POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

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DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Program and Course Section Delivery Mode Definitions and
               Relationship to Distance Education

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AUTHORIZED: Robert Fischer ~~Cheryl Stevens~~ Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

I. Purpose and Scope

Standardized program and course section delivery mode definitions facilitate compliance with SACSCOC policies and federal regulations, while providing valuable information to students regarding the nature of program and course delivery and associated time and effort commitments on their part. This policy establishes standard program and course section delivery mode definitions, and further establishes criteria for classifying programs, courses or course sections as distance education.

II. Policy

To be in compliance with SACSCOC policy on Distance and Correspondence Education, it is incumbent on the university to inform students of the scheduled meetings and technology requirements of each course at the time of registration and that these requirements are consistent with Policy 1.403V. In addition, the Department of Homeland Security requires WKU to determine whether a student's physical presence for classes, examinations, or other purposes is integral to completion of the class. Further, for students to make an informed decision before pursuing a program of study and for accurate data reporting purposes, the university must distinguish the modality of academic programs as it relates to distance education and will follow the CPE academic program delivery method and SACSCOC definitions. Because of these regulations, program and course sections must be identified as distance education according to the federal definition.

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A. SACSCOC defines distance education as follows:

"For the purposes of the Commission on College's accreditation review, distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD's, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program."

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulatory language stipulates the following:

"8 CFR 214.2(f)(6)(i)(G)
(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purpose integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement. (Revised effective 1/1/3; 67 FR 76256)"

SACSCOC defines a distance education program as a program in which 50% or more of the program requirements may be earned by distance education.

B. Course Section Delivery Mode Definitions

1. Classroom course: A course section delivered in-person, synchronously, and at a common scheduled location and time. Some of the required minutes of engagement may be fulfilled by required, out-of-class learning activities such as field trips, group projects, or attendance at special events. Because these course sections are predominantly classroom format, they are not considered distance education by federal and SACSCOC definition.

2. Classroom Hybrid course: Classroom meetings replaced with online activities – a course section delivered through a combination of classroom and WKU supported learning technologies, with more than 50% or more of the required minutes of instruction delivered in classroom format. Examples of WKU supported learning technologies include LMS, videoconferencing, IVS, and audio/video lectures. Because these course sections are predominantly classroom format, they are not

considered distance education by federal and SACSCOC definition.

3. Online Hybrid course: Most course activity is completed online – a course section delivered through a combination of classroom and WKU support learning technologies, with less than 50% of the required minutes of instruction delivered in the classroom format. Examples of WKU supported learning technologies include LMS, videoconferencing, IVS, and audio/video lectures. Because these course sections are predominantly delivered via learning technologies, they are considered distance education by federal and SACSCOC definition.

4. Online (Web) course: A course section delivered online using WKU supported learning technologies with no more than two in-person meetings at a defined campus location on a specific day/time (not including mid-term or final examinations, or any exam dates where student identities are verified by the instructor or an arranged proctor). Courses offered through synchronous online modalities, with no associated defined campus location, are considered online (Web) courses. All online (Web) course sections are considered a distance education course by federal and SACSCOC definition.

5. Other: A course section that doesn't fit within the above definitions, and which is based around an individualized learning experience. This category includes experiences such as independent study, internship, cooperative education, practicum, student teaching, and print-based on demand courses. Because these course sections are predominantly classroom format, they are not considered distance education by federal and SACSCOC definition.

C. Additional Course Section Definition

1. Connect Course: A course section delivered synchronously, in conjunction with an on-campus classroom course section, where students connect through livestreaming technology at scheduled time(s). Some of the required minutes of engagement may be fulfilled by required, out-of-class learning activities such as online instruction, field trips, group projects, or attendance at special events. This designation is in addition to the categories in section II.B. For example, if the master section is hybrid, then the WKU Connect section will be also be identified as hybrid.

D. Distance Education Program Modality Definitions

1. Fully Online program: A program with 100% of coursework delivered online (excluding experiential courses and non-instruction requirements such as testing, academic support, practicum, internship, clinical, matriculation, etc.). Courses must be offered consistently so students can complete the credential in a timely manner.

2. Hybrid program: A program with 50% to 99% of coursework delivered online. Courses must be offered consistently so students can complete the credential in a timely manner.

III. Procedure

1. Designation of a course section as distance education may have scheduling implications for certain types of students (e.g., military students, international students on certain types of visas). As such, students and advisors are encouraged to refer to related policies to ensure individual compliance with relevant policies and regulations.

2. Course section delivery mode definitions and associated distance education classifications (if any) will be coded in Banner as described in the Banner Schedule Preparation Guide maintained by the Registrar.

3. Any planned replacement of contact time will be identified using the date/time/location section and the notes section in Topnet to ensure compliance with Policy 1.403V Engagement Requirements for Hour of Credit.

4. The established course section delivery mode definitions are regularly published in the University Catalog and Registration Guide, and may be available online.

5. For Connect course sections that connect to other classrooms, buildings, times, and room locations will be identified in Topnet. For Connect course sections where students can connect from anywhere, the campus will be designated as Web, the times and dates will be identified in Topnet, and the session, building, and location will be designated as Connect. Additional delivery mode definitions will also be added if, for example, the on-campus master course section is hybrid, then the Connect course section will also be designated as hybrid.

IV. Related Policies

1.403V Engagement Requirements for Hour of Credit

V. Reason for Revision

September 2018
Non-substantive changes to Section II.B. Changed "Hybrid Classroom" under Section II.B.2 to "Classroom Hybrid" and "Hybrid Online" under Section II.B.3 to "Online Hybrid".

October 2019
Revision to include the definition for Connect course sections.