

University-Level Distance Learning Standards

This policy summarizes the University's distance learning (DL) course requirements, which are woven throughout the Provost's new course and change course forms.

The University has a robust course review process and only approves for DL the courses that meet the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) definition of DL. SACSCOC defines a DL course as a course in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) 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 other digital media if used as part of the distance education course or program. Courses that utilize DL for less than a majority (i.e., 50% or less) of the instruction in the course do not receive University review nor require University approval for DL delivery.

When unit faculty vote affirmatively to offer a course via DL, **the department** chair is responsible for ensuring that the requirements summarized in this policy are satisfied at the individual course level for all courses offered via distance learning. **The instructor must** read and understand the University-level assurances listed below regarding an equivalent experience for students utilizing DL.

Curriculum and Instruction

1. The educational experience of a student in a DL course must be comparable to that of a classroom-based student's experience. Consider the comparability of course elements such as:
 - textbooks
 - course goals
 - student retention
 - student satisfaction
 - educational effectiveness (e.g., assessment of student learning outcomes)
2. DL courses must provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students that is comparable to traditional classroom-based courses.
3. DL courses must ensure the integrity of student work. Consider aspects such as:
 - password-protected course portals
 - proctors for exams at interactive video sites
 - academic offense policies

4. DL courses must provide equivalent access to student services, similar to that of a student taking the class in a traditional classroom setting. Consider the comparability of such course elements as:
 - course admission support
 - student financial aid support
 - student academic advising
 - student career counseling and job placement support
 - student mental health counseling services

Library and Learning Resources

1. DL course requirements must ensure that students make appropriate use of learning resources.
2. DL courses must provide access to laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the course or program.

Student Services

1. DL course syllabi must inform students of procedures for resolving technical complaints and list entities available to offer technical help with the delivery and/or receipt of the course, such as the Canvas Support Hotline/Chat or ITS Customer Service.
2. DL courses must explain how enrolled students are able to use the technology employed, as well as explain how students will be provided with assistance in using said technology.
3. DL course technology must be appropriate to the nature and objectives of the course.
4. DL courses must communicate clearly to students from the outset of the course the expectations concerning the use of such technology.

DL-Specific Syllabi Requirements

DL course syllabi must conform to all of the general [University syllabus guidelines](#). Distance learning course syllabi must include all required aspects as described on the Course Syllabi page, particularly the following:

1. Instructor's virtual office hours, if any.
2. Preferred method for reaching instructor, e.g. email, phone, text message.
3. Maximum timeframe for responding to student communications.
4. The technology requirements for the course.
5. Procedure for resolving technical complaints.
6. Contact information for Information Technology Services Customer Service Center:
 - 24/7 urgent matters: 859-218-HELP (4357)
 - Online Support: techhelpcenter.uky.edu
 - Get Help: its.uky.edu/get-help

7. Contact information for Distance Learning services:
 - Email: distancelearning@uky.edu
 - Phone: 859-257-3377
8. Information on Distance Learning Library Services
 - Carla Cantagallo, DL Librarian
 - Web: <https://libraries.uky.edu/DLLS>
 - Phone: 859 218-1240
 - Email: carla@uky.edu
 - Interlibrary Loan Service: <https://libraries.uky.edu/ILL>

Instructor Training

1. Equipment and technical expertise required for DL must be available to faculty.
2. The faculty who teach via DL must have received appropriate training for DL delivery and such training must be available on a regular basis.
3. Faculty support services must be appropriate and specifically related to DL.

Student Resources

1. Equipment and technical expertise (e.g., labs, software, tools, etc.) required for DL must be available to students.

Resources

UK offers a variety of support resources to faculty teaching DL courses and to students enrolled in DL courses.

- [UK Online](#) provides course support and faculty development opportunities for DL course design, quality assurance, media production, and other academic technologies.
- [Faculty Advancement](#) provides faculty development opportunities and supports the midterm and summative evaluation instruments for distance learning course and teacher evaluations.
- [DL Library Services](#) provides help and resources to DL faculty and students, including information literacy, research assistance, access to electronic databases, interlibrary loan, copyright assistance and electronic reserves.
- The [UK Online Technology](#) page provides information about DL student technology requirements, including minimum requirements for computer hardware and software as well as links to specified browser applications.
- [ITS Customer Services](#) offers technical support for DL students.
- Students are encouraged to utilize the resources of the [Career Center](#) as well as to contact directors of undergraduate and graduate studies in the student's field of interest for additional career and academic information.
- For information about resolving academic complaints, students can contact the [Academic Ombud](#).