance with the Mission and Goals of the college by the Distance Education Steering Council, Associate Dean of Distance Education, and Vice President of Academic Affairs. The goals of distance education are as follows:

* + 1. Continue to increase the number and variety of distance education courses.
    2. Update and enhance developed courses.
    3. Effectively market distance education courses to the community.
    4. Maintain hardware and software updates in support of faculty and students in distance education.

**Section II**

**Augusta Technical College and Georgia Virtual Technical Connections**

Augusta Technical College is a founding institution of the Georgia Virtual Technical Institute (GVTI). The GVTI was conceptualized in June of 1997 by representatives of six technical institutes operated under the governance of DTAE. GVTI was created to be a consortium of schools offering online technical education that could be accessed anywhere, anytime, anyplace, as long as the student has access to a computer and an internet service provider.

The name was changed to the Georgia Virtual Technical College (GVTC) in June 2000, and then to Georgia Virtual Technical Connections in August 2011. GVTC now includes all 26 of Georgia's technical colleges.

The mission of GVTC is to provide support, guidance, and assistance to the state’s Technical Colleges in the design, development, and delivery of distance education and technology based learning initiative and to manage the state level online student application portal.

Member institutions develop individual distance education courses offered through the GVTC consortium. Administrative responsibility for individual course offerings is vested with the institution that offers the course. Prospective students may apply online with GVTC; however, the admissions applications and registration requests are forwarded to the technical college that offers the course for processing.

**Section III**

**Distance Education Procedures**

* 1. **Process for Distance Education Course Development and Implementation**

**3.1.1 Procedure for Approval to Develop an Online Course**

The Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) approves all requests for the development of distance education courses. The VPAA may approve the course or refer the request to the Associate Dean of Distance Education for further discussion and research. Requests to develop online courses should be initiated at least one full semester prior to the semester during which the course is expected to be offered.

A request for approval to develop an online course must be submitted to the VPAA according to the following procedure:

* + 1. Initiation of an Online Course

Courses selected for online offerings may come from either the occupational or general education curriculum. Suggestions for course offerings may come

from the faculty or administration. The courses are developed in congruence with the operational and strategic goals of the college. The college may be requested to develop a course by business and industry groups, TCSG, or GVTC. Non- credit course development is initiated and administered through the Vice President for Economic Development and do not adhere to the guidelines set by the Distance Education Department.

* + 1. Proposal to VPAA

The instructor initiating an online course (or creating the course in cases where the course is requested by another party) submits the request to the

Department Head and Dean/VPO. Once approved, the instructor submits the request for the course to the Associate Dean of Distance Education using the appropriate Request Form. (A copy of the Course Development Request Form may be found in the Appendix.) The instructor must have classroom experience teaching the requested course, as well as have previously taught a hybrid course prior to teaching online. Special approval may be granted by the VPAA. The Associate Dean of Distance Education reviews the course proposal and makes a recommendation. The Associate Dean of Distance Education then presents the proposal and recommendation to the VPAA. The VPAA may approve, deny, or postpone the development of the course.

* + 1. Instructor Training/Course Development

Upon approval to create an online course, the developer, in consultation with the VPAA, Dean, and Associate Dean of Distance Education, attends training appropriate for the development and implementation of the course. The training will include an eight hour Basic Angel training session and other training courses as appropriate. After appropriate training, the instructor proceeds to develop a Master shell for the course in accordance with guidelines for maintaining the academic integrity and rigor of the course. The course competencies and student learning outcomes of the course, as with traditional courses, are developed based on established credit hours and standards found in the TCSG Curriculum Data Base (A copy of Course Self-Review Form may be found in the Appendix).

* + 1. Review by the Associate Dean of Distance Education

The course developer presents an overview of the completed course to the Associate Dean of Distance Education prior to the course being offered. The Associate Dean of Distance Education evaluates the course using criteria established in the Self-Review Form. (A copy of this form may be found in the Appendix). After reviewing the course, the Associate Dean of Distance Education recommends implementation of the course, implementation after suggested revisions, or delayed implementation for substantive revisions. The Associate Dean of Distance Education may also recommend the course not be added to

the offering if there is a compelling reason. The overview is also sent to each respective Dean/VPO for further evaluation of content.

* + 1. Distance Education Course Offering

The new course, copied from the Master shell, shall be included in the schedule of course offerings. Students may register for the course during scheduled times of registration. The instructor, in consultation with the Dean, VPAA, and Associate Dean of Distance Education shall determine how often and during what semesters the course shall be offered. A detailed description of Online, Hybrid, and Web Enhanced courses is posted in SmartWeb beside the registration link, as well as in other designated areas of the website. The date and place of the proctored even will be listed in Banner. All online courses must show at least one, and up to three, on campus events in Banner.

* + 1. Distance Education Course Self-Review

Instructors complete a Self-Evaluation Form for every Distance Education course taught to demonstrate that the criteria of the course(s) have been met.

These evaluations are completed once per year and reviewed by the Associate Dean of Distance Education for Best Practices demonstrated and improvements made. Deans/VPOs can request the self-evaluations for further evaluation of content.

* + 1. **Procedure for Approval to Develop a Hybrid Course**

The same procedures are followed as in 3.1.1 with the following variations.

1. The instructor initiating the course (or creating the course in cases where the course is requested by another party) completes and submits the Hybrid Request Form. (A copy of Hybrid Request Form may be found in the Appendix.) Instructors complete a Hybrid Approval Request Form for every hybrid course offered.
2. A Hybrid course will be offered at a max of 50% online (K1) or at 33% online (K2). Any variation from the 33% is requested on the form.
3. If an instructor wishes to teach a K1 hybrid course, he or she must have 1) attended the full Basic Angel Training Course and 2) previously taught a course using Angel as Web Enhanced for at least one semester.
4. If an instructor wishes to teach a K2 hybrid course and has not yet completed the full Basic Angel training, he or she must first attend the Basic Hybrid Entry Training Course. A template is provided for the instructors and contains the

basic requirements needed for a 33% hybrid course. The instructor is not allowed to proceed past the 33% online offering until he or she attends the full Basic Angel Training Course and is approved based on the Hybrid Request Form. These instructors will also complete a Basic Hybrid Self-Review Form by mid-term of each semester.

1. Hybrid courses taught at 50% or more online (K1) will adhere to the same requirements and restrictions of the online courses. All hybrid instructors will complete a Hybrid Self-Review Form for each Hybrid course offered. This form is designed to monitor Best Practices development for hybrid courses. (Example: A course that offers up to 50% online should show numerous varieties of online assignments and interaction similar to an online course.) The Hybrid Self-

Review Form must be completed and submitted by mid-term of each semester (A copy of Hybrid Self-Review Form may be found in the Appendix).

1. Hybrid courses must be ready for student interaction on the first day of the semester. Students will have access to Angel on that day, even if the physical class meeting is not until later in the week. Note that on some occasions, a hybrid class may not meet in person until the 2nd or 3rd week of the term. In such cases, the instructor is responsible for emailing students to welcome and orient

them to the class site and assignments. Students should be given an assignment in Angel, but it cannot count against students’ grades if they do not complete the assignment before the physical class meets. The first assignment should be submitted within the week of the first class meeting.

1. Attendance policy for hybrid courses is based on the 10% rule by combining the percentage of seat time and online time. Instructors have students post assignments online that demonstrate student attendance comparable to class- time. Failure to submit these assignments results in the student being counted

absent for that particular percentage of class time. Once the combined results exceed 10% of total class time, the student may be suspended from class.

Students who have logged in to Angel **or** attended a class session before No Show rosters are submitted cannot be reported as No Shows. Angel log in counts as attendance.

1. Only the actual times/dates that students will be required to be on campus are scheduled in Banner.
2. Classrooms will not be scheduled during the online portion of the class. It will be understood by the student that when registering for a hybrid course, a percentage of the work will be done online.
   * 1. **Procedure for Adopting an Existing Course**
3. Request to Adopt an Existing Course

At least one semester prior to the projected date of offering, the instructor should submit a request to the appropriate department head, Dean, and the Associate Dean of Distance Education to adopt an existing course. The request should include the course name and its projected offering date.

1. Approval to Adopt a Course

The Associate Dean of Distance Education will present the adoption request to the VPAA. The VPAA may approve or deny the request.

1. Obtaining the Course

The Associate Dean of Distance Education will make a copy of the course on the Angel server and set the instructor access.

1. Instructor Training/Course Adaptation

Upon approval to adapt an online course, the developer shall, in consultation with the VPAA, Dean, and Associate Dean of Distance Education, attend training appropriate for the revision and implementation of the course. The training must include Angel training and may include other training courses as appropriate.

After appropriate training, the instructor may proceed to make adaptations to the course. The course will be evaluated as previously described under the Procedure for Approval to Develop an Online Course.

1. Course Offering

The new course shall be included in the schedule of course offerings as previously described under the Procedure for Approval to Develop an Online Course.

**Section IV**

**Distance Education Faculty and Students**

**Faculty**

**4.1 Credentials for Teaching Online Courses**

All faculty members teaching or developing distance education courses must meet the same criteria for academic and professional preparation as those teaching courses delivered in

traditional formats. In some instances, third party vendor certifications may be required as well as the appropriate academic credential.

**4.2. Adjunct Faculty**

Adjunct faculty teaching distance education courses are held to the same academic and professional qualifications as full-time faculty members. All adjunct instructors are required to provide students with contact information. This information should be documented in the course syllabus.

* 1. **Training**

Faculty (full-time or adjunct) developing and/or teaching distance learning courses must participate in training activities necessary to successfully deliver a distance education course. Such activities may include training in the principles, instructional methodologies, evaluation procedures, and technologies used in the development and implementation of distance education courses.

Appropriate training for faculty involved in developing distance education courses shall be provided by the College. Training activities will be selected according to the individual's specific needs, appropriateness for the mode of distance education delivery, and appropriateness for the nature of the class being taught. Training activities may include formal classroom preparation, successful completion of training activities conducted by the Associate Dean of Distance Education, participation in training provided by third party or proprietary vendors, participation in training provided by other educational organizations, mentoring conducted by a faculty member already involved in the delivery of distance education course, or a combination of the above.

All Distance Education instructors are required to complete at least fifteen hours of their required annual staff development training hours toward the enrichment of their distance education courses.

* 1. **Equipment and Resources**

Augusta Technical College shall provide the equipment and software resources necessary to create, teach, and administer a distance education course. This may be done through resources available at either the College or in conjunction with GVTC.

A faculty development center is located in room 225 of the Instructional Technology Center (ITC/1000 building) on the Augusta Campus. Instructional technology available in this room includes computers, scanners, specialized software, digital cameras, and other equipment. The faculty development center is available to all faculty for the development of distance education courses.

On occasion, an instructor may wish to use specialized software or hardware in order to create or deliver an online course. Requests for the purchase of specialized software or hardware may be made to the Associate Dean of Distance Education who will process and send to the appropriate administrator for approval. Purchase requests for specialized hardware or software used in the development and/or delivery of a distance education course must be made through the request for purchase procedures at the College.

Downloads (Respondus/StudyMate/Softchalk/TurnItIn/Elluminate Plan and Publish) - This username and password MAY BE shared with faculty as GVTC encourages faculty to use in their distance education courses. Go to this website: <http://www.gvtc.org/download>

Username: gvtc Password: downloads

* 1. **Teaching Loads**

A faculty member developing a course for distance education delivery may be relieved of class teaching assignments for the purpose of course development and implementation. The amount of release time shall be the number of contact hours equivalent to the number of contact hours of the class being developed. This reduction in teaching assignments shall terminate with the successful development of the course. Release time for the development of any given course shall not exceed two semesters. The VPAA may grant an extension of release time for development purposes when appropriate. When a distance education course is implemented it

is considered to have the same number of contact hours as a traditional class and factors into the teaching load accordingly.

* 1. **Faculty Responsibilities in Distance Education Instruction**

Faculty responsibilities in online instruction are similar to those for the traditional classroom setting. While the responsibilities are similar, it is recognized that the methods of meeting these instructional responsibilities may differ from those used in traditional classroom settings.

During the first week of each term, instructors of online and hybrid courses must

1. Direct students to the SmarterMeasure Assessment and collect student scores.
2. Maintain roster accuracy on a daily basis. Students who are removed from the roster in Banner must be disabled in (not deleted from) Angel.
3. Disable any course that has been cancelled, so students will not have access. Then let the Distance Education Department know to delete the course in Angel.
4. Base 7 day roster attendance on a log-in report set to begin the first day of classes. Note that on some occasions, a hybrid class may not meet in person until the 2nd or 3rd week of the term. In such cases, the instructor is responsible for emailing students to welcome and orient them to the class site and assignments. Students should be given an assignment in Angel, but it cannot count against students’ grades if they do not complete the assignment before the physical class meets. The first assignment should be submitted within the week of the first class meeting.
5. If a student logs into a hybrid Angel course but does not physically attend class by the 7- day roster date, the student will not be considered a NS since the hybrid portion of the course will be available on the first day of the semester. If the student continues to miss class after the 7-day roster is due, then the 10% withdrawal rule will apply.
6. Disable students who are no-showed on the 7 day roster.
7. Require an assignment that students must submit either in Angel or a third-party software to prove interactive attendance.
8. Manage courses in which students received Incompletes from the previous quarter. These courses must be disabled at midterm.

For each online or hybrid course taught, the instructor shall

* Follow the course request process and submit the appropriate forms
* Provide a syllabus detailing course competencies, schedule, course requirements, grading policies, and other pertinent information. See 4.6.1.
* Provide contact information including email, office phone, and fax number (when appropriate). Preferred method of contact and days/hours of availability must be indicated.
* Respond to all student emails within 24 hours, except on weekends or days identified on the syllabus as unavailable to students. Emails should include a salutation to address students by name when possible.
* Keep records of student work and participation in class. The gradebook in Angel or the third part software must be an accurate and current reflection of each student’s progress.

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* Run a course back-up on a weekly basis
* Provide students with assignments (at least one per week) and due dates. Title IV requires that students submit work every week.
* Require interaction among students such as discussion assignments, blogs, or team work
* Interact with students on a weekly basis, at a minimum, through announcements, emails, discussion boards, or gradebook comments
* Use Angel or third-party software for submission of all assignments. Assignments should not be sent using SmartWeb. Attachments are too large and will fill up the system, and many will be deleted so it is not a reliable source.
* Provide students with assessment and grading information.
* Provide students with an opportunity to evaluate the class and the instructor.
* Protect student academic confidentiality.
* Map assignments to Student Learning Outcomes.
* Adhere to copyright laws. Refer to TEACH Act legislation for more information:<http://www.copyright.gov/docs/regstat031301.html>
* Post work ethics assignments and information in Angel (except Gen Ed).
* Turn on student tracking in all folders and assignments to assess student site use.
* Maintain an LOR for larger content items, such as audio or video files
* Compress PowerPoint files to reduce size
* Complete a course review form each year and ensure course compliance with all items on the review form
* Maintain a Master shell and, when possible, copy each semester’s course shells from the Master at least two weeks prior to the first day of classes. Courses must be copied and ready at least 24 hours before the first day of the semester.
* Adhere to institutional policies as detailed in the Augusta Technical College catalog and this document.
* Complete 15 hours (per year, not per course) of staff development pertaining to Angel or online teaching and keep abreast of the content on the Distance Education Staff Development web page in the secure section of the Augusta Tech site.

Additionally, for each online course, the instructor shall

* Deliver all required content and assignments asynchronously. No synchronous activities may be required except for the proctored events.
* Schedule and proctor at least one and not more than three graded assignments on campus. Students with other class and/or employment conflicts must be accommodated. The proctored event should be reflected in the course schedule in Banner.
* Keep records of students’ proof of identification (any valid photo identification) provided at each proctored event.
* Complete and keep records of proctoring forms for out of town students.

In all regards, the distance education course is to maintain the same academic integrity as those delivered in traditional classroom formats. It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure that academic integrity and rigor are maintained in each distanced education course taught.

Distance education courses are subject to a review both before implementation as a general course offering and at other times deemed appropriate (after necessary revision, upgrade, etc.).

**4.6****.1 Syllabus Requirements, in addition to course specific, school, and departmental requirements**

Syllabi for all hybrid courses must include the following:

1. **Student Code of Conduct:** A student’s password will allow access only to his/her own account. Students should not give out their passwords or allow any other person, including family members, to access their account for any reason. It is a violation of section K.1f of the student code of conduct policy for any student to log into to a course as another student. It is also a violation of the policy for a student to permit another person to log in to a course using the password belonging to the student registered for the course or interact in the course in any way.
2. **Hybrid Attendance Policy:** Attendance policy for a Hybrid courses will be based on the 10% rule by combining the percentage of seat time and online time. The student will be required to post assignments in Angel that demonstrate student attendance comparable to class-time. Failure to submit these assignments will result in the student being counted absent for that particular percentage of class time. Once the combined results exceed 10% of total class time, the student will be suspended from class.
3. **Student-Initiated Withdrawal from Course(s):** If a student decides to drop the class, the student will need to withdraw officially from the class by completing and submitting a Schedule Change Form to the Financial Aid Office.

Syllabi for all fully online courses must include the following:

1. **Student Code of Conduct:** A student’s password will allow access only to his/her own account. Students should not give out their passwords or allow any other person, including family members, to access their account for any reason. It is a violation of section K.1f of the student code of conduct policy for any student to log into to a course as another student. It is also a violation of the policy for a student to permit another person to log in to a course using the password belonging to the student registered for the course or interact in the course in any way.
2. **Testing Rules:** Augusta Tech students who attend any of the three campuses, are enrolled in a program, and taking an online course, must take any proctored event/exams at the campus of their instructor.

GA Technical schools transient students are proctored through their home school and need to contact instructors in advance.

Other transient students must locate an official proctoring site in their area – the public library, other colleges, military base education site, etc. and provide instructors the contact information in advance. Students will be responsible for any fees associated with using an outside proctoring site.

A Proctor Request form is available under the CollegeInfo tab in every course. Student’s picture ID will be checked prior to the administering of any proctored event.

1. **Online Attendance Policy:** To complete this class successfully, students are required to participate in Angel and complete assignments within a weekly period (7 calendar days). Failure to follow the attendance policy may result in withdrawal from class. Withdrawal from a class may affect a student’s present and future academic and financial aid status.
2. **Student-Initiated Withdrawal from Course(s):** If a student decides to drop this course, he or she must complete an official drop form through admissions, or email LaTosha Hicks ([latosha.hicks@augustatech.edu](mailto:latosha.hicks@augustatech.edu)) and Mike Violette ([mviolette@augustatech.edu](mailto:mviolette@augustatech.edu)) in student records, as well as the instructor, and request a drop. The email should include the student’s name and student ID number, as well as the course name. Once the email has been received, the student will be officially dropped from the class.
   1. **Class size**

A full class size for distance education courses is calculated at 20 students. The minimum class size must be approved by the VPAA.

* 1. **Teaching Load and Remuneration**

Full-time Faculty

When an online class causes the hours teaching to exceed the normal teaching load, a contract can be awarded for that class.

Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct faculty will be issued a contract based on the number of hours taught and the academic and professional preparation of the faculty member.

* 1. **Faculty Evaluation**

The Deans of the respective academic divisions of the college evaluate faculty members annually. Performance in all Distance Education courses will be included as a part of the instructor's evaluation process. Performance in Distance Education courses shall be treated on an equal basis with performance in traditional classroom settings.

Faculty members teaching Distance Education courses must include ten hours per year of relevant professional development activities for online instruction in their professional development plans.

* 1. **Intellectual Property**

All intellectual property rights associated with any distance education course developed by an employee of Augusta Technical College when produced as a voluntary or assigned duty or with substantial use of college resources, facilities, or funds shall belong to the Technical College System of Georgia.

Any scholarly article, thesis, dissertation, or instructional material prepared by the course creator as a part of the routine teaching process shall be the proprietorship of the course creator even if created as a result of online course development.

In order that the Department be able to utilize to the best and fullest extent all works produced for it, and all works provided for its use, anyone producing work for the Department and anyone providing work for the Department's use, represents and warrants that such works:

* + Do not violate any law;
  + Do not violate or infringe any intellectual property right (including but not limited to copyright, trademark, patent, or right of publicity) of any person or firm; and
  + Do not libel, defame, or invade the privacy of any person or firm.
  1. **Evaluation of Online Courses**
     1. **Course Integrity**

Faculty are encouraged to explore new technologies that may enhance delivery of distance education instruction as they become available. Instructors are also required to provide a variety of assignment and interaction throughout the course that will encourage individual responses from students. Consistent dialog with students allows the instructors to develop a profile of each student which helps determine the validity of their coursework.

* + 1. **Review Procedure**

The Distance Education instructors must submit the proposed course for approval as described in Section 3.1.1. As a part of the evaluation process, the online instructor shall submit a Self-Review form for the course to the Associate Dean of Distance Education. The Associate Dean of Distance Education shall use the overview to assess the course and may make one of the following recommendations:

1. Course may be offered in subsequent semester without revision.
2. Course may be offered after noted revisions.
3. Course needs to be revised and re-submitted to the committee for approval.
4. Course should not be offered.

Courses may be given an additional review when they have been revised or substantially altered in content, instructional methodology, or at other appropriate occasions.

* + 1. **Student Evaluation**

Distance Education students shall have the opportunity to evaluate each course for which they are registered on a semester basis. All students are sent an email to their campus student email account to evaluate all courses for which they are registered. All instructors and deans, as well as appropriate administrative personnel, have access to the evaluation summaries. The results of the student course evaluations will be used in the annual evaluation of the instructor as well as in any necessary longitudinal studies (see Appendix).

* 1. **Retention Plan**

In order to encourage retention in online courses, the Distance Learning office has developed a three tiered plan designed to assist instructors, students, and counseling staff.

* + 1. **Instructional Resources**

The Distance Education office provides support materials for distance education instructors.

Instructors are required to attend training prior to distance education instruction and then a

minimum of 15 hours per year thereafter. Training sessions include techniques for tracking and improving retention. Review of new courses and individual meetings with the Associate Dean of Distance Education encourage the use of a variety of the techniques described below.

* Early Alert Reports

All distanced education courses should have assignments linked to Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). Instructors should set up automated reports to identify students who do not have a 70% average per SLO. Instructors should to follow up the reports with an email to students identified, encouraging improvement and listing additional academic and counseling resources.

* Learning Communities

Instructors are taught techniques to foster community ties within the online environment. The core of community building is dynamic communication between the instructor and the students and between students themselves.

First, frequent and personal communication between the instructor and students creates a bond that leads to higher retention rates. Quick response to student emails is essential to dynamic communication between the instructor and the students. The acceptable time frame for instructors is set by the Associate Dean of Distance Education at 12-24 hours. Students who receive frequent communication from the instructor develop a sense of belonging that is key to finishing the course. Additionally, instructors make use of weekly announcements and assignment feedback to assure students of the instructor’s presence and availability. Tokens, html coding throughout the course pages, are also available to address students by name and develop a personal learning environment.

A second component of building a learning community is interaction between students. These types of opportunities include use of LMS email to ask questions of other students, chat rooms where students can interact and ask questions of one another, and Q and A discussion boards where students can view the questions that other students are asking of the instructor. Instructors are required by the Associate Dean of Distance Education to demonstrate use of activities or tools, such as those above, which foster engagement and relationships among students.

4.12.2 Student Resources

The distance education department addresses student needs through self-assessment, tutoring, and counseling options.

* Self-Assessment

The Distance Education Office encourages students to make use of SmarterMeasure online readiness testing. Students are scored in several skill and learning style areas to indicate readiness for online learning. Instructors and students have access to a student’s scores, and additional resource sites are listed on each score report to encourage students to improve their skills in areas that are deemed troublesome.

* **CollegeInfo Tab**

A CollegeInfo tab has been added to all courses listed in the LMS. This tab contains easily accessible answers to Frequently Asked Questions to ensure that lack of Angel proficiency is not a reason for student attrition. The tab also includes links to counseling services, so that

students who are at risk because of personal issues have easy access to helpful resources. The counseling link offers services to help students choose a career, discuss appropriate classes, establish academic adjustments, improve grades, and overcome personal barriers to success. Additionally, academic tutoring resources are described on the CollegeInfo tab. Students in online classes have access to SmartThinking, an online tutoring service. The service is provided at no cost to the students. Every online class is required to have the nugget for entry to SmartThinking on the front page of the course.

**4.12.3 Counseling Staff**

* Warning Emails

The Counseling staff is available to work with students via phone and email as well as in person, so online students have access to counseling services. Instructors are trained in the use of Agents, automated reports targeting students who need additional academic support.

Warning emails can be sent to students who are in danger of not successfully completing the course or meeting acceptable standards for any single Learning Objective of the course. These warnings include the following list of links to counseling services:

Counseling Center: <http://www.augustatech.edu/counseling_center.html>

Academic Counseling: <http://www.augustatech.edu/AcademicCareerCounseling.htm> Special Needs/Disability Counseling:

<http://www.augustatech.edu/counseling_center/specialneeds.html> Special Populations Counseling:

<http://www.augustatech.edu/counseling_center/specialpop.html>

* Early Alerts

The Counseling Center also has an Early Alert system, so instructors can inform the Counseling staff of a student who is not successfully completing course work. The Staff will contact the student to offer counseling services.

* 1. **Library Services**
     1. **Access**

Faculty and students participating in distance education courses shall have full access to the facilities of the library at Augusta Technical College and to libraries with which the College has a resource sharing agreement. Faculty and students may access library services online from the College website, as well as the *CollegeInfo* tab that is included in every Distance Education course. An online library orientation is available to students as well as an “Ask a Librarian” contact link.

* 1. **Students**
     1. **Registration Process (through 2014)**
        + Current student attempts to register for Distance Education courses via Banner.
* Student is directed to the Online Courses Registration Information link for a list of courses, an online orientation, and other online information.
* Student views the course schedule page and decides which course(s) he or she would like to enroll in.
* Student returns to Banner
* Student registers for class.
* GVTC students and all other transient students register through Student Services.
* Student is added to the course in Angel on the first day of the semester by the Associate Dean of Distance Education.
  + 1. **Student Services/Transient Student Registration**

For transient students, Student Services performs the following functions:

* Validates each student’s eligibility to take course(s).
* Checks course enrollment number.
* Replies to student to confirm or deny enrollment in classes and provides instructions for contacting the instructor.
  + 1. **Withdrawal Process**
* Student will email the instructor and the designated persons in Student Records of the intent to withdraw.
* The designated persons in Student Records will withdraw the student and send notification to the student and the instructor.
* Faculty disables student from the course and emails the student’s LDA to Student Records
  + 1. **Administrative Withdraw Process**
* Students may be administratively withdrawn for failure to demonstrate attendance by logging into their online courses and failing to submit required assignments for 7 consecutive days during the first 60% of the semester.
* The instructor will send the student an email informing him or her of the withdrawal and send a copy of the message to the Dean under which the course falls.
* The student may contact the Dean and the instructor to appeal the withdrawal.
* The Dean will then communicate with the instructor regarding the outcome of the appeal proceedings.
* Once withdrawn, the student will be disabled from the online course roster and be unable to access course materials.
* Instructors must maintain attendance and grade records for withdrawn students, so should not those students from Angel.
  + 1. **Student Privacy**

In accordance with the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html) (FERPA), Augusta Technical College protects the privacy of students enrolled in distance education courses by ensuring the privacy and integrity of the communications and records used within the approved Learning Management System (LMS) course.

Student access to online course content is protected by a unique and secure login and password. A secure grading system is provided. Access to student coursework

is restricted to the instructor and LMS administrators. Augusta Technical College also adheres to the [Georgia Virtual Technical Connection (GVTC) Privacy Policy.](http://www.gvtc.org/Resources/PrivacyPolicy.aspx)

Only course or school email addresses are used for communication within the course. Students accessing grades within the system are limited only to their own. Once a course has been completed, student records are stored within an archived version of the course which is completed at the administrative level every few months. Instructors export and maintain their own electronic versions of course grades and other pertinent information.

Personal information is specific to the user. The only personal information displayed within a distance education course is information that the student elects to provide in response to a discussion board or an assignment. These said postings are only available to members of the class. Students are required to use only course or school email for communication. Any other personal information residing within a course is restricted to LMS administrators and is not shared with any source outside of the Technical College System of Georgia.

Every student registered in a distance education course at the College receives a unique login. The identification number assigned to students allows them access to their course content which resides within the College LMS. The password provided is generic and requires that students change the password prior to accessing their course content. The students also have access to change their password at any

time after that. A secondary secure login and password is also required for entry to any third party software associated with the LMS (see Appendix *Institutional Policy IV.D.1.a*).

* + 1. **Student Complaints**

Students who have complaints about academic issues should follow the established chain of command based on the Grievance Policy found in the student handbook and first attempt to contact their instructor. Should the issue not be resolved, they can then contact the Associate Dean of Distance Education who will direct the student to the appropriate academic dean if needed. For content delivery issues, the students should contact the Associate Dean of Distance Education (see Appendix).

* + 1. **Proctored Events/ Student Authentication**

Augusta Tech online students who attend any of the College campuses are required to participate in one to three proctored events. Any student enrolled in a program and taking an online course must take the scheduled proctored event(s) at the campus of the course instructor. The event(s) must be monitored by the instructor of the course.

Transient students from GA Technical schools will have their events proctored through their home school and need to make arrangements through the instructor of the Augusta Tech class. The instructor will contact the responsible party at that school for proctoring information.

Other transient students must locate an official proctoring site in their area – the public library, other colleges, military base education site, etc. and provide instructors

the contact information in advance. Students will be responsible for any fees associated with using an outside proctoring site.

A Proctor Request form is available in every course under the *CollegeInfo* tab. Students’ picture IDs will be checked during attendance at each proctored event.

There are no additional fees associated with the authentication of student identification (see Appendix *Institutional Policy IV.D.1.b*).

Proctored events scheduled as final exams will be administered during the last week of the semester (to include the scheduled exams days). All course content pertaining to the proctored events must be completed no later than one day prior to the scheduled event. In-class exams scheduled during the normal exam days will take precedence over online events.

Proctored event dates and times will be scheduled as such in Banner. Make-up or alternate dates will be listed in the course syllabus or calendar.

* 1. **Learning Management System Disaster Preparedness Documentation**

A copy of the Disaster Preparedness Documentation for the Angel/Blackboard LMS may be found in the Appendix.

**Appendix**

Documents associated with Distance Education

Note: These documents are reference only and are not to be distributed or copied.

1. *Online Course Development Request Form*
2. *Hybrid Course Development Request Form*
3. *Online Course Self-Review Form - used by the Instructors to document development of an online course, and used by Associate Dean of Distance Education and Deans to evaluate the development of an online course*
4. *Hybrid Instructor Self Review Form – used by the Instructors to document development of a hybrid course, and used by Associate Dean of Distance Education and Deans to evaluate the development of a hybrid course*
5. *Online Course Evaluation Form – delivered online and used by students to evaluate online courses*
6. *Hybrid Course Evaluation Form – delivered online and used by students to evaluate hybrid courses*
7. *Distance Education Retention Plan*
8. *Augusta Technical College Policy IV.D.1.a. Procedure for Distance Education Student Privacy*
9. *Student Complaints*
10. *Augusta Technical College Policy IV.D.1.b Distance Education Procedure for Projected Additional Student Charges*
11. [*Learning Management System Disaster Preparedness Documentation*](file://hydra/ATC_Web/OnlineCourses/blackboardDisasterPreparednessPlan.pdf)

**Augusta Technical College - Online Course Development Request Form SPRING SEMESTER 2013 \*\*\*Note – course content must be completed and reviewed prior to**



**offering**

Name of Instructor Date of Request

Number and Title of Proposed Online Course

Program/Curricular Area Timeline for Development

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term to be developed | Estimated date of completion (must be prior to delivery) |
| Term to be delivered | How often will this course be offered online? |
| Has this course been previously delivered as Online? Yes No | Has this course been previously delivered as Hybrid?  Yes No |
| Has this instructor previously taught a Hybrid course? Yes No |  |

Rationale for Offering (does the course content lend itself to a full on-line model, lab requirements, etc.)

**Administrative Use Only**

**Augusta Technical College Angel Hybrid Request Form**



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Decision:    * Approve    * Decline   **Department Head Date Comments:**   1. Decision:    * Approve    * Decline   **Department Dean/VPO Date Comments:**  **Return to Tammy O’Brien at this point** | 1. Decision:    * Approve    * Decline     Instructor meets training requirements Yes No Director of Institutional Planning and Effectiveness notified Yes No  **Associate Dean of Distance Education Date Comments:**   1. Decision:    * Approve    * Decline   **Vice President of Academic Affairs Date Comments**:\_  5.\_  **Vice President of Institutional Date Planning and Effectiveness** |

**\*\*\*Note – Courses offered over 33% online must be completed and reviewed prior to offering**

**Please complete the form on the computer, print and then route through the proper signatures**

**\*\*\*Be thorough with your answers**

**Previously approved requests do not have to be resubmitted**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | Instructor’s Name | *Click here to enter text.* |
| 2. | Course ID (Prefix and Number – Ex: COMP1000) | *Click here to enter text.* |
| ***3.*** | Request to Offer Course | *Choose an item.* |
| 4. | Instructor Completed Angel Training | *Choose an item.* |
| 5. | Proposed Online/In-Class Percent | *Choose an item.* |
| 6. | Total Course **Contact** Hours (from standards) | *Click here to enter text.* |

1. **Banner** Dates and Times **(in-class times only)**
   * Start Time: *Click here to enter text.*
   * End Time: *Click here to enter text.*
   * Days : M T W R F S S



1. Estimated date of content completion (must be prior to delivery)
2. Rationale for Online Component **\*\*\*Explain with some detail what part of the course content lends itself to online learning as opposed to in-class.**

*Click here to enter text.*

Instructor’s Signature

Date

Dept Head Signature

Date

Dean/VPO Signature

Date

Assoc Dean of Dist Ed Signature

Date

VPAA Signature

Date

Comments:

**Augusta Technical College Online Course Evaluation**

1. How many online courses have you previously taken?
   1. 0
   2. 1
   3. 2
   4. 3
   5. 4 or more
2. Has taking this course increased your knowledge of the topic?
   1. not at all
   2. somewhat
   3. quite a lot
3. How many hours did you devote to this class per week?
   1. 1-2 hours per week
   2. 3-4 hours per week
   3. 5-6 hours per week
   4. 7-8 hours per week
   5. 9 or more hours per week
4. About how many times did you contact the instructor for assistance during the course?
   1. 1-2 times
   2. 3-4 times
   3. 5-6 times
   4. 7-8 times
   5. 9 or more times
5. How do you rate your style as an online learner?
   1. highly motivated and able to complete the required online work
   2. motivated and able to complete the required online work
   3. sometimes motivated and self-disciplined enough to complete the required online work
   4. not motivated or self-discplined enough to complete the required online work
6. How effective was the instructor in his/her distance instruction methods?
   1. highly effective
   2. effective
   3. somewhat effective
   4. not effective
7. During the term, the instructor used a variety of instruction methods and technologies.
   1. Strongly agree
   2. Agree
   3. Disagree
   4. Strongley disagree
8. How satisfied were you with the technical support received during this course?
   1. Very satisfied
   2. Satisfied
   3. Somewhat satisfied
   4. Not satisfied
9. Did technical problems interfere with you learning the content?
   1. Yes
   2. No
10. The instructor interacted with me each week by:
    1. email
    2. announcements
    3. feedback on assignments
    4. discussion boards
    5. online chat or in person
    6. more than on of the above
    7. none of the above
11. The instructor responded to my emails with an average response time of:
    1. 1-2 days
    2. 3-4 days
    3. 5-6 days
    4. 7 or more days
12. Effective use of communication was used throughout the course.
    1. Strongly Agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
13. Instructor encouraged interactivity among students in discussions and/or activities.
    1. Strongly Agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
14. Instructor provided feedback on assignments and projects in a timely manner.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly Disagree
15. Instructions for the course lessons, projects, and assignments were easy to follow.
    1. Strongly Agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
16. The purpose, objectives and grading procedures for the course were clearly stated on the syllabus.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
17. Examinations and graded assignment or graded activities were consistent with course objectives.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
18. Would you recommend this course to others?
    1. yes
    2. no
19. Would you enroll in other Angel delivered courses (hybrid or online) given the opportunity?
    1. yes
    2. no
20. The course web site was available at times I tried to access it.
    1. Always
    2. Frequently
    3. Occasionally
    4. Never
21. The computers on campus were available and working when I needed them.
    1. Always
    2. Frequently
    3. Occasionally
    4. Never
    5. I did not use them
22. How did you register for this course?
    1. I registered myself using web registration
    2. My advisor registered me
    3. Student Services registered me
    4. Other
23. During registration, I was given sufficient guidance to begin the online course.
    1. True
    2. False
24. For the most part the admissions staff responded to me:
    1. Quickly and courteously
    2. Slowly and coureously
    3. Quickly and rudely
    4. Slowly and rudely
25. During registration and throughout the quarter, the financial aid staff responded to me:
    1. Quickly and courteously
    2. Slowly and courteously
    3. Quickly and rudely
    4. Slowly and rudely
26. Please add any comments that you have about the course.

**Augusta Technical College Hybrid Course Evaluation**

1. During registration and throughout the quarter, the financial aid staff responded to me:
   1. Quickly and courteously
   2. Slowly and courteously
   3. Quickly and rudely
   4. Slowly and rudely
2. For the most part the admissions staff responded to me:
   1. Quickly and courteously
   2. Slowly and coureously
   3. Quickly and rudely
   4. Slowly and rudely
3. How many hybrid courses have you previously taken?
   1. 0
   2. 1
   3. 2
   4. 3
   5. 4 or more
4. Has taking this course increased your knowledge of the topic?
   1. not at all
   2. somewhat
   3. quite a lot
5. In which way did the online work enhance the on campus work?
   1. Online assignments sufficiently reinforced and expanded upon material covered in class.
   2. Online assignments sufficiently reinforced material covered in class, but did not add anything to the content.
   3. Online assignments were not used to sufficiently reinforce or cover required material.
   4. There were few required online assignments.
   5. There were no required online assignments.
6. How many hours per week did you spend working on hybrid assignments outside of class?
   1. less than 1 hour
   2. 1-3 hours
   3. 4-6 hours
   4. more than 6 hours
7. How do you rate your style as an online learner?
   1. highly motivated and able to complete the required online work
   2. motivated and able to complete the required online work
   3. sometimes motivated and self-discplined enough to complete the required online work
   4. not motivated or self-discplined enough to complete the required online work
8. How effective was the instructor in his/her distance learning instruction?
   1. highly effective
   2. effective
   3. somewhat effective
   4. not effective
9. Rate your attitude toward the hybrid format:
   1. The flexibilty to do work on my own in combination with some on campus time is best for me.
   2. I would prefer entirely online classes.
   3. I would prefer entirely on campus classes.
10. How satisfied were you with the educational experience gained in this course?
    1. Very satisfied
    2. Satisfied
    3. Somewhat satisfied
    4. Not satisfied
    5. Did not use
11. How satisfied were you with the technical support received during this course?
    1. Very satisfied
    2. Satisfied
    3. Somewhat satisfied
    4. Not satisfied
12. Did technical problems interfere with you learning the content?
    1. Yes
    2. No
13. The instructor used in-class sessions effectively.
    1. Always
    2. Most of the time
    3. Some weeks
    4. No weeks
14. The instructor responded to my emails with an average response time of:
    1. 1-2 days
    2. 3-4 days
    3. 5-6 days
    4. 7 or more days
15. Effective use of communication was used throughout the course.
    1. Strongly Agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
16. Instructor encouraged interactivity among students in discussions and/or activities.
    1. Strongly Agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
17. Instructor provided feedback on assignments and projects in a timely manner.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly Disagree
18. Instructions for the course lessons, projects, and assignments were clear.
    1. Strongly Agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
19. The purpose, objectives and grading procedures for the course were clearly stated on the syllabus.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
20. Examinations and graded assignment or graded activities were consistent with course objectives.
    1. Strongly agree
    2. Agree
    3. Disagree
    4. Strongly disagree
21. Would you enroll in other Angel delivered courses (hybrid or online) given the opportunity?
    1. yes
    2. no
22. The course web site was available at times I tried to access it.
    1. Always
    2. Frequently
    3. Occasionally
    4. Never
23. The computers on campus were available and working when I needed them.
    1. Always
    2. Frequently
    3. Occasionally
    4. Never
24. Would you recommend this course to others?
    1. yes
    2. no
25. Please add any comments that you have about the course.

**Online Course Evaluation**

**Description:**

**Date Created:** 2/14/2012 4:31:48 PM

**Date Range:** 2/15/2012 12:00:00 AM - 6/1/2020 11:59:00 PM

Word PDF

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Page - 1 | | |
|  |  |  |
|  | Q1 How many online courses have you previously taken? |  |
| 0*[Code = 1]* |
| 1*[Code = 2]* |
| 2*[Code = 3]* |
| 3*[Code = 4]* |
| 4 or more*[Code = 5]* |
| *Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1* |
|  |  |  |
|  | Q2 Has taking this course increased your knowledge of the topic? |  |
| Quite a lot*[Code = 3]* |
| Somewhat*[Code = 2]* |
| Not at all*[Code = 1]* |
| *Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1* |
|  |  |  |
|  | Q3 How many hours did you devote to this class per week? |  |
| 1-2 hours per week*[Code = 1]* |
| 3-4 hours per week*[Code = 2]* |
| 5-6 hours per week*[Code = 3]* |
| 7-8 hours per week*[Code = 4]* |
| 9 or more hours per week*[Code = 5]* |
| *Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1* |
|  |  |  |
|  | Q4 About how many times did you contact the instructor for assistance during the course? |  |
| 1-2 times*[Code = 1]* |
| 3-4 times*[Code = 2]* |
| 5-6 times*[Code = 3]* |
| 7-8 times*[Code = 4]* |
| 9 or more times*[Code = 5]* |
| *Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1* |
|  |  |  |
|  | Q5 How do you rate your style as an online learner? |  |
| Highly motivated and able to complete the required online work *[Code = 1]* |
| Motivated and able to complete the required online work *[Code = 2]* |
| Sometimes motivated and self-disciplined enough to complete the required online work *[Code = 3]* |
| Not motivated or self-disciplined enough to complete the required online work*[Code = 4]* |
| *Required answers: 1 Allowed answers: 1* |

**Distance Education Department**

Retention Plan

In order to encourage retention in online courses, the Distance Education office has developed a three tiered plan designed to assist instructors, students, and counseling staff.

***Tier 1: Instructional Resources***

The Distance Education office provides support materials for online instructors. Instructors are required to attend training both before beginning as an online instructor and then 10 hours per year thereafter. Training sessions include techniques for tracking and improving retention. Review of new courses and individual meetings with the Associate Dean of Distance Education encourage the use of a variety of the techniques described below.

Early Alert Reports

All online courses have assignments linked to Student Learning Outcomes (SLO). Instructors should set up automated reports to identify students who do not have a 70% average per SLO. Instructors should follow up the reports with an email to students identified, encouraging improvement and listing additional academic and counseling resources. Early Alert Report Forms are posted on the Distance Education Staff Development website.

Learning Communities

Instructors are taught techniques to foster community ties within the online environment.

The core of community building is dynamic communication between the instructor and the students and between students themselves.

First, frequent and personal communication between the instructor and students creates a bond that leads to higher retention rates. Quick response to student emails is essential to dynamic communication between the instructor and the students. The acceptable time frame for instructors is set by the Associate Dean of Distance Education at 12-24 hours. Students who receive frequent communication from the instructor develop a sense of belonging that is key to finishing the course (Herbert, Michael. “Staying the Course: A Study in Online Student Satisfaction and Retention.”) Additionally, instructors make use of weekly announcements and assignment feedback to assure students of the instructor’s presence and availability. Tokens, html coding throughout the course pages, are also available to address students by name and develop a personal learning environment.

A second component of building a learning community is interaction between students. Students in online courses have responded negatively to being required to interact with other students (Herbert). However, opportunities for optional engagement are appreciated. These types of opportunities include use of Angel mail to ask questions of other students, chat rooms where students can interact and ask questions of one another, and Q and A discussion boards where students can view the questions that other students are asking of the instructor.

Instructors are required by the Associate Dean of Distance Education to demonstrate use of activities or tools, such as those above, which foster engagement and relationships among students.

***Tier 2: Student Resources***

Online students are typically independent learners, yet surveys cite personal problems as the main reason among online learners for not completing a course (Herbert). The Distance Education Office addresses student needs through self-assessment, tutoring, and counseling options.

Self-Assessment

The Distance Education Office encourages students to make use of SmarterMeasure online readiness testing. Students are scored in several skill and learning style areas to indicate readiness for online learning. Instructors and students have access to a student’s scores, and additional resource sites are listed on each score report to encourage students to improve their skills in areas that are deemed troublesome.

CollegeInfo Tab

A tab called CollegeInfo has been added to all Angel classes. This tab contains easily accessible answers to Frequently Asked Questions to ensure that lack of Angel proficiency is not a reason for student attrition. The tab also includes links to counseling services, so that students who are at risk because of personal issues have easy access to helpful resources. The counseling link “offers services to help students choose a career, discuss appropriate classes, establish academic adjustments, improve grades, and overcome personal barriers to success” (ATC Counseling Center web page). Additionally, academic tutoring resources are described on the CollegeInfo tab. Students in online classes have access to Smarthinking, an online tutoring service. The service is provided at no cost to the students. Every online class is required to have the nugget for entry to Smarthinking on the front page of the course.

*Tier 3: Counseling Staff*

Warning Emails

The Counseling staff is available to work with students via phone and email as well as in person, so online students have access to counseling services. Instructors are trained in the use of Agents, automated reports targeting students who need additional academic support. Warning emails can be sent to students who are in danger of not successfully completing the course or meeting acceptable standards for any single Learning Outcome of the course. These warnings include the following list of links to counseling services:

Counseling Center: <http://www.augustatech.edu/counseling_center.html>

Academic Counseling: <http://www.augustatech.edu/AcademicCareerCounseling.htm> Special

Needs/DisabilityCounseling<http://www.augustatech.edu/counseling_center/specialneeds.html> Special Populations Counseling: <http://www.augustatech.edu/counseling_center/specialpop.html>

Early Alerts

The Counseling Center also has an Early Alert system, so instructors can inform the Counseling staff of a student who is not successfully completing course work. The Staff will contact the student to offer counseling services.

**Institutional Policy IV.D.1.a**

**IV. D. 1. a. Augusta Technical College**

**Procedure for Distance Education Student’s Privacy**

https://tcsg.edu/tcsgpolicy/images/dots.gif

**Procedure for Distance Education Student's Privacy**

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Augusta Technical College protects the privacy of students enrolled in distance education courses by ensuring the privacy and integrity of the communications and records used within the approved Learning Management System (LMS) course. Student access to online course content is protected by a unique and secure login and password. A secure grading system is provided. Access to student coursework is restricted to the instructor and LMS administrators. Augusta Technical College also adheres to the Georgia Virtual Technical Connection (GVTC) Privacy Policy.

Only course or school email addresses are used for communication within the course. Students accessing grades within the system are limited only to their own. Once a course has been completed, student records are stored within an archived version of the course which is completed at the administrative level every few months. Instructors export and maintain their own electronic versions of course grades and other pertinent information.

Personal information is specific to the user. The only personal information displayed within a distance education course is information that the student elects to provide in response to a discussion board or an assignment. These said postings are only available to members of the class. Students are required to use only course or school email for communication. Any other personal information residing within a course is restricted to LMS administrators and is not shared with any source outside of the Technical College System of Georgia.

Every student registered in a distance education course at the College receives a unique login. The identification number assigned to students allows them access to their course content which resides within the College LMS. The password provided is generic and requires that students change the password prior to accessing their course content. The students also have access to change their password at any time after that. A secondary secure login and password is also required for entry to any third party software associated with the LMS.

Students are required to show picture identification prior to taking any proctored event. Only instructors or authorized proctors check the identification of a student. There is no other technology use to verify the identity of a student at that time; therefore, the privacy of the student is secured during exam time.

**Student Complaints**

**DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENT COMPLAINTS**

**General Complaints**

Complaints or grievances should be forwarded in writing to the Vice President of Student Affairs (Mr. Eddie Howard, Building 1300, (706) 771-4035) for appropriate referral. The standard procedure for reporting and settling these complaints and/or grievances are listed under “appeal procedure” found in the [Student Handbook.](http://www.augustatech.edu/documents/student_handbook_2013.pdf)

**Academic Complaints**

Students who have complaints about academic issues should follow the established chain of command based on the Grievance Policy found in the [Student Handbook](http://www.augustatech.edu/documents/student_handbook_2013.pdf) and first attempt to contact their instructor.

Should the issue not be resolved, they can then submit a [Help Desk ticket](http://www.gvtc.org/studentSupport.aspx) to the Associate Dean of Distance Education who will direct the student to the appropriate academic dean if needed.

**Content Delivery Issues**

For content delivery issues, the students should first attempt to contact their instructor. Should the issue not be resolved, they can then contact the [Associate Dean of Distance Education](http://www.gvtc.org/studentSupport.aspx) who will then assist the student.

**Institutional Policy IV.D.1.b**

**IV. D. 1. b. Augusta Technical College**

**Distance Education Procedure for Projected Additional Student Charges**

https://tcsg.edu/tcsgpolicy/images/dots.gif

**Procedure for Projected Additional Student Charges**

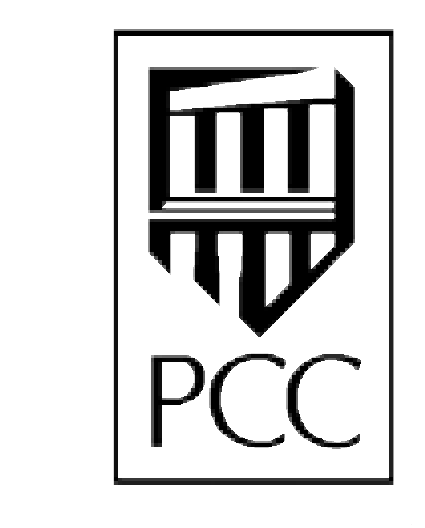
Augusta Tech online students who attend any of the College campuses are required to participate in one to three proctored events. Any student enrolled in a program and taking an online course must take their scheduled proctored event(s) at the campus of their instructor. The event(s) must be monitored by the instructor of the course.

Transient students from GA Technical schools will have their events proctored through their home school and need to contact their instructors in advance as well. The instructor will contact the responsible party at that school for proctoring information.

Other transient students must locate an official proctoring site in their area – the public library, other colleges, military base education site, etc. and provide instructors the contact information in advance.

Students will be responsible for any fees associated with using an outside proctoring site.

Student’s picture identification must be checked prior to administering any proctored event. The Distance Education Online Course Instructions letter notifies students prior to registration of the proctored events and states that there are no additional fees associated with the identification process.



**PASADENA AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT POLICY**

**Title: Distance Education Policy No. 3230**

**Legal Authority:** Title 5 Sections 55200, 55202, 55204, 55206, 55208, 55210,

58003, 58006, 58007, 58009, 58051, 55056, 58056, 59402 **Page 1 of 4**

**It is the policy of the Pasadena Area Community College District** to provide instruction in a variety of modalities including distance education. Distance education instruction will be offered in a manner consistent with law and good practice.

Pasadena City College commits to planning and implementing a distance education program with policies and procedures in place, so that faculty and staff can offer equivalent academic content and student services within an appropriate college support structure with ongoing oversight. Therefore, the development of a distance education program will be congruent with the Educational Master Planand mission of this institution in fostering successful student learning. Furthermore, the administration and the Board of Trustees will articulate the strategic importance of distance education and its role in the strategic plan and mission of the institution.

Approved by the Board of Trustees: November 2, 2011

**PASADENA AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT PROCEDURES**

**For Policy No. 3230**

**Title: Distance Education Procedure No. 3230.10**

**Page 2 of 4**

1. Definitions

The following definitions are adopted for distance education instruction:

* 1. **Online** –– An online distance education course is delivered via the Internet using a campus-supported Learning Management System (LMS). No on-campus meetings are required. 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 effective contact, 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.
  2. **Hybrid** –– A hybrid distance education 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 Learning Management System 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.

* 1. **Telecourse** (ITV): A video-based course which uses a fully integrated package of video instruction combined with instructional support materials (for example, a textbook, a student study guide, and a faculty resource guide). Telecourses are delivered in a variety of ways, including television broadcast. A telecourse will be designated as **ITV** in published campus materials.

1. For clarification, the following is not distance education instruction:
   1. **Web-Enhanced** is not a distance education course. Web-Enhanced refers to any course that uses the campus-supported learning management system to enhance student learning. No classroom time is replaced with online instruction.
   2. **Correspondence**—Correspondence is not a distance education course. Correspondence courses are typically self-paced with limited instructor/student interaction. A correspondence course will be designated as **Corresp** in published campus materials.
2. Faculty Technology Literacy and Online Pedagogical Readiness

Faculty who teach online at PCC must be proficient in certain basic technology literacy skills and online pedagogical readiness in order to assure course quality and to assist students with the technology used in content delivery. Determination as to whether an instructor meets the technology literacy skills and online pedagogical readiness requirement will be made by the Division Dean in consultation with the Distance Education Department.

Prior to teaching an online or hybrid course at Pasadena City College, faculty must meet one of the following requirements:

* 1. Have completed formal training or college-level coursework from an accredited college or university in online teaching and associated technology.
  2. Have completed two semesters of teaching in an online format, preferably using PCC’s Learning Management System (LMS).

**Title: Distance Education Procedure No. 3230.10**

**Page 3 of 4**

* 1. Present a teaching demonstration in an online format, showing evidence of technology literacy and distance education pedagogy fundamentals, including familiarity with PCC’s Learning Management System (see Distance Education Handbook for technology literacy and pedagogical readiness qualifications).
  2. Courses for online teaching and learning as prescribed by PCC’s Distance Education Department (Currently @One).

Faculty who have already met the above criteria may be required to participate in additional professional development activities in order to fulfill College policy, meet federal and state regulations, and accreditationrequirements.

1. C&I Course Approval and Review Process for Distance Education
   1. A new or existing course proposed to be delivered in a distance education format shall be separately reviewed and approved according to C & I guidelines using Form D—the Distance Education Curriculum Approval Addendum. Curriculum review ensures that a course’s approved curriculum (the Course Outline of Record) is followed regardless of delivery mode.
   2. Form D serves to verify that the methods of instruction and evaluation have been adapted for distance education and that the pedagogy utilized ensures that the qualityof a distance education course is comparable in terms of rigor, scope, and regular effective instructor-student contact, to equivalent face-to-face classes. As with other aspects of the curriculum development and review process, faculty continue to be responsible for establishing goals for student learning and for creating content.
2. Distance Education Faculty Working Conditions

Distance Education working condition policies are reviewed by the Academic Senate and established by mutual agreement between the Faculty Association and the District. These conditions include course enrollment limits, course load, office hours, and faculty evaluation.

1. Course Quality and Regular Effective Contact
   1. Pasadena City College will provide quality, innovative courses that maintain the highest standards and best practices in distance education teaching and learning. Title 5 requires that the same standards of course quality are applied to any portion of a course conducted through distance education as are applied to a traditional classroom course. The development and continuous improvement of distance education courses are based on the requirements of Title 5 and WASC, and upheld by the College’s course quality standards and review processes.
   2. The Chancellor’s Office requires that the curriculum for each distance education course and its associated materials and resources be reviewed and revised, as necessary, when the course undergoes curriculum review pursuant to Title 5, every six years as part ofthe accreditation process.
   3. To verify student participation and performance status, distance education courses must include regular effective instructor to student, student to student, and student to content contact in accordance with Title 5 regulations and guidelines. Examples ofregular effective contact include the use of discussion forums, collaborative student activities, frequent monitoring of contact activity by the instructor, and regularly added/revised course content that may incorporate student feedback.

**Title: Distance Education Procedure No. 3230.10**

**Page 4 of 4**

* 1. Faculty will provide students with frequent, substantive feedback and specific policies regarding the frequency and timeliness of instructor-initiated contact and feedback. The syllabus will define course beginning and ending dates and deadlines for assignments and assessments. Accessible media, in compliance with Section 508 and the Chancellor’s Office of the California Community Colleges Guidelines, will be used to facilitate regular effective contact.
  2. If for any reason the instructor is prevented from continuing regular effective contact, the instructor or the Dean will inform students expeditiously when regular contact is likely to resume. In the event of a prolonged absence the instructor, working with the dean, will make appropriate arrangements for the continuation of the course.

1. Distance Education Student Surveys
   1. A survey will be administered to Distance Education students to assess compliancewith Title 5 and WASC Distance Education regulations. The data from this survey will be collected anonymously and will not be tied to faculty evaluation.
   2. Course feedback instruments will be made available by the Distance Education Department for faculty to conduct formative and summative assessments of their courses.
2. Institutional Support for Distance Education
   1. The institution will support high-quality distance education instructional programs by providing faculty support services including training, technical support, and assistance with instructional design and course development to ensure compliance with Section 508 of The U.S. Rehabilitation Act and copyright law and best practices in distance education courses.
   2. The institution will provide distance education students with online access to all student support services. Students enrolled in distance education courses will have access to training materials and technical support.
   3. The College will provide qualified personnel; robust and innovative technology; stable financial resources; and adequate facilities, equipment, web-based services, and other assets.
3. Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights
   1. Fair Use and Legal Use of Copyrighted Materials in Distance Education Courses Copyright guidelines related to Distance Education shall be developed and maintained by the Distance Education Department in accordance with copyright laws (*U.S. Copyright Act,* the *Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, Fair Use Policy* and the *2002 TEACH Act*) and College copyright policies. The guidelines will be available on the Distance Education website, in the Distance Education handbook, and included in distance education training.
   2. Faculty Responsibility for Copyright

Instructors of distance education courses are responsible for ensuring that all instructional material and delivery methods for distance education courses are in compliance with copyright laws and College copyright policy.

* 1. Faculty Intellectual Property Rights

Faculty will maintain the same intellectual property rights of the instructional material they develop for distance education courses as they would for traditional courses.

# Distance Education Policy Standards: A Review

**of Current Regional and National Accrediting Organizations in the United States**

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**Abstract**

A review of distance education accreditation policies and standards written by the six United States regional accrediting commissions and two national accrediting organizations: the Middle States Commission on Higher Education; the New England Association of Schools and Colleges - Commission on Institutions of Higher Education; the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools - The Higher Learning Commission; Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges; the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges; the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools; and the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges. The proliferation of the distance education policies introduced by these accrediting bodies within the last decade creates a need to review how these policies articulate institutional context and commitment; curriculum and instruction; faculty and faculty support; student support; and evaluation and assessment for institutions undergoing or about to undergo accreditation review.

**Distance Education Policy Standards: A Review of Regional and National Accrediting Organizations in the United States**

Distance education accreditation standards and related policies have grown in substance and quantity since the late 1990’s, a period when many colleges and universities began offering DE courses for the first time. The U.S. Department of Education has been regularly including distance education in its detailed review of all agencies seeking initial or continued recognition since December 1999. Prior to July 2010, the U.S. Department of Education made a determination as to whether an agency’s scope of recognition included the accreditation of distance education. After July 2010, “at each review for renewal of recognition, an agency will be expected to demonstrate its evaluation of distance education and/or correspondence education in order to retain distance education and/or correspondence education in its scope of recognition.” This series of events prompted the creation of distance education best practices, standards, and policies by national and regional accreditation agencies across the U.S. The accreditation agencies reviewed in this report have published a number of policies/standards and guidelines to evaluate colleges and universities’ distance education programs (U.S. Department of Education, N.D.).

This article is a review of distance education accreditation policies and standards written by the six United States regional accrediting commissions and two national accrediting organizations. The eight accrediting commissions are:

1. Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
2. New England Association of Schools and Colleges - Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NEASC-CIHE)
3. North Central Association of Colleges and Schools - The Higher Learning Commission (NCA-HLC)
4. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
5. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC)
6. Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC-WASC)
7. Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS), 2013
8. Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC)

These accrediting agencies are recognized “as reliable authorities concerning the quality of education or training offered by the institutions of higher education or higher education programs they accredit” by the

U.S. Secretary of Education (U.S. Department of Education, ND).

As stated above, distance education programs have grown in abundance in the United States since the late 1990’s. The first author began her employment at a community college in the southeast, in 1997; the same semester that the college’s first distance education course was offered. Although she had taught courses that were computer-based in the early 1990’s at a community college in Ohio; the courses were offered as face-to-face courses. She joined the college’s planning and research department in 2002, as a research specialist and grant writer, to help the college prepare for its reaffirmation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC). During this time, the head of her department was preparing a substantive change prospectus as requested by SACS-COC regarding the college’s distance education program. The author prepared statistical reports about distance education courses as documentation for the prospectus. It is important to note that very few policies and guidelines regarding the delivery of distance education programs were available in 2002. A search for distance education guidelines for institutions undergoing the reaffirmation of accreditation in 2002-2003 yields information that is general and very brief.

The SACS-COC approval of the substantive change prospectus for the college’s distance education program paved the way for its growth and success. In the following years, the author continued her role of preparing accreditation responses and supporting documentation for the college’s fifth-year interim report and then for the next ten-year reaffirmation review. She chose to review accreditation guidelines and policies regarding distance education for this article because of the changes in accreditation review requirements. The immense growth of distance education in higher education and resulting abundance of policies and guidelines has impacted the preparation of accreditation reports in many capacities.

One of the major resources used for this review and comparison of distance education policies/standards is a publication titled, Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (Online Learning) (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), 2011), authored by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions. The Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) is made up of the following agencies: Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges: Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges: Senior College and University Commission. The Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education Programs (Online Learning) was developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) and is based on two documents: a 2006 report prepared by the U.S. General Accounting Office, Evidence of Quality in Distance Education Drawn from Interviews with the Accreditation Community (U.S. Department of

Education Office of Postsecondary Education, 2006), and, Best Practice Strategies to promote Academic Integrity in Online Education, prepared by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET, 2009).” This statement is a quotation from the inside cover page of the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education Programs (Online Learning). Its purpose is “to assist institutions in planning distance education and to provide an assessment framework for institutions already involved in distance education.” (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), 2011)

The focus of this review is the accreditation policies on topics that address distance education: institutional context and commitment; curriculum and instruction; faculty and faculty support; student support services; and student identity issues.

**Institutional Context and Commitment**

The book, An Administrator’s Guide to Online Education, by Shelton and Saltsman, (2005), states in Chapter 2 that “the communication of expectations, desires, and goals to members of the organization is what enables dreams to become a reality.” Institutional commitment to distance education programs should be reflected in the institution’s overarching planning. The Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education Programs (Online Learning) (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), 2011) lists various “hallmarks of quality;” the first hallmark addresses the institution’s mission and purposes. The C-RAC analysis/evidence statements include the following:

* The mission statement explains the role of online learning within the range of the institution’s programs and services;
* Institutional and program statements of vision and values inform how the online learning environment is created and supported;
* The office or persons responsible for online learning training programs are clearly identified and have the competencies to accomplish the tasks, including knowledge of the specialized resources and technical support available to support course development and delivery;
* The institution prepares a multi-year budget for online learning that includes resources for assessment of program demand, marketing, appropriate levels of faculty and staff, faculty and staff development, library and information resources, and technology infrastructure;
* As appropriate, the institution incorporates into its online learning programs methods of meeting the stated institutional goals for the student experience at the institution; and
* Senior administrators and staff can articulate how online learning is consonant with the institution’s mission and goals. (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), 2011)

**Other Policies That Address Institutional Commitment and Context**

Other policies include information about the technical and physical plant facilities such as the Middle States Commission on Higher Education policy in Standard 13: “An accredited institution is expected to possess or demonstrate: adequate technical and physical plant facilities, including appropriate staffing and technical assistance, to support electronic offerings;" (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2011, page 59). The following table lists many of the guidelines regarding institutional context and commitment (Table 1).



**Curriculum and Instruction**

Online course development has evolved considerably in the past 15 years from courses that were primarily text-based converted to electronic form, to courses designed specifically for the distributed Internet setting. In, The Theory and Practice of Online Learning, Anderson (2011) states “As the nature of

Internet users evolves, so do their demands and expectations from e-learning,” (page 247). The accrediting agencies’ expectations have also evolved. The C-RAC analysis/evidence statements regarding curriculum and instruction include the following:

* Approval of online courses and programs follows standard processes used in the college or university;
* Online learning courses and programs are evaluated on a periodic basis;
* The curricular goals and course objectives show that the institution or program has knowledge of the best uses of online learning in different disciplines and settings;
* Curricula delivered through online learning are benchmarked against on-ground courses and programs, if provided by the institution, or those provided by traditional institutions;
* The curriculum is coherent in its content and sequencing of courses and is effectively defined in easily available documents including course syllabi and program descriptions;
* Scheduling of online learning courses and programs provides students with a dependable pathway to ensure timely completion of degrees;
* The institution or program has established and enforces a policy on online learning course enrollments to ensure faculty capacity to work appropriately with students;
* Expectations for any required face-to-face, on-ground work (e.g., internships, specialized laboratory work) are stated clearly;
* Course design and delivery supports student-student and faculty-student interaction;
* Curriculum design and the course management system enable active faculty contribution to the learning environment;
* Assessment of student learning follows processes used in onsite courses or programs and/or reflects good practice in assessment methods; and
* Course and program structures provide schedule and support known to be effective in helping online learning students persist and succeed. (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), 2011)

**Additional Policies Regarding Curriculum and Instruction**

Many policies echoing the C-RAC guidelines have been written that reflect the quality concerns and standards for curriculum and instruction. The following tables show many of these policies articulated by national and regional accrediting agencies (see Tables 2a, 2b and 2c).



**Faculty and Faculty Support**

The role of faculty in the development of distance education programs and the related topic of faculty support has been a key and sometimes thorny issue during the growth of institutions’ distance education

programs. Some faculty do not buy-in to the theory of distance education, others have low technology skills for adapting successfully to online instruction, and “many faculty are unprepared for the fundamental differences in the roles required for teaching online,” (Shelton & Saltsman, 2005, page 59). The C-RAC guidelines and other accreditation policies about faculty and faculty support provide optimal strategies for addressing these issues. The C-RAC analysis/evidence statements include the following:

* The institution’s faculty have a designated role in the design and implementation of its online learning offerings;
* Evaluation strategies ensure effective communication between faculty members who design curriculum, faculty members who interact with students, and faculty members who evaluate student learning;
* Online learning faculties are carefully selected, appropriately trained, frequently evaluated, and are marked by an acceptable level of turnover;
* The institution’s training program for online learning faculty is periodic, incorporates tested good practices in online learning pedagogy, and ensures competency with the range of software products used by the institution;
* Faculty are proficient and effectively supported in using the course management system;
* Faculty members engaged in online learning share in the mission and goals of the institution and its programs and are provided the opportunities to contribute to the broader activities of the institution. (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), 2011)

**Faculty Roles and Faculty Support Addressed in Accreditation Policies**

The following two tables (Table 3a and Table 3b) illustrate some of the regional and national accrediting agencies’ policies concerning faculty roles and faculty support.



**Student Support**

Effective and well-designed student support services are essential for student success. “Unfortunately, institutions have not been as quick to put student services online as they have online courses,” (Shelton & Saltsman, 2005, page 83) The authors’ experiences as higher education instructors is that gaps and holes exist in the offering of student services for online learners. The gaps in student services can cause a distance education student to feel frustrated and alone. The C-RAC guidelines list administrative as well as practical strategies for providing effective student support services. The C-RAC analysis/evidence statements include the following:

* The recruitment and admissions programs supporting the online learning courses and programs appropriately target the student populations to be served;
* The students enrolled in the institution’s online learning courses and programs fit the admissions requirements for the students the institution intends to serve;
* The institution regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the academic and support services provided to students in online courses and uses the results for improvement;
* The institution’s admissions program for online learning provides good web-based information to students about the nature of the online learning environment, and assists them in determining if they possess the skills important to success in online learning;
* The institution provides an online learning orientation program;
* The institution provides support services to students in formats appropriate to the delivery of the online learning program;
* Students in online learning programs have adequate access to student services, including financial aid, course registration, and career and placement counseling;
* Students in online learning programs have ready access to 24/7 tech support;
* Students using online learning have adequate access to learning resources, including library, information resources, laboratories, and equipment and tracking systems;
* Students using online learning demonstrate proficiency in the use of electronic forms of learning resources;
* Student complaint processes are clearly defined and can be used electronically;
* Publications and advertising for online learning programs are accurate and contain necessary information such as program goals, requirements, academic calendar, and faculty; and
* Students are provided with reasonable and cost-effective ways to participate in the institution’s system of student authentication. (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), 2011)

Many of the services mentioned above such as online student orientation, library services, student publications, and various tutorials are time-consuming to develop and can be costly; but once in place they are easily updated and maintained. Tables 4a and 4b on Page 17 of this report provide examples of similar policies published by the regional and national accrediting agencies.



**Evaluation and Assessment**



Shattuck (2012) states, “Open and distance learning providers who have enjoyed freedom from external scrutiny may resist attempts at external regulation and auditing and look upon QA (quality assurance) as yet another imposition of corporatization and bureaucracy on education. Others see it as a means of establishing a culture of quality, self-reflection and self-improvement,” The statement articulates an opinion shared about quality assurance and distance education. Regional and national accrediting policies also address the topics of quality assurance, evaluation and assessment at the institution level, program level and course level with numerous guidelines. The C-RAC analysis/evidence statements include the following:

* Development and ownership of plans for online learning extend beyond the administrators directly responsible for it and the programs directly using it;
* Planning documents are explicit about any goals to increase numbers of programs provided through online learning courses and programs and/or numbers of students to be enrolled in them;
* Plans for online learning are linked effectively to budget and technology planning to ensure adequate support for current and future offerings;
* Plans for expanding online learning demonstrate the institution’s capacity to assure an appropriate level of quality;
* The institution and its online learning programs have a track record of conducting needs analysis and of supporting programs.
* The institution demonstrates the appropriate use of technology to support its assessment strategies;
* The institution documents its successes in implementing changes informed by its programs of assessment and evaluation;
* The institution provides examples of student work and student interactions among themselves and with faculty; · The institution sets appropriate goals for the retention/persistence of students using online learning, assesses its achievement of these goals, and uses the results for improvement; and
* Students express satisfaction with the quality of the instruction provided by online learning faculty members. (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), 2011).

An example of a national accrediting agency’s evaluation policy is show in Table 5a:



Examples of regional accrediting agencies evaluation and assessment policies are shown in Table 5b on the next page.



**Student Identity**

Most institutions enroll students who receive Federal Student Aid. The U.S. Department of Education requires that institutions have methods in place to verify student identity. There are “unique risks inherit in the distance education environment.” A final audit report published in February 2014 includes the following statement:

"Current requirements related to verifying the identities of and disbursing Title IV funds to students enrolled in distance education programs are not sufficient to mitigate the risks of fraud and abuse. As a result, fraud rings are targeting distance education programs to illegally obtain Title IV funds. The fraud rings enroll straw students, which are students who do not intend to complete a distance education course or program but who still receive Title IV funds. Both the ringleader and the straw student receive a portion of any Title IV credit balance disbursed in the straw student’s name.” (Office of the Inspector General, US Dept. of Education, 2014)

Other fraud issues include identity questions concerning academic credit and award of degrees, diplomas, and certificates. The C-RAC analysis/evidence statements include:

* The institution has in place effective procedures through which to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The institution makes clear in writing that these processes protect student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional costs associated with the verification procedures.
* The institution’s policies on academic integrity include explicit references to online learning;
* Issues of academic integrity are discussed during the orientation for online students; and
* Training for faculty members engaged in online learning includes consideration of issues of academic integrity, including ways to reduce cheating. (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), 2011)

**Conclusion**

The review of regional and national accrediting policies provides an overview of recent developments and improvements in accreditation policies and guidelines regarding distance education. The growth of accreditation policies and guidelines has impacted the preparation and focus of interim and reaffirmation reports for colleges and universities. Although a review of many of the policies and guidelines is beneficial, one publication in particular, the C-RAC Guidelines, is helpful to faculty and staff implementing distance education programs and for higher education staff who write institutional accreditation statements for five-year and ten-year reaffirmation reports.

This review is intended to serve as a starting point for further study. As regional and national accrediting bodies add policies and requirements specifically addressing the quality of distance education offered by institutions in terms of faculty preparation, technological support, instructional strategies employed, and evaluation and assessment, we foresee greater challenges within higher education institutions to make effective and meaningful use of these policies and guidelines. Furthermore, we foresee the possible need for higher education institutions’ greater involvement in developing and revising accreditation policies as they relate to distance teaching and learning. Further research is recommended.

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**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE 4105: Distance Education**

**Definition**

Distance education means instruction in which the instructor and student are separated by distance and interact through the assistance of communication technology. This definition includes both hybrid and fully online courses.

**Course Approval**

Each proposed or existing course offered by distance education shall be reviewed and approved separately. Separate approval is mandatory if any portion of the classroom instruction in a course, or an entire section of a course, is designed to be provided through distance education.

The review and approval of new and existing distance education courses shall follow the curriculum approval procedures outlined in Administrative Procedure 4020, Program and Curriculum Development. Distance education courses shall be approved under the same conditions and criteria as all other courses.

**Certification**

When approving distance education courses, the Courses and Programs Curriculum Committee (CPCC) will certify the following:

1. Course quality standards: The same standards of course quality are applied to distance education courses as are applied to traditional classroom courses.
2. Course quality determinations: Determinations and judgments about the quality of distance education courses are made in accordance with all CPCC course- approval criteria and procedures.
3. Instructor contact: Each section of a course that is offered through distance education will include regular effective contact between instructor and students. By proposing a distance education course, the faculty author and department chair agree to the following specifications of instructor/student contact:
   1. Instructor-initiated interaction: In hybrid or fully online courses, ensuring regular effective instructor/student contact guarantees the student receives the benefit of the instructor’s presence in the learning environment both as a provider of instructional information and as a facilitator of student learning.

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Adoption History: 1/19/10, 6/18/13 References: Title 5, §55200 et seq.

U.S. Dept. of Education regulations on the Integrity of Federal Student Financial Aid Programs under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended

34 Code of Federal Regulations §602.17

In a face-to-face instructional format, instructors are present at each class meeting and interact via class announcements, lectures, activities, and discussions, which take a variety of forms. In hybrid and online instructional formats, instructors will regularly initiate interaction with students to assess if they are doing all of the following:

* + 1. Accessing and comprehending course material
    2. Participating regularly in course activities

Faculty office hours are not included as fulfilling the regular effective contact requirement and are a separate requirement. Providing students with an open-ended question forum, although appropriate, does not constitute the entirety of effective instructor-initiated interaction.

Instructor-initiated interaction will create an environment of academic integrity that discourages fraud in the form of student misrepresentation and constitutes a means for the following:

1. Monitoring satisfactory progress, defined as earning grades consistent with a final course grade of a “C” or “Pass”
2. Tracking student attendance
3. Determining the last day of attendance for students who drop the course via the following methods:
   1. Prior to the first census date, the instructor will initiate an activity that requires student participation
   2. The instructor will include various robust assessments and assignments on a frequent basis throughout the semester
   3. Frequency of interaction: Distance education courses are considered the virtual equivalent of traditional classroom courses; thus, the frequency of instructor/student interaction in a distance education course will be at least the same as would be established in its face-to-face counterpart. At the very least, the number of instructor contact hours per week that would be available for face-to-face students will also be available, in asynchronous and/or synchronous mode, with students in the distance education format (based on the Carnegie unit). Given the nature of asynchronous instructional methodologies, contact shall be distributed in a manner that ensures regular instructor/student contact is maintained over the course of a week and the duration of the term and should occur as often as is appropriate for the course.
   4. Establishing expectations and managing unexpected instructor absence: An instructor- and/or department-established policy describing the frequency and timeliness of instructor-initiated contact and instructor feedback will be posted in the syllabus and/or other course documents made available to students when the course officially opens each

semester. This information will also refer students to the section in the college catalog on student rights and responsibilities.

During the course, instructors will notify students when they must be out of contact beyond what is described in the course documents as mentioned above. This notification will include when students can expect regular effective contact to resume. If the offline time results in a lengthy absence (e.g., more than three or four instructional days, excluding holidays and weekends), the instructor will file an absence report so that a substitute instructor may be secured per college policies to assist students while the instructor is unavailable. It is the instructor’s responsibility to evaluate and determine whether the length of the anticipated absence in regular effective contact will exceed three or four instructional days (excluding holidays and weekends) and, if so, to notify the department chair of the need for a substitute.

* 1. Quality of contact: Regarding the type of contact that will exist in all MiraCosta distance education courses, instructors will use a variety of means to initiate contact with students, such as the following:
     1. Threaded discussion forums (with appropriate instructor participation)
     2. “Questions for the instructor” forums
     3. General email
     4. Weekly announcements
     5. Timely and frequent feedback for student work
     6. Instructor-prepared electronic lectures or introductions in the form of electronic lectures to any publisher-created materials (written, recorded, broadcast, etc.) that, combined with other course materials, create the virtual equivalent of the face-to-face class.

In addition, instructors shall enable effective instructor/student interaction in distance education courses by doing all of the following:

1. Allocating sufficient hours per week for contact. This may include informing students of the option to meet on a face-to-face basis or via web conferencing or via telephone.
2. Conducting student/instructor interaction with similar care and attention to students as that which occurs during face-to-face office hours and meetings.
3. Responding to student emails, postings, phone calls, etc., in a timely manner.
4. Duration of approval: All distance education courses approved under this procedure will continue to be in effect unless substantive changes are made to their official course outlines of record.

**Verification of Student Identity**

Consistent with federal regulations pertaining to federal financial aid eligibility, the district must authenticate or verify that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The district will provide to each student at the time of registration a statement of the process in place to protect student privacy and estimated additional student charges associated with verification of student identity, if any.

The vice president of instruction shall ensure the institution utilizes one or more of these methods to authenticate or verify student identity:

1. Secure login and password to enable authenticated access to MiraCosta student information and course management systems.
2. Proctored examinations.
3. New or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

**Student Support Services**

The college will assure that distance learners have access to student support services that are comparable to those services provided to on-campus learners.