

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define face-to-face, online, and hybrid courses, programs, and education, and outline their associated procedures.

2. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are guided by the definitions and regulations of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Southern Association of College and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). While all definitions fall within the guidelines of these agencies, some have been further restricted for implementation at Sam Houston State University (SHSU).

- 2.01 Main Campus: Sam Houston State University defines its main campus as the Huntsville campus, located at 1905 University Avenue, Huntsville, TX 77340.
- 2.02 Off-Campus: Any physical location other than the main campus.
- 2.03 Instruction: Instructor-presented, -driven, or -moderated educational content. This includes course lectures, lessons, discussions, and may also include exams and quizzes. Instruction does not necessarily include student activities that occur outside of scheduled class meeting times such as homework, studying, class preparation, group work, writing, or research. Instructor-scheduled activities in lieu of regularly-scheduled class meeting times including, but not limited to, reading days and library days are considered instruction. Supervision of student performance in a clinic or internship setting is also considered instruction.
- 2.04 Face-to-Face Education: The formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are in person in the same physical setting at the same time (i.e. no online or remote instruction). Video conferencing is not considered the same physical setting.
- 2.05 Online Education: The formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting (i.e. no face-to-face instruction). Online education may include courses and programs offered online and electronically to individuals and groups. Delivery methods may include, but are not limited to audio, video, mobile, or internet, and may include both synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

- 2.06 Hybrid Education: The formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for any portion of instruction (i.e. a required combination of online and face-to-face instruction).
- 2.07 Face-to-Face Course: A course in which at least 90% of instruction occurs when instructors and students are in the same physical setting at the same time. Face-to-face courses may be delivered on the main campus or at an off-campus location.
- 2.08 Online Course: A course in which 100% of instruction occurs when the student and the instructor are not in the same physical setting. Three categories of online courses are permitted at SHSU: 1) online on-demand, 2) online live, and 3) online blended.
- a. An online on-demand course is defined as a course with 100% of the instruction occurring asynchronously (on-demand) online. An online on-demand course may have student-optional online synchronous components including special guest lectures, review sessions, or faculty office hours that do not require mandatory attendance and that can be recorded for later viewing. An online on-demand course may have specific timelines for completion of work. An online on-demand course may not require students to participate in any face-to-face instruction and may not require face-to-face exams.
 - b. An online live course is defined as a course with at least 90% of instruction occurring synchronously (live) online. Students enrolled in an online live course are required to participate in synchronous, online instruction and other course activities in real-time during scheduled class meeting times as indicated on the course schedule. An online live course may not require students to participate in any face-to-face instruction and may not require face-to-face exams.
 - c. An online blended course is defined as a course with both asynchronous (on-demand) and synchronous (live) online instruction. Online blended courses have 10-90% of instruction occurring asynchronously (on-demand) online, and 10-90% of instruction occurring synchronously (live) online. An online blended course may not require students to participate in any face-to-face

instruction and may not require face-to-face exams. Synchronous (live) online meeting times must be communicated clearly on the course schedule.

- 2.09 Hybrid Course: A course with more than 50% but less than 75% of instruction occurring online, with the remainder of instruction occurring face-to-face. Three categories of hybrid courses are permitted at SHSU: 1) hybrid on-demand, 2) hybrid live, and 3) hybrid blended.
- a. A hybrid on-demand course is defined as a course with more than 50% and up to 75% of the instruction occurring asynchronously (on-demand) online, with the remainder of instruction occurring face-to face. The on-demand portion of the hybrid on-demand course may have student-optional online synchronous components including special guest lectures, review sessions, or faculty office hours that do not require mandatory attendance and that can be recorded for later viewing. Face-to-face meeting times must be communicated clearly on the course schedule.
 - b. A hybrid live course is defined as a course with more than 50% and up to 75% of the instruction occurring synchronously (live) online, with the remainder of instruction occurring face-to face. All meeting times must be communicated clearly on the course schedule.
 - c. A hybrid-blended course is defined as a course with more than 50% and up to 75% of the instruction occurring through a combination of asynchronous (on-demand) and synchronous (live) online instruction. Hybrid-blended courses have 10-65% of instruction occurring asynchronously (on-demand) online, 10-65% of instruction occurring synchronously (live) online, and 25-50% of instruction occurring face-to-face. Face-to-face and online-live meeting times must be communicated clearly on the course schedule.
- 2.10 Course Engagement: In accordance with federal regulations, students must establish a record of engagement in “academically-related activity” to demonstrate eligibility for financial aid (Federal Student Aid Handbook).
- 2.11 Academically-Related Activities: Activities include, but are not limited to, physically attending a class where there is an opportunity for direct interaction between the instructor and students; submitting an academic assignment; taking an exam or quiz, viewing an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction; attending a study group that is assigned by the course instructor; participating in an

online discussion about academic matters, or initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course. Logging into the Learning Management System (LMS) course page is not sufficient, by itself, to demonstrate engagement.

- 2.12 Face-to-Face Program: An approved course of study in which a student may complete at least 50% of the semester credit hours required for a credential via face-to-face courses. Face-to-face programs may be delivered on the main campus or at an off-campus location.
- 2.13 Off-Campus Program: An approved course of study in which a student may complete at least 50% of the semester credit hours required for a credential via face-to-face courses at a location away from the main campus.
- 2.14 Online On-Demand Program (asynchronous/on-demand): An approved course of study in which a student may complete 100% of the semester credit hours required to qualify for a credential in an online, asynchronous (on-demand) modality. An online on-demand program may not require students to participate in any face-to-face or online-live instruction and may not require face-to-face exams. Exceptions are permitted for internship, practicum, and clinical courses, as well as thesis and dissertation defenses, when appropriately communicated to students in recruiting and admission documentation.
- 2.15 Online Live Program (synchronous/live): An approved course of study in which a student may complete 100% of the semester credit hours required to qualify for a credential in an online, synchronous (live) modality. An online live program may not require students to participate in any face-to-face instruction and may not require face-to-face exams. Exceptions are permitted for internship, practicum, and clinical courses, as well as thesis and dissertation defenses, when appropriately communicated to students in recruiting and admission documentation.
- 2.16 Online Blended Program (mix of asynchronous/on-demand and synchronous/live): An approved course of study in which a student may complete less than 100% of the semester credit hours required to qualify for a credential in an asynchronous (on-demand) online modality, and the remainder of the semester credit hours in a synchronous (live) online modality. An online blended program may not require students to participate in any face-to face instruction and may not require face-to-

face exams. Exceptions are permitted for internship, practicum, and clinical courses, as well as thesis and dissertation defenses, when appropriately communicated to students in recruiting and admission documentation.

- 2.17 Hybrid Program: An approved course of study in which a student may complete more than 50% but less than 100% of the semester credit hours required for a credential in an asynchronous (on-demand) online or synchronous (live) online modality, and the remainder of semester credit hours face-to-face.

3. ONLINE AND HYBRID EDUCATION

3.01 Developing Online and Hybrid Courses and Programs

- a. SHSU Online, supports the strategic coordination of online and hybrid education, including support services to faculty and students engaged in online and hybrid education efforts.
- b. The following standards provide important guiding principles incumbent in the development of online and hybrid education activities.
- c. Online and Hybrid Programs
 - (1) Online and hybrid programs are governed by the same academic expectations and regulations as face-to-face programs, including: maintaining consistency with the mission of the institution; utilizing the same admissions requirements, academic standards, and other administrative requirements as traditional, face-to-face programs; and being in compliance with University and System policies and applicable governing bodies, including but not limited to the SACSCOC *Principles of Accreditation*, which apply to all programs of the institution, regardless of delivery modality.
- d. Procedure for Developing New Online and Hybrid Programs
 - (1) SHSU requires Colleges to complete and submit the SHSU Online form, “Reporting a New Online or Hybrid Program” available on the SHSU Online website, prior to application for a new and/or existing online or hybrid program proposal through the university’s curriculum process.

- (2) Requests for new online or hybrid programs are subject to the institution's curriculum approval processes as outlined on the Academic Planning and Program Development website. All requests for new and existing online or hybrid programs require prior approval of the Texas State University System (TSUS) Board of Regents and the THECB, and in some cases, SACSCOC.
 - (3) The Office of Academic Planning and Program Development will work in collaboration with SHSU Online to ensure that requests for online and hybrid programs meet best practice, THECB, and SACSCOC requirements.
- e. Online On-Demand, Online Live, Online Blended, Hybrid On-Demand, Hybrid Live, and Hybrid Blended Courses
 - (1) Online on-demand, online live, online blended, hybrid on-demand, hybrid live, and hybrid blended courses (hereafter referred to as online and hybrid courses) are governed by the same expectations and regulations as face-to-face courses, including: credit hour; appropriate amount and use of course content; use of explicitly stated learning outcomes; student course engagement monitoring and reporting; and disclosure of information prior to registration, including course modality, technology requirements, and the potential for additional fees or costs associated with the activities of the course.
 - (2) Face-to-face and synchronous (live) online meeting times must be clearly identified on the course schedule to students at the time of registration.
 - (3) If an online or hybrid course is scheduled within a given semester, it must be listed in the SHSU course inventory.
 - (4) All online and hybrid courses shall demonstrate the application of pedagogical best practices as defined in the SHSU Online Rubrics for Online or Hybrid Course Design.
- f. Procedure for Developing New Online and Hybrid Courses
 - (1) The development of online and hybrid courses is a strategic decision for the department, college, and institution. Prior to the development of

courses with these modalities, departments and colleges should consider the impact to existing face-to-face and online programs.

- (2) Requests for online and hybrid courses not yet approved in the SHSU course inventory are subject to the institution's curriculum approval processes as outlined on the Academic Planning and Program Development website.
- (3) Following applicable curriculum approval processes, online and hybrid courses are offered with the approval of SHSU Online, the responsible academic department chair, academic dean, and the Office of the Provost. The following procedures must be followed:
 - i. SHSU requires completion and submission of the applicable SHSU Online form available on the SHSU Online website: "Request to Deliver a New Online Course", and/or "Request to Deliver a New Hybrid Course" available on the SHSU Online website.
 - ii. The development of online-live or hybrid courses will require the proposing department and college to document the impact that the new or revised modality will have to existing online programs.
 - iii. The course shall be designed for online or hybrid delivery by the faculty member while consulting the SHSU Online Course Design Rubrics and, as needed, instructional designers.
 - iv. Any compensation for the development and/or instruction of an approved online or hybrid course is determined by the dean of the academic college.
 - v. Faculty developing an online or hybrid course are advised to meet with an SHSU librarian to go over the proposed course content, to ensure that all posted content is in the best format possible, and to address any copyright concerns.

3.02 Conducting Online and Hybrid Education

The following standards provide important guiding principles incumbent in the conducting of online and hybrid education activities.

a. Faculty Expectations and Responsibilities

- (1) Faculty members are expected, as a normal condition of employment at SHSU, to develop and keep current any online and hybrid courses they may be assigned to teach.
- (2) Faculty are required to upload the latest version of the course syllabus to the official university LMS, regardless of a course's mode of delivery (i.e. all courses, including face-to-face/on- or off-campus courses must display an up-to-date syllabus in the official university LMS) every semester by the start of the term.
- (3) The University is responsible for the digital infrastructure, the LMS, the servers, marketing, and other logistical supports for online and hybrid courses. Faculty, through their respective programs, exercise academic freedom over the syllabus, content, grading standards, etc., consistent with accepted University practices for face-to-face courses.

b. Faculty Development and Support

All faculty members teaching an online or hybrid course must be certified to teach online by completion of a professional development course by SHSU Online.

c. Course Content Ownership

- (1) SHSU retains full rights to common elements of course syllabi including learning objectives, course descriptions, course requirements, and course schedules that are submitted, reviewed, and approved as specified by the appropriate academic department.
- (2) Rights to and use of materials developed for online or hybrid courses are governed by TSUS *Rules & Regulations*, Chapter III, Section 11.2.

3.03 Evaluation Online and Hybrid Education

- a. The following standards provide guiding principles incumbent in the evolution of online and hybrid education activities.
 - (1) The evaluation of faculty teaching online or hybrid courses is accomplished by means of the same procedures as for those of faculty teaching face-to-face courses.
 - (2) The evaluation of online or hybrid programs is accomplished by means of the same procedures as face-to-face programs.
 - (3) Online and hybrid courses may be evaluated by SHSU Online for effective design and pedagogical best practices as outlined in the SHSU Online Course Design Rubrics. Review of online and hybrid course content is the responsibility of the individual faculty member.

3.04 Online Student Services

Students enrolling in online or hybrid courses receive access to equivalent support and services as those enrolling in face-to-face courses.

APPROVED: <signed>
Alisa White, Ph.D., President

DATED: 6/12/2024

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

This academic policy statement (APS) has been approved by the reviewer(s) listed below and represents SHSU's Division of Academic Affairs' policy from the date of this document until superseded.

Original: November 20, 2002
Reviewer(s): Academic Affairs Council

Review Cycle: Five years*
Review Date: Spring 2029

Approved: <signed>
Michael T. Stephenson, Ph.D.,
Provost and Senior Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Date: 6/12/2024

*Effective January 2018, Academic Policy Statements will be reviewed on a rotating 5-year schedule. To transition to a distributed review load, some policies may be reviewed prior to the 5-year timeframe, with subsequent reviews transitioning to the 5-year schedule.