

University of St. Thomas Policies

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Policy Number: A.02.16

Scope: All academic units.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is ensure the academic integrity of distance and hybrid learning courses in a manner that is consistent with applicable University academic standards, policies, and accreditation requirements established by SACSCOC and the U.S. Department of Education.

DEFINITIONS:

Distance education is a formal educational process that uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously.

A *distance education course* (i.e., online course) is defined as one in which the instructional content is delivered exclusively via distance education.

A *distance education program* (i.e., online program) is a program for which all the required coursework for program completion is able to be completed via online courses.

A *hybrid course* is defined as one in which a minimum of one third (but less than 100%) of instructional content is delivered via distance education.

A *hyflex course* is defined as a live course that is also streamed live on the Internet. Students may be in person or remote.>>

POLICY

Course Designations and Approvals:

- UST has a method for identifying hybrid, hyflex, and distance education courses.
- Each semester, the relevant Department/Program chair or Dean approves courses that will be offered in a hybrid, hyflex, or distance education format prior to submitting the semester course schedule to the Registrar.
- The Registrar designates hybrid, hyflex, and distance education courses as such in the published schedule of classes for a given semester.
- Once the schedule of classes has been published, a course designation can only be changed with the approval of the Dean (undergraduate courses) and with the approval of the Dean and Graduate Council or VPAA (graduate courses).
- If a course designation changes after the schedule of classes has been published, a designated Department/School administrator notifies enrolled students of the course designation change.

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Student Identification and Verification:

- UST has a method for identifying students who are enrolled in a distance education program.
- Students use a secure login and passcode to access hybrid, hyflex and distance education courses.
- Faculty and students use official UST email for distance education correspondence.

Unless otherwise specified by federal regulations, international students holding F-1 or J-1 student visas are required to attend class regularly and in-person in the physical classroom and cannot attend class in a fully online modality

Course Standards:

- Hybrid, hyflex, and distance education courses meet the same standards as those of courses offered in a traditional format.
- Each School/Department determines the format and components of the master course shells used for hybrid and distance education courses in that School/Department.
- Hybrid, hyflex, and distance education courses have the same syllabus requirements as those of courses offered in a traditional format (described in policy F.07.01, Faculty Teaching Responsibilities), with one addition: hybrid, hyflex, and distance education course syllabi specify any online and in-person components and expectations, including what will be regarded as student attendance.
- Each School/Department establishes a plan to track and document “student attendance” in hybrid, hyflex and distance education courses, consistent with UST policy on absences and withdrawals (A.02.05).
- Each course includes a student learning activity that can be tracked to determine first-week attendance.

Technology and Training:

- The online component of hybrid, hyflex and distance education courses is delivered through UST’s learning management system. The use of alternate or additional learning management system platforms requires approval of the relevant Dean and the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- UST provides appropriate and timely training, instructional design, and technical support to faculty members developing and teaching hybrid, hyflex and distance education courses.
- Prior to teaching their first hybrid, hyflex or distance education course, faculty complete an introductory training session provided by IT
- Each School/Department may require specific training for faculty who will develop and/or teach hybrid, hyflex, and distance education courses.

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- UST provides appropriate and timely training and technical support to students enrolled in hybrid, hyflex and distance education courses.

Faculty Teaching Responsibilities:

In addition to faculty teaching responsibilities outlined in policy F.07.01, faculty teaching hybrid, hyflex, and distance education courses have the following responsibilities:

- Faculty members teaching a hybrid, hyflex, or distance education course are proficient in the use of the learning management system and other technology used to deliver instruction for the online component of the course.
- Faculty members achieve engagement in a hybrid, hyflex, or distance education course through regular substantive interaction (e.g., feedback on student work, discussion groups), with the expectation of at least weekly interaction with students.
- Each School/Department may specify additional responsibilities for faculty teaching hybrid, hyflex, or distance education courses.
- Evaluations of hybrid, hyflex, and distance education courses follow the plan established in policy F.07.01.
- Each School/Department may specify additional methods for evaluating hybrid, hyflex, and distance education course quality and teaching effectiveness.

Faculty Ownership of Courses:

- The Intellectual Property policy of the university covers course materials developed for distance education by faculty.

APPROVED: Dr. Richard Ludwick

Date of Original Formation: 10-03-2014

Revision Number: 1

Revision Date: 03-10-2022

Effective Date: June 2, 2022