

ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY
DISTANCE EDUCATION PROCEDURES MANUAL



2010

**ALABAMA A&M UNIVERSITY
DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

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DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Alabama A&M University constantly strives to offer the highest quality educational experience to all of its students, whether it be in the traditional mode of classroom instruction or in alternative teaching methodologies, such as distance education. In an effort to reach more students, the university is making more of its course offerings available in the distance education format.

As defined by the Commission on Colleges, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (See Appendix 1), distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may employ correspondence study, or audio, or video, or computer technologies. Alabama A&M University employs all of these technologies in course delivery. This manual explains the policies and procedures which will be used in our distance education programs. These policies and procedures are congruent with those of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (See Appendix 2.).

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of offering courses via distance education at Alabama A&M University is to provide educational opportunities to as many people as possible. Utilization of the various formats for distance education (e.g., correspondence courses, tele-courses and internet-based courses) allows the university to be all-inclusive in its outreach to current and potential students.

1.2 Mission

The mission of the Alabama A&M University Distance Education Program is to expand access to the high quality education courses and programs offered by the university to students who cannot or for various reasons choose not to enroll for the university's on-campus offerings.

This program which includes courses offered in a variety of formats--correspondence courses, tele-courses, and Internet-based courses--is consistent with the university's mission to provide comprehensive outreach programs.

1.3 Program name

The name of the distance education program at the university will be AAMU Online.

1.4 Administration

Distance education at the university will be administered by the Office of Distance Education (ODE). The ODE is administratively in the Center for Instructional Technology and Media Services, a part of the Centers of Excellence for Teaching and Learning (CETL, See Appendix 3), which reports directly to the Office of Academic Affairs.

The ODE is staffed by a director and a technical assistant. Administrative services are provided by the CETL administrative assistant. Student assistants work in conjunction with Information Technology Services to man the Help Desk dedicated to distance education. The responsibilities of ODE include maintaining and updating

the course management system (s) used by the university, maintaining a technical Help Desk, offering faculty sessions on developing and teaching online courses and certifying faculty for online course delivery.

1.5 University commitment

The University shall assure that the institution's administrative policies and procedures allow for an effective and efficient distance education support infrastructure with sufficient resource allocation to maintain the quality of offerings and services.

The University shall maintain a central repository for distance education program information (the Office of Distance Education) and a support structure for facilitating the development and refinement of distance education programs, policies, procedures, and services university-wide.

Since the mission of AAMU Online is to deliver high-quality and affordable educational services to learners who use this service, ensure that the academic quality of distance education programs is a high priority. To help accomplish this objective, the academic programs offered through AAMU Online are committed to the principles set forth in the Distance Education policy statement of the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (Appendix 1) and those of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (Appendix 2). AAMU Online courses and programs undergo the same academic review and scrutiny as academic programs offered on Alabama A&M University's traditional campus. In addition, AAMU Online provides the same level of support services the faculty and students receive on campus. AAMU Online has the administrative infrastructure (guidelines and policies for instruction), technology infrastructure (internet access, computing/networking standards, help desk services), faculty support (including access to and training in a variety of instructional media, library and other required resources), and student support services (advising, placement testing, library support, technical support) necessary to meet the needs of distance education students.

In accordance with the Distance Education policy statement of the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, all distance education courses and programs will be assessed and evaluated on a regular basis. All AAMU Online instructors are expected to support and assist with assessment procedures designed to evaluate academic rigor, educational effectiveness, and student satisfaction.

The university is committed to using its on-campus full-time faculty for distance education instruction whenever possible. When on-campus full-time faculty are not available or when adjunct professors with unusual expertise are deemed to be a better choice, the university will have the option of using them if they meet the qualifications outlined in the current Faculty/Administrative Staff Handbook which are consistent with the criteria used in campus-based courses of the regular academic program. Academic departments will retain control of faculty selection for their courses. **On-line courses will carry the same weight as traditionally taught courses when a faculty member's workload is tabulated.**

1.6 Periodic Review of Policies and Procedures

The policies and procedures stated in this manual will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

2.0 Distance Education Courses

With the growth and rapid speed of the Internet, web-based courses have increased steadily in number. The nature of web-based courses varies with the needs of the instructor and students. In some cases, the instructor places 100% of the course on the web site and the students complete the course work at their own convenience. In other courses, the instructor may require students to meet at a given time in a chat room intended specifically to provide interaction between students and the instructor. Web-based instruction may indeed be a component

of a traditional course, teleconference or interactive video instruction. In some instances students will be required to come to campus for the opening session and to take one or more examinations.

2.1 Classifying Courses

Alabama A&M University policy requires that all courses in which 80% or more of the class meetings are replaced by distance education be identified as a distance education course (See definitions of course types in Appendix 4.). In addition, AAMU charges a distance education fee for all courses classified as distance education. These courses are placed in the semester schedule according to the designation in the comment section and repeated in the Distance Education Section of the course schedule. It is important to note that should circumstances prevent the delivery of a distance education course after it has been placed in the schedule, the course must be cancelled, and students notified in accordance with policies and procedures that are outlined in this document. It is not permissible to simply change the format to a non-distance education course.

Virtually any discipline area can adapt some traditional courses for delivery via the Internet. Numerous examples exist in areas such as business, education, humanities, science and mathematics, engineering, and technology. Courses that include field practice, internship and clinical experiences, and laboratories can be augmented by distance education.

AAMU faculty and administration realize that the decision to use distance education must be made on a course-by-course basis, with consideration given to the content of the course, the needs of the learners, and the flexibility of the delivery system.

In all circumstances, distance education should be appropriate for the content and the level of students being taught. The quality standards for designing and delivering distance education that are outlined in this document apply to all classes and courses which incorporate the instructional techniques above.

2.2 Course Offerings

Courses delivered via distance education shall be regular AAMU academic department courses approved through the usual curriculum approval processes as defined by the appropriate academic units. There shall be no distinction in quality or standards of excellence between courses offered through distance education and those offered on campus. Courses offered via distance education shall have the same rigor and expected outcomes as resident offerings.

Distance education courses shall carry the same curriculum prerequisites as traditional courses. However, non-degree (special) students will be allowed to demonstrate to the course instructor the necessary background for successful matriculation in a particular course. The nature of this demonstration will be at the discretion of the instructor.

2.3 Course Approvals

When a course is reconfigured for delivery via distance education methods, it shall be reviewed by the appropriate curriculum review procedures, outlined by the specific department and school, and by the Office of Academic Affairs (Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee or Graduate Council).

2.4 Course Evaluation and Maintenance

Distance education course offerings shall be evaluated according to the course evaluation procedures in effect for on-campus courses.

Additional items to be evaluated shall include the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery systems, academic resources, student services, and access to faculty.

Records of evaluations and the analyses of the evaluations must be kept on file, as well as documentation of the proactive use of the results of the evaluations in the enhancement of course offerings.

2.5 Procedures for Scheduling Distance Education Courses

Proposals for the development and delivery of distance education courses will follow the same procedures and abide by the same policies as traditional courses. Departments should evaluate the distance education course proposals for appropriateness and only proposals demonstrating comparable content to on-campus courses and sufficient rigor should be approved for delivery via distance education. Proposals for all new courses must include the following information and be forwarded to the appropriate office and/or committee for review and approval (including the Office of Distance Education).

- A. Justification for the proposed distance education course.
- B. A full syllabus (in the same format as for a traditional course) outlining the topics to be covered in the course and how contact hours will be addressed.
- C. A copy of the syllabus.
- D. Description of the delivery mechanism to be used

A statement is needed on what delivery system will be used (e.g., Blackboard, compressed video, etc.) and whether adequate access to technology and resources needed to deliver the course is available, or a statement outlining how this will be resolved prior to the beginning of the course.

E. Assessment Method

A description of assessment methods (including pre-assessment of student capability to succeed in the distance education course) and how those methods will be implemented (e.g., papers submitted via email, tests given online, etc.) should be included.

- F. Interaction methods. The course syllabus will describe how faculty will interact with students and how students will interact with each other.
- G. Sources of course materials (e.g., created, textbooks publishers, e-journals, etc.). Course materials will be listed on the course syllabus and, when needed, a description of them will be provided.
- H. Proposed class size with rationale.

To encourage high quality course offerings, proposals for new distance education courses and distance education courses with a change in course delivery and/or change in instructor must be approved in the semester

prior to the semester of course delivery to allow for sufficient instructor training and course development for placement on the web.

Once the course has been approved at the department and school levels, and by the Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee or the Graduate Council, it should then be submitted to the Registrar's Office to be placed on the schedule

When the course has been submitted through supervisory channels to the Registrar's Office, the course instructor must complete the Distance Education Course Fact Sheet giving basic information about the course. Instructors should clearly state the course requirements as well as minimum requirements for hardware and software. Further information on the course such as a syllabus, textbooks, or other web pages created by the instructor can be linked to the Fact Sheet web page.

Both the submission of the distance education course schedule form and the submission of the Course Fact Sheet are important steps essential to documenting quality control over distance education delivery and adequate assessment of student prerequisite skills for success in distance education.

2.6 Accessibility

A number of accessibility issues require accommodation in the design and implementation of distance education courses for special needs students. Resources are available in the Office of Distance Education to assist faculty with appropriate design strategies.

2.7 Institutional Accommodation

Unless otherwise stated, all Board and university policies, standards, and guidelines for on- and off-campus instruction apply to distance education.

All academic units of the university have an opportunity to participate in providing distance education programs and are encouraged to provide distance education wherever there is a need.

Current programmatic and administrative procedures exist to accommodate persons who may not have easy access to traditional campus-based study at AAMU due to constraints of time, distance, disability, and personal and professional issues.

To be in compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, all programs, services, and activities offered by AAMU must be accessible to and usable by persons with documented disabilities who have met the technical and academic standards for admission.

The distance education program supports the university's commitment to ensuring an equitable academic experience for students with disabilities and will be responsive to requests for reasonable accommodations, regardless of the type of instructional delivery system being utilized. Online courses are required to be ADA compliant. For additional information on accommodation services, contact Special Student Services at (256) 372-4263.

3.0 DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

3.1 Degree Program Offerings

Degree programs offered via distance education shall be consistent with the role and mission of AAMU and the offering units. There shall be no distinctions in content between programs offered through distance education and those offered on campus. Only approved programs offered on campus shall be offered via distance education. Selection of programs to be offered via distance education is the purview of the appropriate academic unit.

Qualified faculty will provide oversight of a program that is offered via distance education to ensure currency and quality of the program, its courses, and resources.

Each program of study shall be coherent and complete and shall result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded. Certificate programs are offered by the Office of Instructional Technology, Distance Education and Extended Studies.

Prior to implementation, proposed distance education programs are to be reviewed and approved by the university process as adopted by the Board of Trustees.

3.2 Program Accreditation and Approvals

As necessary and appropriate, a proposed program shall complete the approval processes of state, regional, or other agencies or associations germane to the conduct of the academic program at AAMU (i.e., ACHE, SACS).

Distance education programs shall meet the same requirements as resident programs holding special accreditations.

3.3 Program Maintenance and Continuation

Once implemented, the offering academic units and the university commit to ongoing support, both financial and technical, and to the continuation of the program for a period sufficient to enable students to complete the program.

4.0 DISTANCE EDUCATION FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

4.1 General Policies

Policies governing financial operations of distance education are approved by the Board of Trustees. Policy elements include the following:

- Distance education programs and courses shall be self-supporting.
- The offering academic department and appropriate dean's office have the responsibility for assuring the financial stability of a distance education offering in accordance with university policies and procedures.
- The university shall maintain a policy of allowing adequate revenue from a distance education program to be distributed to the offering unit in order to cover course and program costs.

- Tuition for distance education courses is the same as tuition for on-campus courses. However, the special distance education fee may vary depending on the cost of delivering the course.
- The maximum allowable tuition rate for distance education courses may be changed each year based on the percentage change in tuition approved by the Board of Trustees.
- All program and course costs, excluding books and materials, shall be calculated as part of the total delivery costs and expressed as a single, per semester hour tuition rate.
- Policies regarding payment of tuition and tuition refunds shall generally follow the campus-based policies unless different policies are approved as part of the program proposal procedure.

4.2 Financial Support, Budgeting, and Fees for Distance Education Courses

4.2.1 Funding and Financial Administration of Distance Education Courses

Unless a specific exception has been made by the Office of Academic Affairs, the development and delivery of distance education courses are expected to be funded on a self-supporting basis from course revenues or external sources. In many cases, the Office of Distance Education (ODE) and AAMU Online may be able to provide financial assistance for the support of web-based courses after a budget plan for the courses has been approved, as described below.

The Office of Distance Education will serve as financial administrator for web-based courses unless special funding arrangements have been approved in advance. This includes approving online course budgets, maintaining records of revenue generation, paying expenses (other than specific expense items delegated to individual departments or schools), and providing an accounting of program activity.

4.2.2 Budget Plan for Each Course and/or Program

Prior to course development, marketing or implementation of any internet-based course to be coordinated through AAMU Online, a budget plan must be developed for each course and approved by ODE.

Budgets for web-based courses must take into consideration both direct and indirect costs, as well as enrollment minimums. This will include expenses for line items such as faculty compensation for course development (where applicable), fringe benefits, marketing, Help Desk costs, equipment maintenance, and course development and technical/administrative resources for faculty and students provided through the ODE. The course approval process will be contingent on development of a satisfactory budget plan, including a contingency plan in the event that enrollments do not meet budget projections.

A model for developing budgets for AAMU Online will be provided upon request, and an ODE representative will be available to work individually with those who need assistance with the budget planning process.

After a satisfactory budget plan has been approved, ODE may agree to provide “advance” or “up front” funds necessary to cover program development expenses and/or marketing costs. These funds are to be rebated to ODE from course revenue.

4.2.3 Tuition & Fees for Distance Education Courses

All fees for distance education must be consistent with policies of the Board of Trustees. As such, distance education course tuition is based upon the current Office of the Comptroller published Tuition & Fees schedule. An additional fee will be added to the traditional Undergraduate and Graduate rates for each distance education course.

Any other fees to be charged in conjunction with web-based courses must be approved in advance as part of the budget planning process for each course and must be consistent with university policies and procedures. ODE will review and coordinate all requests for special differential fees and/or supplementary fees.

4.3 Contingency Plan For Smaller-than-Expected Enrollments

When a distance education course is funded on a self-supporting budget model and has little or no funding from external sources, a contingency plan should be developed during the budget approval process to address “go/no go” decisions in the event that course enrollments are smaller than anticipated. If course enrollments are marginal and thus insufficient to cover program expenses outlined in the budget plan, a major effort will still be made by ODE to avoid canceling the course or asking a faculty member to teach at a reduced pay rate (if taught by an adjunct or on an overload basis). However, in cases where enrollments fall far short of expectations, or a pattern of marginal or low enrollments has developed over time, financial adjustments will have to be made or the course cancelled unless some form of external funding is available. A final “go/no go” decision will be made by the director of ODE in consultation with the course instructor and the Office of Academic Affairs. AAMU Online courses taught during the summer session will be contingent on a minimum enrollment being established prior to the course and the instructor being scheduled.

5 FACULTY AND FACULTY SERVICES

5.1 Faculty Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

All courses offered via distance education shall have a qualified faculty member approved and assigned by the appropriate department head.

Faculty shall retain the primary responsibility and authority for the academic management and oversight of distance education courses and programs.

The assigned faculty member shall have full control of the content of the distance education course material.

The faculty member shall be expected to deliver accurate and current information and shall not include in the content of the course anything which the faculty member knows to constitute libel, invasion of privacy, infringement of copyright or other literary rights, or otherwise violate the legal rights of any persons.

The faculty member must respond to a student’s email query within 24 hours.

The faculty member retains the authority and the responsibility to produce any revised or supplemental materials in order to maintain or enhance the accuracy and quality of the distance education course. Expected updating of course material will be planned and methodically implemented with the appropriate support unit.

The intellectual property rights of faculty shall be governed by the policies in the Alabama A&M University Policy on Intellectual Properties (See Faculty/Administrative Staff Handbook).

5.2 Faculty Qualifications

The faculty assigned to distance education courses and programs shall have the same profile (expertise, experience, rank) as the faculty assigned to on-campus classes.

5.3 Faculty Support

Faculty shall have appropriate services and resources to assure their effectiveness as distance educators and to assure an effective and efficient teaching and learning environment. The University's distance education infrastructure shall provide development opportunities for faculty that will increase their awareness of distance education methodologies and improve their instructional skills in this medium.

The University shall provide adequate equipment, software, and communications access to faculty to support interaction with students, cooperating institutions and other faculty for approved programs and courses.

A ODE staff member shall be available for each course to provide design consultation, to aid the faculty member in the arrangement of services, to coordinate the production of course materials, to provide support during course implementation and evaluation in order to allow the faculty member to focus as much as possible on the content and delivery of instruction and on interaction with and assessment of the learning of the students.

In cases in which a faculty member must be absent from class and decides to use distance education technology to replace the face-to-face meeting, it is the policy of the university that the faculty member must file a leave form with the department head explaining the reason for the absence and how the lost time will be made up. (This is the same policy required for any absence from on-campus courses.) Distance education should never be substituted for a planned class meeting unless the faculty member is confident that students will have access to the technology and can reasonably be successful in meeting the class expectations.

5.4 Faculty Certification

Faculty certification in the use of distance education technology and methodology is required and certification will be verified by the Office of Distance Education before a faculty member can teach a distance education course. The Office of Distance Education should be contacted for specific dates for certification opportunities and processes.

5.5 Faculty Recognition

Faculty shall be given appropriate recognition of teaching and scholarly activities related to distance education programs commensurate with their efforts in traditional activities and programs.

Faculty may be remunerated for any additional effort in serving distance education students as appropriate for the particular policies set by the individual department or school and in accordance with established University policy (see section 9 on Faculty Compensation).

6.0 COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DELIVERY OF WEB-BASED COURSES

6.1 Course Management System Selection

The Distance Education Policies and Procedures (DEPP) Committee (advisory to the Office of Distance Education) determines which course management systems (CMSs) AAMU On-line uses. Presently, Blackboard Academic Suite version 9.1 is the CMS of choice. All new development will be done through the use of

Blackboard Academic Suite. Unless a specific exception has been granted, adjunct faculty employed to teach or develop AAMU distance education courses will be required to adhere to the same guidelines as regular faculty regarding the selection and use of course management systems as well as minimum computer and connectivity requirements.

6.2 Use of Alternative CMS

Faculty members requesting an exception to using a CMS other than one already approved by the DEPP Committee must gain approval from the AAMU distance education support staff and the DEPP Committee.

6.3 Minimum Computer Requirements and Internet Connectivity Requirements for Distance Education Students

Unless specific exceptions are granted, faculty will be required to develop and deliver distance education courses which can be successfully implemented by utilizing the minimum computer requirements and minimum Internet connectivity requirements established for AAMU distance education students.

Students must be informed of minimum configurations prior to their registering for distance education courses.

Published minimum configurations must be accurate.

6.4 Policy Compliance

Faculty should be aware that the same policies which apply to general university usage of the computer network also apply to the delivery of distance education courses.

The University's current information technology policies are published at: http://www.aamu.edu/portal/page/portal/IT_Services/Documentation_Policies.

Special permission is required for distance education courses that place special demands on the University's computer network infrastructure. The request for permission of this kind should be included with the original proposal submitted for approval to teach a distance education course. If a request for special permission was not included in the original proposal and the course has already been approved, an additional request for special permission should be submitted as soon as possible to the Office of Distance Education.

7.0 STUDENTS AND STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Distance education students shall have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services and student rights appropriate to support their learning and successful matriculation and comparable to those offered to on-campus users. Services should include the following: admissions, cashiers, accounts payable (refunds, billing, etc.), bookstore, course catalog, academic advising, technical assistance, registration (Add/Drop), withdrawal from courses, transfers, reinstatements, financial aid information, academic calendar, student records, library services, services for disabled students (American Disabilities Act accommodation), policies, procedures, and protocols for taking courses.

7.1 Student Background

Degree program entrance requirements for distance education students shall be the same as they are for campus-based students. Distance education students shall meet the same course prerequisites as do campus-based students.

7.2 Coordinating Procedural Information Distributed to Distance Education Students

Distance education students will receive procedural and policy information which is consistent, reliable, and, where possible, tailored to meet their needs. Detailed information about online course requirements and recommendations will be provided online. Faculty members and departmental personnel involved in offering distance education courses will provide information about online course requirements and recommendations and are required to stay informed of procedural information concerning distance education at AAMU.

Students shall receive from the course instructor clear, accurate, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, required technological competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, availability of academic resources, availability of student services, program/course costs and payment policies, dates, timeframes and deadlines, academic policies and appeal processes, disability accommodations and procedures for accessing these resources.

7.3 Help Desk Services

AAMU will provide a special Help Desk for distance education students, designed to serve as a central point of contact for both technical and non-technical needs.

When Help Desk personnel are not personally on duty, telephone and/or online service will be provided to assist students with their needs.

7.4 Advising Services

Alabama A&M University distance education students have access to experienced advisers through email, telephone, and videoconferencing services. Students are referred to the appropriate adviser or department by the course instructor. The advisor will be assigned by the department chairperson.

7.5 Textbook Resources

AAMU distance education students, as well as students on campus, can take advantage of the university's online bookstore located at <http://aamu.bkstore.com> . Students have the ability to place orders online for home delivery or store pickup.

7.6 Supplemental Course Materials

A special effort is made to provide distance education students with supplemental course materials. These materials may include special handouts developed by faculty, orientation and procedural information, videotapes, audiotapes, CD ROMs, etc. AAMU's Office of Distance Education staff will work closely with faculty members to help develop these resources and to assist with distribution to distance education students.

7.7 Library Resources

A wide range of electronic resources are available from the AAMU's J.F. Drake Memorial Learning Resources Center (LRC) for use by faculty and students. These resources include electronic access to the LRC's catalog known as AMCAT, reference resources, and licensed citation, abstracts, indexes, and full-text databases. For more information, faculty and students are referred to the LRC's website or to the Reference Department.

There are a number of electronic databases and articles from journals and newspapers which are available to distance education students. Students who take online classes may gain access to these databases after they have been authenticated via a proxy server. The same username and password which is used to access other information such as email and their student information system is what is used for authentication.

Students shall be provided distance education library services information via a short handout, Web, or other means to be included by the instructor with the course materials. Information regarding Web access to the university network should be included as well as the Distance Education librarian's contact information, and interlibrary loan forms. The ODE will provide this information in a package that faculty can email or ship to students.

Faculty shall be encouraged to incorporate the use of library resources in their distance education courses.

The university shall maintain a Distance Education Librarian Liaison to promote and coordinate library services programs, agreements and policies/procedures for distance education students and faculty. These services are expected to include document delivery, electronic access to reference services, reserves, interlibrary loan, and a Web page that includes ready links to services and contacts and self-help modules.

The university library shall retain statistical information regarding library usage by distance education students, types of services requested and used, problems encountered, etc.

7.8 Course Registration

Registration is available online for all students via the Banner system. The process is the same for distance education students as for on-campus students. Banner IDs and campus email addresses which are required for registration will be provided to distance education students in a timely manner.

Difficulties and/or questions about the registration process should be referred to the Registrar's Office (256-372-5254).

7.9 Orientation

Orientation will be provided for all distance education students online by the course instructor. The orientation is designed to familiarize new and prospective students with the online learning environment. A prepared package will be available from the ODE that can be distributed by the faculty member.

7.10 Non-degree (Independent Learning) Students Enrolled in Distance Education Courses

Students who have been admitted to the university as non-degree may take courses via AAMU Online. They should identify themselves as non-degree to the instructor. If they are taking a certificate offering course, they should be registered through the Office of Extended Studies.

8.0 FACULTY COMPENSATION

The compensation guidelines provided here are intended to address typical situations where expenses for distance education courses are expected to be paid. It is also recognized that some distance education courses may receive financial support from external grants or sponsored projects for course development and/or delivery.

In these exceptional cases, some flexibility may be given for approval of alternative compensation by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

8.1 Letter of Agreement

Compensation, course ownership issues, and matters related to newly developed courses will be delineated in a Letter of Agreement for Course Development initiated between the course developer and the University. (See Appendix 5). In situations where a previously developed course is taught by someone other than the original developer, a brief Letter of Understanding for Course Delivery will be used to clarify the terms of compensation and related matters. (See Appendix 6). Modified versions of the Letter of Understanding will also be used for adjunct faculty employed for teaching a previously developed distance education course, and in cases where the compensation delineated in the original Letter of Agreement needs to be modified (e.g., in the case of summer instruction.)

8.2 Compensation for Course Development

The compensation rate is the amount of money paid per credit hour and is fixed by the Board of Trustees. The faculty will be compensated for course development at the existing compensation rate. (See Appendix 7 for existing compensation rates.)

In keeping with the university's instructional technology goals, faculty are encouraged to expand and strengthen their instructional technology skills. As an incentive to accomplish this goal in regard to distance education courses, the following compensation and reassigned time arrangements apply.

The specific amount of compensation for course development will depend on whether or not the development is done on an in-load basis (reassigned time) or an overload basis. To receive compensation for course development on an overload basis requires special approval as indicated below.

During the academic year, if the faculty member is granted reassigned time (one 3-credit hour course for one term) to develop a distance education course during the fall or spring semesters (i.e., done on an in-load basis), no additional compensation will be paid to the faculty member, but the academic department may receive resources to hire an adjunct faculty member, if necessary. Prior approval from the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs is required.

A faculty member may develop two distance education courses on an in-load basis during a fall or spring semester, provided she/he has already fulfilled all contractual agreements regarding the development and delivery of any previous AAMU distance education courses, and provided that he/she has the approval of his/her department head.

If course development is approved for the summer semester, the faculty member will receive compensation at the rate of the existing summer compensation rate. Faculty will be eligible to assume summer school assignments up to a maximum load of nine (9) credit hours including the equivalent hours of the distance education course being developed. Exceptions to this credit hour maximum must be approved by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

A faculty member may be approved to develop and/or teach more than one distance education course during the summer. For example, he/she may be approved to develop one course and to teach one course, or to develop two courses or to teach two courses. The compensation for the development of multiple distance education courses is contingent on any previously developed AAMU distance education courses having already been delivered as scheduled, and upon the faculty member's summer workload not exceeding nine (9) credit hours.

8.3 Compensation for Course Delivery/Instruction/Teaching

It is anticipated that most AAMU distance education courses will be taught as an in-load course assignment. However, circumstances may occur where it will be necessary to have a distance education course taught on an overload basis. When that is the case, the faculty will be compensated for teaching a course at the existing compensation rate if taught on an overload basis. (See Appendix 7 for existing compensation rates.).

8.4 Compensation for Adjunct Faculty

Per course pay for adjunct faculty who teach distance education courses will be the same as compensation paid to full-time AAMU faculty who teach these courses during the fall or spring semesters as an overload. Adjunct faculty must agree to specific enrollment minimums for each distance education course taught. Normally, these enrollment minimums will be finalized during the employment process and prior to advertising the course.

Exceptions to the above compensation rates must be approved by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.

8.5 Compensation for Department Heads and Other Faculty on Twelve-Month Contracts

When teaching an AAMU distance education course as part of his/her regular workload, department heads and faculty on twelve-month contracts will be eligible for compensation consistent with that paid to nine-month faculty when developing/teaching a distance education course on an in-load/overload basis. Academic personnel on twelve-month contracts can teach no more than one distance education course per term when additional compensation is paid.

9.0 COURSE OWNERSHIP AND LETTERS OF AGREEMENT WITH FACULTY

The guidelines and procedures stated in this manual, including course ownership and letters of agreement, will be reviewed and updated annually.

9.1 Course Ownership

Ownership of distance education courses shall be in compliance with the university's intellectual property policy as stated in the Faculty/Administrative Staff Handbook and as approved by the Board of Trustees.

9.2 Letter of Agreement

Faculty who develop distance education courses coordinated through their academic departments and through AAMU Online will be required to sign a Letter of Agreement which addresses the following: services to be provided by the faculty member and the university, course review and approval responsibilities, course assessment provisions, the respective rights of the faculty member and the university related to the use of the course and course content, and any compensation agreements with the faculty member (See Appendix 7).

9.3 Letter of Understanding

Faculty who agree to teach an AAMU Online course but have not been the developer of the course will be asked to sign a Letter of Understanding which addresses topics such as compensation, support services, teaching requirements, etc.

9.4 Non-competition Policy

According to Section 6.4 (Outside Employment) of the Faculty/Administrative Staff Handbook, university employees may not participate in activities that compete with the University for their personal gain or the gain of another. Therefore, faculty members who develop distance education courses are not permitted to provide those courses to be offered by other institutions or entities without the approval of the Office of Academic Affairs.

10.0 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

10.1 Evaluation of course offerings

Each distance education course shall be evaluated by students in the same manner as on-campus course offerings. Additional response items shall include the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery systems, access to academic resources, and access to student services.

Program heads shall review evaluation results with assigned faculty, support staff, and cooperating unit heads as appropriate to facilitate the continual refinement of distance education course offerings.

Consistent with the policies governing on-campus course evaluations, documentation of distance education course evaluations and of the proactive use of the results to enhance course quality shall be maintained in the offering unit office. Summary reports shall be forwarded annually to the Office of Assessment for inclusion in the Institutional Effectiveness report.

10.2 Assessment of Programs

Each distance education program shall be assessed in the same manner and generally at the same frequency as the specific department's assessment of programs offered on campus. Elements covered in the assessment shall include student learning outcomes and retention.

The program head shall review assessment results with assigned faculty, distance education and technical staff, and cooperating service unit heads as appropriate to facilitate the continual refinement of the distance education program.

Documentation of this process and of the proactive use of the results to enhance program quality shall be maintained in the offering unit office and be available for review per university guidelines on assessments.

10.3 Outcomes

Student learning in distance education programs shall compare favorably to student learning in campus-based programs. Documentation of outcomes shall be maintained in the offering unit office and be available for review.

Appendix 1



*The Commission on Colleges
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane
Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097*

DISTANCE EDUCATION

- Policy Statement -

Definition of Distance Education

For the purposes of the Commission's accreditation review, distance education is defined as a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may employ correspondence study, or audio, video, or computer technologies.

Policy

Institutions must ensure that their distance education courses and programs comply with the *Principles of Accreditation*. The referencing of the particular requirements listed in this policy does not imply that they are the only requirements of the *Principles* that apply to distance education. This policy applies to degree and certificate programs and their courses.

I. Curriculum and Instruction

Programs and courses provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty and among students. (CS 3.4.5)*

The faculty assumes responsibility for and exercises oversight of distance education, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction. (CS 3.4.1 and CS 3.4.12)

The technology used is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the programs and courses and expectations concerning the use of such technology are clearly communicated to students. (CS 3.4.12)

There is currency of materials, programs, and courses. (CS 3.5.3 and CS 3.6.4)

Distance education policies are clear concerning ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the use of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products. (CS 3.2.14)

Faculty support services are appropriate and specifically related to distance education. (CS 3.4.9)

Faculty who teach in distance education programs and courses receive appropriate training. (CS 3.7.3)

***Citations refer to the Principles of Accreditation: *Principle of Integrity (PI)*, *Core Requirements (CR)*, *Comprehensive Standards (CS)*, and *Federal Requirements (FR)*.**

Admission and recruitment policies and decisions take into account the capability of students to succeed in distance education programs. (CS 3.4.3)

Comparability of distance education programs to campus-based programs and courses is ensured by the evaluation of educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction. (CS 3.3.1)

The integrity of student work and the credibility of degrees and credits are ensured. (PI 1.1, CS 3.4.6, CS 3.5.3, and CS 3.6.4)

II. Library and Learning Resources

Students have access to and can effectively use appropriate library resources. (CS 3.8.2 and CR 2.9)

Course requirements ensure that students make appropriate use of learning resources. (CS 3.8.2)

Access is provided to laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the courses or programs. (CS 3.8.1 and CS 3.8.2)

III. Student Services

Students have adequate access to the range of services appropriate to support the programs, including admissions, financial aid, academic advising, and delivery of course materials, and placement and counseling. (CR 2.10)

Students have an adequate procedure for resolving their complaints. (CS 4.5)

Advertising, recruiting, and admissions information adequately and accurately represent the programs, requirements, and services available to students. (PI 1.1 and FR 4.6)

Students enrolled in distance education courses are able to use the technology employed, have the equipment necessary to succeed, and are provided assistance in using the technology employed. (CS 3.4.12)

IV. Facilities and Finances

Equipment and technical expertise required for distance education are available. (CS 3.4.12)

Long-range planning, budgeting, and policy development processes reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment and other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the distance education program. (CS 3.3.1, CS 3.8.3, and CS 3.11.3)

*Adopted: Commission on Colleges, June 1997
Updated in accord with the revised Principles, December 2006*

Appendix 2

Alabama Commission on Higher Education Policy on Distance Education

Definition of Distance Education: A formal educational process using technological delivery in which instruction occurs where students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ audio, video, or computer technologies. Distance education, distance learning, and e-learning are recognized by the Commission as being synonymous terms. Academic courses or programs are considered to be distance education entities when over fifty percent of the content is delivered through distance education modes. [Based on the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges (SACS/COC) definitions.]

The Role of Distance Education in Alabama Higher Education: The Commission on Higher Education supports the use of distance education by public higher education institutions in the state as one means of providing higher education opportunities to Alabama citizens and to other students who are enrolled at Alabama public institutions.

Institutional Responsibility: Institutions are to set tuition for distance education offerings, ensuring that they meet statutory requirements. Institutions providing distance education courses or programs are expected to be in full compliance with the standards and/or requirements of any appropriate governing or accreditation authorities.

Commission Responsibility: Units of instruction offered by Alabama public institutions and funded by state appropriations, including distance education offerings, are subject to Commission approval by statute. The Commission also has statutory responsibility for data collection related to funding recommendations, statewide planning, and various state and national reports. Therefore, the Commission's distance education policy addresses three fundamental areas, listed below.

Relationship to the ACHE Standard: For the purpose of inclusion in state formula calculations, student data from distance education offerings must meet one of the following criteria [See implementation below]:

1. Students who are enrolled at Alabama public higher education institutions and whose legal permanent address is within the state of Alabama;
2. Students who are enrolled at Alabama public higher education institutions and whose domicile is within the state of Alabama;
3. Students who are enrolled at Alabama public higher education institutions who are residents of counties in adjacent states within fifty miles of a campus of an institution, provided that the campus existed and operated as of January 1, 1996 (Fifty-Mile County). (Administrative Code, Chapter 300-2-3, Rule .03)

Data Collection: The Commission will collect data as deemed necessary on all distance learning students enrolled in credit courses at Alabama public institutions to meet federal, regional, and state requirements.

Relationship to the Commission's Academic Program Inventory:

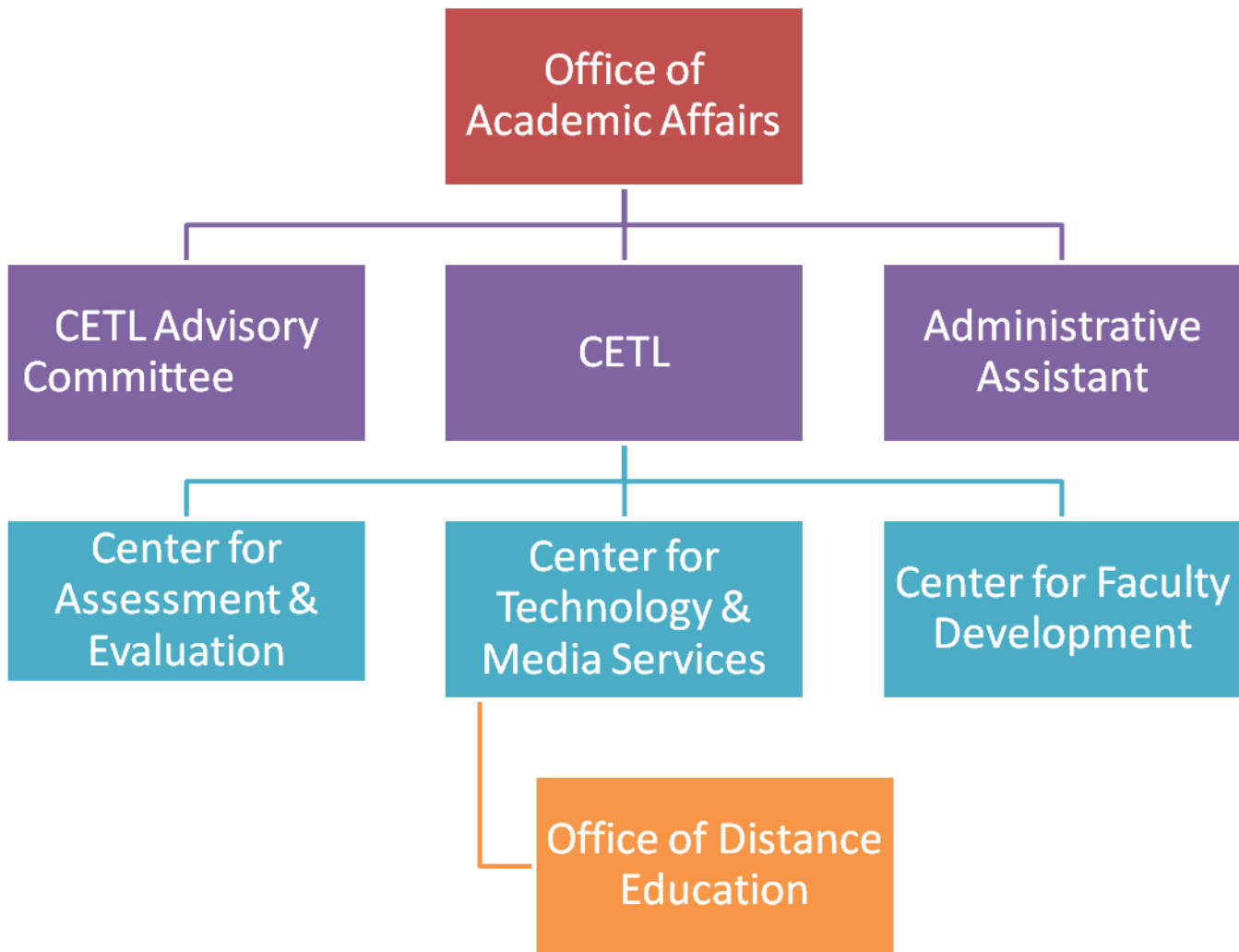
1. In order for student data from such programs to be included in state formula calculations and any Commission data collection, academic programs offered through distance education by Alabama public institution must have been approved by the Commission on Higher Education and must be listed in the Commission's Academic Program Inventory with no restriction to a military base.
2. Programs approved by the Commission on Higher Education do not require additional Commission approval to be configured and offered as distance education programs. However, institutions preparing to offer existing programs as distance education offerings must report this intent to the Commission prior to implementation.
3. The Commission on Higher Education does not require approval of individual courses for distance education purposes.

Implementation: For data collection purposes, implementation in relation to the ACHE Standard will begin Academic Year 2008-09 (FY2010-11) and will not be fully implemented until Fiscal Year 2012-13 Unified Budget Recommendation.

Approved June 22, 2007

Appendix 3

Centers of Excellence for Teaching & Learning (CETL) Organizational Chart



Appendix 4

Classification of Courses*

Proportion of content delivered online	Type of course	Typical description
0%	Traditional	Course with no online technology used content is delivered in writing or orally.
1 to 29%	Web-facilitated	Course that uses web-based technology to facilitate what is essentially a face-to-face course. Uses a course management system (CMS) or web pages to post the syllabus and assignments, for example.
30 to 79%	Blended/Hybrid	Course that blends online and face-to-face delivery. Substantial proportion of the content is delivered online, typically uses online discussions, and typically has some face-to-face meetings.
80+%	Online	A course where most or all the content is delivered online. Typically have no face-to-face meetings.

*Definitions extracted from the SLOAN-C Publications, Making the Grade: Online Education in the United States 2006

APPENDIX 5

ALABAMA A & M UNIVERSITY ONLINE PROGRAM Letter of Agreement for Course Development and Delivery

TO: (Faculty Developer)
Department of _____
Alabama A & M University

This letter of agreement, when signed by the Faculty Developer and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs is binding on both parties, and cannot be modified except by the written agreement of both parties. Copies of the signed agreement shall be retained by both parties for future reference.

The purpose of this agreement is to set forth the understanding of Alabama A & M University and the Faculty Developer regarding their respective rights to the Web-based course identified below which has been or will be produced by the Faculty Developer. This agreement also applies to all supplementary course materials, both print and multi-media, developed for use with the web-based course. By executing this agreement, the parties agree that they shall have the rights set forth herein.

1. Description of Product and Instructional Services the Developer Will Provide.

The product consists of a substantially complete conversion and/or original creation of the _____ credit hour course entitled _____ to electronic format for delivery via the existing Course Management System as approved for use with the Alabama A & M University Online Program.

“Substantially complete” means complete except for those aspects of the course which the Faculty Developer, for instructional reasons, does not want to complete without student participation or feedback. The “course” will contain an online course policy statement as required by the AAMU Distance Education Policies and Procedures Manual, a syllabus, student assignments, and a list of any required materials not available online to be sent to the students, as well as any supplementary course materials, both print and multi-media, developed for student use. Alabama A & M University Online staff will assist faculty with obtaining necessary copyright permissions if material which requires copyright permission can be identified by specific deadlines established for this purpose. However, it is the Faculty Developer’s responsibility to obtain written copyright permissions where such are needed.

Instructional services consist of teaching this course, if needed, at least once upon completion of course development.

2. Description of Services and Payment

Alabama A & M University Online Will Provide:

- access to software (courseware) for course conversion to the online environment;
- technical instruction and support in learning to use the computer software;
- assistance with instructional design related to course development and/or conversion;
- limited scanning of text and graphic material for use online
- ongoing, course-related technical support for faculty when the course is being delivered, including “fixes” for software problems;
- assistance with course evaluation alternatives;

- staff assistance in obtaining required copyright permissions (contingent on deadlines being met for final identification of materials requiring copyright approvals);
- assistance with the production, duplication, and distribution of supplementary course materials, both print and multi-media (within agreed-on cost limits and deadlines); and
- a wide range of support services to assist online students, including a Help Desk, technical support, orientation materials, advising services, streamlined admission and registration services, an administrative coordinator, and others.

Compensation will be in accordance with approved policies found in the AAMU Distance Education Policies and Procedures Manual.

In addition, a statement acknowledging credit to the Faculty Developer for developing the original version of the online course will be included with the course as follows, “The online version of (course number: course name: _____) was originally developed by _____ with resource assistance from the Alabama A & M University Online Program and offered for the first time during the _____ Semester 20__.”

3. Course Review and Approval

Responsibility for the quality review and approval of Alabama A & M University Online courses resides with the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, the department head, and the dean of the school in which the course resides.

4. Course Conduct and Assessment

The Faculty Developer is expected to develop and teach his/her online course in accordance with the AAMU Policies and Procedures Manual. It is understood that the course is subject to Alabama A & M University Online policies related to low or marginal enrollments. The Faculty Developer will not impose an enrollment “cap” that is less than the enrollment figures approved as part of the online course proposal unless an explicit exception has been granted.

Since AAMU Online offers a variety of courses in different formats, Alabama A & M University Online staff, selected faculty and administrators will need first-hand knowledge of each course offered to effectively assist faculty in course review and assessment. The Faculty Developer / Instructor should, therefore, expect that all aspects of online courses except private mail exchanges between students and the instructor, or students and students, may be observed. In addition, in accord with standards outlined in the CBHE “Principles of Good Practice for Distance Learning and Web-Based Courses,” Alabama A & M University Online course instructors will be expected to support and assist with assessment procedures designed to evaluate the academic rigor, educational effectiveness, and student satisfaction of web-based courses.

5. Licensing Agreement for the Course and Course Content, and the Alabama A & M University Online “No Compete” Provision

Because you, as Faculty Developer, are choosing to utilize Alabama A & M University Online resources for the development and possible delivery of this course, Alabama A & M University needs to reserve certain rights to use the course and course content. The University has a need to be sure that the course is not being taught in competition with Alabama A & M University through other educational institutions or organizations. The Faculty developer hereby agrees to not provide the developed course material for use in any other academic or educational setting.

In consideration of the compensation and support which have been provided by Alabama A & M University, the Faculty Developer hereby grants Alabama A & M University and the appropriate academic department all rights for the Internet-based course which is being created under the terms of this agreement.

The parties agree that this letter of agreement is intended to constitute an agreement regarding creative works which involve some combination of individual initiatives and University support as described in the Alabama A & M University Faculty/Administrative Staff Handbook. It is also understood that, according to Section _____ of the Faculty Handbook, University employees may not participate in activities that compete with the University for their personal gain or the gain of another. Under the terms of the present agreement, it is therefore understood that you, as Faculty Developer, are not permitted to teach this course through other institutions or entities or to provide this course to other institutions or organizations for the purpose of being taught by a third party. This “no compete” provision applies to each academic term of the year, including the Summer Semester.

I have received and read a copy of this agreement, and understand that its provisions will cover my participation in the project identified above.

Faculty Developer

Date

Title/Department

I have read a copy of this agreement and approve the project, including the compensation arrangements identified above. I also recognize the obligation to offer this AAMU Online course as scheduled, especially if the course is part of a complete program or a planned sequence of courses.

Department Head

Date

College Dean

Date

Approved:

Associate Provost for Academic Affairs

Date

APPENDIX 6

Letter of Understanding

This Letter of Understanding, when signed by the Course Instructor and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, is binding on both parties and cannot be modified except by the written agreement of both parties.

I, the undersigned, understand that I am delivering a course that was developed by someone else and is the property of Alabama A&M University. As such, I agree that I will make no or only minor modifications to the course material unless I get written permission from the Director of the Office of Distance Education.

Signature of course instructor

Date

Signature of Associate Provost

Date

APPENDIX 7

ALABAMA A & M UNIVERSITY ONLINE PROGRAM Existing Faculty Compensation Rates for Course Development and Delivery

The existing compensation rate at Alabama A&M University is \$800 per credit hour for a course being developed or taught as an overload by a full-time faculty member or by an adjunct faculty member with a doctorate degree and \$600 with a master's degree.

Enrollment Based Compensation Rate (EBCR) is the rate of additional compensation per enrollment based on official enrollment data as of the fourth week census date. The existing EBCR at Alabama A&M University is \$18.33 per credit hour per enrollment. A faculty member teaching a three credit hour distance education course as part of his/her regular load, he/she will receive additional compensation of \$825 for a class with 15 enrollments, or \$1,100 for a class with 20 enrollments. The table below can be used to calculate the additional compensation to be paid for teaching distance education courses.