

DISTANCE EDUCATION HANDBOOK

2015-2016

Policies and procedures with regard to Missouri State distance delivery.

Missouri State Outreach

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Distance Education Handbook

This handbook contains the policies, regulations and procedures that guide the academic community at Missouri State University in the maintenance of quality standards and best practices in online and distance teaching and learning.

As part of the 2011-2016 long-range plan, Objective 1 of the Access to Success initiative, Missouri State University is committed to increasing the alternative pathways for degree completion. Missouri State distance delivered courses are held to the same high standards for student outcomes as traditionally delivered courses.

1. Distance Education Committee (DEC)

The Distance Education Committee is charged with reviewing, creating, and recommending direction and policy for the Provost's consideration for all alternative forms of teaching to include such things as: ITV, online, blended and iCourses. The committee assists the Provost in coordinating and communicating these policies to the university community.

The committee shall include faculty representation from each of the colleges and a faculty member from the West Plains Campus. Other members of the committee will include: representatives from Missouri State Online; the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning; Computer Services; Academic Outreach; and Office of the Provost. These members will be appointed by the Provost.

More information can be found at: <http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/DistanceEducation/>

1.1 Alternative Pathways Definitions

- **Online:** programs offer students the opportunity to obtain a degree totally online, offering a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs. Visit Missouri State Online for more information: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/>
- **Blended:** Integrating online and traditional face-to-face class activities in a planned, pedagogically valuable manner with a portion of the face-to-face time —specifically from 30% to 70% reduced by online activities and specified in the course description.
- **ITV (Interactive Video):** courses utilize BearNet, a two-way, audio/video connection offering live communication between students and teachers at multiple locations. Visit the Off-campus and Interactive Video site for more information: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/offcampus/>
- **iCourses:** The iTunes U program allows students to download actual course lectures to study whenever they want, wherever they want. Courses are professionally produced and hosted through iTunes U and YouTube for student convenience. Visit the iCourses website for more information: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/iCourses/>

2. Developing New Distance Courses

Distance-delivered courses are considered and initiated by individual departments, and are taught by core faculty. When a department determines that a program will be delivered fully online, provost funding is available for course development. More information regarding this process can be found at: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/onlinefacultysupport.htm>

3. Faculty Development

Faculty have many options to further their knowledge of distance delivery. Support is available through Computer Services, the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, and individual departments. ITV instructors also have additional support from the ITV staff.

3.1 Digital Professor Academy

The Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (FCTL) assists faculty through the Digital Professor Academy (DPA) in developing and teaching face-to-face, online, or blended courses. The program is designed to assist faculty throughout the development process with the use of effective pedagogy and instructional design. This process concludes with a fully developed online course subject to peer review. Learn more at: <http://www.missouristate.edu/fctl/>

3.2 Blackboard Black Belt

Computer Services offers an extensive line of training for Blackboard, the university's current learning management system. This Blackboard Black Belt series introduces faculty first to more common elements of the LMS and continues through advanced application. Courses are offered both in-person and at a distance throughout the semester. Learn more at: <http://blogs.missouristate.edu/blackboard/>

3.3 ITV Instruction

ITV instructors have access to operation manuals and additional resources on the off-campus faculty support services page: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/offcampus/176382.htm>
In addition, ITV engineers are available for additional support and one-on-one training for ITV instructors; they can be reached at 417-836-6421.

3.4 Certified Distance Educator Award

Beginning in 2015, the Certified Distance Educator award was established to encourage continued professional development in distance education, provides recognition of continued growth in distance education, and foster instructional innovation. More information about the award can be found at: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/cdeaward.htm>

4. Academic Programs: Online Degrees and Certificates

Missouri State University currently offers over 40 graduate and undergraduate degrees, minors and certificates online. From Fall 2011 to Fall 2015, online credit hours grew by 133%. Distance education is a factor in the University's plan for future growth. Emphasis is placed upon preparing faculty in the pedagogy of online teaching and learning.

Undergraduate Degree Completion Programs and Certificates

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/undergradonlineprograms.htm>

Graduate Degree Programs and Certificates

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/gradonlineprograms.htm>

5. Assessment in Distance Education

All faculty are required to specify any proctored events clearly in the syllabus. Any proctored event that may require additional fees must be stated in the course listing at the time of student registration.

5.1 Respondus LockDown Browser

The university makes the Respondus LockDown browser available for use in any course without charge. This tool works with the Blackboard learning management system to prevent students from printing or copying exam materials, navigating to other URLs, or accessing other applications. This is available for both Windows and Mac systems, making it a viable tool for academic integrity assurance. Training for this tool is available through computer services. More information is available at:

<https://experts.missouristate.edu/display/KB/Respondus+LockDown+Browser>

5.2 Online Test Proctoring Products

Some instructors or programs may wish to utilize third party distance proctoring tools beyond Respondus LockDown Browser. Missouri State University follows federal requirements regarding these systems: any additional fees to the student must be stated clearly in the course listing so that all costs associated with the course can be calculated at the time of registration.

5.3 Online Test Proctoring Center

The Test Proctoring Center, in Strong Hall, is available for proctoring exams for online courses. Currently, test proctoring is available on a limited basis and faculty must make their reservation two weeks before the semester begins. Space is available on a first-come-first-served basis. Faculty who are first-time users of the Center are required to attend a brief orientation. The MSU Proctoring Center is a member of the National College Testing Association. Learn more at:

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/testproctoring.htm>

5.4 Missouri State Off-Campus Test Proctoring

In cases where students are located near a Missouri State satellite campus, it may be possible for them to have an exam proctored at no charge at one of these alternate campuses. Up to date information regarding available campuses and contacts can be found here:

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/proctorexamsforstudents.htm>

5.5 Out of Region Test Proctoring

Students outside the Missouri State region can also make arrangements for proctored exams, subject to proctor approval by instructor. This process should be started early in the semester so that all paperwork can be completed prior to the first proctored exam. Learn more at:

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/proctorexamsforstudents.htm>

6. State Authorization and Reciprocity Agreement (SARA)

MSU membership in SARA provides a reciprocal process for offering distance education opportunities for students outside Missouri and across the United States. Colleges or universities in a SARA state only need their home state authorization to offer distance education to any other SARA member state. Currently, there are over 25 SARA member states. SARA covers online degree programs and clinical experiences associated with online degrees. SARA institutions agree to follow best practices for postsecondary distance education as adopted by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC). Missouri State Online provides a web page designating states where MSU is authorized to offer courses for students at a distance. This website is consistently updated to reflect growing SARA membership. Non-Missouri students should report complaints through the SARA portal after exhausting university procedures.

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/ArticulationAgreements.htm>

7. Course Evaluations

Missouri State Online systematically provides student evaluations of online courses. The DEC developed an instrument used across all online courses to gauge student perception of their learning experience. Missouri State Online utilizes the EvaluationKIT platform with Blackboard integration to deliver course evaluations to students securely and efficiently. These data are collected and distributed to faculty, department heads and deans for purposes of faculty evaluation.

With the addition of a survey notification functionality in Blackboard (pop up box reminder) student responses for online evaluations increased from 34.74% in summer 2014 to 64.50% in summer 2015. While this is a significant improvement, it is essential that we continue to encourage students to complete course evaluations and stress the importance of the evaluation university-wide. To this end, departments and faculty are encouraged to embed incentives and reminders within the course such as: making completion of the evaluation an assignment, stressing the importance of completing evaluations, and demonstrating that student feedback is given consideration. Additional ideas can be found at:

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/studentevaluations.htm>

7.1 Online Student Course Evaluation Sample:

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/174968.htm>

8. Faculty Support Services

Missouri State provides and supports a growing network of faculty support mechanisms designed to ensure availability of the latest instructional technology and pedagogy for faculty who teach distant students.

8.1 Computer Services Help Desk

The Help Desk provides immediate support 24 hours a day Monday through Friday. Faculty may call, email, chat, or be assisted through remote support. The help desk also assists faculty who need software to work at a distance: <http://helpdesk.missouristate.edu/>

8.2 Blackboard Support for Faculty

Missouri State Computer Services provides Blackboard training for faculty both in-person and online: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/bbsupportfaculty.htm>

8.3 Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning

The FCTL provides direct support to faculty as well as many workshops and events throughout the semester: <http://www.missouristate.edu/fctl/>

8.4 Missouri State Online

Missouri State Online provides a hub for faculty resources that is continuously updated. Information can be found at: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/onlinefacultysupport.htm>

8.5 ITV Training and Support

ITV faculty have additional resources tailored to the specific classroom technology. ITV engineers are available to troubleshoot problems and to provide one-on-one training. Additional information is available at: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/offcampus/176382.htm>

8.6 iCourse Support

iCourses are supported by a team of media experts as well as a coordinator. Video is hosted through iTunes and YouTube and is managed by the iCourse coordinator and the office of Web and New Media respectively. More information can be found at: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/iCourses/>

8.7 MOCRA

Each year, Missouri State Online recognizes our exceptional online instructors. For more information about the award and nomination process visit: <http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/MOCRA.htm>

8.8 Copyright and Fair Use

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/onlinecopyrightfairuse.htm>

8.9 Faculty Handbook and Resources, Office of the Provost

<http://www.missouristate.edu/provost/facultyresources.htm>

8.10 Adobe Connect Support

<https://experts.missouristate.edu/display/KB/Adobe+Connect>

9. Student Support Services

Working closely with faculty and student support units across campus, Missouri State Online strives to provide students with the same high quality education and level of support all Missouri State students have come to expect. Everything needed for students to register and complete a program of study are available online.

9.1 Missouri State Online

The Missouri State online website serves as a hub for our students support services:

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/onlinestudentsupport.htm>

Complaint procedures for distance students are also available:

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/128406.htm>

9.2 Help Desk

The Missouri State Help Desk is available 24 hours Monday through Friday with weekend support also available. Students may call or email the help desk with chat and remote support also available.

<http://helpdesk.missouristate.edu/get-support.htm>

9.3 Online Student Orientation

Missouri State provides an online student orientation for every student enrolled in an online course. The orientation provides information regarding best practices in online learning, use of the Blackboard LMS, and university resources for online students, including financial aid, the bookstore, library resources, and career center. Students are automatically enrolled in this Blackboard community so resources are consistently available.

9.4 Online Student Readiness Survey

Missouri State Online provides a readiness self-assessment for students to determine online learning is compatible with their preferred learning style.

<http://outreach.missouristate.edu/online/onlinecoursesforyou.htm>

9.5 Disability Services

Students requiring disability accommodations must request these officially from Missouri State. The request form can be found here: <https://www.missouristate.edu/secure/disability/request.htm>

Examples of accommodations that may be available to distance students include, but are not limited to, closed captioning for video, additional time for exams, and additional optional formats for online exams.

The full accommodation policy can be found here:

<http://www.missouristate.edu/disability/accommodation.htm>

Students are encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center if they have additional questions.

9.6 Library Resources

Missouri State Libraries provide article and database access online as well as the ability to reserve print materials and have them delivered to further support distance learners.

<http://library.missouristate.edu/index.htm>

In addition, the library offers additional support to distance students through virtual research consultations. These meetings help students plan research projects and suggest potential available resources. More information can be found here:

<http://library.missouristate.edu/forms/reference/consultations.htm>

9.7 Bear CLAW: Center for Learning and Writing

The Bear provides tutoring at no charge to Missouri State students. Writing consultation is available for distance students by email: <http://writingcenter.missouristate.edu/24686.htm>

9.8 Career Center

The Missouri State Career Center provides assistance with resumes, interviews, and recruiting. Distance students can access the Missouri State job database, JobTracks as well as participating in web-based mock interviews. Learn more at <http://careercenter.missouristate.edu/>

The Career Center also offers a web-based computerized career and educational planning system called Focus 2. This system enables students to assess interests, skills, personality, values, and leisure activities and get facts regarding occupational options aligned with these assessments. The password must be requested from the Career Center. More information is available here:

<https://www.focuscareer2.com/portal/login.cfm?sid=410>

9.9 Academic Integrity Policies

Missouri State takes academic integrity seriously and all students are held to the same high standard for ethics. Academic dishonesty includes, but it not limited to, cheating, fabrication or other misconduct in research, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty. Students should be familiar with the Missouri State integrity policies. More information is available at:

<http://www.missouristate.edu/academicintegrity/>