

Excerpt from ACCET Document 25 – Policy for New, Revised, and Existing Programs/Courses (pages 8-10)

**Distance Learning**

**Distance Learning is educational delivery conducted through a digital environment to students who are separated from the instructor.**

*Current Definition:*

**Interactive Distance Learning (IDL)** is a means of providing educational delivery which is conducted through an electronically facilitated environment, such as online instruction or video conferencing, accessible to participants who are separated by physical distance for all or part (blended) of the offering. Interactive distance learning supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously, as well as student-to-student interaction. Computerized electronic technologies utilized for IDL instruction, interaction between students and instructors, and interaction between students may include the internet, audio-conferencing, and one-way and two-way transmission through cable, fiber optics, and/or satellite or wireless communication devices. E-learning, correspondence, and self-study are not interactive distance learning, in that there is insufficient interaction between instructors and students.

To ensure that IDL training is appropriate in content and length, ACCET will review IDL programs and/or courses, including those offered in an online, asynchronous delivery mode, to verify that clock hour requirements are met and that the length of the programs and/or courses (clock hours and/or credit hours) is appropriate and educationally sound. In conducting its review, ACCET will consider various methods utilized by institutions to demonstrate that their IDL training meets clock hour requirements and assigned clock hours and/or credit hours are appropriate, including providing (1) a comparison of IDL training with comparable training offered in a traditional face-to-face delivery mode and/or (2) a time-on-task analysis such as those completed by publishers for their online curriculum and made available to their end-users. Methods utilized by institutions to track and monitor student progress and attendance for online, asynchronous training frequently involve the verifiable tracking of student log-in time in conjunction with active student participation. For example, institutions record and track student participation in online activities (e.g., faculty-facilitated discussion forums) and direct assessments (e.g., testing, assignments, projects).

*Proposed Revision*

• **Interactive Distance Learning**

**Interactive Distance Learning (IDL) is communication and instruction delivered partially or entirely through digital technologies and online platforms that support both synchronous and asynchronous engagement. IDL requires regular and substantive, predictable and scheduled student-to-instructor and student-to-student interaction.**

**IDL programs and courses are educationally sound and appropriate in content and length. The institution must demonstrate that clock- and credit-hour requirements are met through a time-on-task analysis.**

Institutions that have never offered IDL courses/programs (defined as any course or program with at least a portion offered via IDL technology) must seek prior approval from ACCET for an out-of-scope program, including situations involving the application of IDL methodology to already-approved courses/programs of study. To be eligible for approval of additional IDL courses/ programs, an institution must first demonstrate the successful outcomes of graduates of its initial approved IDL program/course (e.g. above benchmark completion and, if applicable, placement rates), based upon the submission of a comprehensive report.

### **Types of Interactive Distance Learning**

- **Fully Online**

Programs in which all instruction is delivered online, with no requirement for in-person attendance, are considered fully online. All course content is available to students in a learning management system and/or other educationally sound platforms managed by the institution or contracted provider. All learning activities and assessments take place online. Fully online courses include consistent interaction between instructors and students and among students. A program remains classified as fully online even if it includes a required internship or externship that takes place off campus.

- **Hybrid Learning**

Programs in which components take place both online and in person are classified as hybrid. Traditional classroom pedagogy and approaches, such as lectures and student discussions, may be supported and/or replaced by online components utilizing a structured LMS or other educational platform that demonstrates consistent interaction and is managed by the institution.

#### *Current Definition:*

E-learning is instruction delivered through computerized electronic technologies, such as the internet, intranet, compact disc, mobile devices, or other digital media. Designed specifically to support distinct learning objectives through a variety of instructional strategies, e-learning requires active engagement and interaction by the student with instructional materials to meet course/program objectives and achieve intended learning outcomes. E-learning is one method of instruction; it can be combined with other methods, such as instructor-led training to reinforce learning. E-learning provides educational delivery that is conducted through an electronically facilitated environment to students who are separated by physical distance for all or part (hybrid) of the offering. However, e-learning is not interactive distance learning, in that interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student. Student-to-student interaction is also often limited or absent. Additionally, e-learning is typically self-paced instruction.

To ensure that e-learning is appropriate in content and length, ACCET will review e-learning programs and/or courses, including those offered in an online, asynchronous delivery mode, to verify that clock hour requirements are met and that the length of the programs and/or courses (in

clock hours) is appropriate and educationally sound. In conducting its review, ACCET will consider various methods utilized by institutions to demonstrate that their e-learning meets clock hour requirements and assigned clock hours are appropriate, including providing (1) a comparison of e-learning with comparable training offered in a traditional face-to-face delivery mode and/or (2) a time-on-task analysis such as those completed by publishers for their online curriculum and made available to their end-users. Methods utilized by institutions to track and monitor student progress and attendance for online, asynchronous e-learning frequently involve the verifiable tracking of student log-in time in conjunction with active student participation. For example, institutions record and track student participation in online activities and direct assessments (e.g., testing, assignments).

Institutions may only seek and obtain approval for avocational courses and/or avocational programs to be offered in whole or in part by e-learning. Vocational programs and courses will not be approved by ACCET to be delivered through e-learning.

*Proposed Revision:*

- **Structured Asynchronous Learning (SAL)**

Structured Asynchronous Learning (SAL) is instruction delivered through digital technologies in which students engage with content and complete activities and assessments within a specified timeframe. It is intentionally designed to support specific objectives using a range of learning strategies.

In SAL environments, interaction between instructors and students is typically limited, not regularly scheduled, and often initiated by the student. Opportunities for student-to-student interaction may also be limited or absent. As a result, SAL is generally self-paced and does not meet the standard for regular and substantive interaction required for interactive distance learning.

Only avocational courses/programs are eligible for instructional delivery via SAL.

Institutions that have never offered SAL courses/programs (defined as any course or program with at least a portion offered via SAL) must seek prior approval from ACCET for an out-of-scope program, including situations involving the application of SAL methodology to already-approved courses/programs of study. To be eligible for approval of additional SAL courses/programs, an institution must first demonstrate the successful outcomes of graduates of its initial approved e-learning program/course (e.g., above benchmark completion), based upon the submission of a comprehensive report.