

3-40 Distance Education Policy

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 Southern Association of College and Schools definition of "distance education".)

I. Oversight of Distance Education

The Vice President of Learning shall ensure that academic divisions adhere to the distance education policies described in this section. The faculty assumes primary responsibility for ensuring the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction offered through distance education.

II. Distance Education Courses and Programs

Programs offered via distance education shall be consistent with the mission of College of The Albemarle (COA) and the academic division offering the courses or programs. There shall be no distinctions in academic rigor or content between programs offered through distance education and those offered on campus.

The faculty member teaching a distance education course shall have the same control of content and instruction as in face-to-face courses, consistent with College policies on instruction, academic freedom, copyright issues, and use of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products.

COA assigns qualified faculty to teach distance education courses under the same credential requirements as residential faculty. The College provides appropriate faculty support services specifically related to distance education. COA also provides ongoing training for faculty, students, and staff members so that they can make skillful use of appropriate application software.

COA evaluates student readiness to succeed in distance education programs to better predict student completion and academic success. COA verifies that students admitted to distance education programs and courses possess the knowledge necessary to use the technology employed in the program.

COA ensures the integrity of student work with a variety of learning assessments. The grading policy is published so that students know how they are evaluated for the courses in which they enroll.

III. Identity and Privacy

College of The Albemarle must protect the security, confidentiality, and integrity of the records related to students enrolled in distance education courses and programs. The college shall maintain security measures to protect and back up student records. The privacy of students in distance education courses and programs must always be secure from public access or unauthorized college employees. Students must be notified at registration or enrollment regarding any additional student charges associated with verification of student identity. Due to the nature of distance education, COA verifies the identity of distance education students through appropriate means such as a secure login and password, proctored examinations, as well as any other technologies relevant to verifying student identification.

IV. Library and Learning Resources

COA shall acquire and maintain the necessary equipment, technology and expertise required for the delivery and maintenance of its distance education courses and programs. Faculty and students in distance education courses and programs shall have access to and can effectively use adequate library and other learning resources, including an online orientation program for bibliographic access and other learning resources in an online environment.

V. Student Services

College of The Albemarle publishes advertising and admissions materials that accurately represent the courses, programs, requirements, and services available to distanced education students. COA provides adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support the admissions, financial aid, academic advising and counseling, and delivery of courses and programs in the distance education environment. The college ensures appropriate means for resolving written student complaints for its distance learners.

* See Appendix A for procedures related to Policy 3-40: Distance Education Policy

* See Appendix B for COA Standards for Online Learning related to Policy 3-40: Distance Education Policy