

Adelphi University

Distance Learning Policy

Distance learning has assumed increasing prominence in higher education. Done well, it expands access to education for those who otherwise could not join a traditional classroom setting because of geographic distance. It also provides flexibility for both students and faculty in terms of course scheduling. Equally important, it exposes students to information literacy and technology skills that are essential for today's technology driven world. It also stimulates opportunities for faculty development and professional growth.

While Adelphi University will never abandon the small and intimate face to face classroom environment that has been its educational signature for more than one hundred years, it must at the same time judiciously develop high quality instructional opportunities to meet the needs of the diverse student population it serves. Whether distance learning is incorporated in a traditional class setting, or delivered in place of it, well designed instruction must be at the core of course and program offerings. Not all disciplines, or all types of instruction, will employ technology enhanced curricula in the same manner. Nonetheless, some common guidelines are important to assure the highest educational quality for such distributed learning. The elements of this policy are established to guarantee that Adelphi University continues to provide excellent educational experiences for both students and faculty.

Definition of Distance Learning

Adelphi University recognizes distance learning as a formal educational process in which the majority of instructional time is spent with the faculty and students separated by space and time. Distance education further employs available technology in bridging the distance between the various partners in the enterprise -- faculty and students, and student and student.

Adelphi currently recognizes three formats for distance learning:

- **Video-conferencing** where at least two-way synchronous interactive video is employed in a classroom setting. This is accomplished over Internet Protocol to remote sites or with web based delivery.
- **Blended** instruction where 30% to 79% of the instruction is conducted on-line via the Adelphi *University Supported Course Management System* (USCMS) and the remainder of the instruction is provided in a traditional face-to-face modality. Although typically asynchronous, this may be synchronous.
- **Online instruction** with few or no traditional on-site, face-to-face meetings, and 80% or more of the content delivered online via the Adelphi USCMS.

Guiding Principles for Distance Learning Policy

Adelphi has a commitment to providing instruction and programs that meet the diverse learning needs of our students. The use of asynchronous, web-based learning - based on the USCMS course management system - has demonstrated great potential. Expanded instructional opportunities capture new markets by introducing new certificate, degree and continuing education programs. Distance Learning presents rich opportunities by providing students in selected programs more flexibility in scheduling and enhances existing courses by blending traditional classroom and asynchronous approaches in courses, allowing students to work more independently. All of these activities will enhance our students' skills in using new technology and learning with technology.

The following principles underlie Adelphi's current policy on Distance Learning.

- The faculty is ultimately responsible for the integrity of distance learning content and delivery.
- Faculty are not required to teach in a distance learning format.
- Curriculum developed for distance learning needs to fit the format. To present course or program offerings in a distributed manner, there has to be a defensible rationale.
- There must be an administrative commitment to distance instruction, including twenty-four hour a day, seven days a week technical support for users.
- Students enrolled in distance learning courses/programs will receive the appropriate student and academic services.
- Regular training for our students in web-based utilities is essential for the University to be successful in employing instructional technologies.
- Extensive faculty training in distance learning through the Faculty Center for Professional Excellence (FCPE) needs to be available.
- Distance learning requires online availability of journals and library databases.
- Information literacy instruction/tutorial needs to exist online.
- Optimum class size depends upon the activities in the course.
- All distance learning courses and programs will be assessed for effectiveness in terms of student satisfaction and the degree to which learning goals have been met.

1. ACADEMIC GUIDELINES

1.1 Calendar and Course Credits

1.1.1 Courses will be offered according to the general AU Academic calendar. Courses are offered on a semester calendar, however, if appropriate, shorter cycles are permitted with the permission of the Provost's Office.

Continuing education offerings are not subject to the University's academic calendar.

1.1.2 Final examinations will be scheduled according to the designated examination period for the semester or cycle, unless otherwise approved by the Registrar's Office.

1.1.3 Academic Credit will be awarded on the basis of course content, course competence, extent of student time on task and faculty-student contact. For guidelines for determining equivalent contact time see New York State Department of Education guidelines at:

http://web1.nysed.gov/ocue/distance/determining_time_on_task_in_onli.htm

1.1.4 As with any transfer coursework, academic credit may be transferred from a distance education course offered by other colleges or universities provided that:

- the institutions are accredited by recognized agencies; and
- the faculty of the receiving program assesses the course to be equivalent to an Adelphi offering.

1.2 Course Integrity

1.2.1 Courses will comply with all related Adelphi policies, including but not limited to:

- Academic integrity
- Code of Ethics
- Student Code of Conduct
- Policy on Discrimination and Harassment
- Disability Compliance Statement

1.2.2 Courses will reflect good practices relating to:

- Well articulated learning goals and expectations.
- Course procedures (e.g. communication, assignment submission).
- Format and accessibility of material.
- Use of media to accommodate different learning styles.
- Student assessment.
- Program and Course assessment.
- Establishing an online community.
- Providing instructions for students in the event of interruption of service.
- The inclusion of well articulated learning goals, course expectations and requirements, and methods of communication with instructor, on the course syllabus.
- Informing students that the posting of abusive or insulting messages is prohibited.

- See Appendix for guidelines (and available on the FCPE website at <http://fcpe.adelphi.edu/>) on the use of discussion boards and synchronous chats; course evaluation instruments; and syllabus construction.

1.2.3 Distance education courses will include opportunity for extensive interactions between faculty and students and among students.

1.2.4. References to personal traits such as race, ethnicity, disabilities, age, and gender may be made public only when a student initiates the action to do so.

1.2.5 Program faculty have responsibility for the quality of all program curricula. Ultimately, it is the faculty that is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the distance learning offerings.

1.3 Curriculum Approval Process

1.3.1 New Courses: New courses must be approved by the unit curriculum committee and Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Affairs.

1.3.2 New Programs: New programs must be approved by the unit curriculum committee, Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Affairs, Provost, President, Board of Trustees, and New York State Education Department.

1.3.3 Existing Courses: Approval by the department/program curriculum (or other relevant) committee is required before the development of a distance learning version of a course which has traditionally been offered face-to-face. Notification of such approval must be sent to the Provost's Office on an approved form with the following information:

- a. Instructor Name
- b. Instructor ID
- c. Course and Section Name
- d. Course and Section Number
- e. Semester the course is offered
- f. Course format indication (Online, Blended, Videoconference)

1.3.4 FCPE staff will review the course for non-academic design elements, structure, syllabus accessibility, required/recommended online resource availability, and to confirm that the majority of the course material has been created at least three weeks prior to the start date of the course. Any recommendations concerning course readiness, based on this review, will be forwarded to the faculty member and the program chair/director for consideration of course presentation or cancellation.

1.4 Course Platform and Presentation Requirements

1.4.1 Course Platform: All Web-based courses and curricula must use the University supported course management system (USCMS).

Course Presentation: All Web-based courses and curricula presented as part of University sponsored distance learning will have a signature look. The front page and

organization of the course areas will be developed according to the University style format. This style format is available through the FCPE.

Access to online course environments will be restricted to the instructor and registered students. Should the instructor invite a guest to participate, a temporary password will be provided;

Information and materials provided in the course may not be distributed or presented to a larger audience without permission of the author of the materials.

Final grades are submitted via the C.L.A.S.S. system;

The University will provide reasonable accommodations for disabled students and comply with Web Accessibility Initiative Standards. As with students enrolled in traditional courses, students with disabilities should register with the Office of Disability Support Services. That Office will assist in providing accommodations when appropriate. Details can be acquired from the FCPE.

Faculty will arrange for coverage/provide access to course materials and presentation in the event of illness or other circumstances that prevent him/her from continuing to function as the course instructor for any extended time period.

1.5 Compliance with New York State and Middle States Commission on Higher Education Standards

1.5.1 Distance instruction at Adelphi must meet the principles of good practice set by the New York State Education Department and found at <http://web1.nysed.gov/ocue/distance/practice.html>

1.5.2 Distance Learning Programs at Adelphi must meet the guidelines for Distance Learning Programs set by interregional accrediting agencies and found at: <http://www.msche.org/publications/distguide02050208135713.pdf>

1.6 Student Performance Assessment

In specific cases student work may be utilized to serve a larger assessment such as for program assessment or accreditation purposes. Such assessments will vary by school and instructors should confer with department chairs and program directors whether his/her course is subject to such assessment.

2. FACULTY

2.1 Faculty Obligations

2.1.1 Faculty obligations are consistent with those identified in the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Trustees of Adelphi University and the AAUP.

2.1.2 Faculty Performance will be evaluated in accordance with the current Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Trustees of Adelphi University and the AAUP.

2.1.3 The University's standard Course Evaluation Form will be provided via a link online within the USCMS course. Additional questions specific to the course modality may be added to the online evaluation form by the instructor or academic unit.

2.1.4 A faculty member teaching a distance learning course shall conduct the normally expected number of office hours. In order to accommodate distance education student needs, if it is deemed appropriate by the faculty member, up to 2 hours for each distance learning course may be switched to on-line office hours. When conducting on-line office hours, faculty members are not required to be present on campus.

2.1.5 Faculty are not compelled to teach in any distance learning format.

2.2 Faculty Preparation

2.2.1 The hiring authority (chair, director, Dean or Provost), with the consultation of the Director of the FCPE, is responsible for ensuring that the course developer and/or instructor has the necessary skills to develop and/or teach online curriculum.

2.2.2 Upon the start of the course, the instructor should possess the following qualifications:

2.2.2.a Technology

- Ability to post materials in USCMS: embedded, as attachments and in form of links;
- Ability to create and manage a discussion forum in the USCMS;
- Ability to create and administer surveys, quizzes and/or tests in USCMS;
- Ability to publish students grades via the USCMS grade book;
- Ability to guide students through the online course environment;
- Knowledge and ability to install necessary "plug-ins" for this course;
- Ability to identify commonly accessible file formats and how to save them;
- Have an understanding of how to provide material in a manner accessible to students with disabilities,
- Ability to resize graphics so they can be easily viewed in USCMS;
- Knowledge on how to set up an E-reserve with the library, and how to make it available to students via USCMS.

2.2.2.b Course Design

- Faculty are responsible for ensuring that distance learning courses meet Adelphi's general course design guidelines. (See Appendix and available on the FCPE website at <http://fcpe.adelphi.edu/>)
- Have an understanding of the different strategies needed for teaching online vs. teaching face-to-face;
- Basic knowledge of electronic layout and design concepts;
- Knowledge of strategies to engage the online learner and create effective online learning activities;
- Familiarity with rights and limitations of the TEACHACT and Fair Use in higher education.
- Faculty are responsible for following copyright requirements in the development or revision of distance learning materials.
- Faculty are responsible for certifying that all work presented is a product of their efforts and that no plagiarism, or unauthorized use, exists.

2.2.3 Faculty teaching in distance learning modalities must acquire competency in the use of the appropriate technologies. Training is offered by the University through the FCPE. Certification of training is provided by the FCPE.

2.3 Faculty Compensation and Course Ownership

In all cases, any exceptions to the policies below will be agreed upon in writing prior to the start of the course.

2.3.1 Faculty Workload

- a. Unless otherwise agreed to by the University and the faculty member and specified in writing, the assignment of the course will be covered under faculty workload or overload and subject to the same compensation as stated in the collective bargaining agreement.
- b. Unless otherwise agreed to by the University and the faculty member and specified in writing, the development of the distance learning curricula will be considered as part of the faculty obligation, as is the case with traditional face-to-face course development.
- c. Maximum student enrollment will be determined by the content and level of student-faculty interaction in the course. However, as with all courses at the University, maximum student enrollment will be recommended by the department/program chair/director or Dean and agreed upon by the Provost.

2.3.2 Course Ownership

- a. Course/curriculum that is developed by a faculty member as part of normal workload or overload is owned by the faculty member. Permission for the University to use the course must be secured in writing from the faculty developer.
- b. Ownership of a course/curriculum developed by a faculty member as part of normal workload or overload, but compensated by additional stipend, is subject to written agreement between the University and the course developer.

c. Ownership of a course/curriculum developed under a “Work for Hire” contract is subject to written agreement between the University and the course developer.

2.3.3 Development of Non-Credit, Continuing Education Courses

The development of non-credit, continuing education courses will be accomplished exclusively by means of a “Work for Hire” agreement. The fees for development of such courses will be agreed upon by the University and the course developer and specified in writing.

3. STUDENT COURSE ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Notification of Course Modality

Students, faculty and administrators should know the delivery mode and technology requirements of each course and program at the University. Students are entitled to be informed of requirements prior to enrolling. Therefore, the Associate Provost for Administration and the Registrar will be notified of the course modality, and technology requirements in a timely manner to ensure that courses are designated as (T) traditional face-to-face, (V) Videoconference, (B) Blended or (O) online in:

- a. the University’s Course Schedule;
- b. the CLASS advisement system.

3.2 Student Enrollment Procedures

3.2.1 Students will be automatically entered into the online course at the start of the semester, with late “adds” loaded daily thereafter.

3.2.2 Grade book activity for students who have withdrawn from a course will not be deleted. The course will be made unavailable to those students.

3.2.3 For students who have withdrawn from a course, for which there are no grade book activities, the instructors will remove the student from the course.

3.2.4 Concerns regarding enrollment should be directed to the respective Department Chair and/or Registrar’s office.

3.2.5 Students will not have access to the USCMS course from 14 days after the last day of classes for the semester.

3.3 Student Transcripts

3.3.1 Transcripts will be handled as with traditional face-to-face courses.

3.3.2 Transcripts will not reflect the modality of courses.

3.4 Student Admission Standards

3.4.1 Pre-requisites and admission standards for the course or program will be decided by department/program faculty, and clearly stated in the course schedule and CLASS system.

3.5 Student Training

3.5.1 Student tutorials are available for online use in preparation of taking a course that employs distance learning technology.

3.5.2 Student peer-to-peer assistance is available and facilitated jointly by the Faculty Center for Professional Excellence (FCPE) and the Office of Information Technology and Resources (OITR).

4. University Resources

Adelphi University shall provide adequate support services for the faculty and students participating in distance learning courses, including necessary equipment, personnel and training.

4.1 Faculty Training and Support

4.1.1 The University provides significant support through the course design and technical support professionals at the FCPE. These services are freely available to all faculty. Training opportunities are offered in both group workshop and individual sessions on topics and application of instructional technology and related pedagogy.

4.1.2 Every course developer will be assigned an FCPE liaison who will assist him/her throughout the development process.

4.1.3 Faculty must complete up to 10 hours of training (or its equivalent) facilitated by the FCPE on the application of distance technologies. These hours can be completed through a full immersion or individual modules over time. The FCPE will issue a certificate when 10 hours requirement has been completed. Faculty with demonstrated experience with online instruction may be certified with prior experience by the Director of the FCPE.

Topics can include:

- a. Creating a course development timeline.
- b. Establishing course procedures and requirements.
- c. Establishing an online community and healthy communication habits.
- d. Facilitating online discussions.
- e. Developing formative online assessment opportunities.
- f. Developing summative online assessment.
- g. Locating online learning objects.
- h. Employing graphics and digitized materials into the course platform.

4.1.4 When requested, the FCPE will facilitate peer liaison with other Adelphi faculty for discussions of subject-specific, teaching, or technology aspects of course development.

4.2 Technology Support

Adelphi University employs two designated areas for technology support: the Office of Information Technology and Resources (OITR) and the Faculty Center for Professional Development (FCPE).

4.2.1 The OITR handles administrative systems, equipment maintenance and general user support. Live support is available in the Information Commons on the second floor of the Swirbul Library, via telephone (516)-877-3340 or email helpdesk@adelphi.edu. Please see the current hours of operation at <http://infotech.adelphi.edu/contact/>

4.2.2 The FCPE specializes in faculty support, instructional applications and pedagogical issues involving technology. The Center is open Monday-Thursday 8:00AM-6PM and Friday 8:00AM-5:00PM, and by appointment. Faculty should contact the FCPE with all their technology needs and questions. Live support is available in Alumnae Hall room 01, via phone at (516) 877-4223, or email fcpe@adelphi.edu. For urgent questions and technical problems during off hours, faculty should contact OITR Customer Services as above.

4.2.3 In the event that servers are down, email or phone messages will be sent to the entire Adelphi community.

4.3 Library Support

The Adelphi University libraries provide support for distance instruction. This support includes:

- Remote access to databases and electronic journals.
- Electronic reserve for course related materials.
- Web-based tutorial for basic information literacy for research.
- Telephone reference assistance (and limited Instant Messaging reference assistance).
- Interlibrary loan of articles for delivery via e-mail.
- Interlibrary loan of books for pickup at Garden City or Center libraries