

Texas Woman's University

University Regulation and Procedure

Regulation and Procedure Name: Distance Education

Regulation and Procedure Number: URP: 02.255

Policy Owner: Academic Affairs

POLICY STATEMENT

Texas Woman's University is committed to providing a well-designed and effective process for developing and implementing academic courses and programs in a variety of instructional modalities. Academic Affairs is responsible for coordinating the planning and overall policy for distance education at the University; maintaining compliance with federal, state, and institutional policies, procedures, and regulations related to distance education; identifying new distance education instructional opportunities; coordinating with other university officials and TWU units (e.g., academic components, Library, and administrative support units) to ensure quality and continuous improvement of services for distance learners.

APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to TWU Students, Faculty, and Staff.

DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to distance education are based upon regulations of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board ("THECB") and guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges ("SACSCOC").

1. "Distance Education" ("DE") means the interactive participation in formal learning activities by students and faculty through electronic means.
2. "Distance Education Course" a course in which a majority (more than 50%) of the instruction occurs when the students and instructor(s) are not in the same place. Academic units are responsible for designating courses and sections as distance education as defined in this policy. For the purposes of this policy, there are two categories of distance education courses:
 - a. "Fully Distance Education Course" a course which may have mandatory face-to-face sessions which total no more than 15% of

the instructional time (Examples: orientation session, laboratory, exam review, or an in-person test).

- b. "Hybrid/Blended Course" a course in which a majority, (more than 50%) but less than 85%, of the planned instruction occurs when the students and instructor(s) are not in the same place.
3. "Distance Education Program (degree, certificate, specialization, etc.)" means an educational program in which more than 50% of the courses are designated as distance education courses.
4. "State Authorization" means rules regarding educational activities enacted by individual states to protect its citizens from fraud. Regulated activities may include the offering of online courses or face-to-face experiential activities (e.g., practica, internships, or clinicals) to students physically located in another state, recruiting or marketing directed to residents of another state, the establishment of physical locations in another state, etc.

REGULATION AND PROCEDURE

- I. Authority and Responsibility for Distance Education
 - A. The faculty assumes primary responsibility for and exercises oversight of distance education, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.
 - B. The Division of Academic Affairs is responsible for all matters related to academic programs, including the following:
 1. Ensuring that instructors of record receive recommended training in online pedagogy.
 2. Ensuring that courses meet THECB and SACSCOC standards, and that Institutional effectiveness assessment strategies include measurable student learning outcomes.
 3. Ensuring that students know what technological expertise they will need and what technology they must possess to successfully complete distance education courses prior to registration.

4. Ensuring that faculty teaching distance education courses have adequate time for interaction, monitoring, and evaluating student progress and success.
5. Designating courses and sections in the scheduling system as distance education as defined in this policy.

C. Academic Affairs provides assistance to individuals interested in developing distance education courses or programs through the Office of Teaching and Learning with Technology ("TLT"). TLT is responsible for supporting distance education programs and course development to meet Quality Matters™ criteria and THECB and SACSCOC standards. TLT ensures that academic components interested in developing distance education courses or programs are provided assistance in the course and program preparation including the process for review and consideration as a distance education program.

D. TWU is committed to complying with rules and regulations regarding the operation of higher education institutions in every state in which it enrolls students (State Authorization). TLT assists academic components in securing approvals and in ensuring TWU's website and other marketing materials include appropriate disclosure statements related to state authorization.

II. Planning, Reviewing, and Implementing Distance Education

A. The appropriateness and viability of distance education programs must be carefully considered in the planning process. TWU's distance education programs and courses will meet the University's strategic goal of producing measurable outcomes and will be prioritized in terms of viability and student need using the following guidelines:

1. Programs with administrative leaders and faculty who are conversant with the current technologies;
2. Programs which are ready to be delivered off campus;
3. Programs which address documented needs and demands;
4. Programs where faculty are qualified to lead and support the endeavor;

5. Programs which can be supported financially, technologically, and academically.
- B. Academic components interested in developing distance education programs and courses should contact TLT at the initial stage of the planning process for assistance in developing the proposed program or course and in preparing the necessary proposals. Proposals must be developed for all DE programs regardless of whether they are listed among the University's approved inventory of degrees.
- C. The completed proposal must be sent for approval through appropriate administrative channels (usually program director, academic component administrator ("ACA"), and dean). The proposal must be forwarded to the following individuals/units (as appropriate) for feedback:
 1. Distance Education Advisory Committee ("DEAC");
 2. Dean of the Graduate School (on behalf of Graduate Council); or Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Academic Partnerships (on behalf of Undergraduate Council)
 3. Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost for approval and forwarded for consideration by the TWU Board of Regents. Proposals for new distance education degree or changes in instructional modality of existing doctoral degree require THECB approval.
- D. The academic component is responsible for ensuring that all faculty members involved in approved proposals complete recommended training and are prepared to teach online before courses can be offered. TLT and other TWU units can provide professional development and training to support these efforts.

III. Distance Education Advisory Committee ("DEAC")

Members of the DEAC are appointed by the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, based on their interest and experience regarding the provision of distance education at TWU. DEAC serves in an advisory capacity to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

IV. DEAC Membership

The membership of the Distance Education Advisory Committee includes:

- A. 3 Online Program Representatives appointed by the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost;
- B. Liaison to the Faculty Senate appointed by Faculty Senate;
- C. Liaison to the Council of Chairs appointed by Council of Chairs;
- D. Dean appointed by Academic Council;
- E. A Staff Representative appointed by Staff Council;
- F. An Enrollment Management Representative appointed by Vice President for Enrollment Management;
- G. 2 Student Representatives: 1 undergraduate and 1 graduate student appointed by Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Council;
- H. Additional members may be appointed as needed to provide expertise on specific projects.

V. DEAC Membership Responsibilities

- A. Reviewing new DE degree, certificate, and track proposals;
- B. Reviewing DE policies and procedures;
- C. Providing advice on DE project and planning issues;
- D. Periodically reviewing the quality, viability and appropriateness of distance education programs and courses;
- E. Reviewing new enterprise-level instructional technologies;
- F. Serving other functions as assigned by the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

REVIEW

This policy will remain in effect and published until it is reviewed, updated, or archived. This policy is to be reviewed once every six years. Interim review may be required as a result of updates to federal and state law or regulations, Board of Regents policies, or internal processes or procedures.

REFERENCES

[THECB Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered Electronically](#)

[19 Tex. Admin. Code § 4.255 Subsection P](#)

[SACSCOC Distance and Correspondence Education Policy Statement](#)

[TLT State Authorization Website](#)

FORMS AND TOOLS

None

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