



Program Delivery Definitions

The U.S. Department of Education and the Higher Learning Commission have established definitions for distance education and correspondence education that all institutions of higher education are expected to adopt. Those definitions are listed below. In addition, to assist faculty with the classification of their program's delivery model, definitions of classroom-based and hybrid delivery are also provided.

Classroom-based Delivery

Definition of a Classroom-based Program: A program in which the majority of the courses are delivered with instruction and interaction between the student and the instructor occurring primarily in a physical classroom.

Hybrid Delivery

Definition of a Hybrid Program: A program in which both the physical classroom and distance delivery are used to provide instruction and interaction between students and the instructor, but with fewer than 50% of the required courses being offered as distance-delivered courses (see definition below).

Distance Education Delivery

Definition of a Distance Education Program: A program in which 50% or more of the required courses in a program can be taken as distance-delivered courses.

Classification of a Distance –Delivered Course: A course that employs distance education instructional strategies (1-4 below) for all or the vast majority (75% or more) of the instruction and interaction.

Definition of Distance Education Instructional Strategies: Instructional strategies delivered to students who are separated from the instructor and that involved the use of one or more of the technologies listed below to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously.

- (1) The internet;
- (2) One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
- (3) Audio conferencing; or
- (4) Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROM, if used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3) of this definition.

Correspondence Education Delivery

Definition of a Correspondence Education Program: A program in which one or more of the courses in a program is offered through correspondence education

Definition of a Correspondence Education: (Must meet all three elements)

- (1) Education is provided through one or more courses by an institution under which the institution provides instructional materials, by mail or electronic transmission, including examinations on the materials, to students who are separated from the instructor; and
- (2) Interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; and
- (3) Correspondence courses are typically self-paced.