

WEST VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Title: Online and Distance Education Policy

1. General Information

- 1.1. Scope: Policy pertaining to the design, development, and teaching of online courses for use in credit or non-credit courses offered by the University.
- 1.2. Purpose: The University recognizes the need to ensure quality and academic integrity in online education settings. The University further acknowledges that this endeavor is best accomplished through a combination of research-based standards for practice and comprehensive support for faculty and students engaging in online education activities.
- 1.3. Authority: W. Va. Code §18B-1-6
- 1.4. Effective Date:

2. Definitions

- 2.1. *Distance Education* refers to courses in which students work outside of the traditional classroom with little or no face-to-face (F2F) contact with instructors and in which instruction is delivered through the use of a variety of technologies including, but not limited to, the internet, one-way and two-way broadcast technologies, audio conferencing, DVDs, Blu-Ray, CD-ROMs, or some combination of methods.
- 2.2. *Online Course* refers to any distance education course in which 100% of course content and interaction is conducted online.
- 2.3. *Blended Course* refers to any course that combines traditional, F2F instruction with online or distance instruction.
- 2.4. *LMS* refers to the online Learning Management System adopted by the institution in which all online or blended courses are housed and operated.
- 2.5. *Web Designation* refers to tags attached to online or blended courses to describe the percentage of coursework conducted online and to describe the approximate amount of F2F sessions a student can expect to attend.
 - 2.5.1. *Web10* - Syllabus and course content can be posted online, but no assignments or exams are submitted online. No F2F class sessions can be substituted with online activities.
 - 2.5.2. *Web30* - Syllabus and course content can be posted online, assignments or exams can be submitted online, and 30-49% of class sessions are substituted with online activities. The breakdown of coursework and assignments between the F2F and online components is determined by the instructor and is outlined in the course syllabus.
 - 2.5.3. *Web50* – A course in which 50%-79% of coursework is conducted in the online environment. The breakdown of coursework and assignments between the F2F and online components is determined by the instructor and is outlined in the course syllabus.
 - 2.5.4. *Web80* – A course in which 80%-99% of the coursework is conducted in the online environment. The breakdown of coursework and assignments between the F2F and online components is determined by the instructor and is outlined in the course syllabus.
 - 2.5.5. *Web100* - The course is 100% online with no required F2F class sessions.

- 2.6. *Content Ready* refers to an online course that is completely developed and ready to be taught prior to being placed on an academic course schedule. This includes having developed and/or added all content, assessments, and supporting materials to the course.
- 2.7. *Course Design* refers to the unique combination of learning objectives, content, media applications, evaluations, assessments and instructional strategies that are prepared in advanced of student enrollment in the course. Please note that this is not the same as a course number, as each course number could potentially have several different course designs depending on different instructors' style and preferences.
- 2.8. *Course Redesign* refers to a course that has already been designed and approved through internal quality processes but is undergoing major revision (e.g., design modifications that modify 30% or more of the course design). This can happen because of changes in textbook excluding changes in edition, instructor's prerogative to redesign, or datedness of materials.

3. Administrative Issues Related to Fully Online Programs

- 3.1. Fully Online Programs: Creation and Administration
 - 3.1.1. New degree programs that are interested in being online must follow HEPC guidelines and procedures for program approval.
 - 3.1.2. The initial approval of any new course in an online program (i.e., any course that is not currently in the university catalog) is required to follow the same approval procedures as new courses in traditional settings.
 - 3.1.3. Once a course is included in the course catalog, Web80 or Web100 courses must also successfully complete the quality assurance procedures outlined in section five of this policy.
 - 3.1.4. Departments interested in offering a fully online program, must include plans for managing advising and supporting retention.
 - 3.1.5. Academic calendars and schedules for online programs will follow established university calendars and schedules.
- 3.2. Tuition and Fees for Online Programs
 - 3.2.1. Out-of state online students will follow tuition rates based on in-state and out-of-state rates established by the University.

4. Creating and Designing Online Courses

- 4.1. The design of a new Web80 or Web100 course (or an alternative design to an already existing Web80 or Web100 course) must be approved by the appropriate department chair and dean as well as the Online Learning Advisory Committee.
- 4.2. Web80 or Web100 designations must be content ready prior to being included on the academic course schedule.
- 4.3. Content readiness is determined through an internal review process.
- 4.4. Subsequent offerings of the same course design do not require additional content-readiness reviews; however, different designs—or major redesigns—of the same course will be required to go through content readiness review prior to being placed on the academic course schedule.

5. Quality Standards and Procedures

- 5.1. All Web80 and Web100 courses are required to meet adopted university course quality standards within four iterations of initial offering. All Web80 and Web100 courses already offered at the effective date of this policy will have four iterations from the effective date to meet course quality standards.
- 5.2. Failure to meet these standards within the allotted four iterations will result in that particular course design being removed from future course schedules until such time as it passes internal review.
- 5.3. Evaluations of the design of online courses will be conducted by an internal, peer-review process.
- 5.4. Once a course meets adopted university course quality standards, that approval is for that specific design and does not apply to alternative designs of the same course number (e.g., having one design of a 100 level course successfully meet standards does not mean that all online sections of this course meet quality standards unless they are using the approved design).
- 5.5. Course redesigns of an already approved course will be required to go through this internal, peer-review process to ensure the modifications to the course are still compliant with quality standards.
- 5.6. Enrollment caps for online courses will be the same as their traditional counterparts.

6. Copyright Compliance in Online Courses

- 6.1. Until such time as a university policy on copyright is established, faculty teaching in online courses will be expected to adhere to Title 17, United States Code, Section 101
- 6.2. Title 17, United States Code, Section 101 requires that users of intellectual property and published materials adhere to copyright law protecting the original rights of the creators of works used for educational purposes.
- 6.3. All faculty teaching online and blended courses must adhere to fair use guidelines in compliance with federal copyright law.
- 6.4. The University will exhibit due diligence in offering training opportunities to faculty on copyright compliance in online courses.

7. Intellectual Property and Online Courses

- 7.1. The West Virginia State University BOG Policy #59 Intellectual Property Rights Management addresses the ownership, licensing, and income distribution rights of instructor-created course materials and is available at <http://www.wvstateu.edu/WVStateU/media/icons/Administration/Board%20of%20Governors/policies/BOG59.pdf>
- 7.2. Faculty may enter into design agreements with the University in which intellectual property is shared between faculty member and the University.

8. Teaching Online Courses

- 8.1. Online and blended courses must be delivered primarily through the University's LMS. Requests for exceptions to this rule must be submitted in writing to the Online Learning Advisory Committee. Upon approval of the committee, the appropriate chair and dean must give final approval and notify the Center for Online Learning.

- 8.2. Faculty teaching Web80 and Web100 courses are required to check online courses at least five times a week (Monday through Sunday) and are required to respond to email correspondence from students within a 24-hour period during the work week (i.e., Monday-Friday, excluding holidays). Preferred methods of communication should be listed in the syllabus.
- 8.3. Additionally, faculty teaching online courses will also utilize web 2.0 technologies (such as Skype or WebEx) to provide synchronous office hours of at least 1 hour per week. This can be done simultaneously during regular, physical office hours (e.g., having Skype active during regular office hour periods).
- 8.4. Faculty will exhibit due diligence in monitoring student progress and make efforts to contact and engage students who are exhibiting difficulties in the course.
- 8.5. Faculty evaluations for those teaching online courses will follow the schedule and procedures outlined by the University in the most current Faculty Handbook.
- 8.6. Minimum technical requirements students must meet should be outlined in the syllabus.

9. Student Authentication, Proctoring, and Test Security

- 9.1. The University will exhibit due diligence in the authentication of students in online courses including password protected entry into the system and supporting the use of proctoring to ensure student identity in online testing situations.
- 9.2. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to integrate test security measures for major course assessments in their online courses (e.g., Lockdown Browser or proctoring). This should be decided by the instructor and outlined in the course syllabus.
- 9.3. Students who are unable to come to campus to take proctored exams may be allowed to arrange for an unbiased, off-campus proctor or opt to utilize a university-approved online proctoring service.
- 9.4. Students opting to utilize an off-campus proctor must have the proctor complete a *Proctor Approval Form* and send it to the instructor prior to the first proctored assessment.
- 9.5. If off-campus or online proctoring is utilized, testing materials will be sent directly to the proctor by the instructor.
- 9.6. Faculty and students engaging in proctoring situations can get further information and access required forms in the Center for Online Learning's *Proctoring Guidebook*.

10. Faculty Training and Development for Online Courses

- 10.1. All faculty (including adjunct faculty) must complete online teacher training prior to teaching a Web80 or Web100 course. Additional training may be required of faculty if policy, procedures, and/or requirements change. Any faculty already scheduled to teach at the creation of this policy will have a one semester extension to complete this training.
- 10.2. The Center for Online Learning will provide technical support for online courses as well as training opportunities for faculty as it relates to online teaching and learning.

11. International Students in Online Courses

- 11.1. West Virginia State University policies on online course limits for F-1 students living in the U.S. will adhere to federal regulations from the Department of Homeland Security: 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G)

- 11.2. Per this regulation, only three online course credits per semester can be counted toward the full-time enrollment of an F-1 student.
- 11.3. If, however, a student enrolls in more than the minimum requirements for full-time enrollment (e.g., 15 credit hours instead of 12) those additional credit hours may be online.

12. Student Support and Expectations

- 12.1. The Center for Online Learning will provide technical support for online courses as well as training opportunities for students as it relates to online learning.
- 12.2. The University must provide adequate online alternatives to key support functions including tutoring and library databases and materials.
- 12.3. Students with grade appeals must follow rules outlined in the University Catalog.
- 12.4. Rules guiding student behavior in online courses mirror those outlined in the University Catalog, and students should refer to this as a guide for their behavior.