# LSUA

## POLICY STATEMENT 274
## DISTANCE EDUCATION

Revision: 1
Last Reviewed: February 15, 2024
Effective: February 16, 2024

**PURPOSE:** To provide a framework for the design, development, implementation, instruction, and evaluation of distance learning programs and courses offered for academic credit at LSU of Alexandria. These policies and procedures are intended to help individuals involved in distance education to be successful and to ensure quality of instruction.

## GENERAL POLICY:

I.    **Definitions**

**Course Instructor:** An individual hired by the university to teach a course for credit. Course content may be prepared by this individual or by a separate faculty developer.

**Course Developer:** An individual hired by the university to prepare the online content for a course to be taught for credit. The course is a 'work-for-hire' and faculty developer agrees that the course can be taught by other faculty members. Courses must be developed to the most recent Master Course Outline (MCO) approved by the C&C Committee. Individuals that teach from a 'developed' course will make only minor changes to the course structure once it has been determined to meet quality standards.

**Distance:** LSU of Alexandria follows the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) definition of Distance Education:

For the purposes of the Commission on College's accreditation review, distance education is 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 and may occur in online or blended/hybrid formats. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or other digital media if used as part of the distance learning course or program. [SACSCOC Policy Statement: Distance and Correspondence Education, Revised and Edited, September 2020]

Definitions for determining section numbers:
- "I" section: 100percent of the instructional content is delivered online
- "J" section: course meets for 50 minutes, one day per week; the remainder of instructional content is delivered online
- "K" section: course meets for 75 minutes, one day per week; the remainder of instructional content is delivered online
- "L" section: course meets two days per week for a total of 100 minutes; the remainder of course content is delivered online

Note: Placing significant supplemental materials online does not merit description of 'distance course.'

## Quality Assurance
Distance Education courses and programs shall comply with all of the standard practices, procedures, and criteria that have been established for traditional F2F courses including, but not limited to, faculty involvement at the level of course development, selection of qualified individuals to teach the course, pedagogical determinations about appropriate class size, and oversight of all final course offerings by appropriate academic personnel to ensure conformity with established traditions of course quality and relevance to programs.

## University Commitment
All academic departments of the University shall have an opportunity to participate in providing distance education courses and/or programs and shall be encouraged to provide distance education wherever a need is identified. The University shall assure that the institution's administrative policies and procedures allow for an effective and efficient distance education support structure.

## Distance Education Programs
Programs offered via distance education shall be consistent with the role and mission of LSU of Alexandria and the offering department.  There shall be no distinctions between programs or courses offered through distance education and those same programs or courses offered on campus except by coding to track outcomes.  Development of new online programs and courses will follow the same development and approval procedures as traditional programs and courses.

Selection of programs to be offered via distance education is the purview of the appropriate academic department. The academic department shall provide oversight of a program that is offered via distance education to ensure currency of the program, its courses, and its resources. Each program of study shall be coherent and complete and

shall result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.

Once implemented, the offering academic departments and the University commit to ongoing support, and to the continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable admitted students to complete the program within the Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) definition of standard 'time to graduate' timeframe (3 years for Associate Degree, 6 years for Bachelor's Degree).

## Distance Education Course Review Process

Courses that have been developed to the standards rubric will be reviewed and updated on a schedule set by Academic Affairs in conjunction with Distance Learning and reviewers.

### Assessment and Identification Verification
Students in distance education courses shall take examinations under the supervision of the instructor, an approved proctor, or other techniques that assure the integrity of the process. Identification verification will meet or exceed SACSCOC requirements.

It is important that accessibility issues be addressed in distance education courses. The appropriate offices shall be contacted for consultation regarding access and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) issues. Offices include Title IX and Disability Services and IET Services.

### Library Resources and Support
A wide range of electronic resources are available for faculty and online students, including electronic access to the Library catalogues, full-text databases, reference resources, tutoring services, and online tutorials related to information literacy skills. Librarians are available by email and telephone. Course instructors/developers are encouraged to incorporate the use of library resources in their distance education courses.

### Faculty and Faculty Services
All courses offered via distance education shall have a qualified, credentialed faculty member approved and assigned by the appropriate department chair, with the approval of the Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. Distance Education faculty must have completed an approved Teaching Online training course OR be approved by the Department Chair or Director and the Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs. Academic freedom policies apply to both distance education and traditional classroom instruction. The assigned faculty member shall have full control of the content and instruction of the course, within the scope of the Master Course Outline

Distance Education faculty will be held to the same standards and must adhere to all LSU of Alexandria policies. The LSU System policy on Intellectual Property applies to all distance education programs and courses. The materials created by faculty developers for distance education courses will be treated in exactly the same fashion as materials created by faculty members for traditional courses. Faculty will ensure that the quality and rigor of online courses and programs are equivalent to the quality and rigor of traditional courses. Student learning in distance education programs shall compare favorably to student learning in campus-based programs. Documentation of outcomes shall be maintained in the appropriate academic office and be available for review.

The University shall provide professional development opportunities for faculty to increase their awareness of distance education methodologies and improve their instructional skills. Faculty shall have appropriate services and resources to assure their effectiveness as distance educators and to ensure an effective and efficient teaching and learning environment. Each course instructor/developer assigned to a distance education course shall have access to consultation, training, implementation, and evaluation support from instructional design and delivery staff to ensure the effective and efficient use of the chosen delivery system. The University shall provide appropriate equipment, software, and communications access to faculty to support interaction with students, cooperating institutions, and other faculty for approved programs and courses.

Faculty shall receive appropriate recognition of teaching and scholarly activities related to distance education programs commensurate with their efforts in traditional activities and programs.

Courses taught via distance education may be included as part of the faculty member's regular assigned load or may be recommended by the appropriate Department Chair or Director and submitted for overload compensation approval. If the course is not part of the regular teaching load, the online course will be considered overload subject to the same parameters as defined in PS 209.

Class size for distance education courses will be determined through a consultative process that includes faculty, department chairs or directors, and the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Courses with sufficient enrollment as determined by Academic Affairs and the academic department may utilize Academic Assistants. These individuals are fully qualified to teach the course and are vetted/approved by the Dean of the College that offers the course. Faculty is expected to work with the Academic Assistants to determine the communication plan, support provided, and grading requirements.

Distance Learning staff will provide support and training to faculty preparing to teach or teaching online courses, including: training in the use of instructional technologies to support teaching and learning, , software, hardware, and Moodle.

## Students and Student Services

Distance education students are held to the same admissions standards and enrollment processes as campus-based students.

Distance education students shall have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services and student rights equivalent to that provided to campus-based students and appropriate to support their learning and successful matriculation. Services include the following as necessary and appropriate:
- admissions services,
- course and degree requirements,
- required technological competence and skills,
- availability of academic resources,
- availability of student services,
- program/course costs and payment policies and due dates,
- academic calendar and deadlines,
- academic policies and appeals processes, and
- availability of disability accommodations and procedures for accessing these resources.

Students should consult with their academic advisor for course requirements, advising, and other curriculum and program-related questions. Advisors' contact information can be obtained from the student's portal page at https://my.lsua.edu.

## Evaluation and Assessment

Distance education course offerings shall be evaluated according to the procedures in effect by Academic Affairs for course evaluations.

Academic department heads shall review evaluation results to facilitate the continual refinement of distance education course offerings. Consistent with the policies governing on-campus evaluations, documentation of evaluations must be kept on file in the department office, as well as documentation of the proactive use of the results of the evaluations.

Each distance education program shall be assessed in the same manner and frequency as the specific department's assessment of programs offered on campus. The department chair or director shall review assessment results with assigned faculty, distance education and technical staff, and cooperating service unit heads to facilitate the continual refinement of the distance education program. Documentation of this process and of the proactive use of the results shall be maintained in the appropriate academic office and be available for review.

APPROVED: _____
                   Paul Coreil, Ph.D., Chancellor

2/16/24
Date