

SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS

Policy Manual

SUBJECT: Distance Education

NUMBER: 2:12

Scope: This Distance Education Policy applies to programs and courses offered for college credit through correspondence, electronic delivery, and off-campus delivery.

1. Purpose

The purpose of distance education is to provide broader access to credit bearing college level educational opportunities and to assist communities in making effective use of the resources of South Dakota's public universities.

2. Applicable Policies, Standards and Guidelines

Unless specifically exempted, all Board and campus policies, standards and guidelines for on campus instruction, including admissions requirements, course evaluation requirements, course prerequisites, faculty qualifications, access to appropriate student support services and instructional equipment, and student rights and responsibilities, also apply to distance education instruction.

3. Administration

- A. All distance education programs and courses, including correspondence study, should be coordinated in each institution under one authority such as a Dean or Director.
- B. In planning and executing distance education programs, the Dean/Director should work with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Deans and Department Heads on matters concerned with selection of courses and programs to be offered and recruitment of instructors. The Administrative Head (Dean or Division Head) of the unit in which a course is offered must recommend the course and faculty appointment to the Vice President for Academic Affairs or his/her designee. Where Graduate Courses are offered, the Graduate Dean, Director, or the Graduate Council must also approve the course offering and the instructor.
- C. An off-campus center is any location where programs (majors, minors, options, certificates) are offered by one or more institutions within the system. Centers may be established only with the permission of the Board of Regents and shall facilitate advising, counseling, and academic support assistance for students. Establishment of off-campus centers should be based on demand within the area served and feasibility determined by a careful marketing survey. All academic administration

and academic programming at off-campus centers shall be cleared through the Vice President for Academic Affairs at each institution.

4. Faculty

A. Qualifications and Appointment

1. Individuals who are not regular faculty members and who are appointed to teach a distance education course must meet the same qualifications as members of campus faculty. All such appointments must have the approval of the appropriate Dean(s) and the Vice President for Academic Affairs prior to employment being offered or the course being scheduled. University policies may also require approval at the department level.
2. The person teaching the course and meeting classes must be the individual whose name appears on the grade report (class roster) in the office of the registrar. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
3. Only persons with terminal degrees should teach graduate courses. Only persons with terminal degrees, or in special cases exceptional scholarly qualifications, may teach 700 level courses. In the latter case, exceptions must be approved by the Graduate Dean and Academic Vice President. Each course taught for graduate credit at the 500 or 600 level by faculty who do not hold a terminal degree or graduate faculty standing on a campus must have the recommendation of the Graduate Dean/Director and approval of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

B. Evaluation

Board of Regents and university policies governing faculty evaluation, including student evaluation of instruction, apply to off campus and distance education courses.

C. Compensation

Faculty compensation for faculty bargaining unit members teaching off-campus courses is addressed in the collective bargaining contract. Non-unit faculty members teaching off-campus courses shall be compensated under a plan of compensation approved by the Board.

5. Courses

A. Requirements

Institutions must be able to demonstrate that graduate and undergraduate courses have intellectual demands and requirements comparable to graduate and undergraduate courses offered on campus. Distance education courses should have equivalent standards, rigor, student outcomes, substance and assignments as courses offered on campus.

B. Assessment

Course and instructional program assessment policies of the university transcribing the course apply to off campus and distance education instruction.

C. Class Schedules

1. The time and place for scheduling distance education classes shall be determined by each institution. The scheduling of courses and programs delivered electronically shall be coordinated through the Electronic University Consortium. The schedule for course and program offerings shall be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
2. Distance education courses in which instruction is face-to-face shall be offered over a period of time which allows for appropriate levels of instruction and out-of-class study and reflection. The adequacy of calendar and instructional contact time shall be evaluated by the following measures: (1) number of instructional contact hours, (2) number of days on which the instructor meets with the class and (3) the total length of time from the first to the last class meeting. The following criteria shall be considered standards. Any practice that deviates downward from these standards must be approved by the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Contact Hours One credit hour for a minimum of fifteen contact hours.
A contact hour is 50 minutes of instruction time.

Instructional One credit hour of academic work may be awarded for
instruction spanning at least three calendar days.

3. Distance education courses offered electronically may be scheduled on a semester basis and require that students complete learning experiences on a particular timeline (i.e. each week). Also, distance education courses may be offered asynchronously to allow students maximum flexibility in participation. Asynchronous courses may or may not necessarily be offered on a semester basis. The required length for a distance education course is determined by

course expectations and scheduling. Typically, a one credit hour course lasting for a semester equates to 45 hours of effort by the student.

6. Intellectual Property

Universities shall ensure compliance with copyright laws and all Board policies concerning intellectual property.

7. Access to Library Resources

Books, journals and other library resources that are necessary to conduct a course on campus must also be available in a convenient manner to students enrolled in a distance education course. These resources may be provided by the home campus library, by local public libraries, by agreements with other cooperating institutions, and/or electronically.

8. Contracting With Agencies Outside the Board of Regents

Refer to policy 2:13 Third Party Requests for University Credit, 5:5 Tuition and Fees and 5:17 Instructional Funding.

9. Courses Sponsored by Another Regental Institution

- A. A university may agree to sponsor a course taught by another university and delivered electronically to the sponsoring university's campus or to another site at which the sponsoring university is authorized to offer the instruction. Board Policy 5:17 (Instructional Funding) and 5:18 (Off-Campus State-Funded Programs and Courses) apply when a sponsored course is received at an off-campus location.
- B. The university that requests to receive a course delivered electronically by another university is the "sponsoring" university. The university whose faculty member is teaching the course delivered electronically to the sponsoring university is the "originating" university.
- C. A sponsored course must be a state-support course at the originating university.
- D. The sponsoring university shall have a course that is equivalent to the course being taught at the originating university or may use variable topics to offer the course as an elective in an approved degree program.
- E. Authorization to sponsor a course delivered electronically from another Regental university does not constitute an alternative procedure for obtaining Board approval for new courses or programs.
- F. The sponsoring university shall register students for its own course and collect tuition and approved fees as if it were teaching the course. The originating university

shall register students taking the course on its campus and collect tuition and approved fees according to its usual procedures. Refer to BOR policy 5:5.

- G. The sponsoring university and the originating university shall agree in advance and in writing on the compensation to be paid to the originating university by the sponsoring university and on the responsibilities of each institution for library resources, instructional equipment and supplies, access to the instructor, personnel at the sponsoring university, faculty evaluation, and for compliance with other Board policies.
1. The originating university is responsible for payment of charges related to electronic delivery unless otherwise provided in the written agreement.
 2. Procedures for handling complaints and grievances from students follow the process of the originating institution in collaboration with the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the sponsoring institution.
- H. A course offered as a sponsored course at one or more sites may be offered to one or more additional sites if such arrangements are provided for in the written agreement between the sponsoring and originating universities.
- I. Universities may negotiate sponsored course agreements with regionally accredited non-system institutions.
1. Such agreements shall be presented to the Board for approval at a regularly scheduled meeting.
 2. Universities shall not advertise or participate in the advertising of any electronically delivered course, register students for any course, or enter into any contracts for the purpose of implementing a sponsored course agreement with non-system institutions prior to approval by the Board.
 3. Actions by the non-regental institution prior to Board approval do not establish any Board or university obligations.

SOURCE: BOR, September 1989; BOR, June 1992; BOR, May 2001; BOR, March 2005.