University of Hawai‘i Distance Learning

Consortium Agreement for Financial Aid for Distance Learners
University of Hawai‘i Distance Learning Consortium
Agreement for Financial Aid for Distance Learning

• **Purpose**

Establish procedures that facilitate the financial aid process for students taking
distance learning courses and/or students approved for concurrent registration in
courses at the University of Hawai‘i campuses.

• **Definitions**

1. The Home Institution is the institution at which the student is classified as a
degree-seeking student. A student may be eligible for financial aid at only one
Home Institution at any given time.

2. The Host Institution(s) is/are the campus(es) other than the Home Institution
from which the student may take courses which count toward completion of the
Home Institution’s degree program. Host Institutions do not grant financial aid to
distance learning students.

3. For the purposes of this agreement,

- a "distance learning student" refers to a student enrolled in courses
delivered via outreach or technology-mediated instruction by campuses
other than the student’s Home Institution;
- "students approved for concurrent registration" refers to those students who
possess and are able to present (upon request) a completed and signed
University of Hawai‘i Concurrent Enrollment Application form;
- "multiple campus registrants" refers to those students who enroll
concurrently at
more than one UH campus without completing either the Concurrent
Enrollment Application or the Application for Approval of Distance Learning
Courses for Financial Aid Purposes form or both. This agreement does not
apply to Multiple Campus Registrants.

• **General**

1. In order for courses taken from Host Institutions to be calculated into financial
aid awards, students must complete the Concurrent Enrollment Application form
and/or the Application for Approval of Distance Learning Courses for Financial
Aid Purposes.

2. The student shall be assessed the UH BOR-approved tuition and appropriate
fees of the campus offering the particular course(s). The annual "Guidelines for
the Establishment of Student Budgets To Be Used in the Awarding of Financial
Aid" (as determined through UH financial aid procedures) shall be the basis for determining cost(s) of attendance.
3. The student shall pay tuition to the campus offering the course(s).

4. The student shall be responsible for informing the Home and Host Institutions of enrollment at other campuses and any changes thereto and for completing necessary forms.

5. Students must enroll for at least one course each term at the Home Institution in order to continue to be considered enrolled in a degree program at that institution. However, subject to Home Institution operating procedures, required minimum credit hours for which a student must be enrolled at the Home Institution may vary.

6. If necessary, for any and/or all request(s) for enrollment verification, the student shall be responsible for submitting to the Registrar at the Home Institution, proof of enrollment at campuses other than the Home campus.

7. The student shall be responsible for requesting that official transcripts be sent from the Host Institution(s) to the Home Institution.

8. The Host Institution shall provide information and assistance to the Home Institution, in order to assure compliance with all applicable Financial Aid regulations.

- **Home Institution**

1. The Home Institution's Financial Aid Office shall be responsible for determining eligibility and awarding student financial aid. Enrollment for courses which are applicable to the student's degree program at the Home and Host Institutions shall be considered in the financial aid award.

2. The Home Institution's Financial Aid Office shall be responsible for disbursing financial aid and may seek the assistance of the Host Institution's Financial Aid Office and/or University Center staff.

3. The Home Institution's Financial Aid Office shall be responsible for monitoring the student's continued eligibility for aid with the assistance of the Host Institution and the University Center(s).

4. The Home Institution's Financial Aid Office shall assure that federal financial aid funds are properly refunded to the appropriate accounts should the student completely withdraw prior to the end of the term.

5. Contingent upon student's presentation of proof(s) of enrollment, the Home Institution shall certify enrollment for all courses taken at the Home and Host Institution(s).

- **Host Institution**
1. The Host Institution shall assist in the verification of enrollment and shall provide the student's grades, tuition and fee charges, and other relevant information to the Home Institution.

2. The Host Institution shall inform the Home Institution's Financial Aid Office, on a timely basis, if the student drops courses or completely withdraws. Should the student drop classes or withdraw during the refund period, the Host Institution shall send the refund to the Home Institution to be returned to the federal financial aid accounts as required by federal regulations.

3. In the case where a student may have officially or unofficially withdrawn, the instructor(s) may be asked to provide the Home Institution with the last date of contact (for example, based on the date of exams, submission of assignments, records of attendance, tutorials, computer-assisted instruction, counseling, academic advisement or study group attendance, etc.).
For a full explanation of the University of Hawai‘i’s distance learning policy, please see Executive Policy E5.204: Distance Learning Plans, Policies, and Procedures. The following provides highlights by answering frequently asked questions about distance learning at the University. Both E5.204 and this Q&A document are available on-line at: http://www2.hawaii.edu/ovppp/.

1. **What is distance learning?**

At the University of Hawai‘i, distance learning includes (a) telecommunications-assisted instruction (synchronous or asynchronous interaction) supported by interactive television, cable, Internet-based delivery, telephones, fax machines, teleconferencing, and mail service and (b) off-site instruction (i.e., faculty fly to or are hired at off-campus sites). Distance learning may take place in-state or out-of-state and be credit or non-credit.

2. **What is the goal of UH’s distance learning effort?**

The goal of distance learning at the University of Hawai‘i is to expand access to quality higher educational opportunities to Hawai‘i citizens and to those beyond the boundaries of the state. The primary goal is to provide service to the state and is expressed as follows:

*Providing access to the rich array of quality instructional resources available to on-campus students to students anywhere in the state who are committed to higher education and training but are unable to attend the UH campus offering their program of choice.*

Distance learning outside the state is also an important University goal. Distance learning will increasingly strengthen the University’s Asian/Pacific focus, positioning UH as the premier institution of higher education in the Pacific Basin. The use of the Internet will increasingly blur distinctions between in-state and out-of-state distance learning but will not change UH’s primary responsibility to serve the people of Hawai‘i.

3. **Why is distance learning important at this time?**

Recent advances in telecommunications technologies provide the UH with tools to serve state needs by expanding our geographic reach. The possibilities now available to UH make delivery to off-campus and previously under-served populations more feasible. Currently, the UH is facing increasing competition from out-of-state institutions and private organizations to serve Hawai‘i’s educational needs. It is in this context that the UH seeks to expand access
within Hawai‘i and to share UH’s special strengths beyond state boundaries.
4. **Whose responsibility is distance learning?**

Distance learning is an integral part of the mission of every campus of the UH system. It is a coordinated effort in which collaboration and cooperation are critical to ensure effective and efficient course and program delivery, facets of which span the full range of student and faculty support services. Facilitating this collaboration is one of the most difficult tasks facing the UH. Provision of the full complement of student support services requires extensive coordination and cooperation among the originating campus, the receive site, and all instructional and support units. Increased inter-campus cooperation among the ten primary UH campuses, educational centers, and the University of Hawai‘i centers will facilitate course delivery and provision of appropriate and adequate faculty, staff, and student support by existing units. Those delivering courses and programs solely on-line bear responsibility for ensuring similar services.

5. **Do certain programs bear a special responsibility for distance learning?**

Yes. Unique programs that respond to Hawai‘i’s public policy priorities have a statewide responsibility. For example, programs available from only one UH campus that address statewide workforce needs are expected to use distance learning as a means to meet their statewide service responsibility.

6. **What is entrepreneurial distance learning?**

Distance learning conducted on a cost-recovery basis is considered entrepreneurial. It may involve credit and/or non-credit instruction delivered out-of-state or to in-state populations with special requests or needs that are not otherwise served through normal University programming. Examples include a specially designed five-course training program developed specifically for a local company or an extension of an existing program to out-of-state clientele.

7. **What are the guidelines for entrepreneurial programs?**

Entrepreneurial courses and programs are demand-driven. In all cases, tuition and fees are determined by the target market’s willingness and ability to bear direct and indirect costs of instruction and infrastructure, including instructor replacement costs for any instruction taught in-load. Program coordinators ensure that entrepreneurial efforts provide substantial contributions to in-state resource needs.

Approval authority for special fees attached to courses for special in-state or out-of-state populations has been recently delegated to the President. Separate policy guidelines for determining entrepreneurial course and program fees are being prepared.
8. **How are priorities for the use of UH system resources determined?**

Priority for use of limited system telecommunication resources is given to those programs that respond to statewide needs and goals and serve the largest number of in-state students. In all cases, however, a critical mass of students sufficient to justify offering a full program cycle and maintain the rigor and integrity of the academic program is critical. Additional criteria to be used in determining priorities include course/program availability from UH campuses in the receiving community, program coherence, consistency with campus role and mission, and efficiency in resource sharing and utilization.

In-state offerings have priority over out-of-state offerings. Non-credit instruction will continue to be offered on a self-support basis with tuition and fees covering direct instructional and indirect infrastructure costs, except for those courses and programs involving dedicated general funds.

A University of Hawai’i Master Scheduling Group (MSG), with system-wide representation, coordinates distance learning program scheduling. The MSG focuses on scheduling programs dependent on the resources of the system and/or multiple campuses; other distance learning offerings are scheduled separately but are reported to the MSG for purposes of overall coordination and reporting. The MSG determines the priority in scheduling limited system telecommunication resources by taking into consideration the aforementioned criteria as well as official public policy statements and initiatives, the goals and objectives of the University’s strategic and academic plans, and the results of needs assessments. Needs assessments are conducted through the University Centers and by other components of the University. They determine the demand for specific training and educational programs in under-served areas by assessing the needs and interests of local student, community, and business populations.

9. **How is distance learning quality ensured?**

Distance learning is first and foremost an academic endeavor. As with conventional courses and programs, faculty are responsible for maintaining the integrity of program coherence, individual courses, and content, and for utilizing appropriate pedagogy in course delivery. The quality and standards of distance learning instruction must be comparable to those of other University instructional programs. Responsibility for ensuring quality, in part demonstrated by obtaining regional accreditation, resides with the campus conferring academic credit and/or a credential. The Chief Academic Officer of each campus is responsible for certifying that the appropriate level of oversight and quality assurance is achieved. The responsibilities for quality assurance described here apply equally to distance learning delivered on-site, in collaboration with a receive site, or solely on-line.

The UH has adapted and established as UH policy the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs. These
principles, endorsed by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), focus attention on specific aspects of quality including instructional/academic rigor and breadth; program coherence and course content; appropriate pedagogy; articulated courses and programs; faculty support and development; student support services; and provisions for students with special needs.
10. **Does WASC require special review of distance learning credit courses/programs?**

Yes. The WASC Accrediting Commissions require prior review of substantive changes, which include plans to deliver programs outside the geographic region currently served or through telecommunications technologies. The Junior Commission generally requires “advance notice” of substantive changes. Subject to WASC review of this notice, decisions regarding the need for further information and/or planning and guidelines are provided to the originating institution. The Senior Commission requires a more comprehensive proposal detailed in the “Off-Campus and Substantive Change Application Manual” (WASC, July 1996).

While specific procedures may differ between the Senior and Junior Commissions, substantive change review generally requires descriptions of the institution and program, program need, and faculty resources; provisions for library, information resources, and computer support; physical and financial resources; and plans for evaluation and assessment. In addition, sample syllabi, vitae of key faculty, written library agreements, and copies of program announcements are required. Proposals to the Senior Commission must be submitted at least 120 days prior to program commencement.

11. **How are the coordination and collaboration needed for distance learning across the UH system realized?**

Responsibility for major instructional and support distance learning activities is assigned to campuses based on their status as an originating or receiving site. These responsibilities are elaborated in a document entitled *Interim Operational Roles and Responsibilities for University of Hawai‘i Centers and Originating Campuses*, promulgated June 19, 1997. Among other responsibilities, originating and receiving sites designate single points-of-contact. These points-of-contact are responsible for facilitating the collaboration and communication necessary to provide students with effective service appropriate to the originating campus’ rigor and measures of quality.

Originating campuses retain responsibility and discretion for program delivery including staffing, faculty selection, and course development. Quality assurance therefore resides with the originating campus, and each campus is responsible for establishing internal processes to maintain the quality and integrity of all distance learning programs.

Each receive site is responsible for providing adequate and appropriate support services including library, computer, and student services. In addition, receive sites are responsible for conducting needs assessments to demonstrate local need for specific courses and/or programs and communicating the results to potential originating campuses and appropriate system entities.

System and unit offices such as OVPPP, ITS, the Master Scheduling Group, the UHCC Distance Education Committee, and the UHM Outreach College
provide on-going support and guidance activities to facilitate the efforts of originating and receiving sites.
12. **What are University Centers?**

University Centers are system entities administratively assigned to one of the Major Units of the University of Hawai‘i system. To date, three University Centers have been established by the Board of Regents; they are located in West Hawai‘i and on Maui and Kauai, and are administratively assigned to the UH Community Colleges. University of Hawai‘i Centers establish a permanent University of Hawai‘i presence in communities that otherwise lack access to programs offered elsewhere in the UH system. Centers serve as receive sites and permit qualified students to enroll in courses/programs offered by one or more of the University’s accredited institutions. In general, upper division and graduate programs rotate and respond to cohort need and resource availability. In the absence of a community college, more continuous lower-division programming is available as demand and resources permit. Instruction may be telecommunications-assisted and/or on-site. The primary purpose of University Centers is instructional; some may also serve as receive sites for research and/or public service programs.

13. **What types and levels of service can students expect?**

The UH is committed to providing to distance learners comparable access to those services and resources available to other students at the UH campuses. Originating campuses are charged with giving equal consideration to off-site and on-site students. Similarly, receive sites are charged with supporting the legitimate needs of students, notwithstanding the fact that the degree/certificate will be conferred by a sister campus.

Course delivery and instruction are held to the same instructional standards as residential programs. Interaction with other students and the instructor is facilitated by both mail delivery and through technology (e.g., electronic mail, facsimiles, phone, interactive television, the WWW, and other Internet applications). Access to student support services such as library and information resources, computers and technology, and training is facilitated by the receiving site. Other student support services such as academic advising, counseling, and career advising are the responsibility of the student's home campus but will likely be facilitated by the receive site.

14. **What are the costs to students?**

The goal of the UH is to provide access within Hawai‘i through distance learning at a cost similar to that paid by comparable on-campus students. BOR-approved tuition and fee schedules apply for Hawai‘i students. Cost recovery is expected of courses and programs delivered to students outside Hawai‘i. Special fees, requiring approval by the President, may be charged under special circumstances. A separate executive policy provides guidelines.
15. **Can the University afford distance learning?**

The University needs additional resources to expand its distance learning offerings. It cannot afford to ignore distance learning. The UH has and will continue to play a critical role in facilitating immediate and long-term economic and social goals of the state. In particular, if UH is committed to provide in-state residents with increased access to programs not available to them, distance learning is the most cost-effective means to do so. Further, telecommunications technologies will mean increased competition from out-of-state institutions and private organizations. Despite severe budget cuts, distance learning has continued as a UH priority. With time, it is expected that increased entrepreneurial activity by the units will provide additional funding to support in-state programs.

16. **How will the UH pay for distance learning?**

Funding sources include reallocated and specifically budgeted general funds, special internal allocations, tuition, and other federal, local, and/or private support. Possible strategies to accommodate the costs of distance learning might include the following.

**Faculty assignment.** Whenever existing load permits, distance learning classes are taught as part of the normal teaching assignment. Where necessary, normal campus/departmental procedures shall be followed to determine eligibility for overload. Factors that might be taken into consideration include, but are not limited to, the type of technology used for course delivery, the amount of prior preparation and development of course materials required, and established campus/unit procedures with respect to course development.

**Class sections.** Class sections added to accommodate distance learning students should be funded in the same way as a class section added to accommodate on-campus demand.

**Additional funding.** Where required for in-state courses and programs, it is the responsibility of both the originating and receiving campuses to develop a joint request to the Senior Executives for additional funding.

17. **How will distance learning revenues be distributed?**

Tuition and fee revenues derived from distance learning offerings are retained by the University and shared among the units bearing direct and indirect costs of such offerings. Specific procedures and formulae for system-wide revenue distribution between origination and receive sites are currently being discussed by the University Executive Council. Similar discussions with respect to programs internal to the Manoa campus are being facilitated by the Office of the Senior Vice President and Executive Vice Chancellor for Manoa.
18. **How will distance learning enrollments be reported?**

As a general rule and contingent on the systematic collection by all UH campuses of needed data elements, the University will prepare two general types of enrollment information. Routine and systematic preparation of the following reports will require implementation of a system-wide student registration system.

(a) Unduplicated information that assigns distance learning headcount and course enrollment data to the unit awarding the credit and/or offering the credential.

(b) Duplicated information that displays enrollments, courses, and related information by distance learning support units (e.g., University Centers, UHM Outreach College, etc.).

19. **Has the University considered the impact of external providers in the state?**

Discussions regarding the University’s stance on external providers are ongoing. Plans, policies, and procedures, including the University’s lead responsibility for involvement with the Western Governors University, continue to evolve. In general, collaboration with other external providers may be considered when internal UH resources are not able to respond to demonstrated state needs and when such collaboration can be conducted on a cost-plus basis. All collaborative arrangements are handled on a case-by-case basis and require approval of appropriate UH Unit senior vice presidents.

20. **Is UH distance learning limited to or dependent on HITS technology?**

No. Distance learning at UH uses a rich variety of technologies including interactive television, cable television, and Internet-based instruction. In 1990 the first statewide programs were delivered using HITS. In recent years, much of the growth in distance learning has taken place using Internet technologies. Nearly all UH HITS and Cable TV courses use the Internet to improve interaction and provide access to information. The first UH Internet-only courses were delivered as early as 1993. Many more are now in development. The usual experience is that course preparation for asynchronous Internet delivery is more time-consuming than for interactive classroom instruction.

Interactive television will continue as an important medium for UH, particularly for in-state program offerings. However, the rapid maturation of instructional tools on the Internet, facility with their use, and the obvious ubiquity of the Internet (which permits UH to reach many more students) will over time make it very likely that many more courses will be developed for Internet-based delivery.
21. **Is distance learning for everyone?**

Probably not. Counselors at receive sites and at originating campuses can provide information on general academic and professional preparation required for admission into specific degree programs and assist in determining if distance learning is right for the individual student. Potential benefits of distance learning for students are considerable. For example, distance learning in many cases provides students greater flexibility of time and space, freeing them from requirements of travel or relocation and affording them opportunities to take courses otherwise non-accessible due to scheduling or physical constraints. As a result, much of the responsibility for learning resides with the student and successful completion will depend on the individual student's self-discipline and commitment to the course or program.

While the UH is committed to providing access to necessary instructional and student support services, it is important to recognize that in many cases the separation of teacher and student imposes some constraints on service delivery. First, the process of service delivery may not necessarily be the "same" as that provided to on-campus students. Yet, as with on-campus students, it is the student's responsibility to become aware of available services and procedures and pursue these services and resources as needed.

22. **What is the status of distance learning efforts elsewhere and at UH?**

According to a U.S. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) survey, in fall 1995, approximately 33% of U.S. higher education institutions delivered distance education courses. Of these institutions, 35% of the four-year public institutions and 12% of the public two-year institutions offered complete degree-granting programs via distance education in academic year 1994-95. Roughly 74% of all institutions offering distance education courses in fall 1995 offered less than 26 distance education courses in academic year 1994-95.

During the fall 1997 semester, across the UH system, 4900-plus student registrations were distributed across 280-plus distance learning courses in nine graduate, eight undergraduate, and thirteen associate program areas. In addition, at some sites, the Community Colleges offered various certificate programs in additional content areas.