

CAROLINAS COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
**POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

**ACADEMIC**

**SUBJECT:** DISTANCE EDUCATION

**REVIEWER(S):** Provost\*  
Teaching and Learning Committee Chair

**POLICY**

Carolinas College defines distance education as instructional activity that occurs with a separation by time or space between the student and the instructor. Distance education can include online instruction, simulated instruction, virtual clinical or laboratory instruction, or any other e-learning activities. The purpose of offering distance education is to expand the educational opportunities in healthcare and provide students with alternative methods of learning. All current policies and services that apply to faculty and students involved in on-campus or "traditional" courses apply to distance education courses unless otherwise specified below.

**PROCEDURE**

A. Definitions

Any course that is defined as a distance education course must seek approval from the teaching and learning committee according to procedure outlined in Section B of this policy. For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

| Type of course | Percentage of content delivered online | Description of course activities.   |
|----------------|--|---|
| Traditional    | 0%                                     | Course with no online technology used.  |
| Web-enhanced   | 1% - 25%                               | A traditional course that meets in the classroom for most of the regularly scheduled class time but uses web-based technology for purposes of supplementing the course by publishing course materials, delivering lectures, facilitating discussions, extending office hours, posting course grades, etc. |
| Hybrid         | 26% - 50%                              | A course the blends instructional methodologies so that a portion of regularly scheduled class time is replaced with online activities.   |
| Online         | 51% - 100%                             | A course in which most or all of the content is delivered online. May have only a few or no required face-to-face meetings.   |

The percentage of content delivered online will be calculated based on the number of contact hours in the course. Distance education designations will be reported in Course Summary Forms and reviewed prior to the finalization of the course schedule published in the registration bulletin each semester. Calculations will be updated upon a change in a course as described in Section B.

B. Initial Internal Approval

1. The course approval process originates in the academic programs. Faculty wishing to add a new course or make changes in course delivery to an existing course will submit an Online Course Approval form to the appropriate program chair at the beginning of the semester prior to the semester of course delivery. The program chair will monitor the percentage of content delivered in online format to ensure that the appropriate percentage is maintained with the designated type of course as outlined in the table above. A course syllabus, as well as an updated Course Summary Form, will be included with the approval form. The course syllabus should clearly demonstrate that the course covers the same amount of material that would normally be

expected if the class were a traditional classroom-based course using the established course syllabus template.

2. All new distance education courses also will go through the established practice and process at the college for the approval of new courses by undergoing review and approval by the academic and curriculum committee outlined in the curriculum and academic program approval policy.
3. Once the request has been approved by the program chair (and curriculum committee, if necessary), the online course approval form, the course summary form and course syllabus will be submitted to the teaching and learning committee for review and approval.
4. If the course is approved by the teaching and learning committee, a course will be created within the software platform used to deliver distance education courses (e.g., Canvas). This process should be completed at least 10 weeks prior to the semester of course delivery so that course changes can be incorporated into the published course schedule.
5. In the event of an emergency situation requiring courses to be delivered in a distance education format, the College's Leadership Team will approve the transition to distance education and program chairs will coordinate with faculty to update course delivery and content.

#### C. External Approval

Academic program chairs are responsible for satisfying all approval and accreditation requirements concerning distance education and notification of substantive changes before students are enrolled in a distance education course, in accordance with the substantive change policy. In order to meet standard guidelines for accrediting body approval, proposals will be reviewed and submitted to the appropriate accrediting body at least four months prior to the semester of course delivery.

#### D. Renewals of Internal Approval

1. Approvals for distance education courses are considered ongoing in subsequent semesters, unless a substantive change is made to the teaching methodology (i.e., change in distance education course definition). Other changes in courses should seek approval within the appropriate academic department.
2. If changes are approved by the teaching and learning committee, the director of teaching, learning and technology and director of student records and information management will be notified by the teaching and learning committee chair.

#### E. Course Enrollment

1. The director of teaching, learning and technology is responsible for population of distance education courses the Wednesday before each term begins or on the Monday before the term begins for terms that begin on Wednesday.
2. During the add/drop period, any student that adds a course should reach out to faculty to expedite course access. During this time period, faculty should also regularly check the student information system to identify any students that have added their course. Faculty will grant students access by enrolling them into the course within the learning management system. The academic support team may also be notified by students or faculty if assistance adding students is needed during this time period.
3. For course withdrawals that occur once the drop/add period is complete, the student access to the course will be deactivated in order to retain course records.
4. Students who register in distance education courses/programs are responsible for completing all of the academic assignments and methods of assessment required in each course/program.
5. To assist in verifying the identity of individual students in distance education courses/programs, one or more of the following methodologies must be used: a secure log-in and password or visual verifications of student identity during examinations.
6. Information on costs associated with verifying student identity in a distance education course/program will be provided to the students at the time of enrollment in the course or program.

#### F. State Authorization

As required by federal regulations, the College must be authorized to offer distance education programs in other states than North Carolina. The College is a member institution of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). The College website maintains a current list of authorizations as well as points of contact for students to resolve complaints.

#### G. Curriculum and Instruction

1. Distance education courses should demonstrate that they provide the opportunity for substantial and timely interactions between faculty and students and among students comparable to the level of interactions in the same course offered in a traditional format. Comparability of interaction, assignments and content are evaluated based on descriptions outlined in course syllabi.\*
2. The faculty members of each academic program assume responsibility for and exercise oversight of distance education, ensuring both the rigor of the courses and the quality of instruction.\*
3. Ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues and the utilization of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourse or other media products will be governed by Atrium Health's policy number ADM 260.01 - Ownership, and Commercialization of Intellectual Property and will comply with the U.S. Copyright Law as updated by the Teaching, Education, and Copyright Harmonization (TEACH) Act.
4. The College will provide faculty support services specifically related to teaching via an electronic system, such as adequate equipment and software (in accordance with Carolinas College Access to Information Technology Policy).\*
5. The College will provide appropriate training for faculty who teach using technology.\* All faculty involved in distance education courses should be proficient in the development and delivery of distance education.

#### H. Evaluation and Assessment

1. The College will inform students of the skills and technology that are needed for particular distance education courses. In addition, faculty can, at the beginning of each semester, discuss requirements with students and/or create assignments that require students to demonstrate the necessary skills to succeed in the course.
2. Distance education courses will be evaluated for course effectiveness, including assessments of student learning, student retention and student and faculty satisfaction.\* Courses will be evaluated following the established procedures and schedules for course evaluation and peer reviews and will be included in the regular program review cycle. The teaching and learning committee is responsible for the development and oversight of the evaluation process for distance education courses, in addition to the academic program chairs.

#### I. Student Support

1. Students enrolled in distance education courses or programs will be provided equivalent library, financial, student and learning resources as those students enrolled in traditional courses.
2. Distance education courses are identified as such (i.e., web-enhanced, hybrid or online) prior to the publication deadline for the course schedule so that students can be notified that (1) internet access is required for the course and (2) the required face-to-face meeting time may be reduced.
3. Students will complete a college-wide orientation to learning resources that includes information pertaining to using software used for distance education courses, college e-mail and computer lab use. In addition, faculty members may provide course-specific orientation to course websites at the beginning of the semester. Orientation will also cover information pertaining to academic affairs and procedures, student support, business and financial aid information and library resources.
4. As with traditional on-campus courses, students taking distance education courses may request accommodations to meet individual learning needs. Students seeking accommodations should review the Accommodating Special Needs policy and are encouraged to contact the student success coordinator.
5. Students are required to comply with all related acceptable use policies.

- J. Faculty
1. All faculty members teaching distance education courses will meet the same criteria set by the Southern Association of Colleges and School's Commission on Colleges as all college faculty.
  2. Teaching distance education courses is considered a part of the regular teaching workload.
  3. Members of the faculty are required to comply with all related acceptable use policies.
- K. Facilities and Finances
1. Carolinas College possesses the equipment and technical expertise required for distance education.\* Appropriate equipment and software will be distributed in accordance with the Carolinas College Access to Information Technology policy. The learning technology specialist will be available for technical support. Technical support is available to resolve problems within a reasonable time frame (within 24 hours). In addition, the academic support team will be available to provide support and training to faculty in effective online course design and development.
  2. The teaching and learning committee will ensure that planning, budgeting and policy development processes reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment and other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the distance education course as a part of regular committee functions.\*
- L. The Distance Education policy and procedure will be reviewed bi-annually.

## **REFERENCES**

### **Related Policies to Consult:**

#### **Carolinas College:**

ACADEMIC - [Curriculum and Academic Program Approval](#); [Course Credit Hours and Numbering](#)

ADMINISTRATIVE - [Acceptable Use of Information Technology](#); [Access to Information Technology](#); [Minor and Substantive Change](#); [Planning and Assessment](#)

STUDENT AFFAIRS- [Accommodating Special Needs](#)

#### **Atrium Health:**

ADM 240.07 Ownership and Commercialization of Intellectual Property

IS.PHI 600.01 Communications Environment Acceptable Use

**SACSCOC:** Distance and Correspondence Education

### **Related Form(s)**

[Course Summary Form](#)

[Online Course Proposal Form](#)

[Course Access Removal Form](#)

### **Related 2018 SACSCOC Standard(s):**

10.4 Academic Governance

10.6 Distance and correspondence education

14.3 Comprehensive institutional reviews