



DISTANCE EDUCATION

Policy Number: CU-AA-41

GENERAL

Distance and online education courses and programs at Concord University (University) extend teaching and learning beyond the confines of the physical classroom to “improve the lives of our students and communities, through innovative teaching and learning...” The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) defines distance education as “education that uses one or more ... technologies ... 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.”

Such courses/programs shall be based on the Higher Learning Commission’s (HLC) Distance Education Policy, the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions’ (C-RAC) guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education Programs to ensure best practices are used in the development, oversight, and evaluation of online programs and classes, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation’s (CHEA) endorsement of Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all University courses that:

1. are asynchronously delivered online using the University’s learning management platform (LMS)
2. have a significant defined portion of their content delivered online, as referenced in the definitions section, and/or
3. are delivered synchronously using a combination of online and two-way transmission through face-to-face or various video-conferencing technologies.

POLICY

It is the policy of Concord University to provide distance and online education courses and programs to extend teaching and learning beyond the confines of the physical classroom.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

In general, Concord University shall not provide additional compensation to faculty who develop distance education courses. Syllabi, classroom resources, and pedagogical materials developed by a faculty member in an online or partially online course are considered jointly owned by the University and the faculty member who developed them, meaning that said materials may be used freely by both parties. In the rare case where the University arranges with a faculty member monetary or other compensation for developing pedagogical materials, such materials shall be considered to be owned solely by the University.

DEFINITIONS

Asynchronous (web) Course: Courses delivered entirely online using the University's Learning Management System (LMS). Concord University identifies these courses as "AS" sections and "WEB" on the University's schedule of courses offered.

Hybrid Course: Courses designed to be scheduled and delivered both on a regular recurring basis synchronously, whether face to face onsite, or online with the balance of the course delivered asynchronously.

Note: All Hybrid courses must clearly stipulate face-to-face meeting times which must be communicated to students. The first of these meetings must take place during the first week of regular classes.

The estimation of the amount of coursework assigned between the face to face and online sessions shall be determined by the instructor and outlined in the course syllabus.

Course Creator: This refers to the individual who generates original content for delivery as an online or hybrid course.

Quality Matters (QM): An international, inter-institutional program that uses a set of approved rubrics to evaluate the quality of online courses.

PROCESS

The department chair and dean approve the delivery format of all courses prior to delivery.

Procedures for Online Course Development

Development for an online course will align with the University's Acceptable Use of Information Technology Policy.

All online courses will be aligned with the QM rubric and all faculty teaching asynchronous and hybrid classes must complete at least one QM training.

Faculty will be responsible for acquiring the necessary technical skills needed to design and deliver course/programmatic content online and for consulting with the University's instructional designer for guidance and technical support.

Ideally, development of an online course will be completed at least one semester prior to the semester in which the online course is to be offered to facilitate the review process.

Online Course Evaluation and Quality Assurance

The university will assign a reviewer or team to review the quality of the course, including content, navigation, and accessibility and offer recommendations for improvement, typically prior to placing the course online.

The Dean, Department Chair, his/her designee, and the Provost will have access to individual courses offered through the LMS to assess and ensure the quality of the online course.

All courses/programs will be evaluated at least once every five years as part of the University's 5-Year Program Reviews.

Enrollment for online courses

Enrollment for online courses shall be set for a minimum of 25 students, unless approved by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Students will follow course enrollment guidelines set forth by the University.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Department Chairs have responsibility for implementing and operationalizing this policy.

AUTHORITY FOR INTERPRETATION

The final authority for interpretation of this policy rests with the Provost.

AMENDMENTS

This Policy may be amended to change names, titles, links to information, grammatical and spelling without resorting to the rulemaking process.

Federal and State laws, rules and regulations change. Any portion of this policy may be modified in practice to ensure the due process rights of the individuals involved are provided and to conform with any current Federal and State law, rules and regulations. Subject to the institution's rulemaking policy, the institution will change this policy to conform to the most current laws and regulations within a reasonable time of discovering the change.

REFERENCE/ AUTHORITY

Higher Learning Commission's (HLC) Distance Education Policy

The Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions' (C-RAC) guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education Programs

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation's (CHEA) endorsement of Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs.

Replaces BOG policy CU-AA-41, Distance Education, effective October 29, 2016

APPROVAL

Intent to Plan/ Revise Approved by the Board of Governors : April 20, 2021

Approved by the Board of Governors: June 15, 2021

Effective Date: June 15, 2021