

**CURRICULUM PROCEDURES REFERENCE  
MANUAL**

**SECTION 19**

**Distance Learning Information**

# DISTANCE EDUCATION OPTIONS

## Basic Information

*Distance learning occurs when the interaction of a student and instructor is separated by time and/or place.*

Distance education is designed to provide self-directed students with a means to complete courses using alternative methods of delivery other than face to face traditional classroom situations. Students must be responsible to do their assignments and complete coursework without the traditional schedule of face to face class meetings at specific times and locations.

Courses taught in a distance education format are comparable to the same academic standards as traditional face to face classes.

The **formats** used to deliver distance education courses are:

- **Digitized Media Courses** which use broadband to deliver streamed information over the Internet.
- **Hybrid Courses** which use a combination of online information delivery and face to face class meetings.
- **Information Highway Courses** use interactive video between two or more colleges.
- **Internet Courses** use the Internet for 100% of the course information delivery.
- **Telecourses** use vendor-produced course work delivered by video, television, DVDs or cassettes.
- **Teleweb Courses** use telecourses accompanied by supplemental work that is completed through use of the Internet.
- **Web Supported or Web Assisted Courses** where the primary delivery is via traditional face-to-face method with a requirement that students have Internet access as a supplemental part of the course.

## Virtual Learning Community (VLC)

The Virtual Learning Community (VLC) is a consortium of the 58 colleges of the North Carolina Community College System. Through collaboration, the VLC develops online

courses, edits or updates courses for various online delivery systems, enhances online student services, and facilitates communication about online learning across colleges. The goal is to provide easy access and quality distance learning instruction for students in a cost-effective manner through the sharing of resources. The VLC also provides professional development for distance learning faculty and staff, provides research and recommendations on technologies used in distance learning, and provides research and recommendations on best practices and quality standards for distance learning.

Information regarding the distance learning activities of the VLC can be accessed through its website located at <http://vlc.nccommunitycolleges.edu>. Students may search for online courses and degrees offered by all 58 community colleges. In addition, the VLC has developed 27 online degrees, 226 online curriculum courses, and 29 continuing education courses, which are available for preview or download by the distance learning administrator at each of the colleges.

Courses are developed and edited for the VLC by Centers awarded through the Request for Proposals (RFP) process. RFPs are announced by numbered memo from the System Office. Colleges are given deadlines to submit proposals based on the specific criteria outlined in the RFPs. A selection committee composed of System Office representatives and college faculty, not involved in the submission process, meet to review and select the finalists. The finalists are presented to the State Board for approval and are then awarded the projects. Funding for the Centers is designated in the specifications provided in the RFPs.

### **Reporting of Telecourses**

Each semester, colleges are required to report the use of all vendor-produced distance learning courses, regardless of the delivery method, to the Distance Learning Technician in the System Office. The Distance Learning Report Form is sent to each college as part of a numbered memo at the beginning of each semester. The form is due to the System Office two weeks after the day marking the ten percent (10%) point of the semester.

Colleges should report only telecourses that are licensed by a vendor. Colleges will be liable for penalties due to late submission of the report.

Colleges may have master copies of materials in formats such as tapes, DVDs, or video cassettes. The purchase of these telecourse materials does not exempt a college from reporting the use of this material to the System Office.

NCCCS and UNC-TV joined together to form the NCCCS/UNC-TV Telecourse Consortium. The Consortium allows the NCCCS to take advantage of group pricing structures and other group discounts. Individual colleges are assessed the FTEs for enrolled students. Contracts for telecourse licenses are negotiated by the System Office on a semester basis and must include all colleges using each vendor's telecourses. The licenses are paid for by the System Office.

Reports should be submitted electronically to the Distance Learning Technician at the System Office. Questions regarding the reporting form or procedures should be addressed to the Distance Learning Director or the Distance Learning Technician. *(Please see Section 22 for form.)*

## **Level-Two Instructional Service Agreements**

Two or more colleges can share instruction for one course through the use of interactive video on the North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH). Colleges that choose to share a course must fill out a Level-Two Instructional Service Agreement (ISA). These agreements must be filed with the System Office prior to implementation of the courses. They do not require System Office approval.

Colleges may add additional specifications to the template which follows these instructions. However, a Level-Two ISA must include the following:

- a. Be approved by each local board of trustees unless the board has delegated authority to the president to enter into Level-Two Instructional Service Agreements;
- b. Be signed by the president of each participating college;
- c. Specify the course(s) to be delivered to the other college's service area;
- d. Specify the plan for delivery of the instruction;
- e. Specify the proration of resources and FTE allocated for each college;
- f. Specify the conditions and time frame for termination of the agreement;
- g. Be filed with the System Office President prior to implementation of the course(s); and
- h. Be maintained on file at all colleges involved for audit purposes.

*If the Board of Trustees has not delegated authority to the president to enter into Level-Two ISA's; an original signature should be included. An electronic or stamped signature may only be utilized for the Board of Trustees signature if the agreement is accompanied by approved Board Minutes.*

*The delivery of curriculum courses or continuing education courses delivered into another college's service area via non-traditional delivery as defined in Rule 23 NCAC 02D .0323(e)(1) does not require an instructional service agreement.*

## **Level-Two ISA Submission Process:**

The applying college (approved by the State Board of Community Colleges to offer the course or curriculum program) should submit the Level-Two Instructional Service Agreement to the Vice President for Academic and Student Services. **Three copies of the agreement should be signed. Each participating college should be given a copy**

**with original signatures for its files. One copy of the agreement with original signatures should be sent to:**

Distance Learning Director  
North Carolina Community Colleges System Office  
5006 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-5006

The agreement must be signed by the College President and the Board of Trustees Chairperson of each of the participating institutions. A stamped or electronic Board of Trustees signature may only be utilized if the agreement is accompanied by approved Board Minutes. A Level-Two ISA does not require a Board of Trustees signature if the Board has delegated authority to the President to enter into Level-Two ISAs.

**The Level-Two ISA must be submitted prior to implementation of the course.**

**Note: See Section 6 of the Curriculum Procedures Reference Manual for Level Two ISA Form.**