

Distance Education and Off-Campus Instructional Sites at UTC

Purpose

UTC is committed to provide quality education to students in all modalities. UTC ensures that students enrolled in distance education courses, programs, and/or off-site instruction have access to support services and resources needed to successfully complete their education. This document describes distance education and off-campus instruction at UTC as it aligns with definitions by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on College (SACSCOC) and the *Principles of Accreditation*.

Definitions

SACSCOC defines distance education as “a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use internet; one-way or two-way transmission through open broadcast, closed circuit cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices; audio conferencing; or videocassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program” (SACSCOC, 2012).

The Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost “is responsible for all academic programs” ([1.3.2. Faculty Handbook](#)). Consequently, the Provost is responsible for the approval of the Distance Education curriculum and has the authority to approve the use and allocation of campus resources that support these academic functions.

UTC uses the following definitions:

1. **Online course:** Credit bearing course where 80% or more of required course content, activities, and assessments occur online. These courses are conducted via web-based instruction and collaboration. The course MAY require minimal campus attendance, face-to-face orientation, or in-person/proctored examinations.
2. **Hybrid/Blended course:** Credit bearing course where 30-79% of the required course content, activities, and assessments occur online.
3. **Online/Distance Education program:** An educational program where at least 80% of all courses and associated content, activities, and assessments occur online, via

videoconferencing, and/or at an off-campus location. The programs may require minimal campus attendance, a face-to-face orientation or in-person/proctored examinations.

4. **Hybrid program:** An educational program where 30-79% of all courses and associated content, activities, and assessments occur online, via videoconferencing, and/or at an off-campus location.
5. **Off-campus instruction sites:** Locations that are geographically separate from the main campus of UTC and where students can complete 25% or more of the educational program credit hour requirements.

Organizational Structure

Academic affairs holds the administrative responsibility for the quality of distance learning programs.

Intellectual Property

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga will comply with the [UT System policy](#) regarding patents, copyrights, and other intellectual property. The purpose of this section is to clarify matters that may be open to interpretation.

Sponsored Research, Extension, and Public Service Agreements: The University considers sponsored work to include contractual agreements made between the University and a third party to provide sponsored research or other services. Examples of sponsored research include grants and contracts received from Federal, State, or local governmental agencies and nongovernmental agencies entering into a contract with the University for specific services. The University may also contract with faculty to develop distance education courses and programs of study on a pay-for-hire basis.

The University may classify several of its internal grant opportunities as sponsored research. These agreements will be clearly delineated in the request for proposals and specified in the agreements reached between the University and the faculty receiving the grant. Faculty teaching distance education courses retain the right to take credit for their creative contributions; reproduce the work for their instructional purposes; and incorporate the work in future scholarly works.

With Substantial use of Funds or Facilities: The Provost, through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), may approve the use of University resources for their development and implementation of distance education courses. Such a MOA will constitute substantial use of funds or facilities. The MOA will clearly delineate matters of copyright and the use of course materials.

Without Substantial use of Funds or Facilities: For the purpose of these guidelines, the University's issuance of resources for the development of distance learning courses (e.g., load reductions and minor development funds) does not constitute a basis for University ownership

or copyright of distance education course materials. Absence of a formal agreement (contract or MOA) regarding use of funds or facilities shall establish the condition for “without substantial use”.

Faculty teaching distance education courses should assume ongoing ownership of their distance education course materials and any published work resulting from the development of these materials even if they received released time or compensation for the development of these materials. The University’s involvement in supplying resources for the delivery of distance education does not constitute a basis for University ownership of distance education course materials unless otherwise stipulated.

Faculty teaching distance education courses retain the right and responsibility to revise course materials to reflect course assessment, changes in pedagogical philosophy, advances in the discipline, and other matters that warrant course revision.

The University may not use or distribute materials that an individual faculty member has developed for distance education courses without that individual’s expressed permission. While a member of the faculty is an employee of the University he or she may not distribute the course materials through other means deemed to conflict with the financial interests of the University.

Faculty may receive royalties and other financial compensation from the commercial sale of course materials developed for a distance education course (e.g., textbook).

The University will exercise reasonable efforts to protect the intellectual property rights of faculty-developed distance education course materials.

The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga recognizes the intellectual property rights of faculty, staff, and students. The following policies are aligned with those already in place, which can be found at [UT Research Foundation's Website](#).

Procedures

Distance Education Programs and Courses

1. Distance education programs and courses are consistent with the mission of UTC and will be approved and evaluated through the regular curriculum approval and program assessment procedures ([guidelines for undergraduate curriculum proposals](#); [graduate curriculum proposals](#)). Unless otherwise approved by Academic Affairs, all policies,

standards, procedures and expectations for on-campus instruction apply to programs offered through distance education.

2. Selection of programs to be offered via distance education is the purview of the appropriate college and unit that in turn are expected to provide necessary and sufficient oversight of the program to ensure the currency of the program, its courses, and associated program resources. The college and unit will also be responsible for insuring program compliance with appropriate guidelines and regulations.
3. Each distance education program results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree awarded. Each program offered through distance education has procedures in place to collect and review identified student learning outcomes and to identify program improvements based on the data collected.
4. Once implemented, UTC and the college offering the program commit to ongoing support for the continuation of the program for a period of time sufficient to enable admitted students to complete the program as long as financially feasible.
5. Online and hybrid courses not part of a distance education program are expected to meet all online and hybrid course standards set by the institution.

Off-Campus Instructional Sites

All courses offered for credit at an off-campus location must be part of a degree program offered by the UTC and are subject to the same quality standards required of all courses.

Assessing Quality Education and Institutional Effectiveness

Each academic department/program will provide an ongoing evaluation of its Distance Education programs and courses as a part of its annual review and five-year or periodic accreditation review. This evaluation shall include the following:

1. Student learning competencies and achievement of stated student learning outcomes.
2. Student demand and cost effectiveness.
3. Course design that aligns with UTC's approved rubric.
4. Equivalence of distance education courses and campus-based courses in terms of educational effectiveness, student retention, and student satisfaction.
5. Compliance with applicable University, State, and Federal regulations and policies such as accessibility, copyright, and research policies.

Curriculum and Instruction

The faculty assumes primary responsibility for distance education, ensuring rigor and quality of instruction. Materials and content used in distance education should follow fair use principals as outlined in the [fair use checklist](#). The primary technology used for delivery of distance education courses and programs is the institution's official learning management system, UTC Learn. Course syllabi are required to communicate instructor contact information, course information, technology requirements, course policies, the course calendar, assessments and grading processes, and other items outlined in the [syllabus checklist](#).

Academic support services for faculty related to distance education courses are provided by the Walker Center for Teaching and Learning. Training is available to faculty on online and hybrid course design, UTC Learn, online pedagogy, and other topics. The design of online and hybrid courses is coordinated through the Walker Center for Teaching and Learning and is based on the institution's approved rubric. Evaluation of faculty who teach online and hybrid courses is completed by department heads. Data from the student rating of faculty instrument which contains questions specific to online and hybrid courses are available to the faculty member and department head.

Student Login and Communication

Secure Login and Passcode:

The Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) and SACSCOC requires that institutions offering distance education or programs have processes in place to ensure that the student registered for a course is the same student who participates in the course and receives course credit (U.S. Department of Education, 2008; SACSCOC 2012).

UTC maintains a secure login and password for each student. The user is authenticated using Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) or Single Sign-on (SSO) through the Central Authentication Service (CAS). Students establish their own password using a strong password policy and are instructed not to their share password with anyone. A summary of UT's "Acceptable Use Policy" and practices for safe computing are provided on the [UTC's Information Security webpage](#).

Email:

Email is the official primary means of communication with students. Each student, upon enrolling, is issued a UTC email account with an address on the mocs.utc.edu domain. This account is used for University business and official University communications to students. Students are expected to regularly check their UTC accounts for University communications. Guidelines for email use are posted online, in the [Student Handbook](#), and the [Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate](#) Catalogs.

Protection of Privacy:

UTC ensures student privacy in distance education courses, programs, and off-campus instruction. There is a [Privacy Statement](#) for student privacy related to educational resources and personally identifiable information. The [Family Education Rights Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#) covers all UTC educational records, including those records that may be created through distance education courses, programs, and off-campus instruction.

Only registered students are enrolled in course sites and this enrollment is automatically performed through UTC's student information system (Banner). UTC Learn, UTC's course management system, restricts access to course and student information by controlling users' access through user roles. Student users are only able to access course information that is needed to complete course requirements. Only users who have been trained on Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) have access to the control panel (e.g. Gradebook tool) and protected student information in course sites.

Student Support Services

Admissions:

Students who seek admission into UTC to enroll in Distance Education offerings shall follow the admissions procedures defined by UTC. Students currently admitted to UTC do not require additional admission to enroll in Distance Education courses. Specific limitations apply to students classified as foreign or international students. Enrollment of foreign students in Distance Education courses must be completed in coordination with the [International Student & Scholar Services](#). Upon admission, the student will receive a student account that will provide the student access to email, online campus services, the library, and limited access to other campus resources.

Bookstore:

All students enrolled in distance education courses may access the [campus bookstore](#) during its posted hours. Students may also purchase course materials from the bookstore's online services. The student will be responsible for the shipping expense of materials sent by a common carrier.

Bursar:

All students enrolled in distance education courses will be billed and submit fees to the Bursar's office. The [Bursar's Office](#) is also responsible for the disbursement of financial aid funds.

Financial Aid:

All students enrolled in Distance Education courses may apply for financial aid as controlled by Federal, State, and local regulations. Students may seek financial aid counseling through face-

to-face, telephone, or asynchronous conferences with the [Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships](#).

Library:

All students enrolled in Distance Education courses are entitled access to normal library services, including online and remote access services. The [campus library](#) shall be open to all students enrolled in Distance Education courses during posted hours. Distance education students may find additional information about materials and services for [distance learning from the UTC Library website](#).

Registration/Records:

Students wishing to enroll in Distance Education courses are entitled to use the online registration systems maintained by the [Office of Records](#). The student is responsible for seeking academic advisement from his or her advisor prior to registration. The student is responsible for obtaining any necessary permissions to enroll in a course.

Tutoring:

Students enrolled in Distance Education courses are eligible to receive access to tutoring services. There is on-[campus tutoring available](#) and online tutoring available for certain courses through [Tutor.com](#).

Proctored Testing:

Students may be required to take proctored exams for verification of student identify in Distance Education courses. Faculty are required to notify students regarding any projected additional charges associated with student identity verification at the time of student registration. It is also recommended that faculty include a statement in their syllabus about projected additional charges as follows:

SAMPLE STANDARDIZED STATEMENT for the syllabus:

Additional fees may be incurred for student identity verification for course assessments. If you choose a proctoring site that charges additional fees, you are responsible for paying any additional fees.

Student Complaints:

Distance education students may file a complaint with the UTC Dean of Students or the higher education representative. A record of all complaints and resolutions are documented and kept in the Dean of Students office.

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