

DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

(Approved by the UNCG Policy Advisory Committee, February 13, 2014)

(Approved by the Provost, February 28, 2014; August 7, 2023)¹

Purpose

Distance education is an integral part of the mission of UNCG. The creation and delivery of continuing and online education programs raise specific questions about ownership, compensation, control, evaluation, and quality, as well as other rights and responsibilities. The purpose of this policy is to address these issues. The *Distance Education Policy* will have two foci; online education and off-campus face-to-face courses.

Scope

This policy covers credit-bearing online education and off-campus distance education offered through UNCG approved programs, as well as courses that are not taught as part of an approved program. Off-campus Distance Education for this policy is defined as instruction offered synchronously, face-to-face, and away from UNCG and which may be referred to as “distance”, “off-campus”, or “off-site” instruction whether a single course, a certificate program, or a degree program. This policy addresses specific concerns regarding:

- University Role and Responsibility
- Academic Department/Unit Role and Responsibilities
- Faculty Role and Responsibilities and Faculty Development/Support
- Student Responsibilities and Support

Online and distance education courses, whether taught as part of an approved online program or not, must also follow existing policies in these areas; that is, all current policies and services that apply to on-campus education will apply in the domain of online and distance education, unless otherwise specified.

The fact that a course or program may also be accessed from campus sites will not exclude the course or program from this policy.

¹ Non-substantive amendments made by the Provost, March 25, 2019.

Policy (Online Course)

University Role and Responsibilities

1. UNCG will foster online education in support of its mission and in compliance with state and federal laws, as well as accreditation principles and requirements.
2. UNCG will design and implement operational procedures and policies that support the online educational experience for students and faculty.
3. Courses in the University Catalog may be offered online, if feasible, when doing so does not represent a substantive change for an academic program; otherwise, the appropriate approvals must be sought prior to offering the course. The UNCG Semester Course Schedules must indicate which sections of courses will be delivered by online education, but these courses will not be distinguished on transcripts from sections of these courses delivered on campus.
4. Credit hours granted for courses delivered online will be the same as the credit hours for the same courses delivered on campus.
5. Decisions to offer courses or programs online will reflect student needs and availability of resources. If a degree program is designed to be offered entirely online, the enrolled student must be able to satisfy all course-based requirements of that degree program through online courses.
6. Instructors of online courses must use the University's Learning Management System (LMS) to deliver course content. Instructors may use external websites and tools at their discretion, but those resources should be accessed via the LMS. Instructors shall comply with federal and state laws and University policies including those regarding copyright, accessibility, and privacy when preparing and delivering online course material.
7. UNCG will provide technical, pedagogical, and instructional design support services to faculty and students as appropriate.
8. UNCG will provide training for faculty to obtain sufficient technical and pedagogical skills to present their subject matter.
9. UNCG will ensure compliance with accessibility standards for students with disabilities.
10. UNCG will provide support to ensure academic integrity through our [academic integrity policy](#) and through [testing services](#).

Academic Department/Unit Role and Responsibilities

1. The academic unit offering online education will approve the curriculum and will be developed and implemented in alignment with the School/College faculty workload policies. New courses, whatever their planned mode of delivery, must be approved by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and/or the Graduate Studies Committee, as

appropriate.

2. The unit/department head must approve faculty requests to offer online courses.
3. The academic unit (the department or school if it is not departmentalized) providing online education will be responsible for maintaining the same high standards for all courses and for ensuring that online education instruction is comparable in quality and content to the corresponding on-campus instruction. To that end:
 - a. Academic units offering online education courses are responsible for reviewing the credit hours associated with these courses as demonstrated through course content and requirements, as part of routine curriculum and course reviews conducted at the unit level.
 - b. Academic units offering online education courses will assess the methods by which these courses are delivered as part of routine curriculum and course reviews conducted at the unit level. If offering the course online creates the possibility that a student can earn more than 50% (fifty percent) of coursework online, the department must report this to the Office of Assessment, Accreditation, and Academic Program Planning immediately.
4. Academic units may offer customized information technology support and services for any non-central IT (ITS) supported technologies. However, before offering or considering such services, academic units must first consult with ITS to ensure an existing solution is not already available to avoid duplication of services, and to discuss issues such as security and compatibility with the UNCG technology environment. In addition, academic units must understand that ITS will not provide any hardware or software support for customized solutions, and adherence to existing university policies and standards related to IT Security, technology procurement, and technology management are required.

Faculty Role and Responsibilities and Faculty Development/Support

1. Faculty who teach online are responsible for consulting with technical support personnel and adhering to the [Online Instructor Professional Development Procedures. These will ensure faculty have](#) sufficient technical and pedagogical skills to present their subject matter and related material effectively.
2. Faculty will inform students about technical skill prerequisites and required hardware, software, and supplementary materials necessary for course participation in the catalog description or syllabus.
3. Faculty who offer online education will be available to interact individually with their students in person or via email, telephone, video conference, and/or other tools.
4. Student participation in online education may be recorded through the technology being

employed (e.g., video-chat applications), and student participants may be required to post materials electronically. Faculty will inform students in the syllabus (a) that their participation will be recorded (b) of the circumstances under which others may have access to those recordings and their postings, and (c) recordings and postings should be kept in a manner consistent with the *Electronic Records Retention Policy*. Additionally, recordings and postings should be destroyed when they are no longer needed.

5. Copyright to online education materials used at UNCG is subject to UNCG's *Copyright Ownership and Use Policy*. However, given the nature of online education the creator(s) of these materials and UNCG should enter into a written agreement to clarify the rights of all parties involved.

Student Responsibilities and Student Support

1. The *Student Code of Conduct* and *Academic Integrity Policy* applies regardless of whether courses are taught traditionally or through online education.
2. Students who are not routinely on campus for educational purposes are not covered under the *Missing Student Notification Policy*.
3. Instructional materials essential to online education will be available and accessible to all students.
4. Students enrolled in online courses who have fees waived, are not eligible for activity fee funded events, facilities, programs and services.
5. Students seeking appropriate accommodations will be able to identify the institutional resource responsible for assistance, and be directed to the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services to address their concerns. (This can be accomplished by information in the course syllabus, or in general registration information provided to all students. An example of such a statement would be "If you have a documented disability, and would like to discuss appropriate accommodations, please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources & Services.")

Policy (Off-Campus Face-to-Face Courses)

University Role and Responsibilities

1. UNCG is responsible for complying with UNC System Office authorization policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures for offering off-campus distance education.
2. UNCG will refer to North Carolina proposed site locations by North Carolina county or counties in which the instruction is delivered. If the delivery site is outside North Carolina, then the city and state or country of delivery will be identified.

3. UNCG will identify and describe any site-based facilities used in distance delivery. The description of a site-based facility will explain ownership of the facility and the terms of use, including the cost for use for educational delivery.
4. UNCG will have processes in place to assure that the student who registers for the off-campus distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives academic credit.
5. UNCG is responsible for the development, delivery, regular assessment, and accreditation (general and specialized) of specific degree-related off-campus distance education courses and programs.
6. UNCG will design and implement operational procedures and policies that support the off-campus distance educational experience for students and faculty.
7. UNCG acknowledges that all courses in the University Catalog may be offered via off-campus distance education, if feasible. The published class schedule must indicate which sections of courses will be delivered by off-campus distance education, but these courses will not be distinguished on transcripts from sections of these courses delivered on-campus or online.

Academic Department Role and Responsibilities

1. Academic units will ensure that all on-campus academic policies are adhered to for the off-campus distance education environment unless otherwise specified in this policy document.
2. Academic units offering off-campus distance education courses and programs will approve the curriculum and appoint the faculty. The academic unit will adhere to the School/College workload policy.
3. The academic unit will ensure that policies for faculty evaluation include appropriate recognition of teaching, service, and scholarly or creative activities related to off-campus distance programs or courses.
4. The academic unit is responsible for ensuring that off-campus distance instruction is comparable in quality and content to the corresponding on-campus instruction. To that end:
 - a. Academic units offering off-campus distance education courses and programs are responsible for reviewing the credit hours associated with distance courses, as demonstrated through course content and requirements, as part of routine curriculum and course reviews conducted at the unit level.
 - b. Academic units offering off-campus distance education courses and programs will assess them as part of routine curriculum and course reviews conducted at the unit level.
5. The academic unit will be responsible for adhering to all UNCG and UNC System Office policies regarding the selection and approval of the off-campus distance education facilities including but not limited to filing required approval paperwork and for ensuring that the facilities meet the instructional requirements and needs of both faculty and students.

Faculty Role and Responsibilities and Faculty Development/Support

1. Faculty who teach at off-campus distance education facilities are responsible for acquiring sufficient technical and pedagogical skills to present their subject matter and related material effectively.
2. Faculty who offer courses and programs as off-campus distance education will be available to interact individually with their students in person or via e-mail, telephone, video conference or other tools in accordance with the academic unit's policies for office hours, advising, etc.

Student Responsibilities and Student Support

1. The *Academic Integrity Policy* applies regardless of whether courses are taught on campus traditionally, online, or as off-campus distance education.
2. Students who are not routinely on campus for educational purposes are not covered under the *Missing Student Notification Policy*.
3. Technology support and training essential to success in the off-campus distance course or program will be available and accessible to students, including during evening hours and on weekends.
4. Instructional materials essential to off-campus distance education courses and programs will be available and accessible to all students.
5. Student services, except those limited by fee payment structure, will be available and accessible to all students.

Links to Related University Policies

Acceptable Use of Computing and Electronic Resources

https://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/acceptable_use/

Canvas Use Policy

<https://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/canvas/>

Electronic Records Retention Policy

https://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/electronic_records/

Learning Management System Use Policy

https://policy.uncg.edu/university-policies/learning_management_system/

Academic Integrity Policy

<https://osrr.uncg.edu/academic-integrity/>

See Also

University of North Carolina System Policy Manual 400.1.1 [R]

Regulation for Academic Program Planning and Evaluation

<https://www.northcarolina.edu/apps/policy/index.php?section=400.1.1%5BR%5D>

Office of the Provost/Policies and Publications

<https://provost.uncg.edu/policies-procedures-forms/>

Office of Accessibility Resources & Services

<http://ods.uncg.edu/policies-procedures/distance-learning>

UNCG Curriculum Guide

<http://curriculumguide.uncg.edu/>