

UNIVERSITY RULE

17.99.99.M1 Distance Education Credit Courses and Programs

Approved October 26, 2001

Next Scheduled Review: Currently Under Review

1. GENERAL

1.1 The educational mission of Texas A&M University can be achieved in part by offering programs and courses of instruction away from the main campus of the University via distance education. The responsibility for maintaining the quality of individual distance education programs resides with the faculty and administrative officers who offer and administer the same programs on the main campus. In addition to support provided for off-campus face-to-face courses, the Office of Distance Education assists faculty in planning distance education programs using varying forms of technology including the internet, video conferencing, and satellites. The Office of Distance Education also ensures that all courses meet state guidelines, System policies and regulations, and University rules.

1.2 All rules and regulations of Texas A&M University and the University System that pertain to instructional programs on the main campus apply equally to distance education offerings. This Rule extends to the requirements for admission of students, courses to be offered, the assignment of faculty to such courses, provisions for adequate facilities, library resources, and student services. Policies established by The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Rules, Chapter 4. Rules Applying to All Public Institutions of Higher Education in Texas Subchapter E. Approval of Distance Education, Off-Campus, and Extension Courses and Programs for Public Institutions. Subchapter E and related documents can be accessed at <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=3BBA5600-AB9B-55C7-1A1C6ED6B09A1FD7>.

1.3 Distance education credit courses, for which the University receives formula funding from the state, are considered part of the regular assigned teaching load of the faculty members.

2. APPROVAL OF DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

2.1 Approval for scheduling distance education credit courses must be obtained from the Executive Vice President and Provost. Approval of all distance education credit courses, programs, and standards for these courses and programs must conform to the requirements established under Subchapter E and related documents, and the requirements of the Southern Association of Colleges and

Schools (SACS).

The establishment of distance education courses may result from, but are not restricted to the following circumstances:

- 2.1.1 A request from an institution or agency of business, government, education, or similar organization.
- 2.1.2 When the site away from campus provides unusual and unique resources not available on the main campus.
- 2.1.3 On the basis of an assessment which establishes an unmet need for the course or program to be offered and where students needing the instruction cannot attend resident classes in College Station.

3. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Program Coordination and Reporting

All distance education courses must be coordinated and approved through the Director of Distance Education before courses are offered.

3.2 Scheduling Distance Education Credit Courses

Scheduling of all distance education courses must conform to the requirements outlined in Subchapter E and related documents. For off-campus, face-to-face courses, Subchapter E and related documents require concurrence by Texas institutions located in the area in which these courses will be delivered. These institutions must be consulted by the college or department through which the course would be offered. Distance courses delivered by technology do not require concurrence, but are reported to the Coordinating Board by the Office of Distance Education. The Coordinating Board monitors all Distance Education programs offered in the State but has no regulatory control on out-of-state distance education courses.

3.3 Admission and Registration of Students

Distance education students are admitted under the same procedures that apply to resident students. Registration procedures shall comply with the requirements of the Office of the Registrar at Texas A&M University. In some cases departments may be responsible for registering students for distance education courses. In this situation the department must work with the Registrar's office to preserve continuity in the registration process.

With the approval of the Registrar, the first day of classes for off-campus courses may be scheduled without regard for continuity with the scheduling of similar courses offered on the main campus and the University calendar.

3.4 Financial Support Required for Distance Education Courses

Members of the faculty who teach distance education courses normally do so as a part of their regular departmental assignment and receive no additional salary for such service. The department provides, from its budget allocation (or from grants, projects, or contracts), the budget support required.

Members of the faculty who teach off-campus face-to-face courses for resident credit are entitled to receive reimbursement for travel and per diem expenses in accordance with [University Rule 25.02.01.M2: Travel Rules](#). The form used to request authorization to teach an off-campus face-to-face credit course shall indicate the source of funds for travel and per diem purposes. Funds for this purpose come from one or more of the following sources:

3.4.1 In the event the class to be offered is sponsored by a cooperating institution or agency (such as a unit of government, a business or industrial organization, or a project grantor), such institution or agency may make a grant or payment to the University.

3.4.2 An allocation from the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost.

3.4.3 Operating expenses of the department offering the courses.

4. TUTION AND FEES FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

4.1 For in-state students enrolled in formula funded distance education courses, tuition charges shall be the same as those for students on the main campus during a regular academic semester. Out of state students will pay a tuition replacement fee.

4.2 A distance education fee rate is established by the University Student Fee Committee. Fee rates for non-subvention generating students are established by the Distance Education Fiscal Advisory Committee.

4.3 Students classified as in absentia, study abroad, cooperative education or TAMU graduate students taking courses at the Galveston campus will be exempt from the distance education fee. All other TAMU students enrolled as distance education students, taught via technology or off-campus, will be assessed the distance education fee.

4.4 The complete fee structure for the student classifications noted in section 4.3 will vary. Distance education program fees may vary. Distance education students and faculty should consult the Office of Distance Education, to determine which fees will be levied.

5. PHYSICAL FACILITIES, INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AND STUDENT SERVICES

5.1 As required by Subchapter E faculty will be responsible for determining the distance delivery method that is appropriate for each course and program. Faculty will also be responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this technology.

5.2 TAMU will provide distance education students with appropriate access to library and other learning resources comparable to those available to students on campus. Each department offering distance education credit courses shall determine in advance any computing, laboratory, or other specific equipment for which students are responsible. Departments will ensure that students are aware of these requirements. If specific on-site equipment is required, the department must certify that this equipment is available. This certification will constitute part of the request for authorization to offer the off-campus course for resident credit.

5.3 TAMU will provide distance education students with reasonable and adequate access to a range of appropriate student services. Examples of such services include financial aid, academic skills enhancement, problem resolution assistance and advisement.

5.4 All required materials for distance education courses will be acquired by the students at no cost to the University.

6. FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

6.1 All fee collection, and when appropriate tuition, relating to Distance Education courses shall be processed through Student Financial Services.

6.2 Distance Education programs vary by delivery mechanisms and fee structures. The Office of Distance Education should be consulted regarding related charges to students and outside entities.

7. SUPPORT FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION FACULTY

7.1 Like other contributions to teaching and scholarship, contributions to distance education, as part of assigned responsibilities, will be a factor in promotion and tenure decisions and merit increase decisions. A distance education course should be counted in the workload report in the same manner the course would be

counted if taught by conventional methods. Preparation to teach a course by distance for the first time, or adapting a course for delivery by distance for the first time, should be credited for workload report purposes just as preparation to teach any other new course would be credited and should follow Faculty Workload Report Guidelines, Table 2, Instructions for Completing the Faculty Workload Compliance Report, sections A7, A8 or A9.

OFFICE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

[The Office of Distance Education](#)

[The Office of Graduate Studies](#)