



University of South Alabama Policy on Web-Based and Web-Hybrid Courses

RATIONALE

As new technologies emerge, higher education faculty members are challenged to incorporate new instructional methods into their teaching. Although many courses continue to be offered in the traditional lecture format supported by technology (e.g., powerpoint, CD-DVD, remote personal response systems), other methods are gaining in popularity as both effective methods for delivering information and as powerful tools to support collaboration, independent research, and internet-based instruction (e.g., podcasts, wikis, blogs, Second Life). Indeed, in its meta-analysis of more than a thousand empirical studies of online learning that appeared in the research literature from 1996 through July 2008, the U.S. Department of Education found that online learning has definite advantages over face-to-face instruction when it comes to teaching and learning. The study found that students who took all or part of their instruction online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through face-to-face instruction and those who took "blended" courses -- those that combine elements of online learning and face-to-face instruction -- appeared to do best of all.

In an effort to encourage further innovation and adoption of these methods while retaining course equivalency in content and intended outcomes, the following items are offered for your consideration. The following guidelines shall apply to new courses and to existing courses in which the method of delivery has changed significantly from that approved in the original curriculum proposal.

DEFINITIONS

- Distance Education:** Means of providing instruction to students who are separated by time or physical location from an instructor or from the primary resources of instruction.
- On-campus Courses:** Taught entirely face-to-face on campus or other approved site. Contact hours = 15 50-minute hours per credit hour. Exceptions include labs, clinical, and other field-based experiences. Examinations that must be proctored by a testing center or instructor are not considered required seat time in this definition.
- Web-Enhanced Courses:
(eCompanion Courses)** Delivered entirely face-to-face and are supplemented by online components delivered through the eCollege System. A course is deemed an eCompanion Course only if the online component of the course is not used to reduce class/laboratory/clinical time. Uses of eCompanion intended to reduce direct contact hours in a course can

only be used to accommodate special circumstances for the course instructor being unavailable during a particular term and may not to be used every term or for every section of the course offered.

Web-Based Courses: Delivered entirely online using a distance education format. Such courses are also known as **Online Courses, Distance Education Courses, or eCourses**. By agreement with eCollege, Web-Based Courses that are offered for credit shall refer to courses delivered through the eCollege System in a given Web-Based Course Period where the student typically receives academic credit.

Web-Hybrid Courses: Any course in which 5% to 40% of scheduled class sessions are conducted by means in which student and instructor are not in the same physical location (e.g., online communication) with the remainder of instruction delivered in a format wherein faculty and students are not separated by time or physical location. A Web-Hybrid Course is a blend of face-to-face instruction with significant online learning that results in a reduction of the amount of in-class time.

IMPLEMENTATION

As with all University courses, Web-Based and Web-Hybrid Courses shall only be offered following initial approval by the relevant department chair, dean, and University curriculum committee in accordance with current University policy.

The USA *Transmittal Sheet for Online Courses* shall be revised to read: *Transmittal Sheet for Web-Based and Web-Hybrid Courses* and modified as presented in the attached revised form.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

Ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, or other media products shall be agreed upon by the relevant faculty and the University (in accordance with the Intellectual Property Policy) before the initial offering of a Web-Based or Web-Hybrid Course.

REVISIONS TO POLICY ON COURSE SYLLABI

All sections of a course, whether on-campus, web-enhanced, web-hybrid, or web-based, must be equivalent. The courses must all contain and assess the same course objectives at the same level. The department chair shall ensure that the syllabus for every class in whatever format complies with university policies and that grading policies and procedures are consistent with expected learning outcomes stated in the course syllabus. Course Syllabi shall be revised as necessary to reflect any changes in the schedule of on-campus class sessions.

Two items are recommended to be added to the university policy on Course Description and Syllabi (Faculty Handbook Section 6.3.1) to read:

12. statement regarding requirements for participation in class activities and shall provide a schedule of the dates and times for all on-campus sessions.
13. statement notifying students of any software and hardware required for participation in the course.

WEB-HYBRID COURSE PRICING

Web-Hybrid Course fees shall be established to support additional technology support, increased demand on support staff, and meet current pricing standards, including the fee paid to eCollege under the current contract.

BANNER SYSTEM

Web-Hybrid Courses shall be classified as schedule type WH with section numbers designated in the 700s in the Banner System and in the official Schedule of Classes.

No modifications are anticipated in the Banner System to accommodate the offering of Web-Hybrid Courses.

SCHEDULING OF CLASSES FOR WEB-HYBRID COURSES

The Schedule of Classes shall indicate the proportion of class sessions that will be held online.