

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 January 5, 2021

I. Board Policy

A. Composition: The eLearning advisory committee (EAC) is composed of Montana University 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.

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.

C. Definitions

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.
 - 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.

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II. Reporting Procedures

A. By September 15th of each year, the EAC, with assistance from the office of the commissioner, shall file with the ARSA committee of the board, an annual report of distance learning activity over the preceding fiscal year.

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 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 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 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. 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.