Distance Education Guidelines

University College

Middle Tennessee State University
http://www.mtsu.edu/universitycollege/
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INTRODUCTION
This document outlines the responsibilities of those departments and divisions that support and are responsible for the success of distance education at MTSU, specifically the areas of technology, distance faculty/student services and resources, and administration. MTSU’s Distance Education Guidelines are reviewed and revised annually and reviewed and approved by the MTSU Distance Education Committee. A copy of the Guidelines is provided to all course developers at the beginning of the course development/redesign process.

DISTANCE EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT
The mission of distance course delivery is to provide quality academic instruction to a geographically dispersed student population.

DISTANCE EDUCATION VISION
MTSU’s Distance Education vision is to provide learning experiences through technology-driven outreach.

DISTANCE EDUCATION DEFINITION
Distance education occurs when there is a physical separation of the instructor and the learner and when communication and instruction take place through, or are supported by, any technological means such as, but not limited to, telephone, radio, television, computers, satellite delivery, interactive video, or any combination of present and future technologies. 254 MTSU Distance Education Policy

DISTANCE EDUCATION PURPOSE
Distance education is an established and effective method for extending educational opportunities. To provide the citizens of Tennessee with greater access to postsecondary education, Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) affirms the effectiveness of distance education; recommends the use and development of distance education technologies, when appropriate, to meet student learning outcomes; and encourages academic departments to take advantage of such opportunities in carrying out their individual missions. 254 MTSU Distance Education Policy
HISTORY
The first Middle Tennessee State University online courses were offered in the 1997 Fall Semester. Every year the technical sophistication of students increases creating a demand for more online courses. Online courses afford students the flexibility to complete college degrees while meeting work and home obligations.

Teaching online not only reaches distant or busy students; it is a new way of teaching. Online and hybrid courses offer new, creative ways to present information and creates a higher level of interactivity between instructor and students.

Studies have shown that some students learn better online because of various learning styles. Students are now evaluated on their degree of participation online, resources are more readily available, and more interaction occurs between the students and the instructors and among the students themselves.

Every service currently available to MTSU on-campus students is also offered to our online and hybrid students.

DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE DEFINITIONS
MTSU is committed to providing high quality distance/alternative educational experiences for its students, and faculty members have the opportunity to develop and teach a variety of alternative delivery courses. Below are the types of alternative delivery courses MTSU faculty may develop and the definitions of each.

- MTSU Online
  - All class instruction takes place in an online environment.
  - May include optional meetings/orientations. Students cannot be penalized for non-attendance. (The meeting dates/times are listed in RaiderNet as memo notes, and students can click on the CRN to review. Optional meetings will not create time conflicts.)
  - May include proctored, on-campus exams. Students who cannot make the scheduled date/time/location must have the option of taking the exam during a specified timeframe at an approved, off-campus location.
  - No physical attendance may be required.
  - MTSU distance learning fee applies ($30 per credit hour, graduate and undergraduate).
  - Must be reviewed and approved through UC.
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- Development and redesign fees apply based on number of the number of credit hours developed/redesigned.
- A “D” section number is attached.

- MTSU Hybrid
  - Online courses with required on-campus meetings of no more than fifteen (15) hours.
  - A significant portion of instruction and activities take place online.
  - May include up to 15 hours of required/mandatory campus or face-to-face meetings.
  - MTSU distance learning fee applies ($10 per ugrad. credit hour/$15 per grad.).
  - Must be reviewed and approved through UC.
  - Development fees apply based on number of credit hours developed.
  - Redesign fee ($1,000) applies.
  - A “D” section number is attached.

- MTSU Accelerated Online Courses
  - Courses offered online in an 8-week schedule each Fall and Spring semester.
  - Courses developed for online delivery may be offered in accelerated format.
  - Students may take only 9 hours in each part of term (A1 or A2).
  - Students may mix accelerated courses with full-term courses not to exceed 18 hours total.
  - Students must register for A2 courses during regular registration.
  - Students are not permitted to add the A2 courses after late registration ends except by special permission.
  - May include optional orientation and proctored exams (exams would be listed in RaiderNet as memo notes. Students must click on the CRN to view notes. Optional meetings will not create time conflicts.).
  - Courses are restricted to students in the Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies degree but may be open to students in other programs if they do not fill.
  - A “D” section number is attached.

- TN e-Campus Online Courses
  - All class instruction takes place in an online environment
  - Instructors can require that students take two proctored exams
  - R50 is the course section number
  - Students from TBR institutions may register for courses
  - Course access for faculty and students is through the TN eCampus eLearn website
  - Courses are developed per requirements of the Course Developer Program (CDP) and are housed on the TN eCampus server
  - TN eCampus course tuition/fees are higher than those of MTSU online offerings
  - Courses are reviewed and approved by the TN eCampus instructional design staff
  - Development and redesign fees apply
Alternative delivery courses which do not require approval through the University College process and for which development/redesign fees do not apply are listed below.

- MTSU Synchronous Online
  - All class instruction takes place in an online environment.
  - Class meets online at specified days and times during the semester. These meetings may create time conflicts for students taking other courses that require meetings.
  - May require proctored exams.
  - MTSU distance learning fee applies ($10 per ugrad. credit hour/$15 per grad.).
  - Course is not reviewed/approved through UC.
  - Development and redesign fees do not apply.
  - Recording of class sessions may occur.
  - Lectures are not used beyond the current semester without agreement of the faculty.
  - Viewing of the archived lectures is limited to the enrolled class or a person with a legitimate educational purpose for viewing (such as a department chair).
  - MTSU must request written consent of any person whose image was captured, including a guest lecturer, if an archive is distributed beyond the class.
  - A “D” section number is attached.

RaiderNet Notes
- This class meets online at the time/days of week specified in RaiderNet.
- Students will receive an email from the instructor regarding course access and should check their MTSU email account.
- A reliable computer with, at minimum, a DSL Internet connection is needed to successfully access this course.
- Hardware requirements include earphones, earbuds OR speakers.
- During the class, students can hear and see the professor, and their communication with the professor takes place through a text chat window.
- Recording of class sessions may occur

- MTSU Videoconferencing
  - Courses are taught by MTSU faculty from the main campus and are transmitted "live" to one or more distant sites.
  - The instructor and students interact with each other through television cameras, monitors and microphones enabling real-time interaction.
  - Attendance is required at the MTSU site or at one of the specified distance locations.
Course materials may be provided on the MTSU supported course management system Desire2Learn (D2L) and accessed through Pipeline or at https://elearn.mtsu.edu/

- Distance learning fee does not apply
- “D” section number is attached
- Course is not reviewed/approved through UC
- Development and redesign fees do not apply

• Web-assisted
  - A blend of classroom (in excess of 15 hours per semester spent on campus) and online instruction which utilizes the web to reduce the time traditionally spent in the classroom
  - Regular weekly meetings are required that adhere to standard meeting time requirements
  - “D” section number is not attached
  - Distance learning fee is not assessed
  - Course is not reviewed/approved through UC

• Web-enhanced
  - A blend of classroom and online instruction which does not reduce the time traditionally spent in the classroom – classes meet as scheduled
  - “D” section number is not attached
  - Distance learning fee does not apply
  - Courses are not approved through CEDL
  - Development and revision fees do not apply

ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES

University

The university must provide support to the administration, departments and faculty to enable them to offer online and hybrid courses. It is also responsible for offering the same services to students taking online courses and programs that it provides for students taking traditional, on-ground courses and programs. The following are distance education services provided by the university.

SACSCOC

MTSU is responsible for complying with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation. Federal
Requirement 4.8 states, “An institution that offers distance or correspondence education documents each of the following (Distance and correspondence education):

4.8.1 demonstrates that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as (a) a secure login and pass code, (b) proctored examinations, or (c) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

4.8.2 has a written procedure for protecting the privacy of students enrolled in distance and correspondence education courses or programs.

4.8.3 has a written procedure distributed at the time of registration or enrollment that notifies students of any projected additional student charges associated with verification of student identity.” (p. 40 Federal Requirements, The Principles of Accreditation)

MTSU Definition of Distance Education

Distance education occurs when there is a physical separation of the instructor and the learner and when communication and instruction take place through, or are supported by, any technological means such as, but not limited to, telephone, radio, television, computers, satellite delivery, interactive video, or any combination of present and future technologies. 254 Distance Education Policy

Student Authentication

In compliance with the SACSCOC, MTSU must “demonstrate that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework.” This verification is accomplished by requiring the MTSU student 1) to use a secure login and pass code into the MTSU Learning Management System, currently Desire 2 Learn (D2L), and/or (2) to sit for proctored examinations.

Credit Hour

The University’s credit hour definition is as follows: one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for fifteen weeks, or equivalent academic activities, are required to achieve the student learning outcomes for the credit hour.
Faculty Workload

Development of distance learning and technology-intensive courses is addressed in MTSU's "Guidelines for Determining Faculty Workloads" (K. Instructional Improvement Implementation).

Efforts to improve an individual faculty member's courses and/or teaching methodology are considered to be a part of one's normal teaching assignment. A faculty member assigned the task of developing a new academic program, or experimenting with new pedagogies or technologies to be officially adopted by the department may be given a workload assignment of one to three credit hour equivalency during the first semester of piloting the newly developed pedagogy or technology as stated in the Guidelines for Determining Faculty Workload (K. Instructional Improvement Implementation and E, 1. Other Professional Activities)

Dropping or Adding Courses

Deadlines for dropping and adding distance learning courses are the same as for courses taught on campus. The drop/add procedures and deadlines are provided online at the Registrar's Office website. A student who ceases participation in a class but does not officially drop the class will be assigned a grade of “F,” which will be recorded on the student’s permanent record (Middle Tennessee State University Undergraduate Catalog or Graduate Catalog).

Incompletes

The grade "I" indicates that a student has not completed all course requirements because of illness or other extenuating circumstance, especially those which may occur toward the end of the semester. Mere failure to make up work or turn in required work on time does not provide a basis for the grade of "I" unless the extenuating circumstances noted above are present for reasons acceptable to the instructor. When a student fails to take the final examination without known cause, the grade to be reported should be determined as follows: if the student has not done satisfactory work to that point, the grade "F" should be reported.

The incomplete must be removed during the succeeding semester, excluding summer. Otherwise, the grade of "F" is entered. A student should not make up the incomplete by registering and paying again for the same course. The "I" grade carries no value until converted to a final grade (Middle Tennessee State University Undergraduate Catalog or Graduate Catalog).

Withdrawal From The University

The University College advisors, located in room 318 of the Keathley University Center (KUC), provide assistance to students withdrawing from Middle Tennessee State University.

Total withdrawal from the University means to drop all courses for that semester. Please refer to the registration guide for all deadlines associated with withdrawing and the Refunds website for calculating refunds or fee adjustments. A student who preregisters for classes and decides not to attend MTSU for the term should access RaiderNet through PipelineMT to withdraw from all classes selected during preregistration.
Refer to the Registrar’s Office website for important dates and deadlines for each term. Once classes begin, course withdrawals may be processed on RaiderNet through PipelineMT and are subject to the refund deadlines listed in the registration guide. Withdrawals should be processed prior to the first day of class to receive a 100% refund.

Consult the Registration Guide for each term to determine whether the withdrawal should be completed through RaiderNet or through the University College Advisors. Students may wish to consult with the University College Advisors to determine if withdrawing is in their best interest. See Withdrawal Procedure and the MTSU Withdrawal Policy for more information.

Financial Aid

Students enrolled in online courses should verify their financial aid eligibility with the MTSU Financial Aid Office. Students taking online or hybrid courses must meet the same eligibility requirements for financial aid that they would have to meet if they were taking courses on campus. All students receiving financial aid must demonstrate satisfactory academic progress. Online or hybrid students who have not participated in class may be reported as nonparticipating by the instructor, and financial aid may be stopped. If the report is discovered later to be in error or if a student is allowed to finish the course, the student’s record will be changed to good standing, and his or her receipt of financial aid will be adjusted accordingly (Middle Tennessee State University Undergraduate Catalog or Graduate Catalog).

Student Engagement in MTSU Online Courses

Simply logging into a course no longer constitutes student participation in an online class. To comply with new federal regulations regarding student engagement and participation in online courses, MTSU “must demonstrate that a student participated in class or was otherwise engaged in an academically-related activity, such as by contributing to an online discussion or initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question.” Additional information, including a tutorial, is found at the Attendance Reporting website.

Course Enrollment

The University College recommends enrollments of 25 students for undergraduate MTSU online/hybrid courses and 15 for graduate courses. However, it is recommended that first-time online instructors limit their enrollment to 15 students. Department chairs may increase enrollments, as needed and as first-time professors become more familiar and comfortable with online instruction. These numbers are only a guide and may be exceeded based on the course.

The Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) recommends enrollment limits in TN e-Campus courses to 25 (undergraduate courses) and 15 (graduate courses) due to the highly interactive nature of online courses. (approved by Dean’s Council 11/20/2004)

The maximum enrollments suggested below are based on ‘section E’ of the Faculty Overload Guidelines, which limit enrollments to a maximum of 48 unless special considerations are made.
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MTSU Minimum Enrollments - (Faculty Workload G and Summer School Guidelines VI, 1)
6 students - 7000 level courses
8 students - 6000 level courses
10 students – 3000/4000/5000 level courses
15 students – 1000/2000 level courses

COLLEGE

- Approve the development of each online and hybrid course.
- Review and approve for delivery new and redesigned online courses when the course designer is a department chair/school director.
- Provide advising to online and hybrid students in their majors.

DEPARTMENT

Department chairs are involved in the development and redesign of online and hybrid courses from the beginning of the process. Roles and responsibilities of departments related to distance education are below.

Online Course Scheduling and Cancellation

- Online and hybrid courses are usually taught as part of a faculty member’s course load.
- It is the department’s decision to cancel any class due to low enrollments.
- Academic departments, are responsible for working with the Scheduling Center to schedule new online and hybrid courses for the target semesters of delivery noted in the Online and Hybrid Course Development Agreements.
  - New online and hybrid courses may be added to the semester schedule no later than four weeks prior to the start of the semester if the review/approval process has been completed. Exceptions must be approved by the Provost's office.
  - New online and hybrid courses will not be added to the semester schedule until they have been peer reviewed and reviewed and approved by the department chair and the Course Approval Form returned to the Distance Education Faculty Services Office.
  - The course delivery method cannot be changed after registration begins.
- Requests to reserve on-campus facilities for distance course mandatory and optional meetings must be submitted to the Scheduling Center.

Responsibilities

- Department chairs are responsible for approval of a course development proposal, contract, final review, and delivery approval.
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- Pay online and hybrid instructors as part of their course load unless the course is offered during summer school or make other pay arrangements through the department and college.
- Refer students to the Permission of Department (POD) Form for permission to register for distance courses, if necessary.
- Authorize PODs to qualified students requesting them.
- Familiarize office staff with the permission and registration procedures.
- Certify that all adjuncts and professors receive training on the MTSU learning management system (Desire2Learn-D2L) or have prior online/hybrid teaching experience using the university’s LMS.
- Offer and staff additional sections of online courses when possible.
- Appoint new lead designers when original course designers leave MTSU or no longer teach online.

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

University College provides central coordination, through Distance Education Faculty Services, for the development/redesign and delivery of distance education courses and programs. This central coordination contributes to a uniformity of delivery ensuring ease of consistency of student access while maintaining instructional flexibility. The College recruits faculty members to develop and deliver distance education courses, provides services specific to distance learners, disseminates materials, works with departments and Scheduling to insure approved distance courses are added to semester schedules, and works with ITD to provide technical assistance and training for faculty developing and teaching distance education courses. The specific services provided by University College are below.

- University College is charged by SACS to conduct regular evaluations of the course delivery method: “The institution engages in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of institutional mission, goals, and outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.” (Core Requirement 2.5 - p. 18 Principles of Accreditation).

- University College coordinates through its Distance Education Faculty Services office the development and delivery of MTSU distance education courses and programs including online, hybrid, videoconferencing and TN eCampus.

- Distance Education Student Services provides services and resources specific to distance learners.

- University College provides a Contact Form for visitors to its website. Comments are directed to the appropriate offices and answered promptly.
The College conducts distance learning student and faculty satisfaction surveys annually. The summarized results are distributed at the end of the semester in which they are given to MTSU's departments and faculty.

**Distance Education Faculty Services**

This office provides resources, assistance and direction to faculty who wish to develop and teach online and hybrid courses. Responsibilities include:

- Insure that faculty are aware that only existing traditional/on-ground courses (approved by the University Curriculum Committee or the Graduate Council) are eligible for online or hybrid development. Online/hybrid development is a change in delivery method, not a change in curriculum. Courses that are new to MTSU (those which have not yet been taught in the classroom) must receive approval from the MTSU Curriculum Committee or the MTSU Graduate Council, as appropriate, prior to development.

- MTSU faculty are paid a fee (based on credit hour of course developed) by University College for online and hybrid course development if the course is developed per UC criteria. Department chairs determine which faculty member in their department will design a course and receive the development fee. Fees are only paid for those courses not previously developed in the online/hybrid format. Approved courses are used as masters from which to clone additional sections for instruction. Minor revisions are permitted within the cloned sections.

- All online and hybrid courses must be developed in accordance with criteria stipulated by the Distance Education Faculty Services Office and the Distance Education Guidelines. The Guidelines specify the use of, and training on, the learning management system (LMS) supported by the university; a course review conducted by a faculty peer; and a review and final approval by the department chair. The reviews are conducted using the Peer Review Form.

- Provide in the LMS (Desire2Learn) and update annually a syllabus template for use in online courses in order to provide information and resources specific to online learners.

- Provide direction to individuals/offices who can assist instructors and students with hardware and software questions or who can refer the questions to the appropriate sources.

- Coordinate the administration of online and hybrid courses by providing assistance to instructors with tasks that are not a part of their usual duties and are unique to online and hybrid course instruction.
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- Distribute course access instructions to instructors.
- Maintain the Faculty Services website which provides current best practices and other resources for faculty who wish to develop and teach online and hybrid courses.
- Maintain the MTSU Online website which provides information and resources for prospective MTSU online students.
- Market online and hybrid courses to maximize enrollments in each class.
- Serve as a liaison between the Tennessee Board of Regents to coordinate the TN e-Campus Program and MTSU academic departments.
- Coordinate the Online Faculty Mentor (OFM) Program and assign OFMs to all faculty who design and redesign online and hybrid courses.
- Update the online Permission of Department (POD) Form prior to each semester.
- Assist faculty with scheduling on-campus orientation and testing facilities when requested.
- At the request of distance education faculty, contact students who appear to be having difficulty accessing their online courses.
- Provide professional development opportunities for faculty who design and teach online and hybrid courses, when funding is available.
- Provide laptop computers for faculty teaching in full online programs.
- Provide computer software for faculty teaching distance courses when funds are available and when site licenses are not available.

Distance Education Student Services

Distance Education Student Services is a central office dedicated to assisting prospective and current distance learners. Responsibilities include:

- Maintaining, and regularly updating, the UC Student Services website that serves as a "front door" for students to locate information related to online learning.
- Distribute course access instructions to students.
- Advise students in the TN e-Campus online programs.
- Coordinate distance course evaluation process each semester.
• Provide resources such as Smarthinking and directions to other student resources.
• Conduct the Student Satisfaction Survey annually.

FACULTY COURSE DESIGNERS

Preparation for Online Course Development

• Prior to development, review the Distance Education Guidelines and the Peer Review Form.

• Determine the best delivery method for their course based on content, student needs, and according to MTSU distance course definitions.

• Request a Desire2Learn (D2L) development shell from ITD in which to create and post original content.
  o Use development shells for course creation as opposed to semester shells. Content will be lost if a semester shell is deleted.

• MTSU requires full-time and adjunct faculty to receive training on the learning management system licensed and supported by the university or certify that they have had prior online teaching experience with this system prior to instruction.

• Successfully complete Sexual Harassment training offered by the university before (or shortly after) the beginning of online course instruction.

• Participate in required training with the Instructional Design Specialist in the LT&ITC to plan the design of new courses.

• Meet with the assigned Online Faculty Mentor (OFM) and as needed during course development.

• Complete required Accessibility Training.

• Complete the course per the deadline noted in the Online Course Development Agreement.

Documentation

• Complete and submit for approval all course development documents to D.E. Faculty Services:
  o Online/Hybrid Course Proposal Form;
    ▪ Propose only existing MTSU courses approved by the Curriculum Committee or Graduate Council which have not previously been developed for distance delivery;
Course Development/Design

- Design online courses that:
  - provide original content housed within the university-supported LMS (D2L) allowing students to complete course requirements within the course;
  - limit instruction of course content and do not share student educational records in e-publisher or other third party vendor websites because of financial aid, FERPA and other regulations;
  - provide ease of uploading and downloading files and documents; course file sizes have been optimized for the web so that they can be quickly uploaded and downloaded;
  - respect intellectual property rights (http://www.mtsu.edu/policies/general/140.php);
  - meet ADA accessibility standards (http://www.mtsu.edu/ada/); include accessible text, headings and alt tags (at minimum);
  - provide ease of instruction by other faculty members;
  - provide students with detailed information on all assignments and course requirements;
  - consider posted university holidays and breaks when scheduling exams, meetings and assignment due dates (http://www.mtsu.edu/calendar_academic.php);
  - ensure that online and hybrid courses meet the same standards and criteria set by departments for classroom courses (http://www.mtsu.edu/policies/academic-affairs-institution-and-faculty/254.php);

Online Course Approval

- When the course is complete, conduct a self-evaluation (using the Peer Review Form) and submit it to the assigned Online Faculty Mentor (OFM).
- Take into consideration changes recommended by OFM, and resubmit the self-evaluation to the OFM, if necessary.
- Add OFM and department chair/school director (or dean if course designer is a chair) to the course for peer review and chair review/approval, respectively.
- When the course is approved, serve as the lead designer for the term of the three-year contract. The duties include:
  - Serve as lead designer for the approved course, which includes:
    - sharing approved course content with sectional instructors;
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- updating the master shell each semester as necessary;
- familiarizing other professors with instruction of the course and serve as instructional mentor throughout the semester;
- assisting new instructors with revisions of the Welcome page, Contact Information, and course calendar.
- working with department to obtain textbooks and other course materials.
- Note: These services should be provided by the lead designer even if he/she is not teaching a section of his/her own course during the semester.

Course Redesign
- **Revise** the course when the three-year contract expires.
- The same development, review, approval processes apply for a redesign.

ONLINE COURSE INSTRUCTION
- Faculty (adjuncts or full-time) teaching sections of online courses developed by others must meet with the lead designer/course developer to review course content and to revise the welcome page and faculty contact information. **Online course content must not be changed by faculty teaching sections of an approved course.**
- Faculty new to online instruction must participate in D2L training through the Faculty Instructional Technology Center (FITC). One-on-one training sessions are scheduled by calling 904-8189.
- Order textbooks.
- Submit the online and hybrid course information to the department for inclusion in the target semester's schedule. New online and hybrid courses are added to the semester schedule **no later than four weeks prior to the start of the semester** if the review/approval process has been completed. Exceptions must be approved by the University Provost's office. The course delivery method may not be changed after registration begins.
- Adhere to and support MTSU's [Information Technology Resources Policy](#) and encourage students to do the same.
- Review [copyright resources](#) as they pertain to the Internet and the World Wide Web.
- Maintain up-to-date virus detection software and operating system updates.
- If external websites are used in the design of online and hybrid courses to enhance student learning, provide detailed descriptions of how the sites will be used in conjunction with required D2L activities and assignments.
- Due to financial aid, FERPA and other regulations, instruction of online course content in e-publisher websites or other third party vendors should be limited. Student educational records, including grades and feedback, must never be posted to these sites. MTSU’s ITD does not support nor provide archival capabilities for content posted to external/e-publisher websites. Students cannot be authenticated nor participation monitored for financial aid purposes when participating in external/e-publisher sites.
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- Encourage students to complete and submit the Distance Education Student Evaluation Form at the conclusion of the semester.
- Follow these instructional recommendations/best practices each semester and share with sectional instructors:
  - Login to class the day classes begin;
  - Login to class at least three times per week;
  - Respond to student questions (e-mails and non-graded discussion postings) within 24-48 hours;
  - Assignment feedback and grades should be posted as soon as possible, and within two weeks of the assignment submission, depending on the nature and length of the course and assignment type;
  - Follow the University posted holiday schedule during all terms.

- Per the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – MTSU faculty must communicate with and provide online course feedback (including grades) to their distance education students within a university-supported learning management system, currently D2L. Faculty may respond to student emails received via the MTMail account, but educational data must never be sent to or from a non-institutional assigned email account.
- In compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act (and SACS Principles of Accreditation), MTSU must "demonstrate that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework."

This verification is accomplished by requiring the MTSU online student to:

1) use a secure login and pass code into the MTSU-supported Learning Management System, currently Desire2Learn (D2L) and/or;
2) sit for proctored examinations.

- Credit Hour Requirements
  - The responsibility, of ensuring that the credit hour requirements for time and student learning outcomes are met, lies with the faculty member instructing the class and with the academic department chair.
  - The student learning outcomes for a course must be the same regardless of whether the credit hours are delivered in the traditional format or by equivalent academic activities. In situations where a credit hour(s) is offered in a non-traditional format and there is no class section offered in the traditional format, department chairs will consult with the instructor to ensure that credit hour(s) requirements are similar to the traditional format. This includes but is not limited
to internships, independent studies, experiential learning activities, and online courses.

- Asynchronous communication tools accessible to students 24/7:
  - Posting of course materials--Posting course materials (text, graphics, links to videos, external websites and audio files) in the course learning management system (LMS) content area allows students to access topic presentations, reading materials, assignment criteria and instructions, assessments, discussion boards, and supplemental resources, etc.
  - File Exchange--Files are exchanged via e-mail attachments and LMS digital GROUP dropboxes, (rather than individual dropboxes).
  - Email--Email allows digital communication among class participants.
  - LMS-based discussion boards--Discussion boards allow multiple-person discussions to occur within the class.
  - Videos--Videos should not be uploaded to courses but instead be linked to from MTSU’s MTmedia server, YouTube, or some other online source. Uploading multiple videos to a course may cause problems copying the course each semester.

- Instructors may choose to use any or all of the following tools. These tools, as well as the tools noted above, permit faculty to include interactivity within their courses and to foster a learning community with their students.

  - PipelineMT Basics and Login Information
  - Desire2Learn (D2L) Faculty Support
  - Sample D2L Content Modules
  - MERLOT
  - Faculty Instructional Technology Center (FITC) Staff
  - Student Lingo – plagiarism prevention tutorial
  - Turnitin – located within D2L
  - Mobile Apps

DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENTS

Student Responsibilities

- Access course on the first day of class.
- Review MTSU student regulations and policies, obtain required course materials and textbooks, review meeting information (if applicable), etc. at MTSU Distance Education Student Services.
- Following acceptance to MTSU, and prior to registering for online or hybrid classes, students may be required to complete a Permission of Department Form. This request is automatically submitted to the professor of the course, or the designated departmental representative, who provides registration permission electronically. It is the student's responsibility to register for the course after receipt of the POD.
o Completion of the Permission of Department (POD) Form (located on the Distance Education Student Services website) demonstrates that the student has access to the internet.

o The step also ensures that students become familiar with the location of online support services.

- Complete the Distance Learning Student Evaluation at the conclusion of the semester.
- Have access to a reliable computer with a DVD/CD-ROM drive and Internet connection. Students who do not have a computer may access their courses at the MTSU Walker Library.
- Review the MTSU open computer labs website for hours of operation.
- Students may also access their courses from a local public library. (Note: Some public libraries block certain web addresses. Students should verify with the library’s IT support if unable to access.)

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology Division (ITD) supports information technology resources on campus. IT:

- manages the campus network and MTSU's administrative and academic computer systems;
- provides telecommunications services for the campus;
- promotes and supports instructional technology;
- provides academic computing support;
- provides technical support and training for the use of microcomputer hardware and software;
- provides and supports selected software on the campus academic and administrative servers;
- supports MTSU's administrative applications (such as student information and human resources);
- oversees the campus ID system;
- manages the Faculty Instructional Technology Center which conducts workshops for faculty and staff.

ITD provides a variety of services for MTSU distance learning faculty and students. These services include:

- Managing and supporting the campus network.
- Providing accounts and support for student and faculty use of an online learning management system, electronic communications, email, and the World Wide Web.
- Internet, list servers, and applications on academic systems.
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- Providing accounts and support for faculty and student use of applications on selected academic servers and administrative systems.
- Providing support for the MTSU World Wide Web pages.
- Providing and supporting graphical access to the academic systems via the network to on-campus offices, classrooms, labs, and other facilities.
- Operation of the ITD Faculty Instructional Technology Center and support in multimedia resource development, digital cameras and scanners, graphic and video production and editing, instructional design consultation and training on software applications.
- Supporting faculty use and development of instructional technologies, including Web-based learning environments, by providing one-on-one consultation, and providing annual instructional technology innovation grants.
- Offering a wide range of hands-on workshops for faculty, staff, and graduate assistants on topics including use of productivity applications such as word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, and database applications, development of multimedia applications using authoring software, and the creation of Web pages and Web-based learning environments.
- Providing training opportunities for faculty on the use and development of instructional technologies.
- Supporting the use of a variety of applications on the administrative system including student registration, class rolls, and grade reporting.
- Staffing a Help Desk for students and faculty (615/898-5345).
- Provide disk space for faculty and students on academic servers.

COMPUTER SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS

Students require a reliable computer and Internet connection to successfully take an online course. Students who do not have a computer may access their courses at the MTSU Walker Library (with an MTSU ID), MTSU computer labs or at a local public library. (Note: Some public libraries block certain web addresses; students should verify with the library’s IT support if unable to access. Also, some libraries may charge usage fees and may have time limits on their computers.)

Browser checks should be conducted when using the following MTSU systems

- Desire2Learn (D2L) learning management system: Before you login, look for the following link - D2L

- PipelineMT - Students register for classes, pay fees, check email, keep a calendar and access personal data at the MTSU portal. The browser check may be conducted at the login site by selecting the Quick Links and Supported Browser links.

Free Technology Tutorials on internet basics and systems are also available at GCF LearnFree.org.
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**CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL MEDIA**

The Center for Educational Media (CEM) provides equipment, facilities, training, and support for the use of educational media by MTSU faculty, MTSU students, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers. The CEM consists of several related units. The Media Library houses MTSU’s multimedia collection, including videos and books on CD, and provides onsite viewing and listening stations.

Audio/Visual Services maintains and repairs campus audio/visual equipment and administers a professional television studio. Faculty who would like to enhance their course web pages with professionally produced video clips may seek assistance from Audio/Visual Services production staff. The CEM also houses a computer classroom, a graduate student multimedia development center, and a University computer lab. The center offers satellite up-linking and down-linking services to MTSU faculty and staff. CEM partners with public and private organizations to deliver educational programming and training via satellite, cable television, and webcasting to K-12 schools, social workers, and communities across the state. Additional information concerning these and other services may be found at the CEM website.

**COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

The College of Graduate Studies serves as a coordinator for admission and graduation of students enrolled in MTSU and RODP Graduate programs. Persons wishing to pursue an online/hybrid graduate degree at MTSU through the Regents Online Degree Program or any other online program must make application to and be granted admission by the College of Graduate Studies in addition to being accepted into a particular graduate program (i.e. MSN, MPS., etc.) The college provides a Graduate Program Liaison for each online/hybrid graduate program just as it does for traditional, on-ground graduate degrees. These individuals work with the student and graduate program coordinator to ensure that all requirements of the program, college and university are met.

The College of Graduate Studies is responsible for ensuring quality in graduate education via the graduate program review process including the review of online/hybrid graduate programs and selectivity in making graduate faculty appointments. All online/hybrid graduate academic programs and courses are approved by the Graduate Council.

The College of Graduate studies works closely with the University College, the Information Technology Division, and the Instructional Technology Support Center to ensure that all students and faculty participating in online/hybrid graduate programs receive the support necessary for success in high quality graduate education environment.
The Walker Library provides the following services in support of online and hybrid courses:

- The library's catalog;
- Electronic course reserves in which instructors' materials can be accessed through the library catalog;
- Online databases, including many with full-text journal articles, which can be viewed, printed, and emailed from any location;
- Online Research Guides - created by librarians and provide links to subject-specific library resources.
- Online request form for delivery of requested library materials by mail or electronically to students who are without access to needed materials;
- Ask a Librarian page on the library's website which provides access to online chat service for immediate assistance during library hours.
- Distance Learning Library Services webpage which contains information and links to these services;

- Embedded Librarian
- Online Library tutorials

Additional information regarding conducting library research at a distance, requesting materials on interlibrary loan, securing borrowing privileges, etc. may be obtained by contacting the librarian responsible for Distance Learning Library Services and Resources, (615) 898-2549, sharon.parente@mtsu.edu.
REFERENCES

Americans with Disabilities Act
http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998
http://www.mtsu.edu/itd/dm-copyright-act.php

MTSU "Guidelines for Determining Faculty Workloads," Fall 2009
http://www.mtsu.edu/provost/forms/wkguide.pdf

MTSU Financial Aid Office
http://www.mtsu.edu/financialaid/

MTSU James E. Walker Library Distance Learning
Library Services and Resources
http://library.mtsu.edu/distance.php

MTSU Information Technology Division
http://www.mtsu.edu/itd/index.php

MTSU Faculty Instructional Technology Center
http://www.mtsu.edu/fitc/index.php

MTSU Center for Educational Media
http://cem.mtsu.edu/

MTSU College of Graduate Studies
http://www.mtsu.edu/graduate/

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MTSU Undergraduate Catalog
http://www.mtsu.edu/ucat/

MTSU Graduate Catalog
http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/

MTSU Faculty Handbook
http://www.mtsu.edu/provost/fac_handbook/

MTSU Distance Education Faculty Services
http://www.mtsu.edu/universitycollege/distance/faculty.php

MTSU Distance Education Student Services
http://www.mtsu.edu/universitycollege/distance/students.php

MTSU Records and Scheduling Office http://www.mtsu.edu/records/
MTSU Withdrawal Office http://www.mtsu.edu/withdraw/

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges, Principles of Accreditation (http://www.sacs.org/)

TN eCampus – http://www.tnecampus.org/

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