

Guidelines for Administration of Technologically Mediated Distance Education

(Approved by Deans' Council 11/02)

Boise State University is committed to the delivery of academic programs through the use of technologically mediated distance education methods, in order to respond effectively to student needs for greater flexibility of time and/or place and to increase access to higher education.

Successful development and implementation of distance education courses and programs require efficient collaboration among academic, administrative, technology, and student service units. Those units include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Academic colleges and departments
- Academic support programs, including the Division of Extended Studies, Academic Technologies, and Albertsons Library
- Office of Information Technology
- Student Affairs offices, including Admissions, Registrar, Gateway Center, and the Bookstore

The Guidelines for Best Practices, developed by the Western Cooperative for Electronic Telecommunications (WCET) in conjunction with the regional accrediting commissions in the late 1990s, provide guidance for Boise State University in addressing issues of collaboration, centralization, support, etc. These guidelines will be used in accreditation reviews for institutions that offer academic programs through distance delivery methods. It is anticipated that during the next accreditation review, Boise State will be asked to demonstrate compliance with these best practices.

Distance Delivery Methods

Distance delivery methods or instructional systems currently utilized by the university:

- Internet
- Computer conferencing
- Boise State's Knowledge Network via interactive microwave system and cable television
- Telecourses that combine video broadcast on public television and in-person meetings
- Videoconferencing on Boise State's Distance Learning Network and the Higher Education Network
- Computer-based multimedia
- Videotape

Procedures and Support Structures

Political Boundaries

When considering the delivery of a new program through distance education, faculty members need to consult with both their department chair and dean as well as the director of distance education and dean of Extended Studies, the director of Academic Technologies and the provost to ensure that such delivery meets college and institutional priorities, State Board of Education (SBOE) boundary issues, and best practices/accreditation requirements, and that necessary administrative support structures are available. In addition, new distance education degree and certification programs may require approval from the SBOE or the Northwest Regional Accrediting Association.

Courses and Programs

A course is defined as a technologically mediated distance education offering at Boise State when it is offered electronically using an instructional technology system and when there are six or fewer in-person class meetings. Distance education courses are offered at the initiation of the academic department or Extended Studies as part of the department's overall course offerings. Courses that use the Web or other technologies to enhance live instruction do not fall under the definition of technologically mediated distance education.

Academic Oversight

As with all live classes, academic departments are responsible for decisions regarding curriculum, instruction, and evaluation for distance education classes. As noted in the accreditation guidelines, it is essential that in the

design of the course, departments ensure appropriate interaction between the instructor and students and among students. The involvement of Academic Technologies and Extended Studies may result in an awareness of instructional concerns; when this occurs, it will be brought to the attention of the academic department.

Course Set-up and Fees

Distance education courses are set-up in the student system through Extended Studies in conjunction with the appropriate academic department. Academic distance courses are offered within the regular calendar sessions and at the regular undergraduate or graduate fees. Any special fees are established by or in conjunction with Extended Studies. Requests for special graduate program fees (new or changes to current fees) need to be negotiated by the program director and college dean with the director of distance education, the dean of Extended Studies, and the provost.

In the case of collaborations among universities, inside or outside the state, for the development and delivery of distance education courses/programs, fees and exchange of fees should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. This may include transferring a portion of the full-time fees from one institution to another to support instructional costs. At Boise State, this discussion and negotiation will need to include the program director/sponsor, the college dean, the director of distance education, the dean of Extended Studies, the provost, and when the programs are at the graduate level, the dean of the Graduate College.

Faculty Support

Academic Technologies and Extended Studies are available to assist faculty and deans in selecting delivery technology appropriate for the curriculum and intended audience. Academic Technologies provides faculty development/training and is available to advise on instructional objectives, pedagogy, and technical and instructional design considerations.

In addition, because of the differences between live and distance instructional delivery, tools for course structure and design have been developed under the leadership of Academic Technologies and Extended Studies, in conjunction with the Core Online Project and the Teaching/Learning Technology Roundtable. These tools provide an appropriate academic support framework, yet allow considerable flexibility for individual faculty and course needs. They should be utilized by faculty when developing a course and preparing to teach online.

Administrative Support

Extended Studies provides the administrative support structure for the implementation of distance education courses, including course set-up, registration support, student advisement, targeted marketing, faculty support, support/delivery of course materials and course evaluation. Academic Technologies assists with materials support/delivery for the Knowledge Network system.

Technology Support

Academic Technologies is the educational technology organization for Boise State and provides technology support and instructional design and consultation for all distance delivery methods. The Office of Information Technology provides support for the Blackboard server and manages the university's access to the Internet.

Student Support

Extended Studies is responsible for ensuring that students enrolled in distance education classes receive appropriate support services. These services will be provided by the appropriate student services functional area wherever possible and by Extended Studies staff where that is not possible. When a new graduate program is being considered for full distance delivery, the type and location of necessary student services will be determined by the academic department, dean of the college, director of distance education, dean of Extended Studies and the provost.

Academic Technologies produces and provides orientation training and/or materials to help students succeed within the specific type of course delivery.

Note: Pre-existing programs that are not in violation of these procedures will continue to operate as they have in the past.