

Guidelines for Distance Education Courses and Programs

The educational mission of Texas A&M University can be achieved in part by offering programs and courses of instruction through distance education (DE). DE may be offered through approved online programs, online courses, face-to-face instruction at approved off-campus instructional locations, or through videoconference technology to students at approved off-campus instructional locations. Delivery may be synchronous or asynchronous.

Texas A&M University considers distance education to be a mode of delivery for instructional content. Therefore, all rules and regulations of Texas A&M University and the University System that pertain to instructional programs apply equally to distance education offerings. Additionally, these guidelines extend to the requirements for admission of students, courses to be offered, the assignment of faculty to such courses, provisions for adequate facilities, library resources, academic services, and student services. Moreover, Texas A&M University Student Rules, which govern academic, student life, and student grievance procedures, are applicable equally to any student at Texas A&M University.

TAMU will provide distance education students with reasonable and adequate access to a range of appropriate student and academic services.

To meet the requirements of the US Department of Education and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the following guidelines are to be followed for DE courses and programs.

Student Identity, Privacy, and Notifications of Fees

1. All students must submit graded assignments through eCampus or another Learning Management System (LMS)/program which uses CAS authentication.
2. For exams that would typically be proctored in a face-to-face environment (thus considered an in-class exam rather than a take-home exam), academic programs must use a proctoring service approved by the university (either *Examity* or *ProctorU for online proctoring*), OR a program must have a set of written procedures outlining steps for verifying student identity. Students will NOT be charged for any fees associated with proctoring services as these fees are included in the normal tuition and fees charged.
3. Students must be notified when registering for a course of any additional charges that they will incur for the verification of their identity. Programs can indicate these courses during the course scheduling process implemented by the Office of the Registrar. The student is notified of the additional fees in Howdy when enrolling in the course.

Faculty Support and Responsibility

The responsibility for maintaining the quality and rigor of individual distance education programs resides with the faculty and administrative officers who offer and administer the program. As such, the following guidelines are to be followed with respect to the delivery of the curriculum through DE.

1. At the discretion of the college dean, faculty who teach in a distance education program or online course may do so either as a part of their regular departmental assignment or as an overload. If the course is taught as an overload, university processes for requesting in-excess appointments shall be followed. The department is responsible for providing the budget support required.
2. Faculty who teach off-campus face-to-face courses for resident credit are entitled to receive reimbursement for travel and per diem expenses.
3. Faculty will be responsible for determining the distance delivery method that is appropriate for each course and program. Faculty will also be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this technology and may consult with instructional designers for assistance as appropriate.
4. Like other contributions to teaching and scholarship, contributions to distance education, as part of assigned responsibilities, will be evaluated annually and will be a factor in promotion and tenure decisions and merit increase decisions. A distance education course should be counted in the workload report in the same manner the course would be counted if taught by conventional methods.
5. Preparation to teach a course by distance for the first time, or adapting a course for delivery by distance for the first time, should be credited for workload report purposes just as preparation to teach any other new course would be credited. Additional support is provided at the discretion of the department or college.

Export Controls

1. Per University Rule 15.02.99.M1, *Export Controls*, all distance education programs must conform to export control laws and regulations. Export control information is accessible on the Division of Research's web page located at <http://vpr.tamu.edu/resources/export-controls>. Questions should be directed to TAMU's Export Control Office, telephone (979) 862- 6419 or by email to exportcontrols@tamu.edu.
2. It is the responsibility of the department offering the course and the faculty instructor of record to ensure export control requirements are reviewed and any concerns addressed with the Export Control Office prior to allowing students to register for the section. Faculty members should ensure that course content does not contain controlled information which is prohibited or restricted for distribution to certain countries.
3. International students and U.S. citizens/lawful permanent residents seeking admission into a degree program offered via distance education or any admitted student seeking to register for courses from outside the United States or through one of the University's approved off-campus educational sites are subject to Restricted Party Screening by the Export Control Office as identified by the Registrar's Office prior to the first day of classes and by the 20th day of classes

for students registering late for classes. Results of the Export Control Office review are communicated to the Registrar's Office before a student is permitted to take a course.

4. Faculty members shall utilize start of semester interaction with students enrolled in distance education to verify location and authenticate UIN for each student.

Course Approval

Per University Rule 11.03.99.M1, *Definition of a Credit Hour*, courses taught online or in distance programs must be reviewed and approved through the institution's curricular approval process to ensure that the course has learning outcomes and credit hour requirements equivalent to traditionally taught courses.

Assessment

Programs delivered through DE will be assessed on an annual basis with respect to attainment of identified student learning outcomes and program outcomes and no less than every seven years per the Academic Program Review process. For programs offered through DE, the following guidelines are to be observed.

1. The mission of the academic program is to state that the program is a DE program, and clearly articulate the mode of delivery and/or location(s) at which the program is offered.
2. Assessment data will be routinely gathered and evaluated to ensure the equivalence of the DE program with similar traditional (i.e., face-to-face) programs.

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