

**I. Title:**

Alabama State University Online Education and Course Facilitation Policy

**II. Policy Statement:**

Alabama State University (ASU) acknowledges the significance of online instructional quality to include five components:

- (a) course design,
- (b) content authorship,
- (c) course oversight and faculty evaluation,
- (d) course revision, and
- (e) faculty engagement behaviors.

These components provide online learners with edifying post-secondary learning experiences. ASU further recognizes the role of online instruction and engagement in advancing the institutional commitment “to global excellence in teaching, research, and service.” The ASU Online Education and Course Facilitation Policy serves four purposes:

1. To provide a guide for developing distance education courses and programs;
2. To communicate quality standards for an internal process of certifying faculty to teach online courses;
3. To define procedures for online course and online faculty evaluation; and
4. To define procedures for online design, course facilitation, and engagement.

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.

**III. Scope:**

The ASU Online Education and Course Facilitation Policy considers the role faculty play in fostering learning among online learners. Thus, the policy is established to benefit all online learners (i.e., students who enroll in hybrid or fully online certifications, courses, or programs).

The ASU Online Education Course Facilitation Policy considers previous communications about online education and instructional best practices (e.g., Memorandum for Minimum Online Presence Expectation dated March 13, 2020, and Options for Virtual Office Hours).

**IV. Effective Date:**

Immediately upon approval by the ASU Board of Trustees

**V. Audience:**

The ASU Online Education and Course Facilitation Policy applies to all faculty, staff, and contractors (i.e., part time, full time, and temporary) who facilitate or support courses and programs facilitated online. This includes hybrid or fully online courses and programs.

**VI. Policy Management:**

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Office of Technology Services

Responsible Officer(s): Provost, University Faculty, Academic Deans, and Academic Advisors, Associate Provost, assistant provosts, the Division of Online Education and Programs staff, department chairs, and faculty.

**VII. Definitions:**

Procedures for compliance with the ASU Online Education and Course Facilitation Policy are influenced by many factors. Relative terms and definitions are provided and listed in alphabetical order:

***Accessibility:***

‘Accessibility’ refers to the process of promoting a high degree of usability among a diverse audience of end users. To comply with [Section 508](#) of the Americans with Disabilities Act, equal access to course materials must be provided for all online learners. Accessible online courses and programs also comply with [Web Content and Accessibility Guidelines](#).

***Asynchronous:***

‘Asynchronous’ is a term used to refer to online courses and online programs that are not live or not occurring in real time and can be further characterized by the percentage of technology-mediated content:

- Online Courses are those offered with 100% via the internet.
- Hybrid or Courses are those that combine face-to-face classroom instruction with internet-based course elements.

***Course Authorship:***

‘Course Authorship’ refers to the act, be in solitary or among a team, authoring courses or course content. Faculty are primary course authors. However, course rights are reserved at the institutional level.

***Distance Education:***

Per the ASU Curriculum Development Guide, ‘distance education’ refers to education that uses one or more of the technologies listed (i.e., the Internet, one- and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, etc.; audio conferencing; and video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs) to deliver instruction to

students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. SACSCOC defines distance education as, “a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous” (See Appendix A).

***Fully Online Course:***

‘Fully online course’ refers to an online course that has no in-person requirements.

***Fully Online Program:***

‘Fully online program’ refers to an online program with no in-person requirements.

***Hybrid or Blended:***

“Hybrid” or “blended” courses involve a combination of online and face-to-face course sessions. The previously recognized definition of “hybrid” or “blended” indicated the involvement of 75% or less technology mediation.

***Instructional Design:***

‘Instructional design’ is the systematic process of planning, designing, developing, and delivering courses. Instructional design integrates design theory and pedagogy to suit the learning modality and specific population of learners.

***National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA):***

‘National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement’ is the [non-profit organization](#) that promotes learner access to educational opportunities and effective regulation online programs.

***Modality:***

Regarding online instruction, ‘modality’ refers to how learning occurs. Table 1 shows various online learning modalities and their descriptions.

***Online Course:***

‘Online course’ generally refers to a course that is delivered through technology-mediation and via the Internet.

***Online Education:***

‘Online education’ refers to a system of instructional delivery that is facilitated through technology mediation and via the Internet. Online education can include asynchronous and synchronous elements.

***Online Learners:***

‘Online learners’ are students who enroll in hybrid or fully online certifications, courses, or programs.

Table 1. Online Instructional Modalities

| Modality                 | Description   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Virtual and Synchronous  | These fully online courses are held at a designated time each week and are facilitated using a live collaborative tool (i.e., Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate, Google Meet, Adobe Connect). For faculty and student benefit, all courses will be recorded. |
| Virtual and Asynchronous | These fully online courses do have a required live component and are not held at a designated.  |
| Hybrid and Synchronous   | These courses are defined by a combination of online (i.e., usually asynchronous class meetings) and face-to-face meetings.   |
| Hybrid and Asynchronous  | These courses are defined by a combination of virtual asynchronous course components (i.e., offered through a learning management system) and face-to-face meetings.  |

***Online Program:***

‘Online program’ refers an academic program of study that offered online and leads to a degree confirmed by ASU. Proposals for converting existing programs into online programs must begin with the department chair and receive the appropriate approval.

***State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA):***

‘State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement’ is an agreement that establishes comparable national interstate standards for post-secondary online education. SARA is membership based and includes state, district, and territory members.

***Student Authentication:***

‘Student authentication’ is established by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). According to [SACSCOS’s Distance and Correspondence Education Policy Statement](#), “the institution demonstrates that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as 1) a secure login and pass code 2) proctored examinations and 3) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification” (see Appendix A).

***Synchronous:***

Synchronous courses and course components are live. Among other potential methods, compressed video is an option:

- Compressed Video Courses occur in real time and allows the faculty to communicate with remote site sections of the class via two-way audio/video. Faculty and students hear and see each other live from each site. These courses blend face-to-face and online pedagogies.

***Technology-Mediated Instruction:***

‘Technology-mediated instruction’ is a broad term that refers to the use of digital technology—in various forms—to support pedagogy, instruction, and learning.

***Traditional Course:***

Per the ASU Curriculum Development Guide, ‘traditional course’ is a course with no content presented online.

***Virtual:***

The term ‘virtual’ refers to something that occurs through computer-mediation. The phrase ‘virtual course’ usually refers to an online course.

**VIII. Procedures:**

ASU Online Education and Course Facilitation Policy procedures promote edifying online learning experiences through design, development, evaluation, and revision. Likewise, the policy aims to establish a sense of community among faculty and online learners through best practices in course facilitation and engagement.

***Establishing Online Education Courses and Programs***

Online education courses are as rigorous as traditional, classroom education. Although classroom and online education courses use different pedagogical methods and modes of interaction, online courses retain the expectations of classroom courses. All online courses at ASU are considered comparable to classroom courses and adhere to the same course standards, prerequisites, and requirements as classroom courses.

Once the modality of an online course has been identified and advertised, faculty cannot change the modality. Faculty must comply with the Alabama State University Online Education and Course Facilitation Policy.

Online education can be used to deliver courses and entire programs. New online courses are developed by faculty through the Curriculum Development Guide. The Division of Online Education and Programs staff will support design and development, and new online courses are approved by department, department chairs, and deans. ASU is a SARA member; thus, agreement standards must be reviewed.

Development of a new online program, as well as changing the mode of delivery of an existing program, must follow appropriate institutional policies and starts with the

department chair. Approval is necessary and involves the appropriate college's dean and the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs staff. All online programs must receive approval from the applicable accrediting agencies, follow guidelines set by the SACSCOC, and be confirmed by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE).

### ***Quality Assurance for Online Education Courses***

Instructional design for online education courses will reflect best practice standards for quality and promote instructional practices that make learning fluid, appealing, meaningful, and efficient. The Division of Online Education and Program staff provide professional instructional design services for faculty facilitating online courses. Department chairs are responsible for the regular monitoring of online course facilitation and engagement (i.e., based on the expectations presented herein—Response Time and Expectations for Pre-Course Set Up, Facilitation, and Post-Course Actions). Chairs, DOEP staff, and deans will have access to all courses for consistent and unannounced monitoring. Oversight of online courses is vital to promote and maintain quality assurance. Faculty peer reviewers will be given course access as needed.

The quality assurance process involves faculty, faculty peer reviewers, the Division of Online Education and Programs staff, department chairs, and deans. This process can include, but is not limited to, the specific components of online education:

- Needs Assessments
- Course Design
- Content Authorship
- Learning Objectives Assessment and Measurement
- Authenticity
- Resources and Materials
- Learner Engagement
- Feedback Regularity and Quality
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Infrastructure
- Course Technology
- Learner Support
- Qualifications and Certifications
- Accessibility
- Professional Communications
- Course Evaluations and Review

### ***Quality Standards***

All ASU Online Education courses and programs must meet a quality standard, defined by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, before being offered. ASU defines the quality standard for online courses as meeting the expectations of an internal course review that utilizes online quality assurance standards (e.g., Quality Matters or Online Learning Consortium). The internal course review will be performed by a certified peer reviewer, department chair, or a member

of the Division of Online Education and Programs staff and follows a continuous improvement approach.

The department chair, supported by the Division of Online Education and Programs staff, will monitor fulfillment of quality standards, response time, faculty attendance, and participation. The Division of Online Education and Program staff will also provide regular reports to department chairs

#### ***Faculty Certification in Online Instruction***

In addition to the credential parameters outlined in the Faculty Credential Manual, faculty who teach online courses must complete the ASU Certificate in Online Instruction (CIOI). Requirements of the ASU CIOI process may change as institutional needs change.

#### ***Qualifications for Online Education Facilitation for New Faculty***

To teach an online course, faculty members must possess ASU's CIOI, which include professional development on instructional design, online preparation, and course development.

#### ***Qualifications for Faculty with CIOI***

Certified faculty are required to complete at least one professional development (PD) offering annually. The Division of Online Education and Programs will sponsor and facilitate PD offers during the fall and spring semesters.

#### ***Professional Development of Faculty***

For online education courses, the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will oversee the CIOI process and will provide training that focuses on course engagement, instructional design, and course development, as well as other related topics. Initial certification and ongoing professional development could also cover topics such as the utilization of the course management system, syllabi development, and improving course effectiveness. Professional development will be provided on-site, from external vendors, virtually, and through individual consultations in a format that prepares faculty to develop courses that are in accordance with the quality assurance process.

ASU provides an ongoing program of orientation, training, and support for faculty. Faculty will have opportunities to take part in technology-mediated professional development offerings that are faculty-centered, peer-reviewed, and designed to certify the quality of online courses. Faculty training opportunities include protocols for the entire life cycle of the online courses, from pre-development through course launch to revision.

*Ongoing Professional Development for all Online Education Faculty*

Starting the year after CIOI completion, all faculty teaching online courses or within online programs are required to complete at least one professional development course/workshop/webinar or session that focuses on online teaching or learning. These include offerings facilitated or hosted by the Division of Online Education and Programs staff.

*Course Load and Compensation*

Online Education courses are typically part of a faculty member's regular teaching load, with the same rate of compensation as traditional courses. Online Education courses may also be taught as an overload, at the same rate of compensation as classroom 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 chair, the dean, and the Provost.

*Student Enrollment Cap*

While the number of students enrolled in each course will be determined by the department chair and dean, faculty-to-student ratio in online courses should be based on faculty member experience with online courses, previous evaluations, subject, and course availability. It is desirable that undergraduate online courses include no more than 20 students and graduate online courses include no more than 15 students.

*Credit Hours*

All courses, including those offered partially or fully online, must adhere to ASU's Credit Hour Policy.

**Faculty Oversight**

As with classroom courses, ASU's faculty assumes primary responsibility for and exercises oversight over online instruction, ensuring the rigor of courses, curriculum, and the quality of instruction. Hybrid or blended courses are required to follow the response time and general expectations for engagement for the technology-mediated portion of the course.

With noted differences between teaching online courses and teaching traditional courses, the decision to use distance learning can 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.

**Course Availability**

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 chair 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.

### ***Online Design Procedures***

To foster quality assurance of online courses, Online Design Procedures, which include evaluation, follow.

#### ***Design Process:***

Moving a face-to-face course online will begin with a consultation between the faculty member, chair, and an instructional designer (i.e., member of the Division of Online Education and Programs staff). The faculty member can email a DOEP member or submit the appropriate form (e.g., Online Instructional Design/Modification/Evaluation Request) (see Appendix C). The purpose of this meeting or form is to devise a plan for design and development of the online course.

Department chairs hold the responsibility of reviewing online courses and encouraging faculty to work with the Division of Online Education and Program staff to work through the design and development process. This includes content and course authorship, storyboarding, graphic elements, course development, evaluation, and redesign. Annual review of all online courses is desirable and will include student evaluation feedback.

Course design procedures will also include random review by chairs, Division of Online Education and Program staff, and deans. These reviews will be guided by rubrics recommended by the Division of Online Education and Program staff. The review process will include at least one formative review prior to summative review. Annual informal review of course content and design is recommended.

#### ***Evaluation:***

With noted differences between teaching distance education courses and teaching classroom courses, the decision to use distance learning can 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.

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 Student Course Evaluation (SCE) surveys administered in each class during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters, regardless of the delivery format of the class. The results of the SCE are shared with the course faculty and department chair for each online course.

- **Formative Evaluation**

Division of Online Education and Programs (DOEP) staff, a member of the Consortium of Faculty for Instruction in Virtual Ecologies (see Peer Evaluation), department chairs, and deans can conduct a formative evaluation. The overall objective of a formative evaluation is to monitor the quality of course design and

online instruction. For this reason, DOEP staff, chairs, and deans will have access to courses and are not required to notify faculty. Peer review also classifies as formative review. Peer faculty access will be provided as needed. Likewise, these evaluations are meant to promote faculty skills development and are not punitive. Formative evaluations are designed to coincide with Section 3.9 Faculty Evaluation Procedure outlined in the 2009 ASU Faculty Handbook. The faculty member will be notified by email that the course is undergoing a formative evaluation.

For temporary and probationary faculty, formative evaluations can coincide with Progress Review I (Oct/Nov) and Progress Review II (Jan/Feb). DOEP staff will conduct random formative evaluations—without faculty consent—and deans can submit a formative evaluation request, via email, to the assigned DOEP staff member. Department chairs and deans can also initiate and complete a formative evaluation.

- **Summative Evaluation**

Summative evaluations will be conducted by department chairs and deans. The objective of summative evaluations is to provide an overall formal assessment of online instructional quality. The summative evaluation procedure coincides with the Section 3.9 Faculty Evaluation Procedure outlined in the 2009 ASU Faculty Handbook. Temporary and probationary faculty as well as tenured faculty will undergo Annual Reviews (April 1-May 15). For online courses, a summative evaluation can only be initiated after the faculty member has been alerted.

- **Peer Evaluation: Consortium of Faculty for Instruction in Virtual Ecologies (C-FIVE)**

The Consortium of Faculty for Instruction in Virtual Ecologies (C-FIVE) include members of the faculty who have demonstrated efficacy in online instruction and participated in various online professional developments initiatives. These faculty are recommended. Approval will include a member of the DOEP staff, the appropriate department chair, and college dean. C-FIVE members will mentor new online Members of the C-FIVE will receive committee membership recognition towards tenure and promotion.

*Ownership of Materials and Copyright:*

ASU supports the development of its research and academic program through the application and commercial development of intellectual property through patents, copyrights, licenses, and related programs. The policies on Intellectual Property are contained in the Faculty Handbook and the Faculty Handbook for Online Instruction. Regarding Copyright and Fair Use Policies, which differ in the virtual environment, online courses are not covered under the Classroom Use Exemption. More information about Copyright and Fair Use is contained in the Faculty Handbook for Online Instruction.

Rights to online courses designed and developed for ASU reside with the University. Faculty must consider copyright, trademark, and licensing issues when designing online education courses. Examples include the use of copyrighted photographs,

graphics, text selections, audio clips from a song, or video clips from a movie. The usual permissions must be acquired and documented by the faculty member. If copyright permission cannot be obtained or if ownership is questionable, faculty will substitute other open, free-use resources where copyright permission is clear and attainable or substitute resources that are in the public domain.

*Accessibility:*

All online courses must comply with ADA and meet WCAG guidelines for accessibility. Such guidelines include font size, captions for all videos, transcripts for all audios. To meet all guidelines, faculty should refer to [Web Content and Accessibility Guidelines](#) and with [Section 508](#) of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Online course accessibility training will be offered annually.

***Online Course Facilitation:***

To promote edifying online learning experiences, as well as cultural competence for students, Online Facilitation Procedures follow.

The first day of the week for all online courses will be Monday. Thus, all online courses will run Monday (i.e., day 1) through Sunday (i.e., day 7), which benefits working students by giving them the weekend to finalize assignments.

Faculty cannot change the mode of course delivery (Refer to Table 1). If the course is online, the implication is that the course is asynchronous. If the course is online and synchronous, a message presented on the semester course schedule, in the syllabus, and on any course advertisement must be included and the course description must indicate the meeting time, frequency, and mode of connectivity.

Faculty cannot require asynchronous online learners to participate in synchronous course meetings; they can, however, provide synchronous meetings as a supplement to course content. If synchronous meetings are held, they must be recorded and uploaded for all student use.

All faculty must be deliberate in fostering a sense of community, as well as promote and reflect cultural competence among online courses. Faculty will consult with the Division of Online Education and Programs staff for appropriate strategies.

Faculty must ensure student authentication when speaking with online learners. When providing learners with grade information, faculty must comply with [Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) guidelines. Faculty can request that students use within system email. When speaking with students via video conferencing, faculty can ask students to confirm their identity through picture identification. Such is not necessary for general course sessions (i.e., information sessions and lessons).

*Proctoring Exams:*

Ensuring academic honesty in an Online Education environment is vital to the integrity of Online Education courses at ASU. Faculty members teaching Online

Education courses and offering exams can have proctored exams. The faculty may choose to require that more than one exam be proctored. Proctoring must be done using the following approved methods:

- For hybrid or blended courses, the faculty member may choose to proctor his/her own exam in a computer lab and/or in the classroom;
- Approved Online Education proctoring service (e.g., ProctorU, Examity, Proctorio, Honorlock etc.);
- Other Universities that proctor exams for students enrolled in online or independent study courses;
- Commercial testing center (e.g., Pearson VUE); and
- Military students may use a post/base/shipyard-based education center.

If a fee is charged, the student is responsible for the fee.

***Online Engagement Procedures:***

To promote a high sense of community among faculty and online learners, Online Engagement Procedures follow.

***General Expectations for Pre-Course Set Up, Reoccurring Responsibilities, and Post-Course Actions***

Faculty are expected to comply with the General Responsibilities Timeline, which provides pre-course set up, reoccurring, and post-course expectations (see Appendix B). It is a toolkit document to help faculty remember time-sensitive responsibilities.

***General Engagement:***

Faculty will engage in the course at least four days a week. Engagement includes posting an announcement and posting a discussion response. Faculty are required to post at least one announcement per week. The Announcement can introduce new content, provide a weekly overview, or provide other pertinent course information or changes.

***Attendance:***

If for any reason the course faculty member will be unavailable for 48 hours or more, he or she will (a) alert the chair of the department and program coordinator, (b) identify course coverage\* to further student engagement, c) send a Course Message to all students, and (d) post an Announcement to share how to contact a supporting instructor or teaching assistant. \*The faculty member is responsible for identifying someone to cover the course and can confer with his or her department chair and the Division of Online Education and Programs staff.

***Participation:***

To model student participation and foster positive engagement, faculty are expected to participate in online courses at least every 48 hours. Participation is met through general engagement. Likewise, grading with the learning management system, and responding to within system emails, are also factored into participation. Faculty will

respond to at least 30% of the students in any discussion thread. Faculty will post at least one announcement per week, at the start of each week.

*Grading (See Table 2 and Appendix B):*

Faculty teaching undergraduate courses will grade all assignments within 7 days of the due date. Lengthy writing assignments can be broken into smaller assignment portions to stay within this grading policy. All discussion posts will be graded within 7 days. Students should not be required to submit new related assignments until they receive feedback on previously associated ones.

Faculty teaching graduate courses will grade all assignments within 14 days of the due date. All discussion posts will be graded within 7 days of the due date.

*Availability and Communication with Students:*

Response Time

Faculty teaching online courses are encouraged to respond to student inquiries in a timely fashion. Expectations for responses fall under quality standards (See Table 2).

Virtual Office Hours

As required by ASU, each faculty member will maintain availability 5 days a week for students. Faculty teaching online courses will maintain two and a half virtual office hours (i.e., 150 minutes) every week for each online course taught. Virtual office hours can be combined with physical office hours. For example, if a faculty member teaches two virtual and two traditional courses, half of his or her office hours would be virtual and half would be fulfilled face-to-face. The requirements are documented in the Faculty Handbook. Faculty will post these hours in the syllabus, the learning management system, on the faculty's door (if applicable), and provide a copy to the department chair and program coordinator.

Announcements

By Monday at 12:00 noon, Central Standard Time, faculty will also post a weekly Course Announcement introducing the objectives and assignment. A weekly email is suggested as well.

Table 2. Response Times

| Inquiry/Assignment Type   | Response Time   |
|---|---|
| Email   | As soon as possible but within 24 hours Sunday through Thursday and within 48 hours Friday and Saturday |
| Asynchronous Chat   | As soon as possible but within 24 hours Sunday through Thursday and within 48 hours Friday and Saturday |
| Discussion Participation<br>Feedback/Grading  | No more than 7 days after due date  |
| Short Written Assignments<br>(5 pages or less)<br>Feedback/Grading                      | No more than 7 days after due date  |
| Graduate Level and Long<br>Written Assignments (6 or<br>more pages)<br>Feedback/Grading | No more than 14 days after due date   |

The response times comply with General Expectations for Pre-Course Set Up, Reoccurring Responsibilities, and Post-Course Actions (See Appendix A).

#### Email Use

Faculty can use emails to (a) communicate with individual students or groups, (b) check on inactive students, (c) alert students to course changes, and (d) provide direction to resources that support or review course-related content.

#### FERPA

Faculty will also consider the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) when communicating with students. Verification of a student's identity is mandatory

#### Netiquette

Faculty will use personable but professional language—that complies with netiquette guidelines—when communicating with students.

## Appendix A



*Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges  
1866 Southern Lane  
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

**DISTANCE AND CORRESPONDENCE EDUCATION Policy Statement*****Definition of Distance Education***

For the purposes of the Commission on College's accreditation review, distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program.

***Definition of Correspondence Education***

Correspondence education is a formal educational process under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor. Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; courses are typically self-paced.

***Policy Statements***

1. At the time of review by the Commission, the institution demonstrates that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as (1) a secure login and pass code, (2) proctored examinations, and (3) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.
2. At the time of review by the Commission, the institution demonstrates that it has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.
3. At the time of review by the Commission, the institution demonstrates that it has a written procedure distributed at the time of registration or enrollment that notifies students of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.

4. An institution that offers distance or correspondence education must ensure that it reports accurate headcount enrollment on its annual Institutional Profile submitted to the Commission.
5. Institutions must ensure that their distance and correspondence education courses and programs comply with the *Principles of Accreditation*. This applies to all educational programs and services, wherever located or however delivered.

### ***Guidelines in the Application of the Principles of Accreditation to Distance and Correspondence Education***

With the underlying concept that the *Principles of Accreditation* apply to all programs of the institution, regardless of mode of delivery, institutions should consider the following guideline statements in implementing and reporting on distance and correspondence education programs.

#### **Mission**

If an institution offers significant distance and correspondence education, it should be reflected in the institution's mission.

#### **Curriculum and Instruction**

The faculty assumes primary responsibility for and exercises oversight of distance and correspondence education, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.

The technology used is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the programs and courses and expectations concerning the use of such technology are clearly communicated to students.

Distance and correspondence education policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products.

Academic support services are appropriate and specifically related to distance and correspondence education.

Program length is appropriate for each of the institution's educational programs, including those offered through distance education and correspondence education.

For all degree programs offered through distance or correspondence education, the programs embody a coherent course of study that is compatible with the institution's mission and is based upon fields of study appropriate to higher education.

For all courses offered through distance or correspondence education, the institution employs sound and acceptable practices for determining the amount and level of credit awarded and justifies the use of a unit other than semester credit hours by explaining its equivalency.



An institution entering into consortial arrangements or contractual agreements for the delivery of courses/programs or services offered by distance or correspondence education is an active participant in ensuring the effectiveness and quality of the courses/programs offered by all of the participants.

### **Faculty**

An institution offering distance or correspondence learning courses/programs ensures that there is a sufficient number of faculty qualified to develop, design, and teach the courses/programs.

The institution has clear criteria for the evaluation of faculty teaching distance education courses and programs.

Faculty who teach in distance and correspondence education programs and courses receive appropriate training.

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

Comparability of distance and correspondence education programs to campus-based programs and courses are ensured by the evaluation of educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction.

The institution regularly assesses the effectiveness of its provision of library/learning resources and student support services for distance or correspondence education students.

### **Library and Learning Resources**

Students have access to and can effectively use appropriate library resources.

Access is provided to laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the courses or programs

### **Student Services**

Students have adequate access to the range of services appropriate to support the programs offered through distance and correspondence education.

Students in distance or correspondence programs have an adequate procedure for resolving their complaints, and the institution follows its policies and procedures.

Advertising, recruiting, and admissions information adequately and accurately represent the programs, requirements, and services available to students.

Documented procedures assure that security of personal information is protected in the conduct of assessments and evaluations and in the dissemination of results.

Students enrolled in distance education courses are able to use the technology employed, have the equipment necessary to succeed, and are provided assistance in using the technology employed.

### **Facilities and Finances**

Appropriate equipment and technical expertise required for distance and correspondence education are available.

The institution, in making distance and correspondence education courses/programs a part of its mission, provides adequate funding for faculty, staff, services, and technological infrastructure to support the methodology.

### ***Document History***

*Adopted: Commission on Colleges, June 1997 Updated in accord with the revised Principles, December 2006 Revised: SACSCOC Board of Trustees: June 2010 Edited: January 2012 Reformatted: July 2014; August 2018*

## Appendix B




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**Expectations for Pre-Course Set Up, Facilitation, and Post-Course Actions**


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| <i>Three Weeks Prior to the Course Start</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm that the course content is uploaded and complies with expectations. Work with the Division of Online Education and Programs staff.</li> <li>• Make the course syllabus available; be sure to include a downloadable version.</li> <li>• Post a brief biography about yourself.</li> <li>• Post a Course Policies Announcement.</li> <li>• Post an Office Hours Announcement. Be sure to indicate how (or through what medium) you will hold office hours</li> </ul> |
| <i>One Week Prior to the Course Start</i>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send a group email introducing the course, the required texts, and syllabus; include the start date</li> <li>• Post the Welcome Announcement and Welcome Video.</li> </ul>  |
| <i>One Day Before the Course Begins</i>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send a group email to generate course excitement</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Day One of the Course</i>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send a group welcome message to the students</li> <li>• Post an Announcement to (a) introduce yourself, (b) highlight course policies, (c) provide virtual office hours (as well as how they will be held), (d) offer encouragement, (e) provide success tips, and (f) foster a sense of community.</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Weekly</i>                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post a weekly announcement by Monday at 12:00 noon, CST</li> <li>• Send a group email</li> <li>• Contact any student who is not meeting expectations or is not active</li> <li>• Comply with Response Time expectations for feedback and grading (i.e., provide students with didactic feedback)</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Daily</i>                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respond to emails with 24 of receiving them</li> <li>• Address student concerns and questions</li> <li>• Monitor student discussion threads and respond to further and re-direct discussion</li> <li>• Provide formative feedback and grading</li> <li>• Share augmentative learning resources</li> </ul>   |
| <i>Two Weeks Before the Course Ends</i>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind students about completing the course evaluation</li> </ul>   |
| <i>The Final Day of the Course</i>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send an affirming and encouraging group email and share the date grades will be posted</li> </ul>   |

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**ONLINE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN/MODIFICATION/EVALUATION REQUEST**

ASU FORM (8/2021)

DATE:

Submit one (1) completed form for each request.

**Section I. Type of Action, Request Type, Requestee(s)**

**A. Type of Action** (Select One): Course Design  Review/Evaluation  Modification

**B. Instructional Design Strategy:** Microlearning  Story-Based  Scenario-Based  Gamification  Other

**C. Request Type** (Select One): Individual  Departmental

“Individual” requests are submitted by one faculty members. “Departmental” requests imply (a) faculty collaboration and (b) common course design.

**D. Requestee** (If a “Departmental” request, please indicate two collaborating faculty member’s information.)

|                       | Name | Department | Contact Information |
|-----------------------|------|------------|---------------------|
| Request submitted by  |      |            |                     |
| Collaborating Faculty |      |            |                     |
| Collaborating Faculty |      |            |                     |
| Collaborating Faculty |      |            |                     |
| Collaborating Faculty |      |            |                     |

**Section II. Course/Program Information** (Skip to Section II-B for a Program Request.)

**A. Course Prefix:**  **Course Number:**  **Course Name:**

*Please attach a current course syllabus.*

Do not complete Section II-B for a Course Request.

**B. Program**

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Existing Online Program New Online Program 

For new programs, please follow the process outlined in Curriculum Development Guide. Begin by submitting a preliminary program proposal to the department and college dean. Instructional design is vital, so engaging DOEP staff early is best.

Number of Courses: *Please prepare and attach a current Program of Study that lists all courses.*

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**Section III.****Action/Request Details**

Please provide as many details as possible. Include a supplemental content if necessary.

Email this form and any associated documents to a Division of Online Education and Programs Staff member and copy the Executive Director. Upon receipt of this form, you and your department chair will receive a confirmation email.

[Amanda Woods, eLearning Specialist](#)  
[Michael Hernandez, Instructional Designer](#)  
[Almut Haboeck, Sr. Instructional Designer](#)  
[Albert Calhoun, Sr. Instructional Technologist](#)  
[Patrice W. Glenn Jones, Executive Director](#)