

Distance Learning Standards and Guidelines

Distance learning comprises web-based courses, learning packages, and other non-face-to-face formats for delivering instruction. It does not include courses that meet with a traditional, face-to-face format at sites at some distance from Mt. Pleasant (e.g. the CEL program center in Troy).

1. If Central Michigan University creates a Center for Faculty Development, then this center should coordinate the existing Office of Distance Learning and Instructional Development units to:
 - Train faculty in the development of distance learning courses and course modules;
 - Develop faculty knowledge of and expertise in teaching distance learning courses; and
 - Develop and maintain linkage with the College of Extended Learning's (CEL) Center for Research on Adult Learning (CRAL) to further our knowledge and understanding of Distance Learning education and format effectiveness.
2. Each CMU course follows a Master Syllabus. An existing course, which is reformatted as a distance learning course, will have an attachment to the Master as described in the Guidelines for Preparing a Master Course Syllabus Addendum for a Reformatted Course. Similarly, a course being formatted for distance delivery exclusively will follow the procedures outlined in these "Guidelines." (See Curricular Authority Document, Appendix H, for specifics.)
3. The UCC and Graduate Council should review and recommend for publication distance learning formatted courses on the basis of: a) consistency of course objectives and text and materials with the Master Syllabus; b) evaluation of students; and c) the degree of interactivity among students and between the instructor and students, especially in graduate level courses.
4. Departments should develop and maintain a faculty-student interaction plan before more than 25% of the credit hours applied to a program are delivered in a distance delivery format. The plan would address issues of faculty-student mentoring, cohort group and peer interaction, student organizations, special events, laboratory and research facilities, and information and instructional resources.
5. CEL should design on-line courses that require a minimal level of computer-based skills (e.g., chat room, discussion forum and e-mail). If further skills are required, these must be stated in the distance learning formatted syllabus. Furthermore, if required access to specified hardware and software are a pre-requisite of the course, it should be described in the course syllabus.
6. CEL should provide a mechanism for ensuring that the results of examinations are those of the student.
7. CMU (CEL) should continue to offer adequate class record keeping assistance to distance learning course faculty for routine maintenance and monitoring of student progress and performance, thereby allowing the faculty member to devote their limited time and efforts to teaching.
8. Class size should be determined jointly between CEL and the department offering the course. The decision to impose an enrollment limit on a particular course should be left to departmental discretion. The department should be required to support its decision to impose, or not impose, any cap with a sound pedagogical rationale.

9. Departments may assign graduate students as discussion leaders, teaching assistants, class facilitators, and guest lecturers after they complete a faculty distance delivery training program. However, graduate students normally should not be expected to teach entire courses in a distance learning format.
10. Scheduling should be determined jointly between CEL and the department offering the course. Credit hours should be under departmental control and decided on a course by course basis.
11. All distance learning programs and courses should be published in the appropriate current on-campus bulletin. Courses and programs approved for distance learning delivery by the curricular process will be so designated in the appropriate on- and/or off-campus *Bulletins*. Similarly, the student course schedules will clearly indicate which course sections are being offered through distance learning.
12. The University's Program Review program instructions should be amended to include two key questions pertaining to distance delivered programs:
 - a. Does the distance delivered program conform to the on-campus program in its essential features?
 - b. Are the distance delivered program's goals being achieved?
13. Departments should explicitly include their distance delivered programs in ongoing departmental assessment.