Bishop State Community College

Distance Education Policy

Purpose of Distance Education

The goal of distance education at Bishop State Community College (BSCC or the College) is to provide students with access to instruction without having to regularly appear on campus. The College strives to serve the needs of those who find it difficult to continue education and training via conventional educational methods.

All distance education courses must comply with the Principles of Accreditation defined by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Standards for Quality Online Courses provided by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) will oversee the development and delivery of all distance learning courses at Bishop State Community College. Divisional chairpersons are responsible for making sure that all faculty comply with this policy.

Definitions

SACS defines distance education as “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”.

Policies within this document relate specifically to all distance education courses defined as either “online” or “hybrid” courses. Courses that are offered completely online, other than the mandatory proctored assessment, are defined as “online” courses. In most cases these courses do not mandate that students visit the campus for anything other than for the proctored assessment. In a few cases, students may have to visit the campus 2 or 3 times (see attachment for examples.)

Courses that include a combination of online and face-to-face meetings, where at least 4 of the face-to-face meetings are for instructional purposes (not assessments), are defined as “hybrid” courses. There should be conformity within each discipline between hybrid courses. An example of a hybrid course may include a science or technical course that requires students to come to the campus once a week for a face-to-face lab meeting.

Development

Generally, full-time faculty members will develop new online courses. All distance education courses should be comparable in terms of rigor and quality to their face-to-face
counterparts. All sections of any course (whether it be online or face-to-face) must cover the same learning outcomes.

Procedures for Development:

In order for a new course to be offered online, an instructor must:

1. Complete an online instructor application and SREB form
2. Meet with CTL to develop a plan, including several one-on-one sessions with CTL staff and on-going meetings as necessary
3. Receive approval from the CTL (signed “online course approval form”)

All courses must be fully developed and approved by the CTL prior to the date students are allowed to register for the course. If the course has not been fully developed by that date the course may be dropped from the list of available courses for that term. This decision will be made by the Director of the CTL. Once a course has been developed, it must be reviewed by CTL, and an “online course approval form” (appendix) must be completed before the course may be taught.

All online courses must meet the requirements outlined below. The CTL will be available to assist all faculty members in making these changes. The requirements follow logical principles of instructional design. The primary purpose is to standardize the design of each course, thereby making all courses more user friendly to students.

**Course Requirements**

All of the following components must be included in all online courses. Not all of these are required for hybrid courses, but if they are included they must follow the guidelines stated in this document.

**“Help” page**

The “help” page, which can be found in the Faculty Resource Center, must be included within the menu on the left side of the page within each course.

**Syllabus**

Each syllabus must be formatted using the College’s standardized syllabus template.

**Basic course design/organization**

All distance education courses must contain 15 units of material. CTL will provide opening dates for each unit before the beginning of the term. Announcements must be used to inform students which unit the class is currently working on, so that at all times students can quickly identify the currently assigned unit. Grades for most work must be posted within one week of the final due date. All grades must be posted within the online
gradebook within the course. Grades for larger assignments/projects/papers do not need to be posted this quickly, but they should be posted in a timely manner. Students should be notified that grades for this work may take longer to determine.

In addition, each unit in an online course must contain the following minimum requirements (hybrid courses should also contain an appropriate combination of these, depending on the structure of the course):

1. Front Page
   The “front page” of each unit must contain a list of instructions explaining the tasks to be completed within that unit.

2. Objectives
   Objectives that outline the content to be covered must be provided in the “Lecture” section within each unit.

3. Lecture
   Each unit must contain at least one “Lecture” section (narrative of the content, links to additional content, PowerPoint presentation, etc.)

4. Interaction
   There must be student/student and faculty/student interaction throughout the entire course (threaded discussions, chats, etc.). Methods of interaction other than threaded discussions may be used in teaching hybrid courses. If threaded discussions are used within a course, the following guidelines must be followed:
   - Students must be required to post at least 3 responses within each discussion area.
   - It is recommended that there be 2 due dates for responses within each threaded discussion area (one for the initial response about half-way through the time period allowed for the unit, the other responses would be due before the unit expires).
   - Threaded discussion responses may not be accepted late, after a unit has expired.
   - Faculty must demonstrate their presence within the threaded discussion area by posting on at least 3 different days within each week.

5. Assessment
   Each course must include at least two different types of graded assessments in each unit, other than in the first and last units which may contain only one.
   If quizzes or exams are used, they must be made up of pools of questions (at least 3x the number of questions to be chosen for the assessment should be included in each pool). In addition, it is recommended that graded quizzes/exams not be used within the first week of a course. Instructors are encouraged to include a “practice” quiz within the first week so that students may see what a quiz will look like. Practice quizzes are not considered to be assessments.
6. **Announcements**

   All courses must use weekly announcements that tell students which unit is currently assigned (utilizing the unit dates provided by CTL). Beginning and ending dates should be used to set these announcements so no more than a few are visible at any one time. A list of mandatory announcements will be provided to all faculty before the beginning of each term (example - online orientation, helpdesk, etc.)

**Proctored Assessment**

All distance education courses must include a proctored assessment, which will usually be a proctored final exam. Since this may be the only time that the work of a student is monitored during the course, it is appropriate that final exams be comprehensive (or at least cover the most important concepts in the course). Final exams should also be taken without the use of textbooks or notes.

The proctored assessment must be worth at least 20% of each student’s final grade. Hybrid courses that assess students throughout the term in a proctored environment may have final exams that are worth less than 20% of a student’s overall grade. Instructors teaching hybrid courses will administer a paper/pencil final exam in the final course meeting during week 15 (which ends with the College’s published final exam days). Special arrangements may need to be made individually with students who are graduating at the end of each spring term.

Instructors teaching online courses may administer proctored final exams in one of the following ways:

1. **Paper/pencil exams**
   
   A paper/pencil exam may be given to an entire class by the instructor during a published “final exam” meeting. This testing date should be announced before the term begins.

2. **On campus online exam**
   
   Faculty members may schedule a time in one of the computer labs in Caldwell-Richardson Building or in the Business Technology Center in order to administer their final exams. Faculty members should set up password-protected final exams in their courses if this option is to be used. These passwords may then be distributed to students as they show up to take the exam. Faculty should check photo identification (state issued driver’s license/ID, military ID, or passport) before distributing passwords to students.

3. **Off campus, proctored exam**
   
   Students who live more than one hour from the Main campus may use a proctor who has been approved by the instructor of the course, following the appropriate proctoring guidelines. Completed proctor forms must be submitted to faculty before the end of week 10 (Fall, Spring) or the end of week 6 (Summer). Proctors may administer the exam using one of the following methods:
A. Provide students with online access so that they may take a password protected exam
   B. Allow students to take the exam on a computer, then email the results to the instructor from the proctor’s email address
   C. Print and administer a paper and pencil exam, then fax the answer sheet to the instructor. Proctors must then deliver or mail the original assessment to the instructor of the course.

Proctor Guidelines

To be eligible to serve as a proctor, a person must be either an administrator or full-time faculty member from an institution of higher education, an administrator (principal or assistant principal) within a k-12 school system, a professional testing center test administrator, or a head librarian at a public library. All costs (if any) associated with procuring a proctor fall upon the student. Please reference the approved Bishop State proctor form for complete instructions. The form can be found in the “student services” portion of the College’s website.

Faculty Responsibilities

All faculty members of the College are held to the requirements stated in the Faculty/Staff Handbook. When problems related to distance education arise, faculty members should inform their division chairperson and the Director of CTL.

Office Hours

Full-time faculty members with course loads that include online courses may schedule teaching time outside of the normal operating hours of the College. This will allow instructors to accommodate students at times outside of the normal operating hours, including nights and weekends. For every one (3-4 credit hour) online or hybrid course taught, instructors will be allowed to schedule 2.5 hours of teaching time outside of traditional college hours. The maximum number of hours that may be taken away from campus is 5 hours per week. The weekly use of outside teaching time will be included in the required 35-hour work week. Instructors are expected to be available to distance education students during these non-traditional hours. Faculty must be present on campus during the required number of office hours, based on Bishop State Community College policies for both academic and technical instructors.

Faculty Compensation

All courses offered at the college (online, hybrid, face-to-face) are compensated using the same guidelines outlined in the Faculty/Staff Handbook.

Communication

Faculty members must reply to all forms of correspondence (e.g., email, voice-mail) within 48 hours of the message being received (preferably 24 hours), except when on
leave. Faculty should inform students when they will be on leave and/or unable to respond to emails and phone calls. Faculty must monitor the lines of communications they have prescribed for their students to ensure they respond within the designated time frame. It is important that faculty exercise caution when emailing students, ensuring that confidential information about other students is not shared.

Class size

Online course enrollment is capped at 20 students. Hybrid courses may have up to 35 students, depending on the course and the availability of equipment and space. This decision will be made on a course-by-course basis by both the instructor and the Director of CTL, depending on the specifics of the course, number of face-to-face meetings, etc.

Reporting Requirements

All posted dates related to College activities (registration, add/drop, etc.) are applicable to both distance education and face-to-face courses; therefore, faculty who teach distance education courses must maintain accurate student records (i.e., online gradebook) and meet all deadlines for submitting paperwork (i.e., grades, attendance records).

Attendance in online courses may be viewed though either of two ways. Instructors should view the “Last Access” column of the Grade Center. A student who has a “blank” in the Last Access area will be reported as a no-show (NS) on Attendance Verifications. Instructors may also check for attendance via the “Performance Dashboard.” To access this, the instructors will go to their course Control Panel, select Evaluation and then select Performance Dashboard. This menu will have a column titled “Last Course Access,” which will list the date and time that the student last accessed the course. It is recommended that instructors also check for other evidence of student presence in the course (e.g., threaded discussion posts, quiz grades).

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property has been defined as a product that is the result of intellectual creation involving research, development, or any cognitive process. Bishop State Community College retains ownership rights to all distance education courses. Sale, transfer, or reuse of such materials at separate institutions by faculty is not permitted without express written permission of Bishop State Community College. Within each course, it is the responsibility of each faculty member to obtain the permission of the author of all work used within their course. A written copy of this permission should be maintained in an instructor’s files indefinitely.

Training for faculty

Professional development related to teaching distance education courses will be organized by the CTL. The CTL will provide:

1. Initial Development Training – described in the “procedures for development” section above.
2. On-going professional development – Various sessions will be offered to faculty during professional development days at the beginning of each fall term and throughout the academic year. Faculty are encouraged to suggest ideas to CTL for future trainings.

Evaluation of Faculty

Evaluations for faculty teaching online will be conducted by division chairpersons as part of each faculty member's overall evaluation. In addition, students will complete end of term evaluations in each of their courses. The Coordinator of Instructional Design will oversee that each course is properly polled using Alliant Data Systems (B.O.R.I.S.) online surveys. Each faculty member will be able to review their student evaluations at the end of the term, as soon as grades have been finalized. These evaluations will be used by division chairpersons during the overall instructor evaluation process.

Evaluation of Courses

Evaluations of courses will be conducted by the CTL on an annual or as needed basis. Based on the results of these evaluations, courses that do not meet the developmental guidelines stated in this policy may be removed from the College’s online course offerings. If a course does not meet these guidelines, the instructor must attend professional development sessions with the CTL, make appropriate changes to future courses, and receive approval from the CTL that the course is now in compliance. If an instructor fails to comply with these guidelines before the beginning of the next term, he/she will lose the opportunity to teach the course.

Distance Learning Committee

The Distance Learning Committee will periodically review the College’s distance education policies and procedures, making appropriate recommendations to the Director of CTL as needed. The committee consists of current faculty and staff members of Bishop State Community College.

Support Services for Students

All College support services are available to all students, no matter the format in which a course is offered (face-to-face, hybrid, online). See the Appendix: Rights and Responsibilities of Students Enrolled in Distance Education courses.

Online orientation

A face-to-face Online Orientation session will be held on the Main Campus during the first week of each term in order to assist students with getting started in their online and hybrid courses. Announcements related to these sessions should be included in all courses.
Students who live more than an hour from the Main campus may find a proctor to administer their final exam in their local. This form must be completed and returned to the instructor of the course by the end of week 10 (Fall, Spring) or week 6 (Summer).

To be eligible to serve as a proctor, a person must hold one of the following positions:
- Administrator or full-time faculty member from an institution of higher education
- Administrator within the k-12 school system
- Professional testing center test administrator
- Head librarian at a public library.

A proctor cannot be a friend, relative, or student.

All proctors must be approved by the course instructor by the end of week 11. If a proctor is not approved, then the student will be notified immediately so that he/she may find an acceptable replacement. **Proctors must have the ability to receive email and be able to print an exam. Proctors must administer the exam in one of the following ways:**

- Provide students with online access so that they may take a password protected exam
- Allow students to take the exam on a computer, then email the results to the instructor from the proctor's email address
- Print and administer a paper and pencil exam, then fax the answer sheet to the instructor.

Students MUST show a valid driver's license, state or military ID, or passport to the proctor at exam time.

For questions regarding this form please contact course instructor or call the Center for Distance Learning at 251-405-7144.

Student ____________________
Course ___________________
Instructor___________________

Proposed Proctor ____________________ Position held __________________
Print

Proctor __________________________________ Signature

Professional email address __________________
BISHOP STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Final Exam Proctor Form to Accompany Exam

This Section To Be Completed By Instructor

Student: ____________________________________________________________

Term: ______________ Course: ____________ Section: ______________

Instructor: ___________________ Instructor’s email: ________________

Instructor’s phone: ______________ Fax: __________________________

Time allowed for exam: ______________ Password: _______________

(Leave blank if none)

Instructions:

Please do not allow students to leave with any of the testing materials.

This Section To Be Completed By Proctor

I understand that this is a CLOSED BOOK, CLOSED NOTES exam and that I
must follow the instructions outlined above.

_____________________________________
Name of Proctor (Print)

_____________________________________
Signature of Proctor
Rights and Responsibilities of Students Enrolled in Distance Education (online or hybrid) courses

1. It is highly recommended that students taking distance education courses have a computer and Internet access in their homes. The lack of Internet access and/or the presence of technical difficulties do not constitute an excuse for work to be submitted late. It is each student’s responsibility to ensure that he/she has reliable Internet access.

2. Distance Education courses will be governed by the same rules that apply to face-to-face courses, unless stated otherwise. These policies may be found in the Bishop State Community College Catalog and the Student Handbook.

3. Students have the right to adequate contact with their assigned instructor, they have the right to comparable instruction, resources, and materials, and they have the right to question the policies and procedures of their respective instructor. Distance education students shall also have access to the Student Handbook, Bishop State Community College catalog, the library, registration, tuition payment, computer labs, administration services, counseling, financial aid, and the bookstore.

4. Students taking distance education courses must use the email address provided to them by Bishop State Community College. While using BSCC’s email system or Blackboard, messages intercepted or received by individuals other than the intended recipient are not the responsibility of Bishop State Community College.

5. All posted dates related to College activities (registration, add/drop, etc.) are applicable to both distance education and face-to-face courses. Therefore, all refund and payment deadlines are applicable to both distance education and face-to-face courses.

6. All distance education courses begin on the first day of each term. Students should log in to their courses as of the first day of class. Instructions for logging in are sent to each student’s email account. Students who enroll for a distance education course who do not receive this email within 2 days of the beginning of class should send an email that includes their student number to rmcwilliams@bishop.edu requesting their login information.

7. Students who fail to log in to their course by the first attendance verification period (which is usually within the first 2 weeks of the term), will be turned in as “no shows” and may be dropped from the course. The financial aid status of these students will be affected if they are turned in as a “no show” and they will not receive financial aid for that course.

8. Courses that do not receive adequate enrollment numbers may be removed from the listing of course offerings. If a course is dropped, it is the student’s responsibility to register for a different course.

9. Students will be held to the requirements posted in each instructor’s syllabus.
10. There will be requirements for students to physically appear on campus for either labs and/or examinations. Students in hybrid courses must meet on campus during the times posted in the course schedule (e.g., lab times) throughout the term in order to successfully complete these courses. If a student cannot appear on campus for an exam meeting because of distance constraints, it is up to that student to procure the services of a proctor. Before using a proctor, each student must first complete a Proctor Guidelines/Acceptance Form in order to receive permission of his/her instructor to use that individual as a proctor. The deadline for submitting this form is the end of week 10 of each semester (week 6 during summer terms). The form can be obtained from the instructor of any online course. All costs (if any) associated with the procurement of a proctor are the responsibility of each student.

11. Bishop State Community College does not guarantee personal Internet access or computer use to distance learning students. The College does maintain computer labs with set hours of operation that are open to all students. The College also does not hold any responsibility for the loss of use of a student’s personal computer through any mishaps or misfortune.

12. Certain online courses may require additional software and/or materials. These additional requirements will be posted in the syllabus. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain these materials in a timely fashion. All costs associated with these materials are the responsibility of the student.

13. General questions about distance education courses should be directed to the Center for Teaching and Learning at 405-7144. Questions related to specific courses should be directed to the instructor of that course.

14. Using your provided user name and password serves as an acknowledgement that you have read these policies and procedures and that you agree to abide by them.
Distance Education Definitions

Online course - courses that are offered completely online, other than the mandatory proctored final exam and one other assessment that may be present in a few courses.

Hybrid course - courses that include a combination of online and face-to-face meetings, where at least 4 of these meetings are for instructional purposes (not assessment).

All distance education courses require a proctored final exam.

Examples:

**Online**

-Students work online throughout the term, except for one face-to-face meeting for the final exam.

-Students work online throughout the term, except for 2 face-to-face meetings (one to take a midterm, one to take the final exam).

**Hybrid**

-Students complete work online but still come in to campus once per week for a lecture, only meeting half as often as a traditional TTH face-to-face course would meet. Then students return to the campus to take the proctored final exam.

-Students complete lecture portion of a class online, while coming in to campus once a week (or once every other week) to complete the lab portion of the course. Then students return to the campus to take the proctored final exam.

-Students complete work online but still come in to campus once per month for a lecture. Then students return to the campus to take the proctored final exam.
Online Course Approval Form

Course:

Instructor:

I have completed the development for the course listed. All “course requirements” listed in the Distance Education Policy have been met, and I have reviewed my own course with the “Course Checklist”.

____________________    __________
  Instructor Signature     Date

______________________________________________________________

Completed by CTL

All “course requirements” within Distance Education Policy have been met ____

The course listed above appears to meet appropriate guidelines described in the Distance Education Policy and may be offered online.

____________________
  Director of CTL