

NCATE GUIDELINES AND POLICIES ON DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS IN TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Definitions

Distance Learning. A formal educational process in which the major portion of the instruction occurs when the learner and the instructor are not in the same place at the same time through virtually any media including printed materials, videotapes, audio recordings, facsimiles, telephone communications, Internet communications through email, and web-based delivery systems.

Distance Learning Program. A program in which over half of the required courses in the program occur when the learner and the instructor are not in the same place at the same time. See definition on distance learning. These programs include those offered by the professional educational unit through a contract with an outside vendor or in a consortium arrangement with other higher education institutions, local education agencies, or other entities.

Disaggregation of Data

Beginning in fall 2007, professional education units will be asked to disaggregate candidate assessment data by campus programs, off-campus programs, and distance learning programs for the national review process and unit accreditation to help determine similarities and differences in the quality of candidates that complete these programs.

Questions Developed for Assistance in Evaluation of Distance Learning Programs

The following ten questions have been approved by the UAB as guides for BOE teams and institutions in the assessment of distance learning programs. These questions were developed to assist teams and units in determining whether distance learning offerings meet NCATE standards to the same degree as other programs offered by the unit through traditional means.

1. **Standard 1:** What assessments are used to monitor candidate performance and determine that proficiencies in standards are being met by candidates in distance learning programs? What do the data suggest about the performance of candidates in distance learning programs as compared to candidates in traditional programs?
2. **Standard 2:** What evaluations of the distance learning programs provide systematic and ongoing data for use in program improvement? What changes have occurred as a result of these evaluations?

3. **Standard 3:** How do distance learning programs in professional education ensure that field experiences and clinical practice are well sequenced, supervised by trained personnel and monitored by unit faculty, and integrated into the program?
4. **Standard 4:** How does the unit ensure that the curriculum provided through distance learning reflect diversity and prepares candidates to work with all students? How does the unit ensure that candidates interact with diverse faculty and peers? How does the unit ensure that candidates work with diverse student populations?
5. **Standard 5:** What are the qualifications of faculty members who teach via distance delivery that indicate they are proficient in the methods of delivery?
6. **Conceptual Framework and Standard 6:** To what extent are the design and delivery of distance learning programs consistent with the mission of the institution and the unit, supported by a conceptual framework and knowledge base, guided by a long-range plan, and supported by adequate resources?
7. **Standard 6:** How are distance learning programs, including programs that are acquired through contract with an outside vendor or delivered in a consortium arrangement, controlled, coordinated, and evaluated by the unit?
8. **Standard 6:** How are distance learning candidates provided advisement and personal access to faculty similar to that provided traditional candidates?
9. **Standard 6:** To what extent is the balance of part-time and full-time faculty, requirements for scholarship and service, and evaluation processes similar for faculty members who teach via distance learning and for other faculty members?
10. **Standard 6:** What technical system is in place to ensure consistent and reliable delivery of the program and provide necessary security for testing and assessments (e.g., monitoring that the person completing assignments is actually the person enrolled in the program)?

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