

Millersville University Governance & Policies

Effective: Fall 2005

Curriculum Approval Policy DISTANCE LEARNING (DL) COURSE APPROVAL PROCESS

Approved: 10/4/05, Deans' Council; 7/18/05 Faculty Senate
Revised: February 14, 2007, Deans' Council; March 21, 2006, Faculty Senate
Fall 2007?

Purpose of Distance Learning (DL) Course

To enrich and to increase the availability of the course offerings while maintaining quality educational experiences for students learning in a distance environment.

Millersville University Definition of Distance Learning (DL)

Distance learning takes place when students and faculty members are separated from each other by location or time. DL courses **as defined by the CBA, Article 42.B.1.a, may meet entirely on-line or may include a combination of on-line and face-to-face instruction representing up to 20 % of the entire course.** ~~usually have little or no requirement for "live" meetings—whether in a physical location or across the Internet. However, an instructor may require meetings throughout the semester. The definition is consistent with Article 42 B.1.a. of the CBA.~~

Distance Learning Formats

1. Online – Millersville University defines an online course as one that meets completely online via online courseware system (i.e. Blackboard, eCollege, or WebCT).
2. Blended – Millersville University defines a blended course as a distance learning course that blends online learning with face-to-face meetings. The face-to-face meetings (including fieldwork and on-site labs) cannot exceed ~~33%~~ **20%** of the entire course. The remainder of the course must be taught online. **Courses that utilize a distance learning delivery mode for less than 80% of the course are not covered by the Distance Learning Course approval process or Article 42 of the CBA.**

Technical and Instructional Support

The University shall assure the availability of technical support personnel and materials appropriate to the principal technology and consistent with the faculty member's prior training and experience.

1. Faculty member has been provided with appropriate training and technical support.

2. Faculty member has access to appropriate technical infrastructure.
3. Qualified instructional designers have an appropriate role in course development.

Course Approval Process

New credit-bearing courses that wish to be presented via a DL delivery mode must be approved through the existing course approval procedure at the University. The method of DL (video conferencing, e-mail, online, blended, etc.) must be clearly stated in the course proposal.

Existing credit-bearing courses that wish to add the option of a DL delivery format shall be reviewed by the department and University curriculum committee (UCPRC or GCPRC), which shall each provide its recommendation to the President or his/her designee. In these cases, the review by the department and University curriculum committees shall focus only on the presentation of the course via the proposed DL delivery mode rather than re-examining the elements of the existing course. This review should be completed within thirty (30) days¹ of receipt of the course proposal by the University curriculum committee.

Course Approval Criteria

In approving distance education courses, the following criteria shall be applicable:

1. Course content, outcomes, practice, and assessment are consistent and clearly stated in the course proposal and in the materials distributed to students.
 - a. Minimum technology and skills required for the course are clearly stated.
 - b. Learning outcomes/competencies are clearly stated using action verbs to communicate what learners will know and be able to do as a result of the learning experience.
 - c. Suitable opportunities for interaction between instructor and student are provided.
 - 1) Instructors provide clear guidelines for interactions with students.
 - 2) Learning activities are developed to foster instructor-student, student-content, and where appropriate, student-student interaction.
 - 3) Instructors are encouraged to provide two types of feedback: information feedback (related to content) and acknowledgment feedback (confirmation of receipt).
 - d. Suitable assessment of student achievement is evident.
 - 1) Assessment methods are designed to measure the competencies stated in learning outcomes and are appropriate for distance learning.
 - 2) Faculty working with departmental and school curriculum committees, in consultation with instructional design specialists, have developed methods of assessment that protect the integrity of the distance learning course.
 - 3) Course syllabus clearly states that students must adhere to the MU Academic Integrity Policy.
2. Technological tools used for distance learning assure student fulfillment of learning outcomes.
 - a. Minimum technology competencies expected of students are clearly indicated in course materials.

¹ Since Faculty Senate committees do not typically meet outside of the regular fall and spring semesters, the thirty (30) day period applies only to the regular fall and spring semesters.

- b. Assistance with technology, including orientation and testing, is made available to students.
 - c. A contingency plan has been developed in the event of a technology failure.
3. Course resources assure student fulfillment of learning outcomes.
- a. Course resources are accessible to the learners, including online access to library materials.
 - b. Course resources are developed in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and may include such accommodations as are typically offered to non-distance education students through learning services and by course instructors.
 - c. Instructions are included on the site for those with disabilities explaining how to access all course resources.
4. Methods for course evaluation and maintenance are evident.

~~An appropriate student evaluation instrument shall be developed and implemented in compliance with Article 42.F.2. of the CBA.~~

~~a. The faculty member shall write an evaluation of his/her experience in the distance education course and suggest measures, which may be taken to improve the quality of distance education in the future (CBA, Article 42.G.).~~

~~1) Student perceptions regarding learning through distance education should be included in the report.~~

~~2) The evaluation should be submitted to the department chairperson, the department offering the course, and the appropriate Dean/management supervisor.~~