

**Policy Title:** Web Based Courses

**Policy Type:** Technology                      **New/revised:** Revised

**Old Policy #:** Web Based Courses

**Approval level:**  Board of Trustees  
 President  
 Vice President  
 Other (specify here)

**Purpose:** Web-based courses have frequently had additional or different requirements than courses meeting on-campus. Provides guidance to instructors and departments on specific requirements for web-based courses.

**Policy:**

**1.0 Definition:**

An Internet/web-based course is any course in which students may complete more than 50% of the requirements through Internet access to the course web site.

**2.0 Course-building:**

All Internet/web-based courses must be created in Banner with an online section number and WEB as the method of instruction. No other courses should be assigned this section number or this method of instruction.

**3.0 Classification:**

All Internet/web-based courses are Distance Education courses.

**4.0 Statement on Credit Hours:**

The Statement on Credit Hours is consistent with the policy and procedures approved by the East Tennessee State University Academic Council and published in the Faculty Handbook, Chairs Handbook, and Curriculum Process System. According to the ETSU Policy and Procedures for Awarding Credit, a semester credit is a unit of educational accomplishment represented by learning outcomes. In accordance with federal regulation (34 CFR 600.2 and subsequent guidance), one semester credit reasonably approximates the learning outcomes expected from one hour of direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student academic engagement each week for 15 weeks. Courses offered in alternative calendars and course types require an equivalent amount of faculty and student engagement and learning outcomes.

Therefore, the definition of contact hours in asynchronous learning environments at ETSU is consistent with the ETSU Policy and Procedures for Awarding Credit. In accordance with that policy the following institutionally established criteria reflect professional standards and include some or all of the following:

- a. The course syllabus should clearly document that the course covers the same amount of material or course content that would normally be expected if the class were a traditional campus-based course. Clear documentation includes the course objectives covered, the course topics covered, and the stated expectations for readings, projects, and other assignments as well as the stated learning outcomes. It is the responsibility of departmental faculty teaching in an asynchronous environment to determine if the course content delivered in an asynchronous environment is of sufficient scope and rigor to ensure the amount of material delivered is comparable to the same campus-based course.
- b. During the planning and development of an asynchronous learning environment, faculty should estimate the time a typical student will take interacting with the course content. This should be equivalent to the number of out-of-class engagement normally expected in a campus-based course, and should be documented in the course syllabus.
- c. Faculty are encouraged to determine class attendance by the evaluation of student participation in scheduled online discussions, required interaction with the faculty as well as other classmates, and the timely submission of class assignments rather than simply by the number of logins provided in the statistics measured by the course management system.
- d. Discipline-specific best practices
- e. Purpose and goals of the course
- f. Intellectual/learning outcomes
- g. Content and topics
- h. Assessment methods
- i. Class level: lower or upper division undergraduate, undergraduate/graduate combine, graduate (master and/or doctoral).
- j. Course type: lecture, lab, clinical, studio, study abroad, internship, field placement, independent study, thesis, or dissertation
- k. Course delivery method: synchronous, asynchronous, or combined
- l. Articulation and transferability of credit to other institutions

### **5.0 Statement on Equivalence:**

Courses taught in the web-based format must be equivalent to the same courses taught in the traditional format.

- a. Courses developed specifically for web-based delivery must be approved through the curriculum process in the same way as new traditional courses.
- b. The processes and procedures for offering web-based courses are the same as all other ETSU courses.
- c. Departments offering courses in web-based format should be prepared to document that the courses have student-learning outcomes that are equivalent to those for courses taught in the traditional format.

## **6.0 Statement on Copyright:**

Faculty teaching web-based courses are expected to be familiar with and abide by all applicable or relevant copyright laws. Information about copyright laws can be found on the [Sherrod Library Digital Copyright site](#).

## **7.0 Standard Components for Web-based Courses:**

[The Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) for Synchronous and Asynchronous online courses](#) lists the specific components that are required in any web-based course. Faculty members and departments may offer online courses without completing the MOU. The developing faculty member should contact Information Technology Services (ITS) to request an evaluation of the course based on the required components listed in the MOU.

## **8.0 Continued Review:**

Approved courses will be reviewed on a three-year cycle. Faculty may work out a re-development plan with ITS and receive additional compensation as part of the re-development /re-approval process. Faculty should contact the department before beginning re-development to determine if the course is eligible.

## **9.0 Policy on Faculty Training:**

All faculty developing and teaching Internet courses must demonstrate competence in the use of the technology for instruction and course development. It is the responsibility of Information Technology Services to ensure and document this competence prior to the offering of the Internet course.

- a. Supported Software: ITS will specify a limited list of software to be used in developing and offering Internet courses that will be supported fully by ITS personnel. Any exceptions will be made by ITS on a case-by-case basis, based on their best judgment on what can be adequately supported. The decision on what software to use, or to change software, will be made by ITS in consultation with faculty users and technical consultants. If a decision is taken to change the software to be supported and faculty must migrate to a new format, faculty will be notified well in advance and assisted in making the transition.
- b. Workshops and Training: ITS will provide workshops and training for faculty on the software applications adopted for Internet course creation, and pedagogical and managerial aspects of Internet instruction.

## **10.0 Student Lab Support:**

All open student computer labs will be configured and managed to support student access to the content of Internet courses developed by ETSU faculty.

## **11.0 Evaluation of Internet Courses:**

Internet based courses are to be evaluated by the same standards as traditional courses and the areas assessed must be equivalent to traditional courses. The Student Assessment of Instruction (SAI) for both asynchronous and synchronous online courses will be securely administered to students through the course management system. Faculty members, department chairs and college deans will have access to the results after the semester has ended.

#### **12.0 Higher Education Opportunity Act:**

In compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), all students in online courses are [required to use their ETSU username and secure password to access the course management system](#).

#### **13.0 Policy on Electronic Mail:**

The ETSU [Email Use Policy](#) requires all faculty communication with students regarding ETSU business be conducted via the official ETSU email account.

#### **14.0 Hardware and Software Support:**

The University will provide the necessary support, hardware and/or supported software, for faculty members who have specific feasible plans to develop and offer Internet based courses in a reasonable time frame. The necessary hardware and software includes an acceptable computer, any supported client software needed for content development, appropriate network access and server space on the University's streaming servers, and on-going support from Information Technology Services. ITS will consult with faculty and departments to determine if a particular faculty member has, or can acquire, the necessary technical skills, if the faculty member either has or can develop a realistic and feasible plan for developing the Internet course, and if the particular course is suitable for delivery through the Internet. ITS will develop a suitable training plan for the faculty member developing the course. If resources are limited ITS will consult with faculty and departments to set priorities based on factors such as the number of students to be served, programmatic and organizational needs, and estimated time for completing the task.

Synchronous online courses are to be delivered using ITS supported web conferencing software.

#### **Notes:**

Approved: Information Technology Governance Council

Revised: February 2017

3/24/2017 – approved by the Board of Trustees.