THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER

UT Health Science Center:
AA102-H Distance Education and Off-campus Instructional Sites Policy – Academic Affairs

No./Title: AA102 – DISTANCE EDUCATION AND OFF-CAMPUS INSTRUCTIONAL SITES POLICY	Resp. Office: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS Approval Body: CASA	Effective Date: 04/16/2013
Category: Academic	Last Review: 08/03/2021	Next Review: 08/03/2024
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Related Policies:	Approval of Curricular Changes Relating to Academic Programs Student Learning Assessment Policy Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	

POLICY

UTHSC is committed to providing a quality educational experience for all students regardless of geographic location or mode of delivery. Students enrolled in distance education programs or participating in instruction at an off-campus instructional site have access to the range of support services and resources necessary to successfully complete their education. Likewise, necessary and sufficient practices are followed to assure the privacy of all students regardless of geographic location or mode of delivery.

POLICY DEFINITIONS, RATIONALE AND PROCEDURES

Definitions

For the purposes of this document and other related policies and procedures, UTHSC uses the definition for distance education as set forth by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC):

> *"... 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 other digital media if used as part of the distance education course or program.
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> *(Distance and Correspondence Education Policy Statement, September 2020)*

Distance education courses and programs include those courses and programs offered online (relying primarily on the internet for the delivery of course material); and courses and programs relying on videoconference capacity, allowing synchronous interaction between students and instructors who are geographically separated.

Consistent with the definition and guidelines as set forth by SACSCOC regarding

distance education, UTHSC uses the following definitions for purposes of this document and other related policies and procedures:

1. **Online program**: An online educational program is defined as any program where 50% or more of the program content is delivered through electronic means (either synchronous or asynchronous, though not including the use of videoconference technology to deliver a course or program to an off-campus instructional site).
2. **Hybrid program**: A hybrid educational program is defined as any program where 20 - 49% of the program content is delivered through electronic means (either synchronous or asynchronous, though not including the use of videoconference technology to deliver a course or program to an off-campus instructional site).
3. **Online course**: An online course is defined as any course where 50% or more of the course content is delivered through electronic means (either synchronous or asynchronous, though not including the use of videoconference technology).
4. **Hybrid course**: A hybrid course is defined as any course where 20 - 49% of the course content is delivered through electronic means (either synchronous or asynchronous, though not including the use of videoconference technology).

Finally, consistent with guidelines set forth by SACSCOC, and for the purposes of this document and other related policies and procedures, UTHSC defines **off-campus instructional sites** as those locations that are geographically separate from the main campus of UTHSC (located in Memphis, Tennessee) and where students can complete 25% or more of the educational program credit hour requirements[1].

Distance Education Programs and Courses
1. Distance education programs are consistent with the mission of UTHSC and the offering college and will be approved and evaluated through the regular curriculum approval and program assessment procedures. Unless otherwise provided, all policies, standards, procedures and expectations for on-campus instruction apply to programs offered through distance education.
2. Selection of programs to be offered via distance education is the purview of the appropriate college and unit which are expected to provide necessary and sufficient oversight of the program to ensure the currency of the program, its courses, and resources.
3. Each distance education program results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree awarded. Each program offered through distance education has procedures in place to collect and review identified student learning outcomes and to identify program improvements based on the data collected.
4. Once implemented, UTHSC and the college offering the program commit to ongoing

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[1] *Hospital and outpatient settings where students complete required clinical experiences are not considered off-campus instructional sites for the purposes of this document or related policies and procedures.*

support for the continuation of the program for a period of time sufficient to enable admitted students to complete the program as long as financially feasible.

Required Procedures for Colleges/Academic Units offering Distance Education Courses or Programs

1. The college or academic unit offering a distance education program (or course) is responsible for verifying student identity to ensure that each student who registers for a distance education course is the same student who completes the requisite coursework.
   a. Strategies such as using a secure login to access course material and to submit course assignments and/or establishing means of proctoring exams are acceptable approaches of verifying student identity.
   b. In the event a specific fee is established and charged to students to cover the cost associated with verifying student identity, students will be notified upon registration regarding the associated fee.
2. A written statement regarding means through which student privacy is maintained and assured is included in official information regarding a distance education course or program.
   a. At a minimum, information regarding the protection and assurance of student privacy for students enrolled in distance education courses or programs is included in the UTHSC Bulletin and is addressed during new student orientation.
3. Students enrolled in distance education courses evaluate such courses using identified course evaluation strategies for all courses, regardless of means of delivery, as approved by the college and/or academic unit offering the distance education course(s). Additional aspects of distance education courses evaluated include, but are not limited to, the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery system along with access to necessary support services, library resources, and the instructor(s) engaged in the delivery of the course content. As with all courses, results of course evaluations, and particularly the evaluation of the unique aspects of distance education course delivery, are used to enhance distance education courses.

Institutional Support for Distance Education

1. UTHSC ensures that all distance education students have access to sufficient library resources to support the courses in which students are enrolled and provides access to library support services that closely approximates that offered to on-campus students.
2. UTHSC ensures that all distance education students have access to the range of academic and student support services necessary to support their successful completion of a distance education course or program.
3. UTHSC provides faculty development opportunities and support specifically related to the effective delivery and evaluation of distance education courses and programs.
4. UTHSC deploys appropriate academic technologies for distance learning and addresses security, privacy and accessibility.

APPROVAL HISTORY

Effective: April 16, 2013
Reviewed: May 1, 2018, Committee on Academic and Student Affairs (CASA)
Approved: June 5, 2018, CASA
Approved: June 25, 2018, Chancellor
Reviewed: August 3, 2021, CASA
Approved: October 11, 2021, Chief Academic Officer