



**Policy Chapter:** Chapter 6 Faculty Affairs

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

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**I. Policy Statement**

UNT promotes high-quality online and hybrid instruction and ensures compliance with state, federal, and recognized accreditation requirements including Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). This policy establishes the approval and review requirements for online courses and programs while giving faculty maximum flexibility to innovate and create online curricula.

**II. Application of Policy**

All University.

**III. Policy Definitions**

**A. Online Course**

“Online Course,” in this policy, means a course section that is fully (100%) 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,” in this policy, means a course section in which fifty (50) to ninety-nine (99) percent of the planned instruction occurs online, and where the students and instructor(s) are in the same place at the same time for the face-to-face portion of the course.

**C. Instructional Design**

“Instructional Design,” in this policy, means a systematic and organized approach to creating effective and efficient instructional materials and learning experiences. It involves a structured process for analyzing, designing, developing, implementing, and evaluating instructional strategies.

**D. Online Education Degree or Certificate Program**

“Online Education Degree or Certificate Program,” in this policy, 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. A “Fully Online Degree or Certificate Program” is a program in which a student completes 100% of the credit hours required for the program through 100% online courses.

## IV. Policy Responsibilities

### A. Approval of Online Courses and Programs

#### 1. Responsible Parties

##### a. Faculty, Curriculum Committees, and Unit Administrators

As with face-to-face course instruction, the online curriculum is vested in the faculty and delegated to departmental, college, and university curriculum committees, who will review all course content for quality, currency in the discipline, and suitability for the intended instructional level. As such, decisions pertaining to course content belong to the faculty and are reaffirmed by [UNT Policy 06.035, Academic Freedom and Academic Responsibility](#), and [UNT Policy 06.001, Evaluating, Awarding, and Accepting Credit](#).

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 established procedures. At the institution-level, the dean must seek curriculum committee approval. The proposing department should work with Digital Strategy and Innovation's Center for Learning, Experimentation, Application, and Research (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 Distance Education](#). 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. THECB approval is also required for doctoral-level programs that include more than four (4) online courses.

##### b. Office of the Provost

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

At the university-level, the Office of the Provost must actively seek Board of Regents and THECB approval for new programs proposed for online delivery if the program is not already in the approved program inventory. The Office of the Provost is also responsible for coordinating with the SACSCOC liaison and the THECB liaison to fulfill notification and/or additional approval requirements.

The Office of the Provost, via DSI CLEAR, makes online and hybrid course recommendations related to instructional design and is responsible for:

- i. reviewing online degree or certificate programs for compliance with applicable state, federal, and recognized accreditation requirements regarding accessibility and copyright;
- ii. providing deadlines by which the approval process must be completed before an online or hybrid class may be added to the schedule;
- iii. maintaining an inventory of courses approved for online and hybrid delivery;
- iv. making available new-courseware workspaces (“shells”) for faculty to develop online and hybrid courses for course development at the request of faculty; and
- v. ensuring that online and hybrid courses are reviewed for accessibility and copyright compliance on a 3-year cycle, with adequate advance notice and support provided to faculty.

Directives related to accessibility and copyright are non-discretionary. Upon DSI CLEAR’s assurance of copyright and accessibility compliance, faculty members must receive final approval from their unit administrator before any online or hybrid course is opened for registration.

#### ***B. Supporting Course Development***

1. Consistent with [SACSCOC Proposed 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines](#), the university will provide faculty with sufficient support and resources for the development and execution of online courses. This includes but is not limited to, teaching faculty how to create accessible documents, use accessible teaching tools, and purchase tools that support the conversion of existing non-compliant items.
2. On the occasions when online course development is especially labor-intensive and consistent with [UNT Policy 06.027, Academic Workload](#), unit administrators must account for the time and labor associated with developing online courses in faculty workload.

#### **V. References and Cross-References**

[34 CFR 600.2](#)

[3 Texas Education Code §§61.821 - 61.832](#)

[19 Texas Administrative Code §4.6](#)

[SACSCOC Proposed 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines](#)

[THECB Principles of Good Practice for Distance Education](#)

[UNT Policy 06.001, Evaluating, Awarding, and Accepting Credit](#)

[UNT Policy 06.027, Academic Workload](#)

[UNT Policy 06.035, Academic Freedom and Academic Responsibility](#)

[UNT Policy 06.037, Course and Curriculum Development](#)

[Guidelines for Awarding Transfer and Non-Traditional Learning Credit](#)

**VI. Revision History**

Policy Contact:	Asst. Vice Provost, Faculty Success
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