



Policy Chapter: Chapter 6 Faculty Affairs

Policy Number and Title: 06.030 Review and Approval of Online Courses and Programs

I. Policy Statement

UNT promotes high-quality online instruction and ensures compliance with state, federal, and accreditation requirements. This policy establishes the review and approval process for online courses and programs.

II. Application of Policy

All University

III. Policy Definitions

A. Online Course

“Online Course” means a course section that is fully online and delivered electronically, with no requirement for students and the instructor to meet in the same space or come to campus.

B. Hybrid Course

“Hybrid Course” means a course section in which 50 to 99 percent of the planned instruction occurs online, where the students and instructor(s) are not in the same place, and the instruction is electronically-delivered.

C. Online Education Degree or Certificate Program

“Online Education Degree or Certificate Program” means a program in which a student may complete a majority (more than 50 percent) of the credit hours required for the program through online courses.

D. Unit Administrator

“Unit Administrator” means an individual with unit supervisory responsibilities. Unit administrators include, but are not limited to, directors, chairs, associate deans, and deans.

IV. Policy Responsibilities

A. Approval of Online Courses

1. Responsible Parties for Courses

The Office of the Provost, via Digital Strategy and Innovation’s Center for Learning, Experimentation, Application and Research (DSI CLEAR), is responsible for the review and approval of online and hybrid courses and for maintaining an inventory of courses approved for online and hybrid delivery.

2. Course Inventory

Courses proposed for online or hybrid delivery must be in the institution's course inventory prior to development.

3. Course Approvals & Requirements

In consultation with their unit administrator, a faculty member must receive final approval by the Office of the Provost, via DSI CLEAR, before any online or hybrid course is opened for registration. While decisions related to course content belong to faculty and are protected by UNT Policy 06.035, Academic Freedom and Academic Responsibility, final approval requires the completion of a successful quality review for instructional design to ensure that the course meets online instructional design standards, in accordance with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered Electronically. All courses must also meet accessibility requirements under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

4. Course Deadlines

The Office of the Provost, via DSI CLEAR, will provide deadlines by which the approval process must be completed before an online or hybrid class may be added to the schedule. In the event a faculty member does not successfully complete course development by the specified deadline, the unit administrator will either find a suitable faculty member to successfully complete the course under development or remove the course from the schedule of classes until the course is completed and meets online course design standards for offering in a subsequent semester.

5. Course Review Cycle

After approval, the unit administrator, in collaboration with DSI CLEAR, ensures that online courses are reviewed for instructional design quality, accessibility, and copyright compliance on a 3-year cycle, with adequate advance notice and support provided to faculty. Examples include, but are not limited to, instructional design assistance and flexibility with respect to timing of review when possible.

B. Approval of Undergraduate and Graduate Online Degree and Certificate Programs

1. Responsible Parties for Programs

The Office of the Provost is responsible for approving online degree and certificate programs and maintaining an inventory of all programs approved for online delivery.

2. Program Inventory

Programs proposed for online delivery must be in the institution's approved program inventory or the appropriate university authority must be actively seeking approval as

a new program through the appropriate sources.

3. Program Approvals

At the institution-level, the dean must seek curriculum committee approval. At the university-level, the Office of the Provost must seek Board of Regents and THECB approval.

4. Program Proposal

The proposing department should work with DSI CLEAR to prepare a program proposal that provides evidence that the program can be successful, and addresses the THECB Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered Electronically. This process should begin at least nine (9) months before the program is offered, but additional time will be allowed for programs that require Board of Regents and/or THECB approval.

5. Doctoral Program Requirements

Doctoral-level programs that include more than four (4) online courses must receive approval by the THECB.

6. Program Coordination & Reporting Responsibilities

The Office of the Provost is responsible for coordinating with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and the THECB liaisons to fulfill notification and/or additional approval requirements. The Office of the Provost reports periodically to the president, chancellor, and Board of Regents regarding the programs approved for online delivery.

V. Forms and Tools

[Online Course Development & Approval Form](#)

VI. References and Cross-References

UNT Policy 06.035, Academic Freedom and Academic Responsibility

29 U.S.C.A. § 794 (Sec. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act)

42 U.S.C.A. §12101 (Title II of the ADA)

Approval of Distance Education Courses and Programs for Public Institutions, Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter P

THECB Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered Electronically

VII. Revision History

Policy Contact:	Policy Director, Office of the Provost and VP for Academic Affairs
Approved Date:	02/1999
Effective Date:	10/19/2016
Revisions:	06/2003, 04/2011, 10/19/2016, 12/14/2021