McLennan Community College

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Reference:	B-XVII	Effective Date:	09/14/2021
Subject:	Distance Education		
Source:	Vice President, Instruction and Student Engagement		
Approval Authority:	President	Approval Date:	09/14/2021
History:	Previously effective 12/02/2016, replaced policy dated 05/06/2015		
Remarks:	Policy update based on recent changes in distance learning processes and to incorporate the new format.		

I.   **Purpose**
     The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) requires each public institution of higher education that intends to offer distance education courses and programs to submit an Institutional Plan for Distance Education for review and approval. The MCC Institutional Plan for Distance Education is kept on file in the Office of the Vice President, Instruction and Student Engagement (VPISE). To supplement the MCC Institutional Plan for Distance Education, this Distance Education Policy has been developed according to the guidelines for distance education as defined by Chapter 4, Subchapter P of the THECB's Rules and Regulations.

II. **Definitions:**
   A. **Synchronous** is defined as occurring at the same date and time. When instruction happens or students engage with learning materials at required dates or times it is considered synchronous.

   B. **Asynchronous** is defined as not occurring at the same date and time. When students can engage with the learning materials at any time and are not tied to particular interactions at specific dates and times it is considered asynchronous.

   C. **Distance Education** is defined as instruction in which the majority of the instruction occurs when the student and faculty are not in the same physical setting. A class is considered a distance education class if students receive at least 50% of the instruction at a distance. Distance education can be delivered synchronously or asynchronously to any single or multiple location(s) within or outside the boundaries of McLennan Community College's service area via instructional telecommunications including electronic delivery of all types.

   D. **Online Course** is defined by the College as a course in which 85 percent to 100 percent of the instructional content/curriculum is delivered online asynchronously; mandatory synchronous sessions may total no more than 15 percent of the instruction time, this includes synchronous proctored exams.

E. **Blended Course** is defined by the College as a course in which 50 percent to 84 percent of the instructional content/curriculum is delivered asynchronously; mandatory face-to-face synchronous sessions may total no more than 50 percent of the instruction time, this includes synchronous proctored exams.

F. **BlendSync Course** is defined by the College as a course in which 50 percent to 84 percent of the instructional content/curriculum is delivered online asynchronously. Mandatory online synchronous tool sessions (Zoom, etc.) may total no more than 50 percent of the instruction time, this includes synchronous proctored exams.

G. **Hyflex Course** is defined by the College as a course design model that presents components of face-to-face, online, blended and blendsync learning in a flexible course structure that gives students the option of attending sessions in the classroom, participating online asynchronously, participating online synchronously (Zoom, etc.), or doing all three. Students can change their mode of attendance at any time, according to need or preference. In this flexible design, faculty provide course content for all three participation modes and tailor activities for each format. This is not a self-paced model, even though online sessions can be either synchronous or asynchronous.

H. **Web-Enhanced Course** is defined by the College as a course in which at least 85 percent of the instructional content/curriculum is delivered face-to-face. Up to 15 percent of the content/curriculum may be provided online asynchronously.

I. **Course Template** is defined by the College as a fully developed course shell which has been approved and created to be used for all online offerings of that course.

III. **Standards and Criteria for Distance Education Instruction**

A. Institutional Issues

1. The quality of distance education instruction must meet the same standards as on-campus instruction. Distance Education at MCC encompasses all courses developed in any of the following formats: online, blended, blendsync, and hyflex. All distance education classes must be approved by the Vice President of Instruction and Student Engagement before development. The Division Chair identifies a course to implement in a distance education format on the "Course Proposal, Update and Deletion Form" and submits this through the Dean to the Vice President of Instruction and Student Engagement. After the course has been developed, the faculty member must complete the "Principles of Good Practice" form once the first 50 percent of the course is complete, which is subsequently verified by the Center for Teaching & Learning. Verification is through the Division Chair and appropriate Dean for approval to go online with the course. Distance education courses and faculty are evaluated according to guidelines outlined in the Faculty Evaluation Policy, B-XII.

2. All distance education courses that offer either semester credit hours or Continuing Education Units shall do so in accordance with the standards of the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

3. Students who enroll in distance education courses must satisfy the same requirements for admission to MCC, to the program of which the course is a part, and to the class/section itself as are required of on-campus students.

4. All instruction shall be administered by the same department/division administering the corresponding on-campus instruction. The supervision, monitoring, and evaluation process for distance education faculty shall be comparable to those for on-campus instruction. All subject content decisions will be the responsibility of the faculty and will be coordinated through the appropriate MCC academic structure no matter the delivery system. All MCC policies and procedures related to admission, withdrawals, and attendance will be the same no matter how instruction is delivered MCC maintains an "open door" admissions policy. However, admission to the College does not automatically admit students to a specific distance education program or course. Texas Higher Education Assessment requirements must be met before a student is admitted to a course that might require proficiency in related study skills. In addition, there are individual course prerequisites that must be met.

B. Faculty

1. Faculty shall be evaluated by the same standards, review, and approval procedures used by the institution to select and evaluate faculty responsible for on-campus instruction. Faculty selection follows the same procedure at MCC no matter what delivery system for the course is used.

2. The Center for Teaching & Learning and Information Systems & Services departments shall provide training and support to enhance the added skills required of faculty teaching classes at a distance via electronic delivery.

3. The faculty of record shall be certified to teach a distance education course after they pass "Teaching Online: Fundamentals" or receive an alternative certification exemption from the Center for Teaching & Learning.

4. The faculty of record shall bear responsibility for the delivery of instruction and for evaluation of student progress.

5. The load value for a distance education course shall be the same as its equivalent on-campus course. The total number of students allowed to enroll in any distance education course shall be set by the appropriate Division Chair in consultation with the appropriate Dean and the faculty. However, the total number of enrolled students in a distance education course should not exceed the maximum limit of the on-campus course; however, in situations where distance education courses exceed the maximum enrollment of an on-campus course, faculty loading and compensation may be adjusted if necessary.

6. Faculty members who create distance education courses are subject to the college's Intellectual Property Policy (E-XVII). A distance education course is considered to be a product comprised of the course materials and the course framework. In general, faculty members who author and develop course materials to be utilized in a distance education course own these materials. The College owns the course framework (e.g. license for the Learning Management System's software).

7. Preapproval from the Dean and VPISE is required before developing a course template. The Course Template Development Request form must be submitted to the faculty member's supervisor, Dean and VPISE. Once approved, the faculty member agrees to develop a course template for the College. The faculty member may be paid a stipend for the development of a distance education course upon completion. MCC shall be permitted to use or edit the course shell or the course material in question for internal instructional, educational, and administrative purposes. In addition, the faculty member retains all rights to the course for personal teaching purposes; however, the College reserves the right to get a percentage of any royalties up to the total amount of the stipend paid the faculty member if the course is commercialized. The course template must be comprised of instructor developed (not publisher) content. This will allow the course to be independent of the publisher's edition, textbook, and copyright laws. Course content should be fully developed, including all videos, content, activities, etc. (no placeholders). All course templates should be developed in collaboration with the Center for Teaching & Learning. The Center for Teaching & Learning must also review and approve the course template.

8. Faculty compensation for teaching distance education courses shall be the same as for the equivalent on-campus courses.

9. The College, through the Center for Teaching & Learning, shall provide information regarding the most current copyright laws to all faculty members, and faculty members shall adhere to those guidelines.

10. Faculty working through the Center for Teaching & Learning will ensure their distance education course is compliant with American Disability Act amendments in Section

C. Academic and Student Support Services

1. All, recruiting and scheduling information provided in campus publications or online regarding any distance education class or program shall include the prerequisite level of knowledge and skill necessary to complete the course successfully and clear and specific information on the technology needed to participate in the course. Where necessary, these publications shall include information on resources available to assist the student in using the required technology.

2. Students engaged in distance education courses shall be provided online academic and student support services—including academic advising, counseling, library and other learning resources, tutoring services, and financial aid—comparable to those available for on-campus students. Online academic support services available to students may be provided by a variety of delivery methods, including, but not limited to, orientations, on-site conferences, links on web pages within Internet-based courses, the MCC website, video services, e-mail, fax, and/or telephone.

3. MCC shall furnish access to appropriate library resources beyond the local

collection through its participation in resource-sharing programs, such as the TexShare Library Card Program and Inter-Library Loan Program.

D. Distance Education Facilities and Support Services:

1. Distance education facilities (other than homes as distance education reception sites) shall be comparable in quality to those for on-campus instruction. Distance education students shall receive access to technology comparable to that provided to on-campus students.

2. The College shall support student and faculty access to online courses and online support services through access provided in computer labs on campus. An online help desk shall be provided by the Information Systems & Services Department.