# ALABAMA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION

# PLANNING AND COORDINATION

# ADMINISTRATIVE CODE

**CHAPTER 300-2-1**

**PROGRAM REVIEW**

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| NOTE: Proposed changes are visible in this document using red text for additions and strikethrough for deletions. The current version of the Administrative Code is available at <http://www.alabamaadministrativecode.state.al.us/docs/hged/300-2-1.pdf> | | |

# 300-2-1-.10 Distance Education.

1. Purpose: This section is intended to ensure consistency around implementation and quality of distance education.
2. Commission Responsibility: Code of Alabama, Section 16-67-1, entitled, “Reciprocity committee and fund,” established the Alabama State Reciprocity Committee (SRC) to oversee reciprocity agreements governing the offering of distance education by Alabama institutions and participation of Alabama residents in distance education activities offered by institutions in other states. In keeping with its charge, the SRC has selected the Alabama Commission on Higher Education to serve as the state portal agency to coordinate related activities.
3. Scope: This policy applies to academic programs (not to individual courses) offered by public colleges and universities located in Alabama. It does not apply to private institutions or to institutions with no physical presence in Alabama.
4. Definitions: The following definitions pertain to this policy:

(a)~~Delivery Modality: The method through which coursework in academic programs is delivered to students. Modality includes the following types:~~

1. ~~Face-to-face instruction (content offered in-person)~~
2. ~~Synchronous virtual instruction (content offered online where instructor and students interact in real time)~~
3. ~~Asynchronous virtual instruction (content offered online where instructor and students do not need to interact in real time)~~
4. ~~Hybrid instruction (content includes distinct face-to-face and virtual components) includes blended~~
5. ~~Hyflex instruction (content offered simultaneously in face-to-face and virtual modalities)~~
6. ~~Videoconference~~
7. Definition of Distance Education: A formal educational process using technological delivery in which instruction occurs where students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. ~~Distance education may employ audio, video, or computer technologies.~~ Distance education, distance learning, and e- learning are recognized by the Commission as being synonymous terms. [IPEDS Distance education (DE) is education that uses one or more types of technology to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously. ] ~~Academic courses or programs are considered to be distance education entities when over fifty percent of the content is delivered through distance education modes. [Based on the Council on Occupational Education (COE) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools/Commission on Colleges (SACS/COC) definitions.]~~
8. Distance Education Program: ACHE defines a “distance education program” as an academic program (of any level) for which all the required coursework for program completion can be completed entirely via distance education courses. A distance education program may have in-person requirements that are non-instructional (e.g., orientation, practicum).
9. State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (SARA): an interstate distance education compact coordinated through the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA). Institutional membership in SARA establishes recognition of comparable standards in the interstate delivery of postsecondary distance education courses and programs.
10. Program Approval: ~~Units~~ Programs of instruction offered by Alabama public institutions, including distance education offerings, are subject to Commission approval per the Code of Ala. 1975, Section 16-5-8.
11. Tuition: Institutions are to set tuition for distance education offerings, ensuring that they meet statutory requirements.
12. Authorization: Institutions providing distance education courses or programs are expected to be in full compliance with the standards and/or requirements of any appropriate governing or accreditation authorities. Authorization to provide distance education programs to residents of states outside of Alabama may be satisfied through membership in SARA.
13. ~~Academic programs offered through distance education by Alabama public institutions must have been approved by the Commission on Higher Education and must be listed in the Commission’s Academic Program Inventory with no restriction to a military base.~~
14. Prior Notification: Programs approved by the Commission on Higher Education do not require additional Commission approval to be configured and offered as distance education programs. However, institutions preparing to offer existing programs as distance education offerings must report this intent to the Commission prior to implementation.
15. An academic program may be offered both as a distance education program and in another format (such as face-to-face or hybrid). ACHE would only need notification for programs that are adding a distance education modality.
16. Notification not Required: The Commission does not require notification or approval for distance education in the following circumstances:
    1. Individual courses configured for distance education
    2. Academic programs where less than 100% of the coursework is delivered through distance education modalities

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**Statutory Authority:** Code of Ala. 1975, §§16-5-1 et seg. **History: New Rule:** Filed December 11, 2018; effective January 25, 2019