

DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HELLENIC COLLEGE HOLY CROSS

CONTENTS:	Glossary
	Overview
	Assurance of Distance Education Course Quality
	Intellectual Property Rights
	Verification of Student Identity
	Attendance Policy for Distance Education
	Distance Education Course Development Proposal and Process

GLOSSARY

Distance Education*:	Courses delivering content to students who are physically separated from faculty teaching the course through the use of one or more of the following technologies: (a) The internet; (b) video conferencing; (c) audio communication; or (d) other media or technology used to communicate or deliver educational content.
On-campus:	Courses delivering content in a physical setting for 100% of the total course hours. The LMS platform is used to augment learning.
Clock/Course Hour* (Distance Education):	A period of time consisting of 50 to 60 minutes in a 60-minute period of attendance in one or more of the following: (a) A synchronous or asynchronous class, lecture, or recitation where there is opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students; or (b) An asynchronous learning activity involving academic engagement in which the student interacts with technology that can monitor and document the amount of time that the student participates in the activity. One clock hour is equivalent to one hour of direct faculty instruction for 15 weeks of instruction and two (undergraduate) and three (graduate) hours of out-of-class work/study (or its equivalent for field education or practicum courses).
LMS:	The learning management system (LMS), is the software platform utilized by HCHC to deliver educational content, training courses, online/blended learning courses, or other materials for the purpose of education. It is HCHC's tool for tracking attendance, posting syllabi, and collecting assignments.
Online:	Courses delivering more than 50% of required course content via an asynchronous online format. <i>Online</i> also refers to the portion of a blended or remote course that is offered asynchronously via the Learning Management System (LMS).
Blended:	Courses delivering content in an asynchronous, online capacity for less than 50% of the total course hours. These courses are partially synchronous and partially asynchronous (perhaps with a synchronous on-campus component).

- Remote:** Courses delivering content in a *synchronous* environment via video conferencing for 100% of the total course hours, and the LMS platform is used to augment learning.
- Resources:** Facilities, funding, equipment, software, staff support, and use of the learning management system.
- Educational Materials:** Lecture notes, video/audio presentations, documents, assessments, assignments, synchronous video recordings, asynchronous discussion forums, and other content located within the LMS.
- Substantive Interaction*:** Substantive interaction includes faculty engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following—(a) Providing direct instruction; (b) Assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework; (c) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency; (d) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or (e) Other instructional activities approved by the institution or program’s accrediting agency.
- Academic Engagement*:** Each of the following activities constitutes academic engagement. Engagement in at least two of these activities further constitutes attendance in a distance education course. (a) Attending a synchronous class, lecture, recitation, or field or laboratory activity, physically or online, where there is an opportunity for interaction between the instructor and students; (b) Submitting an academic assignment; (c) Taking an assessment or an examination; (d) Participating in an interactive tutorial, webinar, or other interactive computer-assisted instruction; (e) Participating in a study group, group project, or an online discussion that is assigned by the institution; or (f) Interacting with an instructor about academic matters. Academic engagement does not include actions such as living in on-campus housing; logging into an online class or tutorial without participating; or participating in academic counseling or advising.

OVERVIEW

The Distance Education Policies and Procedures is an assemblage of policies, processes, and information that apply to all faculty, staff, and administrators affiliated with online offerings at Hellenic College Holy Cross (HCHC). The academic leadership of each academic unit may endeavor to implement separate, additional processes specific to online learning at HCHC. The Distance Education Policies and Procedures document serves as an appendix to the official Faculty Handbook.

ASSURANCE OF COURSE QUALITY FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Purpose

All degrees conferred by Hellenic College Holy Cross (HCHC), regardless of method of delivery, must abide by the same academic and regulatory standards; therefore, students enrolled in online or distance education courses reach equivalent required course objectives and student learning outcomes and spend an equivalent number of hours in attaining these standards. All distance courses adhere to the highest standards of educational excellence and academic integrity; such courses are held to the same standards as in person courses, and follow the same academic policies found in the course catalog. This includes compliance with policies regarding privacy, FERPA, and ADA/Accommodations.

Scope

This policy applies to all faculty, teaching assistants, visiting faculty, staff, and students who access courses or programs at HCHC through asynchronous online, synchronous remote, or blended delivery methods.

Policy Statement

- (1) *Faculty Qualification for Teaching Distance Courses.* Faculty responsible for teaching distance education are deemed qualified for this type of instruction through several means in addition to the existing standards required of all HCHC faculty. These additional qualifications include 1) Mandatory LMS training; 2) Regular and positive course evaluations by students; 3) Regular and positive peer or dean evaluations designed for distance education.
- (2) *Communication.* Communication methods and response time expectations are clearly described to students. Faculty who teach online, blended, or remote courses communicate availability to meet with students synchronously.
- (3) *Learning Management System Course Standardization.* All LMS courses adhere to the same standards of course appearance. The standard course design is determined by academic leadership (the vice president for academic affairs and the academic deans) in coordination with instructional design staff. If an alternative course structure or delivery method is needed, documented approval from academic leadership and/or Disability Services is required. All online courses are designed and delivered using HCHC's preferred Learning Management System (LMS) in order to support curriculum design.
- (4) *Academic Integrity.* Students participate in an LMS orientation course where academic integrity policies and expectations are explained. All syllabi include HCHC's academic integrity policy. Proctoring policies for each course are clearly communicated in the syllabus.
- (5) *Accountability/Quality Control.* All distance education courses are consistent in terms of purpose, scope, quality, assessment, and expected student learning outcomes with other in-person courses bearing the same course number and title. Through its assessment processes, HCHC evaluates the effectiveness of these remote delivery courses, including a comparative evaluation of such courses with in-person courses. Such measures include student learning outcomes, student retention, course evaluations, and student and faculty satisfaction.
- (6) *Course Preparation.* The LMS template is provided for all scheduled HCHC classes well in advance of the upcoming semester. Instructors are required to prepare and make content available for students prior to the first day of the official start of each semester and in accordance with a timeline specified by the academic deans.
- (7) *Distance Education Course Review.* Distance education course review is managed by the dean in cooperation with the Director of Distance and Continuing Education and under the direction of the vice president for academic affairs. All new courses and/or new-to-distance education faculty undergo the online review process. All existing courses are subject to the student online course review process every semester, and a fuller review as part of the academic program review process, or as determined by academic leadership.

Process

All instructors of courses with online or blended components shall adhere to the following guidelines in relation to the aforementioned policy:

- (1) *Faculty Qualifications for Teaching Distance Courses.*
 - (a) LMS training is currently available through the Office of Distance and Continuing Education and through regular LMS and video conferencing training sessions. All new instructors require at least one individual training session with a representative from the Office of Distance and Continuing Education prior to receiving access to the LMS courses to which they are assigned.
 - (b) Student Course evaluations automatically appear in all LMS courses in the final weeks of each semester. A campus-wide announcement from the registrar will appear in the LMS to remind students to complete evaluations. Instructors are expected to additionally remind students to complete course evaluations via the LMS.
 - (c) Evaluations conducted by peers or an academic dean are conducted as outlined in the Faculty Handbook. Online, remote, and hybrid courses are additionally subject to online course review, which is coordinated by academic leadership.
- (2) *Communication.* All distance education courses contain clear information about how often and by which means instructors will communicate with students. Instructors are expected to demonstrate availability through video conferencing, phone, or in-person meeting for asynchronous online courses. Instructors of online courses respond to student emails normally within 24 hours unless otherwise stated in the syllabus or LMS course.

- (3) *Learning Management System Course Standardization/Course Preparation.* Prior to the start of each semester, all LMS courses are provided with a blank template containing a campus wide syllabus and general structure with college resources and modular organization. While there is room for course design based on the type of content delivered, it is expected that all distance courses contain a weekly outline of upcoming activities and due dates that expand on the syllabus. It is also expected that all courses display the campus-wide syllabus containing HCHC policies and adhere to the same standards of course appearance. Instructors desiring significant diversion from the provided LMS course template should contact the Office of Distance and Continuing Education for coordinated approval from academic leadership and/or Disability Services. All courses in Canvas are available for updating at the start of student registration for the upcoming semester. All courses are prepared for students with at least one week of educational content and introductory material one week prior to the start of the semester.
- (4) *Academic Integrity.* All LMS courses are currently equipped with plagiarism detection software that all instructors are encouraged to utilize. Additionally, the LMS provides tools embedded within the assessments feature which allow for easy proctoring setup. A wide variety of strategies and tools are available to promote academic integrity at HCHC, however, students must be informed of processes and costs at the start of the semester. HCHC's academic integrity policy is located in the campus-wide syllabus, which is available in all LMS courses.
- (5) *Accountability/Quality Control through Online Course Review.* Courses containing a distance education component are subject to additional quality review standards specific to online pedagogy and technology. New distance education courses and courses taught by faculty who are new to distance education are reviewed using a rubric approved by HCHC's academic leadership. The rubric evaluation includes course organization and structure, presence of student learning outcomes/objectives, academic engagement, clarity of instructor availability and communication methodology, consistency in appearance, and presence of engaging and relevant educational content. All existing courses are subject to the student online course review process every semester, and a fuller review as part of the academic program review process, or as determined by academic leadership.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS TO EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS DEVELOPED VIA THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Policy Overview

Hellenic College Holy Cross (HCHC) values the knowledge and rights of the faculty and students associated with the institution. Thus, the intellectual property rights policy is designed to govern and protect educational content created and utilized by the faculty and students of HCHC within the learning management system (LMS) or other software or systems employed in the future for online delivery. This policy applies to all faculty, staff, and students who use the equipment, facilities, software, or other resources or who are paid through hourly, salary, or stipend wages.

The intellectual property policy acknowledges that while the Board of Trustees reserves the ownership rights to educational and professional materials developed using institutional resources in the LMS, the Board has no intention to distribute, share, or profit from these ownership rights. Courses delivered via HCHC's LMS are considered technically available for use and instruction by others who may teach this course in the future, as may be required, especially in cases of emergency when a professor is not able to complete course instruction. The policy in its entirety is available in the HCHC Faculty Handbook.

VERIFICATION OF STUDENT IDENTITY

Policy Overview

The United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) of 2008 along with the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE) require student identification verification for online and/or distance learning. This policy serves to establish the means through which student identities are verified at Hellenic College Holy Cross when students are not physically present in the classroom. This policy applies to all students enrolled in a course or program of study that is credit bearing but which does not require physical presence in the classroom.

Policy Statement

- (1) The following options are approved methodologies for verifying student identities and shall be implemented:
 - (a) Unique and secure login username and password to the MyHCHC portal, video conferencing software, and learning management system,
 - (b) Availability of test proctoring with required photo identification at the time of examination, and/or

- (c) Other technologies or practices that are effective in verifying student identification.
- (2) All methods utilized at HCHC are equipped with safeguards to protect student privacy.
- (3) Students are notified at the time of registration or enrollment if there are any student fees or charges associated with the verification of student identity.

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Purpose

Instructors of all distance education courses must report attendance in alignment with both the HCHC policy on attendance and the US Department of Education's regulations stipulating attendance requirements in distance education courses for the purpose of receiving financial aid and student loans. Students receiving financial aid must attend their online classes to continue to receive aid. Because these classes do not meet in-person 100% of the time, a clear definition of what constitutes online attendance is essential. This policy serves to describe HCHC's distance education requirements.

Scope

This policy applies to all students, instructors, staff, and administrators at HCHC affiliated with any form of distance education.

Policy Statement

- (1) Academic attendance in a distance education course must include academic engagement as defined in the Glossary section of this document and in alignment with the standards of the US Department of Education as defined under 34 CFR 600.2.
- (2) Instructors must report attendance for all students enrolled in courses for which they are the instructor of record in alignment with HCHC's preferred timeline and processes.
- (3) Attendance must be formally documented by the instructor of record for each distance education course using the available LMS Attendance tool.
- (4) In distance education courses with synchronous instruction, instructors may use clock hours to record student attendance.

Process

Instructors must report attendance to the Registrar's Office by 5pm at the close of day on the second Friday of the term in order for students to receive financial aid disbursements. The methodology for reporting of attendance will be determined and communicated by the Registrar's Office.

COURSE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL AND PROCESS

When a subject matter expert identifies a course slated for delivery via distance education, s/he will contact the appropriate dean for approval. Upon consent of the dean and via the process outlined in the Faculty Handbook, approval for course development should be secured prior to development of a distance education course in the LMS. Once approval to develop a DE course is secured, the subject matter expert will complete a course development proposal form and submit it to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. If approved, the Office of Distance and Continuing Education will support technical and pedagogical aspects of course development, including:

- Digital conversion and development of course content--lectures, documents, discussions, and assessments.
- Course and module-level learning outcome alignment
- Assurance that students will spend enough course hours to meet NECHE-required distance education requirements

Once a course is developed, the Dean and the Director of Distance and Continuing Education will utilize the Distance Education Quality Course Review Criteria to ensure the course is ready for live delivery. Once the course has been reviewed and feedback provided, the course developer will make any needed adjustments prior to live course delivery. Faculty teaching courses in the online modality will receive a course differential of \$1000 in compensation.

*Asterisks indicate reference or paraphrase from [USDE Regulations of Distance Education](#), revised September 2020. 1/3/22. Office of Distance and Continuing Education. Distance Education Policy and Procedures

Proposal for Development of Distance Education Courses

When proposing an idea for new Distance Education (DE) courses at HCHC, there are several pieces of information that you will need to provide in addition to the course proposal process already outlined in the Faculty Handbook. This will help the HCHC leadership team understand your idea and how it fits into the existing DE programming structure and strategy.

Prior to drafting your proposal, please gather the following information:

- Course name and description
- Contact hours
- Audience
- Delivery format (remote, in-person/on-campus, asynchronous online, hybrid, etc.)
- Updated Faculty CV

Please present the DE course proposal according to the following outline:

Cover Page

The cover page should contain the program/course name, description, contact hours, program proposer, program development team members, and date of proposal submission.

Course Title(s), Course Description(s), & Contact Hours for Each Course

Provide a detailed description of each DE course you are planning on developing. Include proposed course learning objectives. Identify the number of contact hours students will spend on each course.

Delivery Method

Describe the program and course delivery method. Options include in-person, remote delivery via synchronous video, asynchronous online, hybrid, or some combination therein.

Delivery Approach

Describe the course content for each individual course. Examples include lecture-based, discussion-based, workshop-based, document/reading-focused, etc. Please be as detailed and specific as possible. It is likely that each course will have some combination of lectures, discussion, and hands-on activity; and if this is the case, please describe the course content and structure. Feel free to include any supplementary materials as addendums to the proposal.

Audience

Identify the audience with whom you believe the program or course(s) will most align. Consider who will be interested in this program or course(s) and why. Include any market analysis or career-related information that you feel might be relevant.

Program Alignment at HCHC

Be sure to answer the following questions in narrative form:

- How will the proposed DE program or course(s) align with current offerings at HCHC?
- Are there other HCHC courses or programs that the newly proposed program/course(s) might compete with and have a potentially negative impact on their enrollment?
- What can HCHC (the school as a whole, including students, faculty, leadership, alumni, trustees, etc.) gain from implementing the proposed program or course(s)?
- What can students who complete the program or course(s) hope to use their new skill set for in practice? How will it advance their career or spiritual path?
- What is the expected enrollment?
- What amount of revenue do you expect this program to generate? What will it cost to invest in starting this program?
- Does this program or course fill a need or a gap related to HCHC's institutional mission?

Note: Prior to delivery, this course or program will be evaluated by the dean and representative from the Department of Distance and Continuing Education using the Distance Education Course Review Matrix.

Dean Approval

Printed Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Vice President for Academic Affairs Approval

Printed Name _____ Signature _____ Date _____