

**MONTANA BOARD OF REGENTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
Policy and Procedures Manual**

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Policy 303.7 – Online Learning

**Effective: Adopted: November 4, 1988; Revised: September 22, 2011; Revised: XXX XX, XXXX**

I. Board Policy

A. ~~The commissioner of higher education shall appoint a member of the staff to be the director of eLearning business and to chair an~~ **Composition:** The eLearning advisory committee (EAC). ~~The EAC is comprised composed~~ of Montana ~~u~~University ~~s~~System (MUS) eLearning leaders who collaborate to benefit learners and to align campus eLearning efforts. The EAC is composed of one primary representative from each stand-alone campus in the MUS and from each of the community colleges. EAC campus representatives are appointed by the respective campus chief academic officer.

~~A.~~ **B. Charge:** The purpose of the EAC will be to advise the academic, research, and student affairs (ARSA) committee of the board ~~through the eLearning director~~ on matters related to present and future delivery of eLearning education and other matters related to the use and types of educational technologies associated with quality online education.

~~B.—The most recent update to the accreditation standards of the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), the regional accrediting body for the Montana university system and the community college campuses in Montana, has embedded the language, “wherever offered and however delivered” heavily into its standards for accreditation specifically to eliminate separate standards associated with online learning. As a matter of practice, the EAC accepts and endorses a similar approach to board of regents (BOR) policies and practices governing both traditional face-to-face delivery and the use of technology in delivering postsecondary education.~~

C. Definitions

~~1.—Distance Education is defined as planned learning that normally occurs in a different place from teaching, requiring specialized course design, instructional techniques, communication through various technologies, and special organizational and administrative arrangements. Both synchronous and asynchronous learning are included in this definition.~~

1. The board adopts the definition of *Distance Education* set out by the U.S. Department of Education in 34 CFR 600.2

2. Program Modality Definitions (see also BOR Policy 940.20)

a. *Online Program:* Any academic degree or certificate program in which all of the required coursework can be completed through online delivery, with exceptions for concentrated, short-term residency requirements.

b. *Blended Program:* Any academic degree or certificate program in which 80% or more of the required coursework (but not all) can be completed through online delivery.

3. Course Modality Definitions

a. *Internet or Online* delivery implies that 100% of the course section is offered completely online and delivered asynchronously, with no face-to-face interaction between instructors and students.

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- b. *Video Conferencing* is characterized by a course section offered through scheduled (synchronous) interactive video, including desktop conferencing.
  - c. *Blended* delivery is designed specifically to be delivered partially online in an asynchronous format and partially through face-to-face (F2F) interaction, typically in the classroom. Both online and F2F interactions are required for the course. This delivery is characterized by the expectation of reduced F2F class meeting time when compared to the equivalent credit classroom course.
  - d. *Hybrid-Flexible* or 'Hyflex' delivery is any class section where students may choose to attend either in an assigned face-to-face environment or in an online environment, synchronously or asynchronously.
  - e. *Other Distance* delivery includes courses other than internet/online and interactive video, and may include correspondence courses, tape/DVD delivery, etc.
- ~~2. *Face-to-Face/Enhanced* delivery is characterized when instruction occurs in a traditional classroom with face-to-face interaction between the instructor and students, at any local campus or remote site, and includes utilization of technology to enhance the class without reducing student seat time.~~
  - ~~3. *Internet or Online* delivery implies that 100% of the course section is offered completely online and delivered asynchronously, with no face-to-face interaction between instructors and students.~~
  - ~~4. *Video Conferencing* is characterized by a course section offered through scheduled (synchronous) interactive video, including desktop conferencing.~~
  - ~~5. *Blended* learning is designed specifically to be delivered partially online in an asynchronous format and partially through face-to-face (F2F) interaction, typically in the classroom. Both online and F2F interactions are required for the course. This delivery is characterized by the expectation of reduced F2F class meeting time when compared to the equivalent credit classroom course.~~
  - ~~6. *Other Distance Learning* includes courses other than internet/online and interactive video, and may include correspondence courses, tape/DVD delivery, etc.~~

## II. Reporting Procedures

- A. ~~The director of eLearning business will annually identify data elements involving online learning to be gathered on an annual basis, and will rely upon the use of these definitions in the gathering of data from the campuses and the MUS data warehouse. By September 15th of each year, the director EAC, with assistance from the office of the commissioner, shall file with the ARSA committee of the board, an annual report of online distance learning activity over the preceding fiscal year. The director will provide guidelines to the campuses for the format and content of this annual report, the web site presence of online programs will be updated at least annually, and the director will publish a compiled report on the MUS web site at <http://mus.edu/online>.~~
- B. The EAC serves as a formal conduit for campuses and OCHE to share technology interests, adaptations, uses, experiences for the purposes of judging and evaluating compatibility and possible multi-campus purchasing/licensing efficiencies that can be discussed and attained where feasible, as well as to offer periodic recommendations to the ARSA committee of the board, as needed. Campuses considering the acquisition of large-scale interactive delivery systems and/or learning management systems to support

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technology-mediated learning or online course development and delivery should strive to select systems that are compatible with existing technology, and should provide timely notice of interest, product experience/evaluations, and potential acquisition to the to the ~~director of eLearning business office of the commissioner of higher education~~ for review and discussion with the EAC prior to purchase and implementation. Prior to purchases of other related distance learning technology, campuses are encouraged to share their desire for such technologies with the EAC.

### III. Standards and Conditions

A. Faculty training and development of courses or programs will follow the ~~eight~~ core principles of quality online course design as developed, adopted, and defined by the EAC.

B. ~~Campuses will comply with U.S. Department of Education and the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) requirements regarding notifications and consumer protection disclosures for distance education students.~~

~~C.— Each campus will ensure that students admitted to a course possess the knowledge and equipment necessary to use the technology employed in the course, and will provide aid to students who experience difficulty using the required technology.~~

~~D.— Each campus will be responsible for ensuring that its online web presence at the Montana university system web site is current and fully functional with respect to the posted web links, and will notify the director of eLearning business whenever updates are needed or web links are not functioning properly.~~

#### ~~D.C.~~ Course-related content

1. Copyright and intellectual property protection (see also BOR Policy 401.3)

- a. Campuses offering distance education courses shall ensure compliance with all applicable copyright laws governing the use and transmission of films, videotapes, recordings, performances and other protected works, as well as the reproduction of printed materials prior to the offering or transmission of the course.
- b. Campuses offering distance education courses shall ensure compliance with all laws, as well as MUS or institutional policies relating to the protection of intellectual property prior to the offering or transmission of the course.

History:

Item 60-004-R0788, Telecommunication Instruction Policy, November 4, 1988; as revised March 25, 1999. Item 152-132-R0911, revised September 22, 2011. ~~Item XXX-XXX-XXXXX, revised MM DD, YYYY~~