Missouri Baptist University
Center for Distance Learning
Policy and Procedure

Policy

All distance education policy at Missouri Baptist University complies with the Principles of Accreditation set forth in the Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning). The Center for Distance Learning is responsible for online course and program offerings at the University.

The Center is currently staffed by a Director, an Assistant Director, a Learning Management System Administrator, and a Retention officer who are committed to providing quality educational opportunities through electronic technology by (1) ensuring that the technological needs of online, web-enhanced, and blended course instructors have been met, and (2) assisting division chairs in the propagation of online course and program offerings.

Goals of the CDL include the following:

(1) Implementing a strategic plan that focuses on why and how we educate students through distance and hybrid learning and what roles people play in this endeavor
    a. Keeping all that we do Christ-honoring and student-focused
    b. Ensuring student success through increased emphasis on
        i. Well-trained and well-prepared faculty - scholar-practitioners who will create, administer, and measure practice-based, student-focused, and outcomes-driven learning environments
        ii. Student well-being, including finances and social setting
        iii. Encouraging the understanding, appreciation, and overall improvement of services provided by departments that support the learning process

(2) Creating an active learning model that emphasizes the student
    a. Train faculty to employ various learning and teaching strategies
    b. Encourage and assess progress towards provision of rigorous online and hybrid coursework
    c. Provide evidence of individual and corporate faculty success

(3) Creating authentic assessments to measure student learning
    a. Implement differential measurements demonstrating the retention and impact of knowledge, skills, and attitudes
    b. Adapt and improve teaching models in accordance with data collected
    c. Be transparent regarding implemented change to the CDL strategic plan

(4) Designing online learning environments that will allow faculty to:
    a. Develop better online and hybrid curricula
    b. Map learning to outcomes
    c. Redesign the online and hybrid learning environment to better engage students

(5) Providing significant resources to support faculty development through

      a. Continually improving ET Mentor and support staff capabilities
          i. Increasing and improving the mentoring and coaching of MBU faculty
          ii. Improving proficiency in instructional design
      b. Provision of data and analysis of learning initiatives
      c. Assessing results and continuing to implement necessary strategic changes

All distance learning courses and programs at Missouri Baptist University will adhere to the *Vision, Mission Statement* and *Goals* of the Center for Distance Learning and will be in full compliance with the distance learning policies set forth below:

Curriculum and Instruction

(1) Timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students will be provided in all courses and programs. The Distance Learning Committee, under the direction of the Center for Distance Learning (CDL) Director, will oversee the distance education platforms, encouraging the continued rigor of both the programs and the quality of instruction.

(2) The technology will be appropriate to the nature and objectives of the programs. Course objectives and faculty expectations concerning the use of such technology will be clearly communicated to students.

(3) Materials, programs, and courses will be timely and current.

(4) Faculty interested in teaching an online course for the first time will be asked to adhere to prescribed procedure (see below). The application process will direct the faculty member's attention to ownership policies, faculty compensation, copyright issues, the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of software or other media products, and inform the faculty member of criteria from which the efficacy of all MBU online courses will be determined.

(5) The Center for Distance Learning (CDL) will provide appropriate support services for faculty. The Director of Distance Learning will provide assistance to the ET designate from each division (Division Education Technology mentor) and to all Regional Learning Center Deans. Instructors who are tasked with teaching distance learning courses, web-enhanced courses, and web-centric courses will receive appropriate training and support from the Division Mentor and/or the CDL Associate Director in charge of faculty training.

(6) Admission and recruitment policies and decisions will take into account the capability of students to succeed in distance education programs.

(7) Comparability of distance education programs to campus-based programs and courses will be ensured by the evaluation of educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction.

(8) The integrity of student work and the credibility of degrees and credits are ensured.

Library and Learning Resources

(1) Students will have access to, and will be able to effectively use, appropriate library resources.

(2) Course requirements will ensure that students make appropriate use of learning resources.

(3) Access will be provided to laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the courses or programs.

Student Services
(1) Students will have adequate access to the range of services appropriate to support the programs, including admissions, financial aid, academic advising, delivery of course materials, and placement and counseling.
(2) Students will have an adequate procedure for resolving their complaints.
(3) Advertising, recruiting, and admissions information adequately and accurately represent the programs, requirements, and services available to students.
(4) Students enrolled in distance learning courses will be able to use the technology employed, have the equipment necessary to succeed, and will be provided assistance in using the technology employed.

Facilities and Finances
(1) Equipment and technical expertise required for **distance** education are available.
(2) Long range planning, budgeting, and policy development processes reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment and other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the distance learning program.

Procedure

Instructors interested in offering an online class at MBU for the first time should implement that following procedures:

Contemplation

1. **Course content** – Consider the appropriateness of the course for distance learning. Familiarize yourself with the content area and the minimum requirements for teaching online (see Step 2 below).

2. **Competencies** – Faculty must have obtained the requisite technical and instructional skills in advance of teaching a distance learning course.

    a. **Technical** – familiar with the appropriate use of each of the tools in learning platform (i.e. Canvas) and Microsoft Office. Also will need competency in sending and receiving email; copying and pasting; file organization and word processing.

    b. **Instructional** –Develop a plan for accommodating the learning styles of the students in the distance learning class you are proposing to teach. Be aware of how the tools in the learning platform (Canvas) might best be used to accommodate your students' needs.

3. **Resources** – Establish a resource bank. Check with the publisher of your textbook regarding online materials. Compile a list of online resources available through the MBU library system. Search the web for additional resources if appropriate.

4. Schedule a visit with your Division Chair and Division ET Mentor to discuss the possibility of teaching the class online.

Preparation

In order to teach an online course successfully, much of the preparatory work must be done well in advance. For example:
- If you are going to be using worksheets in your class, it would be wise to have them made up and posted (probably only the most current will need to be visible).
- If timed quizzes will be made available, prepare the test bank before the beginning of the semester.
- If you would like to communicate the most basic precepts from week to week and wish to prepare a vignette for students to watch, you can tape several sessions at a time well in advance of your first class and load them on our Blackboard site
- Discussion board questions, chat rooms sessions, and group projects can all be loaded and ready for the students on the first day (again, you might want to not make the materials visible until closer to their due date).

By preparing well in advance, the course will be more organized and you will be better able to meet the more immediate needs of your students (questions concerning content area, course requirements, Canvas tools, grading, etc.)

Evaluation

Students enrolled in online courses will be asked to evaluate their experience at the end of the semester. Criteria for evaluation are available to faculty on the Center for Distance Learning website. Additionally, each online course will be evaluated by the Division Education Technology Mentor. Faculty with courses that fail to meet the established CDL criteria will not receive compensation for course design until the course meets acceptable standards.

Revised by Dr. Greg Comfort
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