DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY

The Health Science Center’s commitment to academic excellence includes consistency between traditional classroom instruction and distance education. The purpose of this operating policy is to provide a framework for the development, implementation, and maintenance of formal degree and certificate programs and courses offered via distance education for academic credit.

The school-specific administration is responsible for the administration of distance education programs and course delivery. The school-specific deans report to the President.

All schools of the Health Science Center shall have an opportunity to participate in providing distance education courses and/or programs and shall be encouraged to provide distance education as appropriate. Through the schools, the Health Science Center shall ensure that all academic programs, including those delivered through distance education, are afforded an adequate resource support structure.

The Health Science Center follows the definitions for distance education as articulated by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/): “The Coordinating Board rules define distance education as ‘the formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for the majority (more than 50 percent) of instruction.’ Distance education can include courses and programs offered online, off-campus face-to-face, and electronic-to-groups. Coordinating Board rules recognize two categories of distance education courses: fully distance education courses and hybrid/blended courses. A fully distance education course is defined as ‘A course which may have mandatory face-to-face sessions totaling no more than 15 percent of the instructional time. Examples of face-to-face sessions include orientation, laboratory, exam review, or an in-person test.’ A hybrid/blended course is defined as ‘A course in which a majority (more than 50 percent but less than 85 percent), of the planned instruction occurs when the students and instructor(s) are not in the same place.’ ”

For more information on the Distance Education Policy, please see Policy 2.6.5 (https://wp.uthscsa.edu/compliance/wp-content/uploads/sites/174/2021/06/HOP_2.6.5.pdf) in the Health Science Center Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP).

National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA)

Texas was approved as a SARA state in 2015 and is administered by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The national council has defined, “The State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement is a voluntary agreement among its member states and U.S. territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance-education courses and programs. It is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state.”

Professional Licensure

States and other government entities have established standards of practice for the occupations or professions they have chosen to regulate, and they provide legal permission to practice those professions only to individuals who meet those standards. This is called professional licensure: professions for which need to meet certain criteria in order to practice in that field.