ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION
PLANNING AND COORDINATION
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

CHAPTER 300-2-1
PROGRAM REVIEW

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NOTE: Existing policy language appears in black text, with strikethrough for proposed deletions. Proposed additions appear red text. The current version of the Administrative Code is available at http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/hged/300-2-1.pdf
OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CHANGES

300-2-1-.10  Distance Education

Last Amended: 2018

Synopsis of Section: This section was originally developed in 2007 when distance education offerings were becoming more common. The last revision occurred in 2018 when this rule was moved from another chapter of ACHE’s Administrative Code to become part of this chapter on Program Review. The section defines distance education and sets forth the expectations for public institutions in delivering distance education programs.

Summary of Recommended Changes:

• The section should be expanded to include a statement of purpose, commission responsibility, and scope.

• Language should be clarified and additional definitions included.

Link to Open Forum: Administrative Procedures, Part 7 (Posted 11/3/22):
https://www.ache.edu/?page_id=16109
Distance Education.

(1) **Purpose.** This section is intended to ensure consistency around implementation of distance education programs.

(2) **Commission Responsibility.** Units Programs of instruction offered by Alabama public institutions, including distance education offerings, are subject to Commission approval per Code of Ala. 1975, §16-5-8.

(3) **Scope.** This policy applies to programs of instruction offered by public colleges and universities headquartered in Alabama. It does not apply to programs of instruction offered by private institutions or by institutions with no physical presence in Alabama.

(4) **Definitions.** The following definitions pertain to this rule:

   (a) Definition of Distance Education: A formal educational process using technological delivery in which instruction occurs where students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ audio, video, or computer technologies. Distance education, distance learning, and e-learning are recognized by the Commission as being synonymous terms. Academic courses or programs are considered to be distance education entities when over fifty percent of the content is delivered through distance education modes. [Based on the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges (SACS/COC) definitions.]

   (b) Delivery Modality: Technology or method used to deliver instruction within courses required for program completion, such as in-person/face-to-face instruction, distance education, or a combination thereof. In addition, an academic program may be offered in multiple modalities.

   (c) Distance Education Program: An academic program for which required instructional activities can be completed entirely through distance education modalities. A distance education program may have in-person requirements that are non-instructional (e.g., orientation, practicum).

   (d) State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA):
An interstate distance education compact coordinated through the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). Institutional membership in SARA establishes recognition of comparable standards in the interstate delivery of postsecondary distance education courses and programs and streamlines authorization to enroll non-Alabama residents.

(5) **Tuition for Distance Education Programs.**
Institutions are to set tuition for distance education offerings, ensuring that they meet statutory requirements under Code of Ala. 1975, §16-64-1 et seq.

(6) **Expectations for Compliance.**

(a) Institutions providing distance education courses or programs are expected to be in full compliance with the standards and/or requirements of any appropriate governing, authorization, or accreditation authorities.

(b) **Academic degree programs** offered through distance education by Alabama public institutions must have been approved by the Commission on Higher Education and must be listed in the Commission’s Program Academic Program Inventory with no restriction to a military base.

(7) **Configuration of Programs for Distance Education.**

(a) **Programs approved by the Commission on Higher Education of instruction listed in the Commission’s Academic Program Inventory** do not require additional Commission approval to be configured and offered as distance education programs. However, institutions preparing to offer existing programs as distance education offerings must report this intent to the Commission prior to implementation.

(b) **Institutions intending to deliver a new program of instruction as a distance education program are to note this on the program proposal so that no further notification is needed prior to implementation.**

(c) **The Commission does not require approval of prior notification of distance education in the following cases:**

1. **Configuration of** individual courses for distance education purposes.

   2. **Programs of instruction** where less than 100% of
the coursework is delivered through distance education modalities.

Author: Leonard Lock; Robin McGill
Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-1 et seq.
History: New Rule: Filed December 11, 2018; effective January 25, 2019. Amended: XXXX
EXISTING VERSION

300-2-1-.10 Distance Education.

(1) Units of instruction offered by Alabama public institutions, including distance education offerings, are subject to Commission approval per the Code of Ala. 1975, Section 16-5-8.

(2) Definition of Distance Education: A formal educational process using technological delivery in which instruction occurs where students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education may employ audio, video, or computer technologies. Distance education, distance learning, and e-learning are recognized by the Commission as being synonymous terms. Academic courses or programs are considered to be distance education entities when over fifty percent of the content is delivered through distance education modes. [Based on the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges (SACS/COC) definitions.]

(3) Institutions are to set tuition for distance education offerings, ensuring that they meet statutory requirements. Institutions providing distance education courses or programs are expected to be in full compliance with the standards and/or requirements of any appropriate governing or accreditation authorities.

(4) Academic programs offered through distance education by Alabama public institutions must have been approved by the Commission on Higher Education and must be listed in the Commission’s Academic Program Inventory with no restriction to a military base.

(5) Programs approved by the Commission on Higher Education do not require additional Commission approval to be configured and offered as distance education programs. However, institutions preparing to offer existing programs as distance education offerings must report this intent to the Commission prior to implementation.

(6) The Commission on Higher Education does not require approval of individual courses for distance education purposes.