

OFFICIAL POLICY

Subject/Title: Distributed Learning Policy
Policy Number: FPU-5.0640AP
X_New Revised _Technical Revision Only _Emergency Policy
Date First Adopted: July 15, 2021
Date Revised:
Responsible Division or Department: Academic Affairs
Initiating Authority: Provost & Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs

A. APPLICABILITY and PURPOSE:

This policy applies to all members of the University.

B. POLICY STATEMENT:

The programs and courses offered via distance “distributed” learning are consistent with Florida Polytechnic University’s role and mission. In its commitment to serve students and stakeholders, the University ensures that its distributed learning offerings maintain the same degree of quality and rigor expected of its traditional offerings. In establishing and maintaining its distributed learning offerings, the University follows the standards and requirements set forth by the Florida Board of Governors and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Courses. In so doing, the University takes measures to verify the identity of students participating in distributed learning, protect student privacy, notify students of any and all associated distributed learning fees, and provide appropriate and, where applicable, equivalent resources, support, and access to all distributed learning students.

C. DEFINITIONS:

Distributed Learning serves as an all-encompassing term to refer to educational delivery methods supported by technology where there is a geographical separation of students and instructors for part (or all) of the instruction.

1. Types of Distributed Learning at the University

The University’s baseline mode of instructional delivery is through **Direct Faculty Instruction**, also called *face-to-face* or “*traditional delivery*” with the requirement that faculty post their official courses syllabus in the Learning Management System (LMS). This mode of delivery assumes physical presence of instructor and student in the same space for learning consistent with the University’s credit hour definition and standard semester calendar as defined by the Board of Governors (BOG), set by the University, and approved by its Board of Trustees (BOT). In all cases, distributed learning courses adhere to the same content and therefore commitment of time as is defined for face-to-face courses. Distributed Learning formats include the following:

***Note – these modalities also apply to any future off-site locations.**

University Term/Designation	University Definition	BOG Definition(s)
Online (designated OL -100% online)	<u>Courses/Programs</u> where direct instruction is delivered using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time, space, or both. OL courses may require in-person attendance for special course components (e.g. testing center).	Corresponds to BOG definition “fully distance learning course” or “fully online program” where 100% of the instruction is via distributed methods.
Limited Attendance (designated LA -80-99% online)	<u>Courses/Programs</u> where direct instruction is delivered primarily through distributed learning technologies; however a limited percentage of in-class/on-campus attendance is required for the course/program.	Corresponds to BOG definition for “Primarily Distance Learning Course” or “Primarily Online Program” where 80 – 99% of the direct instruction is delivered using distributed learning technologies.
Hybrid (designated H -50-79% online)	<u>Courses/Programs</u> where greater than 50% but less than 79% of direct instruction is through distributed learning technologies. Students are required to be in-person/on-campus for specific periods of time.	Corresponds to BOG definition for “Hybrid Course” or “Hybrid Program” where 50 – 79% of the direct instruction is delivered using distributed learning technologies.
Low-Flex (designed LF -<49% online)	<u>Courses/Programs</u> where instruction is delivered primarily face-to-face, and students must show in-person attendance for ≥51% of class meetings.	Corresponds to BOG definition for “Primarily Classroom Course” or Program” where less than 50% of direct instruction is delivered using distributed learning technologies.
Direct Faculty Instruction (designated with section # only)	Traditional in-person delivery: usually 100% direct instruction and supplemented with educational technology.	BOG – “Primarily Classroom Course”

D. PROCEDURES:

1. Student Protection and Notification

- a. Identity Verification:** Students register for online courses using the student information system (SIS) and access is managed through a centralized authentication system (LDAP or Shibboleth). The learning management system (LMS) in which all online courses are hosted authenticates student user accounts and passwords to the University’s centralized authentication system. To obtain access to

- ii. Course requirements
 1. Courses taught via distributed methods must adhere to the standards for credit hours as outlined in the University's policy on credit hours.
 2. Course Syllabi: For courses delivered through distance education syllabi must specify hardware, software, and equipment requirements. Syllabi and other materials describing programs delivered through distance education must provide details on the delivery of course and program content, as well as the rationale for choices regarding content, examinations and assessment, time limits for completion of coursework, faculty-student contact, security, integrity, ethical behavior, advising, faculty qualifications, and technical, instructional, and administrative support requirements. Other important information including the academic calendar, grades, financial aid, and refunds are available online to all students, including those enrolled in distance education courses and programs.
 3. Courses taught 100% online (synchronous or asynchronous) and regularly offered as such must be included in the Florida Shines catalog.
 4. Courses taught 100% online (synchronous or asynchronous) and regularly offered must undergo appropriate content and design reviews per Board of Governors requirements and practices within five years of first delivery, and periodically thereafter, not to exceed five years between reviews.
- iii. Program requirements: Programs or portions of programs expressly designed to be delivered via distributed learning methods must –
 1. Ensure that faculty have had appropriate training and/or experience to effectively deliver in those areas.
 2. Ensure program coordination by qualified faculty.
 3. Ensure that the assessment and evaluation of the program and student learning outcomes includes distributed learning deliveries and where appropriate makes improvement plans based on results in these areas.
 4. Include an evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery systems, academic resources, student services, and access to faculty.
 5. Include student course evaluations consistent with those used for traditional, on-site delivery courses.

d. Academic & Student Support

- i. Students registered for distributed learning courses and programs have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support their successful completion of course work. These services are comparable to those offered to traditional, on-campus users and include all or most of the following: admissions; accounting; payment processing; bookstore; university catalog; academic advising; technical assistance; registration, withdrawal from courses; financial aid information; academic calendar; services for disabled students (American Disabilities Act of 1990 accommodation); policies, procedures, and protocols for taking courses.
- ii. **Library:** The University's all-digital library ensures that all distance education students have access to library resources to support the courses in which the students are enrolled and to provide services consistent with those offered to on-campus students. Students are regularly apprised of library instruction and support, and the University library is regularly assessed and its collection and services evaluated for effectiveness of delivery of content and services.

3. Student Complaints Related to Distributed Learning

The University's policies and procedures for handling student academic and non-academic complaints are applicable to all students, including those enrolled in distance education programs and courses. Students with complaints about distance education delivered should

follow the University's Student Complaint policy, which provides avenues for informal and formal resolution, including details on filing complaints with the Florida Board of Governors and the University's institutional accreditation agency, SACSCOC.

4. Legal Policies Intellectual Property

The following policies govern intellectual property and other issues related to distributed learning:

- a. [FPU-1.0061P – Intellectual Property](#)
- b. Copyright and Fair Use – The University complies with [Title 17 Copyright Laws](#) of the University States.
- c. [FPU-11.0018P – Appropriate Use of IT Resources](#)

ACADEMIC POLICY APPROVAL	
Policy No.: FPU-5.00712AP	
_____	Date _____
Initiating Authority	
_____	Date _____
Policies Committee Chair	
_____	Date _____
President/Designee	
Approved by FPU BOT, if required	Date _____
EXECUTED SIGNATURE PAGES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL	