TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSCEP OP: 59.02, **Online and Distance Education**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso) Operating Policy and Procedure (HSCEP OP) is to specify how online and distance education instruction shall be conducted.

REVIEW: This HSCEP OP will be reviewed by September 1 of every even-numbered year (ENY) by the vice president of information technology, deans of the schools and the vice president for academic affairs or designee, with recommendations for revisions submitted to the Academic Council for approval by November 1.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

I.   Definitions.

A.   Per Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter J, Rule §2.202, "distance education" is defined "the formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are in separate physical locations for the majority (more than 50 percent) of instruction". This definition also applies to courses in which the majority of the instruction occurs when the student(s) and instructor(s) are not in separate physical locations. Two categories of distance education modalities are defined for academic programs and courses:

   1.   **Distance Education Degree or Certificate Programs**

      a)   **100-Percent Online Program.** A degree program in which students complete 100 percent of the credit hours required for the program through 100-Percent Online Courses. Requirements for on-campus or in-person orientation, testing, academic support services, internships/fieldwork, or other non-instructional activities do not exclude a program from this category.

      b)   **Hybrid Program.** A degree program in which students complete more than 50 percent but less than 100 percent of the credit hours required for the program through Distance Education Courses.

   2.   **Distance Education Courses**

      a)   **100-Percent Online Course.** A distance education course in which 100 percent of instructional activity takes place when the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations. Requirements for on-campus or in-person orientation, testing, academic support services, internships/fieldwork, or other non-instructional activities do not exclude a course from this category.

      b)   **Hybrid Course.** A distance education course in which more than 50 percent but less than 100 percent of instructional activity takes place when

the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations.

Per Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Distance Education and Correspondence Courses Policy Statement, instruction in distance education courses may be synchronous or asynchronous.

3. This policy also applies to face-to-face and other courses that are not considered distance education based on the definitions above, but use technology to deliver curricula with formats, in which 50% or less of instructional activity takes place when the student(s) and instructor(s) are in separate physical locations.

B. Unless otherwise specified below, all current policies that apply to face-to-face delivery of academic programs and coursework shall also apply to programs and coursework that is delivered online or with distance education formats.

II. Procedures.

A. Educational Support

All TTUHSC El Paso students who apply for admission to or are enrolled in an educational program that includes instruction delivered in online or distance education formats shall be provided appropriate access to student support services. These services shall include online access to admissions, orientation, academic advising, course registration, textbook lists and course materials, financial aid, technical assistance, and related services. Students seeking accommodations as applicable under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 must register with the Office of Accessibility Services in the Office of Student Services and Student Engagement and file appropriate documentation in order to be eligible for any disability benefits and services described in HSCEP OP 77.14, Accessibility and Establishing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.

1. The TTUHSC El Paso library shall provide support for all programs and courses and programs regardless of delivery modality (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, online/fully online).

2. Elements of library support available to students enrolled in online/distance education courses or programs include electronic document delivery, electronic journals, full-text databases, end-user searching, reference assistance and instruction, network access, and interlibrary loan services.

3. All TTUHSC El Paso students enrolled in distance education programs and/or courses shall have access to appropriate institutional academic technologies and support regardless of program and/or course delivery modality.

4. All instructors of online/distance education programs and/or courses shall be provided professional support in adopting appropriate instructional techniques, comply with accessibility requirements, and strategies to deliver, maintain, and facilitate student learning. Such support shall be provided through the Office of Faculty Development, Office of Academic Affairs designee, TTUHSC El Paso eLearning Committee and by each school and/or program within TTUHSC El Paso.

B.   Coordination and Oversight

1.   TTUHSC El Paso eLearning Committee

The TTUHSC El Paso eLearning Committee reviews and makes recommendations for institutional processes and administrative aspects affecting electronically delivered, technology-assisted, online and distance education instruction, including the following:

a)   recommending the allocation of institutional resources to support instructional needs;

b)   promoting best practices in the use of academic technologies towards improving student learning outcomes;

c)   providing guidance for the staff supporting the Learning Management Systems (LMS);

d)   approving web-page material related to support services and academic program offerings, etc.;

e)   ensuring awareness of requirements related to distance education as set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) requirements.

Committee members shall represent TTUHSC El Paso administrative offices and departments at the institutional and school levels. Representatives will be appointed to the eLearning Committee by the vice president for academic affairs with recommendations solicited from relevant institutional division heads (i.e., vice presidents, deans). Appointments are reviewed annually, or more often as needed, by the committee chair. The eLearning Committee reports to the vice president for academic affairs and the Academic Council as relevant.

2.   TTUHSC El Paso Schools

Each school will ensure:

a)   adherence to the THECB's Principles of Good Practice for Distance Education, which apply to degree and certificate programs, as well as courses offered at a distance (Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 2, Subchapter J, Rule §2.204);

b)   adherence to the standards and guidelines of the SACSCOC Distance Education and Correspondence Courses Policy Statement;

c)   identification of resource needs and allocation of resources to support courses delivered in online, distance and technology-assisted education formats;

d)   facilitation of academic support services for students and faculty within the schools who are engaged in online, distance and technology-assisted instruction;

e)   assistance to programs in the development and/or revision of curricula; and

f)   identification of data and assessments needed to evaluate the effectiveness of online, distance and technology-assisted instruction.

C.   Programs, Course Offerings, and Ownership of Instructional Materials

1.   Faculty within schools are responsible for deciding which courses and/or programs will be offered and the most appropriate modality (e.g. face-to-face, hybrid, online/fully online).

2.   Faculty within schools are responsible for ensuring the academic rigor of programs and the quality of instruction in all courses and/or programs, regardless of delivery modality.

3.   Faculty members are responsible for ensuring the integrity of student work in courses and programs, regardless of delivery modality.

4.   Proposals for new distance education courses and/or programs shall be developed, reviewed, and approved in the same manner as proposals for face-to-face courses and/or programs and approvals must be secured at the school level and through the relevant approval processes coordinated by the Office of Academic Affairs.

5.   Ownership of instructional materials that are developed for distance education programs and/or courses and the revenue derived from the creation of software or other media products that are developed for instructional purposes shall be determined in accordance with Regents' Rules and Policy Statement, Chapter 10, Intellectual Property Rights.

D.   Assessment

1.   Students will evaluate each online/distance education course they are enrolled in. Evaluation forms will include additional items to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery systems, academic resources and student services.

2.   The effectiveness of all educational programs is continuously evaluated as part of the institution's ongoing effectiveness processes. Assessments will address various elements, including student learning outcomes, performance on programmatic assessments, satisfaction with the course and technology, persistence in the degree program, and program outcomes (e.g., pass rates on licensing exams) as relevant.

3.   Coordinators of programs and instructors of record for programs/courses classified as distance education by the THECB shall review the THECB Principles of Good Practice for Distance Education (PGP) documentation and review program/course(s) for PGP alignment.

4.   *Instructors of record for courses classified as distance education should consult the* SACSCOC Distance Education and Correspondence Courses Policy Statement *to ensure that all requirements are met.*