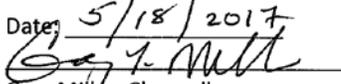




Approved by: Chancellor's Cabinet

Date: 5/18/2017

Gary Miller, Chancellor

Approved by Faculty Senate: 3-29-2017

Distance Education Policy

AC 30-17-1

What is Distance Education?

Distance education is defined as a planned teaching/learning experience in which teacher and students are separated by physical distance and teacher-student interaction occurs through multiple modalities of existing and evolving media. Distance education requires special techniques of course design, instructional techniques, assessment, and methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organization and administrative arrangements. We accept the Higher Learning Commission's definitions for Distance Education courses and programs:

- Distance education courses are those in which all or the vast majority (typically 75% or more) of the instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication or equivalent mechanism with the faculty and students physically separated from each other.
- Distance education programs are those certificate or degree programs in which 50% or more of the required courses may be taken as distance education courses.

Modes of Delivery

A variety of electronic instructional delivery modes are available at UW-Green Bay, including:

Asynchronous:

1. Online: Courses offered via the internet using a Learning Management System (LMS)
2. Blended or Hybrid (Arranged): Combines face-to-face classroom instruction with distance education activities

Synchronous:

3. Compressed Video: Occurs in real time and allows the instructor to communicate with remote site sections of the class via two-way audio/video. Instructors and students hear and see each other live from each site. These courses blend face-to-face and online pedagogies.

The UW-Green Bay schedule of classes indicates which courses are being offered via distance education and via which delivery format.

Philosophy Guiding Online Education

At the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, we hold in creative tension two distinct aspects of distance education. On the one hand, online education is every bit as rigorous as traditional, or face-to-face education. The quality of the educational experience should be equivalent for teacher and student alike. Yet, while distance education retains the high expectations we expect of our face-to-face courses, we are mindful of the fact that online instruction and in-class instruction are not the same. In order to reach the same standards of excellence, face-to-face and online courses use different pedagogical methods and modes of interaction. Online and traditional instruction are two different roads that lead to the same location.

Purpose Statement

As the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay's mission is to provide an interdisciplinary, problem-focused educational experience that prepares students to think critically and address complex issues, the University recognizes the advantages of providing learning opportunities that are not restricted by time, place, or method of delivery and that all approaches to instruction must meet the same high quality standards that exist for traditional classroom-bound education. In an effort to meet and ensure that these standards exist in distance education at UW-Green Bay, the distance education policy provides two purposes:

1. To provide a guide for developing and implementing distance education.
2. To communicate quality standards for the delivery and assessment of distance education.

The development, delivery, and evaluation of distance education courses and programs take place in the context of the policies and procedures of all existing academic programs.

Requirements and Expectations for Distance Education Courses

All distance education courses at UW-Green Bay are considered comparable to traditional courses and adhere to the same course standards, prerequisites, and requirements as traditional sections of identical courses.

Assessment of Tuition

All distance education courses at UW-Green Bay are assessed tuition and segregated fees. In addition, a distance education fee is assessed per credit. Students who register for all online classes will be charged in-state tuition.

Faculty and Faculty Support

As with traditional courses, UW-Green Bay's faculty assumes primary responsibility for and exercises oversight over distance education instruction, ensuring the rigor of courses, curriculum, and the quality of instruction. Blended courses offered less than 75% via distance education are not required to follow the Distance Education Policy. With noted differences between teaching distance education courses and teaching courses using "traditional" methodologies, the decision to use distance learning can be made on a course-by-course basis, with consideration given to the content of the course, the needs of the learners, and the flexibility of the delivery mechanism.

Alternatively, distance education can be used to deliver entire programs or majors. This decision is made at the Dean and Provost level, and follows governance procedures set by the HLC and the UW-System. The UW-System policies regarding the creation of new programs can be found in the [Academic Information Series document 1.0](#). Instructional design for distance learning classes and

programs should reflect best practice quality standards, and provide for an accessible and navigable environment, and learning experience for students.

Faculty Qualifications

Instructors in distance education courses will meet the faculty qualification requirements laid out in the Higher Learning Commission guidelines. UW-Green Bay provides an ongoing program of orientation, training, and support for faculty. Instructors take part in electronically delivered offerings that are faculty-centered, peer-reviewed, and designed to certify the quality of online, blended, and face-to-face courses. The quality assurance process addresses the following components of distance instruction:

- Course Overview and Introduction
- Learning Objectives Assessment and Measurement
- Resources and Materials Learner Engagement
- Course Technology
- Learner Support
- Accessibility
- Professional Communications

Training

For online distance education courses, the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning provides training regarding course design and implementation. Training is provided in onsite cohorts and through individual consultations in a format that prepares faculty to develop courses that are in accordance with the quality assurance process 1) Starters Fellows for those new to teaching in an online environment and 2) Advanced Fellows for those who meet the qualifications to have a course submitted for peer-review with Quality Matters.

Course Load, Compensation, Ownership of Materials, and Copyright

Distance learning courses are typically part of a faculty member's regular teaching load, with the same rate of compensation as traditional courses. Distance learning courses may also be taught as an overload, at the same rate of compensation as traditional courses taught as an overload. Any exceptions (e.g., reassigned time for developing courses using new distance technologies) are reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and as per current procedure, must be approved by the department head, the dean, and the provost. See the Workload Policy for the respective colleges.

UW-Green Bay follows the guidelines outlined by the University of Wisconsin System (UWS) with regard to ownership of materials and utilization of revenues derived from the creation and production of intellectual property found in the UWS Intellectual Property and Shared Royalties Policy and in UW-Green Bay's Intellectual Property and Shared Royalties Policy.

Faculty must keep in mind copyright, trademark, and licensing issues when designing distance education courses and therefore should be familiar with UW-Green Bay's Copyright Policy. Examples include the use of copyrighted photographs, graphics, text selections, audio clips from a song, or video clips from a movie. As UW-Green Bay's policy states, the usual permissions must be acquired and documented by the faculty member. When in doubt about copyright ownership, it is preferable to be overly cautious. If copyright permission cannot be obtained or if ownership is questionable, faculty should substitute other resources where copyright permission is clear and obtainable, or substitute resources that are in the public domain.

Availability and Communication with Students Office Hours

As required by UW-Green Bay, each instructor should maintain office hours every week during each semester to accommodate student consultations. Instructors should post these hours on the syllabus, the learning management system, on the instructor's door, and kept by the department chair. It is encouraged that a minimum of one hour of scheduled office hours a week for each online class taught. For their distance courses, instructors may use various modes of synchronous online communication (e.g., online chat, instant messaging, FaceTime, Skype, email, etc.).

Response Time

Instructors teaching distance education courses are encouraged to respond to student inquiries in a timely fashion (within 48 hours).

Credit Hour Policy

All courses, including those using a distance education delivery method, must adhere to UW-Green Bay's Credit Hour Policy.

Preferred Course Approval Pathway

UW-Green Bay has developed a pathway that will assist instructors in aligning their online courses with the best practices in teaching and learning. The outline of that process is described below and instructors may contact the Center for Teaching and Learning for a fuller description of the course development process. (See Figure 1.)

Pathway for New Distance Education Instructors

Within three semesters of teaching their first online course, instructors will have completed the Starter Online Teaching Fellows course. The intention of this course is to ground online courses in the best practices of teaching and learning for distance delivery.

Pathway for Experienced Distance Education Instructors

For those instructors who have completed the starters course, subsequent courses will be reviewed with an expedited review process. Every three years, a CATL staff member and the course instructor will work together to adapt the course to changes in technology and online delivery.

Rationale

Online courses require different faculty development than face-to-face courses. UW-Green Bay intends the approval process to be supportive of instructors because online instructional design may be outside of their expertise.

Course Availability

The ability of the faculty member to continue to offer the course using the approved distance delivery method depends on factors including but not necessarily limited to (a) the results of the faculty member's annual evaluations of teaching, particularly with regard to teaching the course in question and the delivery method in question, (b) student needs, (c) department/college/university goals concerning distance versus face-to-face delivery of individual courses and degree programs, and (d) resource availability. The department head has primary responsibility for overseeing the scheduling of courses offered through the department each semester and summer, and that includes the scheduling of the course delivery format.

Course Assessment

Individual courses are expected to adhere to approved course descriptions and have similar expected student learning outcomes, regardless of the course delivery format. Student satisfaction is assessed through Course Comment Questionnaires (CCQs) surveys administered in each class during the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters, regardless of the delivery format of the class. CCQs are shared with course instructor and department chair for each online course.

Figure 1:

