

DRAFT

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This is a REVISED Executive Policy, replacing E5.204 dated May 1998.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I

EXECUTIVE POLICY - ADMINISTRATION

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Page 1 of 7

E5.204 Distance and Online Learning

I. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to help the University of Hawai'i (UH) advance its mission of extending access to higher education throughout the State of Hawai'i, enhance educational services to UH students, and reach new constituencies throughout the world. This executive policy is promulgated in accordance with the authority delegated to the President by the Board of Regents. The provisions of this policy are designed to carry out the intent of the Board of Regents' policy to expand access to quality higher educational opportunities to Hawai'i citizens (Board of Regents Bylaws and Policies, Section 5-10).

The primary purpose for distance learning at UH is to provide increased access to post-secondary education to the residents of the State of Hawai'i. Distance learning is also an important enabler of the entrepreneurial goals of the University and can support the University's mission beyond the boundaries of the State.

Online learning is a powerful and flexible enabler of distance learning. In addition to breaking down barriers of distance, online learning can break down barriers of time that prevent some students from attending courses on scheduled days and times. Online

learning is also an important educational element for campus-based students who may take fully online courses alongside classroom-based courses and hybrid courses that combine classroom and online activities. Online learning can provide high-quality opportunities for individualization of learning and increased student engagement. In addition, online learning can help UH address limited resource constraints such as classrooms and parking, can enable campuses to aggregate demand for courses for which there is insufficient enrollment to justify offerings on multiple campuses. Online learning offers opportunities for affordably increasing high quality educational opportunities for students.

UH takes a holistic approach to distance and online learning through which we leverage and integrate our campus based practices and capabilities with our distance and online practices and capabilities. UH distance and online courses are taught by UH faculty hired through the normal faculty processes and UH distance and online programs award regular UH campus credentials. Distance and online learning is largely "mainstreamed" at UH, i.e., standard campus academic and administrative processes support distance and online endeavors. The "anywhere and anytime" technologies used in distance and online education at UH also support classroom-based instruction, meetings, and collaboration among UH faculty and staff throughout the UH System and with colleagues elsewhere. Distance and online learning may be applicable at any level and may be for credit or non-credit.

II. Guiding Principles for Distance and Online Learning

The fundamental policy principles for University of Hawai'i distance and online learning are:

A. **Everyone's Responsibility:** Distance and online learning and support are an integral part of the University's mission and a responsibility of every campus and support unit throughout the UH System. In addition, every unit on every campus needs to embrace their responsibilities to fully support and

embrace distance and online learning and distance learners alongside classroom-based instruction and campus-based learners. This includes not only instructional delivery but also academic support, student support, and administrative and other support services.

- B. **Quality:** Distance and online learning is first and foremost an academic endeavor. The quality and standards of distance and online instruction, whether involving synchronous or asynchronous interaction, must be comparable to those for traditional instructional programs activities with at least comparable assessment practices. Regardless of any collaborative arrangements, the responsibility for quality assurance resides firmly with the campus conferring the credit and/or credential.
- C. **All UH Students are "Our" Students:** UH campuses and education centers support all UH distance learning students as their own, including those matriculating at other campuses. If a distance learning program is a joint effort among campuses, it is the responsibility of the supporting sites to provide for the legitimate needs of the students physically on their campus, notwithstanding the fact that the degree or certificate the student is pursuing will be conferred by a sister campus.
- D. **Collaboration:** Distance learning within the UH System is a collaborative enterprise across all aspects of the academic environment including program planning, curriculum development and delivery, student services and other support services (such as testing centers). If needed, memoranda of agreement detail the responsibilities of originating and supporting sites including addressing specific cases in which financial support may be required from originating campuses. Collaboration with external providers may be considered when internal resources are not available to respond to demonstrated in-state needs.
- E. **Accreditation:** The responsibility for meeting accreditation standards for distance and online

learning programs rests firmly with the campus bestowing the degree or certificate. Responsibility for supporting in-state distance learning students may be shared among an originating campus and other supporting sites, i.e., campuses and education centers where student may participate in synchronous interactive sessions and/or receive assistance and support. For distance learning programs within Hawai'i campuses and support units work together to ensure that accreditation standards are met.

- F. Tuition and fees. In accord with BOR Policy [5-10(d)], distance learning credit instruction is offered in Hawai'i at a cost to residents similar to that of regular on-campus instruction. Special provisions of BOR Policy [6-2(g)] enable special tuition rates for distance learning programs delivered entirely by telecommunications outside the State or to specific populations, generally on an entrepreneurial or externally-supported basis.

Students in distance and online programs need to be recognized as members of the student body of the offering campus including having access to co-curricular and fee-based services. However, distance learning students who have no opportunity to benefit from certain on-campus fees may have those fees waived or may be charged substitute fees that support unique requirements of distant learners (BOR Policy 6-3.b.2.ii).

- G. Broad Technology Applicability. When deploying technologies to support distance learning, the University strives to select and invest in technologies that have broad applicability to support campus-based learners and to general collaboration within academic communities as well.
- H. Accessibility: In accord with applicable statutes and regulations, reasonable accommodations will be made to facilitate access to UH distance learning programs and services by all qualified students with disabilities. Although distance learning often breaks down traditional barriers of time and space, technological advances may also place new and unforeseen demands on educational services and

support. Originating and supporting sites, along with their respective disability service programs, will cooperate to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to those with documented disabilities.

- I. Copyright: The University is committed to full compliance with copyright laws in its adoption and utilization of software and content for distance and online learning.

III. Distance Learning Roles & Responsibilities

Effective and efficient delivery of distance and online programs across the State of Hawai'i requires collaboration among campuses, education centers and support units. Even fully online programs inevitably demand the support of other UH units of when enrolling students on other islands of the State. The follow sections outline the responsibilities of units that deliver programs, units that support programs from other campuses, the UH System, and specific coordinating entities.

A. Campuses that originate programs and courses:

1. Have primary responsibility for delivery of programs & courses and the implementation of appropriate instructional materials and methods. Each campus establishes its own internal processes for assuring the quality and integrity of all distance learning curricula and meeting all applicable accreditation requirements.
2. Commitment to all necessary support for a period sufficient to enable current students to complete their degrees/certificates.
3. Commit to providing accurate and complete information about courses and programs, including entering all course and program data into all applicable university information systems.
4. Collaborate with supporting sites regarding program plans, support needs and requirements.

B. Supporting sites:

1. Provide information to students in their areas of responsibility who are interested and qualified

for programs and courses in collaboration with the campuses offering programs.

2. Collaborate with originating campuses to ensure adequate support services to enable students to complete degrees/certificates in a timely manner.
3. University and Education Centers regularly assess community needs within their areas of responsibility and communicate the results of those assessments throughout the UH System.

C. System Offices:

1. Facilitate coordination among campuses and units supporting distance learning, including the creation and convening of standing and ad-hoc working groups and advisory councils.
2. Manage the UH System technology infrastructure and services to support distance and online learning activities.
3. Disseminate information regarding applicable federal and state regulations and laws, and best practices in distance and online learning.
4. Display course, program, enrollment and related information regarding distance and online learning to communicate opportunities and activities within UH and externally.
5. Provide opportunities for system-wide faculty and staff development in distance and online learning.
6. Assist in the acquisition of resources for development of distance learning programs.

D. Specific Distance Learning Coordinating Entities

Coordination of collaborative distance learning throughout the UH System requires the active collaboration among inter-campus and cross-functional working groups and advisory councils. Establishing effective lines of communication across these "communities of practice" is essential to the University of Hawai'i's overall decentralized approach, mainstreamed and collaborative approach to distance learning.

1. Distance Learning Advisory Council (DLAC) is the lead system-wide group that helps the University

of Hawai'i advance its mission through distance and online learning. The DLAC is responsible to recommend policies and to proactively identify and catalyze action on systemic issues as they arise. As appropriate, the DLAC counsels University administrators and policy-makers through such groups as the Council of Chancellors, the Council of Chief Academic Officer, and the Council of Chief Student Affairs Officers. The DLAC prepares, monitors and oversees a system-wide distance and online learning action plan that advances overall institutional plans and priorities of the UH system and the campuses

(<http://www.hawaii.edu/dlplan>). The DLAC is convened and chaired jointly by the offices of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost and Vice President for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer.

2. Distance Learning Program Planning Group (DLPPG) is a system-wide group composed of University and Education Centers and representation from offering units that assists campuses, departments and support units in the planning and coordination of distance and online programs to meet educational needs within the State of Hawai'i. The DLPPG advises programs, allocates system resources, and coordinates the master listings of distance and online programs.
3. Campus Distance Coordinators (CDC) is a system-wide group that is responsible for addressing student, faculty, and staff concerns relating to distance learning at the operational level. This group helps identify system-wide issues and raises them to the attention of the DLAC.