

1. GENERAL INFORMATION AND PURPOSE

- 1.01 The administration of Sam Houston State University recognizes the significance of organizing the distance education initiatives of the institution so that a well-coordinated program will be delivered. Coordination of distance education initiatives is required to provide the resources and assistance for faculty, to provide support services for distance education students, to maximize the use of University resources with a minimum of duplication, and to ensure consistent and fair policies and procedures related to faculty and students. Organized and well-coordinated programs facilitate marketing and promotional strategies and strengthen the University's image as an innovative and technologically sound institution.
- 1.02 Rapid advancements in technology will undoubtedly create new methods for providing and delivering distance education. Therefore, policies and procedures that impact distance education will continuously change and these guidelines should be considered "interim" in nature and reflect the latest developments at the time of printing. As changes occur that are internally developed, required by The Texas State University System (TSUS), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), or the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), this document will be revised to incorporate those changes.
- 1.03 The following distance education policies and procedures are intended to assist with planning, coordination, and technological support for participating administration, faculty, and staff. These policies and procedures are built on current SHSU academic policy statements, the university mission statement, and the strategic plan, and shall apply to new distance education activities as well as to existing courses and programs in which the method of delivery has changed significantly from that approved in the original curriculum proposal.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.01 Distance Education: For the purposes of this policy, distance education will be defined as instruction delivered through electronic means such as television, interactive video conferencing, or computer networks.
- 2.02 Distance Education Course: An individual course in which the majority of instruction occurs when the student and the instructor are not in the same physical setting. The course is considered distance education if the student receives more than 50 percent of the instruction at a distance. Distance

education courses offered electronically must first be approved for on-campus delivery before being offered via distance education.

- 2.03 Distance Education Program: An approved collection of courses or course of study where a student can earn 50 percent or more credits necessary to qualify for a degree through distance education.

3. PLANNING FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

- 3.01 The appropriateness and viability of distance education programs must be carefully considered in the planning process. Distance education programs should be focused on the University mission and goals, consistent with the colleges' long range planning, and supportive of the educational strategies of the department. Distance education programs should be designed and evaluated according to guidelines similar to those utilized for on-campus programs.
- 3.02 The design and development of distance education courses and programs should follow priorities established by the colleges. These priorities should be based on educational requirements, market studies, public demand, community and business needs, and the competitive advantages of SHSU. Development of distance education programs should maximize University research and educational goals, promote the development of resources unavailable at other institutions, and/or encourage collaboration with other institutions.

4. ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS AND QUALITY STANDARDS

The following standards represent important guiding principles for developing, conducting, and evaluating distance education instruction activities at Sam Houston State University.

- 4.01 Sam Houston State University engages in distance education courses and programs which are consistent with the institutional role and mission.
- 4.02 Distance education activities conducted at SHSU will comply with the "Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certification Programs and Credit Courses Offered Electronically" as presented by THECB and in accordance with the SACS "Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs."

- 4.03 The course or program that is being proposed as a degree-related distance education activity shall meet the same quality standards applicable to on-campus instruction.
 - 4.04 Distance education credit courses will be listed in the undergraduate or graduate course inventory.
 - 4.05 Each distance education course provides for planned interaction and timely feedback between students and faculty member(s) teaching the course.
 - 4.06 The instructor will be responsible for the delivery of instruction and for evaluating student progress.
 - 4.07 Faculty will be selected and evaluated by the same standards and procedures required to select faculty responsible for on-campus instruction.
 - 4.08 Sam Houston State University will make available the appropriate training and support for faculty providing distance education.
 - 4.09 The same policies concerning admissions requirements, scholastic standards, and the administrative processes apply to distance education as they do for on-campus classes.
 - 4.10 Students enrolled in a distance education class will have access to academic support, including library services, advising, counseling, and financial aid appropriate for distance education.
5. ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL AND COORDINATION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES AND PROGRAMS
- 5.01 Distance education instruction will be offered with the consensus of the responsible academic department/school chair, academic dean, and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
 - 5.02 The institution shall provide the means for assessing the quality of the distance education offerings in comparison with traditional instructional approaches.
 - 5.03 All distance education instruction shall be administered by the same entity administering the corresponding on-campus instruction.

- 5.04 Distance education course proposals are prepared according to the guidelines in [Attachment A](#). Course proposals will be submitted for review and recommendation in the following order: appropriate department/school chair, academic dean, Office of Academic Instructional Technology and Distance Learning, and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
 - 5.05 Distance education program proposals are prepared according to the format and guidelines in [Attachment B](#). Program proposals will be submitted for review and recommendation in the following order: appropriate department/school chair, academic dean, the Office of Academic Instructional Technology and Distance Learning, and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
 - 5.06 The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will review approved program proposals for compliance with the TSUS, THECB, and SACS guidelines.
 - 5.07 The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs will seek the required approval to offer distance education with the TSUS, THECB, and SACS.
 - 5.08 Removal of distance education programs is proposed through a memorandum from the departmental/school chair of the academic unit, via the academic dean to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Requests to delete a program should contain the following information: name of the program, justification for the program removal (including the impact of enrolled students), and the proposed effective date.
6. FACULTY COMPENSATION FOR WEB-BASED COURSE DESIGN AND INSTRUCTION
- 6.01 Development of Web-Based Courses: The development of web-based courses requires extra faculty time and the acquisition of special skills. Therefore, the creation of a web-based course may often proceed in a stepwise fashion. For descriptive purposes, the characteristics associated with two stages in the development of online courses are outlined:

- a. *Basic Online Course.* A Basic Online Course must provide not only Internet access to the syllabus, course outline, lecture notes, and list of assignments, but it also must allow for online student comment and instructor feedback. In this type of course, most instructor feedback is asynchronous. Although there may be limited face-to-face classroom meetings during a semester, most of the course is conducted online. A Basic Online Course should be enhanced by links to resource sites. Exams are proctored at remote locations.
- b. *Optimal Online Course.* An Optimal Online Course has the same basic attributes as a basic course, but it is enhanced by streaming videos of instructor lectures or accessory materials, e-assignments with instructor feedback, synchronous interactive sessions (class chat rooms) with the instructor or distinguished guests, and hot links to resource sites. Pre-tests and other practice exercises are provided in addition to reading and written e-mail assignments.

6.02 Faculty Compensation: To compensate faculty for the development of web-based courses at Sam Houston State University, the following strategy for compensation has been adopted:

- a. Faculty members should be encouraged to develop a website for each course they teach. The web site should include a course syllabus, a course outline, and a description of course assignments. The website should be updated prior to each semester that the course is offered. The faculty should not be compensated for this type of course enhancement.
- b. Faculty should be encouraged to develop Basic Online Courses (BOC). A brief proposal to develop a BOC should be approved by the appropriate departmental/school chair, the academic dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). Compensation per course for the completion of approved BOCs will be determined by the dean of the college, with preference of these rewards towards the development of BOCs associated with specific degree programs, specific distance learning needs, and continuing education.
- c. Faculty should be encouraged to develop Optimal Online Courses (OOC) or upgrade BOCs to OOCs. A brief proposal to develop an OOC or upgrade an existing BOC to an OOC should be approved by the department/school chair, the academic dean, and the VPAA. Compensation will be determined by the dean of the college for the completion of an upgrade of a BOC to an OOC. Faculty members are

currently compensated \$2,000 for the development of a Category IV Optimal Online Course.

- d. To compensate faculty for the instruction of online courses at Sam Houston State University, the following options for compensation are allowed (the option will be negotiated in advance between the academic dean, the department/school chair, and the faculty member):
 1. Faculty members could accept an online course as one course in a normal teaching load (standard minimum class size rules would apply, or
 2. Faculty members could receive a reduced teaching load during a regular semester once they have had a prearranged number of students complete their online course (the criteria for the actual number of students would be 75 percent of the normal class size for the same class when taught on-campus, with a pre-established minimum of 25 undergraduate students or 10 graduate students).
 3. Exceptions to this policy must be approved in writing by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

7. CATEGORIES FOR ONLINE CLASSES

7.01 During negotiations with the chair and dean, the faculty member will select for each online class one of the categories listed below:

a. *Category 1 – Totally Faculty or Staff Generated*

1. Description of Individual and University Contribution: The work resulted from an individual's efforts on his own personal time without any direct support from or through SHSU and without the use of any SHSU resources beyond those normally provided by the University.

2. Ownership and Compensation: The individual owns all intellectual property, may receive external compensation for work, and retains distribution rights.

b. Category II – Minimal University Resources

1. Description of Individual and University Contribution: The work resulted from the individual's efforts with minimal resources above and beyond those normally provided.
2. Ownership and Compensation: The individual owns intellectual property and has the right to distribute the work. The individual may receive compensation for any distribution outside the university course delivery. The University has a nonexclusive educational license to use the work as part of SHSU course delivery. In such case, the faculty member will be compensated at a rate pre-negotiated with the Vice President for Academic Affairs or as otherwise agreed to by the University and the faculty member.

c. Category III – Substantial University Resources are Provided

1. Description of Individual and University Contribution: The work resulted from the individual's efforts with substantial University resources above and beyond those normally provided.
2. Ownership and Compensation: The individual and the University jointly own the intellectual property and have the right to distribute it and jointly share compensation for any distribution outside the University course delivery. The University has a nonexclusive educational license to use the work as a part of SHSU course delivery. In such case, the faculty member will be compensated at a rate pre-negotiated with the University. The University also has a nonexclusive commercial license to market the course outside the University. If licensed for commercial purposes either by the Vice President for Academic Affairs or the faculty member, the University and the faculty member(s) will each receive a percentage of the royalty as negotiated.

d. Category IV – Work Made for Hire – University Assigns Duty to Faculty or Staff Member to Develop a Work

1. Description of Individual and University Contribution: An employee of the University was contracted to develop a specific product. The University provided all resources for the work. The work was carried out totally as a part of the faculty or staff member's assigned time.
 2. Ownership and Compensation: The University owns all intellectual property, has an exclusive educational and commercial ownership, and has license authority. The faculty or staff member is not entitled to payment of royalty.
- e. Category V – Faculty Member Uses Own Work as Part of Course Offering at SHSU*
1. Description of Individual and University Contribution: The faculty member is using a work that he/she created as part of teaching at SHSU.
 2. Ownership and Compensation: Ownership will be determined by categories I through IV. There will be no extra compensation beyond normal teaching compensation for use of the work.
8. This policy will be periodically reviewed. The University reserves the right to place a prominent disclaimer on any course.

APPROVED: _____/signed/
James F. Gaertner, President

DATED: _____ 04/14/03