Policy Statement.
Faculty planning to offer distance education towards a degree or certificate awarded through the University of North Texas Health Science Center (UNTHSC) must obtain approval to do so through UNTHSC’s Distance Education Committee. Distance education (aka. distance learning) must be appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded; comparable in standards and requirements to other campus-based programs; have sufficient numbers of qualified faculty; be compatible with delivery using an electronic learning management system; and be evaluated for educational effectiveness.

Application.
This policy applies to all schools, colleges, institutes, departments, programs, and teaching faculty at UNTHSC.

Definitions.
1. **Distance Education (DE).** “Distance Education” means the formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for the majority (more than 50 percent) of instruction.

2. **Online Course.** “Online Course” means a course in which a majority (more than 50 percent) of the instruction occurs when the student(s) and instructor(s) are not in the same place and the primary mode of delivery is electronic.

3. **Learning Management System (LMS).** “Learning Management System” means an approved electronic software application used by the UNTHSC for the purposes of delivering, administrating, documenting, tracking, and reporting outcomes related to online educational activities.

Procedures and Responsibilities. Faculty who wish to offer distance education or online courses must adhere to the procedures outlined below.

1. UNTHSC will comply with applicable state laws and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) rules and procedures for establishing and maintaining DE and or Online Courses.

   **Responsible Party:** Distance Education Committee.
2. The Center for Innovative Learning (CIL) provides support and consultative services related to reviewing and processing requests for approval to develop and/or to deliver online DE activities within UNTHSC.

   Responsible Party: Director of the CIL.

3. Faculty planning to offer new Online Courses and DE must submit a *Distance Education Proposal: Approval to Develop* form (https://www.unthsc.edu/center-for-innovative-learning/online-course-design-and-development-at-unthsc/) to the CIL for processing prior to seeking approval to offer the course or DE activity. Developers are strongly encouraged to contact the CIL for assistance early in the development process.

   Responsible Party: Course Developer/Director.

4. Course developers are expected to take all necessary steps to ensure that DE courses and materials meet Principles of Good Practice (PGP) requirements published by the THECB (http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=A5A152AC-D29D-334F-872625E9E77B3B37) and to provide assurances that curriculum and instruction are appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded; are comparable in standards and requirements to other campus-based programs; that sufficient numbers of qualified faculty are available/assigned to teach in the DE program; that assigned faculty have received appropriate training and approval required to participate in online course delivery; that DE activities are compatible with delivery using a CIL-approved LMS; and that course/instructional activities are appropriately evaluated for educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction.

   Responsible Party: Course Developer/Course Director.

5. Course developers/directors seeking approval to deliver online DE activities must submit a *Distance Education Proposal: Approval to Deliver* form (https://www.unthsc.edu/center-for-innovative-learning/online-course-design-and-development-at-unthsc/) to the CIL for review and processing. Previously approved online courses that have undergone substantive revision must be resubmitted for review and approval using the *Distance Education Proposal: Approval to Deliver* form.

   Responsible Party: Course Developer/Course Director.
6. All requests to deliver Online Courses must be routed through the CIL for review and then to the Distance Education Committee (DEC) for approval. The CIL review process will include comparison to PGP and Quality Matters Standards (https://www.unthsc.edu/center-for-innovative-learning/quality-of-course-design-at-unthsc/), which helps to ensure that course activities meet minimum design standards and that resources are in place to support the planned DE.

   **Responsible Parties:** Course Developer/Course Director, Director of CIL.

7. Once satisfactory review of a proposed DE activity has been attained, the CIL Director will forward the Distance Education Proposal: Approval to Deliver to the DEC for action. Upon completion of review by that committee, the CIL Director will notify the respective dean/program director of the outcome. If CIL personnel determine that a course does not meet PGP/QM requirements, the course developer/director will be provided a written report outlining any deficiencies and suggestions for revision(s) that are required. Once revisions have been made, all materials can be resubmitted for review and forwarded to the DEC for action.

   **Responsible Party:** Director of the CIL.

8. **Distance Education Fees.** The Student Finance Office and academic admissions personnel are responsible to post and notify students and prospective students of any additional or waived fees associated with participation in Online Courses or DE activities in accordance with state law.

   **Responsible Parties:** Student Finance Office Staff / Admissions Staff.

9. **Student Identity Validation.** Access to DE materials is restricted to properly enrolled students who possess a unique login identifier which has been assigned to them by the UNTHSC. Students are not permitted to share this information with others and are only permitted access to the LMS after correctly entering their assigned login and a secret password. Login identifiers shall only be provided to students who have been properly registered and who have been approved to participate in online courses by the respective academic school/program. Students who permit others access to the LMS using their assigned login/password or who allow others to assume their place in performing online course activities are subject to dismissal under the UNTHSC Student Honor Code. For major exams, i.e., mid-term and final exams, online course instructors are permitted to make use of online proctoring tools, such as ProctorTrack™. Students experiencing difficulties with the LMS are provided assistance by CIL staff or through the
10. **Student Privacy.** Faculty, instructors and teaching assistants are expected to be aware of FERPA regulations and UNTHSC student privacy policy requirements prior to participation in delivery of online DE. All faculty, instructors and teaching assistants participating in delivery of online instructional materials must complete FERPA training offered through the UNTHSC.

   **Responsible Party:** Registrar.

11. Instructors and faculty who have never taught online are required to complete the *Preparing to Teach Online* short course offered by the CIL prior to participating in online course delivery.

   **Responsible Parties:** Instructors/Faculty.

**References and Cross-references.**

UNTHSC 7.139, Technology Mediated Course Policy
UNTHSC 8.102, “Distributed Learning Creation, Use, Ownership, Royalties, Revision and Distribution of Electronically Developed Course Materials
Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008
Tex. Educ. Code § 61.0512(g)
Tex. Educ. Code § 54.218
Tex. Educ. Code § 54.009

**Forms and Tools.**

UNTHSC Distance Education Proposal: Approval to Develop (https://www.unthsc.edu/center-for-innovative-learning/online-course-design-and-development-at-unthsc/)
UNTHSC Distance Education Proposal: Approval to Deliver (https://www.unthsc.edu/center-for-innovative-learning/online-course-design-and-development-at-unthsc/)
THECB Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered Electronically (Principles of Good Practice) (http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=A5A152AC-D29D-334F-872625E9E77B3B37)

FERPA Training Completion and Request for EIS Access to View Basic Student Records (training is provided through the UNTHSC and the CIL)