

Proposition 30-16/17: Proposal to Revise -6.55 Academic Rules for Distance Education

**Proposition:** 30-16/17

**Title:** Proposal to Revise Rule 6.55 - Academic Rules for Distance Education

**Date Submitted:** March 3, 2017

**Sponsor(s):** Richard Oliver, College of Business

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**Proposed Committee:** Scholastic Affairs

**Assigned Committee:** Scholastic Affairs

**Prior Approvals:** Reviewed by Academic Deans Council, Associate Deans' Academic Council, University Administrative Council, Faculty Advisory Committee on Technology, and the Online Course Improvement Program Advisory Board

**Proposal:**

**6.55 - Academic Rules for Distance Education v022117postUAC1**

**PART 1: DISTANCE EDUCATION AT NMSU**

Distance Education at New Mexico State University refers to the formal process of delivering instruction via electronic or other media regardless of the location of the student or the instructor. This can be synchronous or asynchronous and can include face-to-face interaction.

- A. Distance Education Course Criteria: Courses that meet any one of the following criteria are considered distance education courses.
1. Online courses with greater than or equal to 80% web-based technologies and 20% or less face-to-face instruction;
  2. Offsite courses that are face-to-face, with or without web-based technologies, offered at a location other than the campus of program origin; or
  3. Courses that use interactive television (ITV) to deliver instruction.
- B. Distance Education Program Criteria: A degree, certification, or other credential where more than 50% of the program is delivered via off-site, web-based technologies, or other media will be considered a Distance Education Program.

**PART 2: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING CAMPUS DISTANCE EDUCATION COMMITTEE(S)**

- A. Campus Distance Education Committee(s): Each campus within the NMSU system will have a distance education committee whose membership is determined by the campus academic officer in consultation with campus faculty. Each campus distance education committee will review and coordinate its campus' distance education activities with their respective campus chief academic officer, and with the distance education director.
- B. Distance Education Director: The distance education director provides oversight, coordination, and support for all aspects of the institution's distance education program and course offerings. This includes but is not limited to professional development, student support, maintaining quality initiatives, and advocating for program development as well as growth.
- C. Executive Vice President and Provost: On behalf of the NMSU system, the Executive Vice President and Provost will coordinate the work of the campus distance education committees, with the committees' respective chief academic officers and with the distance education director.
- D. Faculty Expectations:
1. In order to maintain the educational quality of all distance education offerings, faculty are expected to have experience teaching online. When appropriate, departments are encouraged to include online teaching experience in the evaluation of applicants for faculty positions. The department head or dean will determine if faculty have or have not demonstrated appropriate experience. Faculty who have not demonstrated appropriate experience are expected to complete the following professional development activities prior to teaching an online course:
    - a. Learning Management System training
    - b. Short course for online teaching
    - c. Applying the Quality Matters Rubric workshop
    - d. Videoconference/ITV training when appropriate.
  2. Faculty are expected to use the institutional learning management system to deliver online course materials. Although supplementary instructional materials may be provided via other websites, these websites should not be the primary tool for instructional interaction (*See Part 3 and 5 of Rule 2.80*).
- E. Administration: Administration will provide opportunities for faculty to continue to develop distance education teaching skills. Faculty teaching online are expected to keep current with new developments in distance teaching and learning. To support this expectation, Department and College Promotion and Tenure documents must include appropriate credit for distance education course development as well as teaching online.

**PART 3: FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES APPLICABLE TO DISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND COURSES**

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- A. Quality and Learning Goals; Prioritization of Distance Education Programs: A fundamental principle for all NMSU courses and programs is that quality and learning goals are consistent regardless of delivery modality. The value of distance education offerings is ultimately achieved through coordinated program offerings that lead to a specified credential. Resources will be prioritized toward offering full distance education programs over individual courses.
- B. Transition from Face-to-Face Delivery to Distance Education Delivery: Programs moving from face-to-face delivery to distance delivery must follow procedures for new programs as outlined in Rule 6.82 (Degrees, Majors, Minors, & other Academic Programs of Study). This rule applies to degrees, majors, minors or certificates that change modality from face-to-face settings or move more than 50% of the program to a distance delivery.
- C. Review and Approval of Newly Proposed Distance Education Programs: New distance education program proposals must be reviewed by the director of distance education prior to being presented to the Associate Deans Academic Council. This review must include an assessment of the financial viability of the program offering that outlines anticipated revenues as well as expenses.
- D. Assessment of Distance Ed Learning Outcomes: Assessment of distance education programs shall be incorporated into other assessment activities of the academic unit. When a distance education program is also offered face-to-face, assessment of learning outcomes shall be integrated.
- E. Requirements to Offer Online Courses: All NMSU online courses must meet a quality metric before being offered. This metric will address standards for course design, branding, and templates. Online courses will be reviewed on a five-year cycle by the college. (*See Rule 6.35, Curricula Changes*).
- F. Approval of Distance Education Courses: NMSU's four-year campus distance education courses must be approved through the appropriate college and the Director of Distance Education. NMSU's two-year campuses will develop their own course approval process. The work of each campus distance education committee will be coordinated and aligned system wide through the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost.
- G. Compliance with NMSU Policies and Procedures: Faculty and staff developing and teaching online courses will be subject to applicable university, college or departmental policies and procedures, including but not limited to the Administrative Rules and Procedures of NMSU (ARP). For example, Rule 11.05, Intellectual Property Management and Rule 3.20.28, Conflicts of Commitment.
- H. Course Delivery Fee (CDF): Each campus shall impose a course delivery fee for distance education courses as defined above. These fees shall be shared among campus administration, colleges, and units in a manner that supports the mission of the university and distance education.

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| Rule Administrator:  | Executive Vice President and Provost   |
| Scope:               | NMSU System  |
| Rule Effective Date: | [UGC will complete]  |
| Revision History:    | 10.21.15 BOR approved replicated Policy 6.55 as initial Rule 6.55. <i>No Prior Revision History Available for Policy 6.55.</i> |
| Cross References:    |  |

### **Rationale:**

The proposed revision of the current 6.55 – Academic Rules for Distance Education is based on four primary factors. See Supplement 1.

- 1) The proposed revisions to 6.55 will update the DE policies to more accurately reflect the current realities, such as a commitment to faculty support, and needs of DE at NMSU, for example, increased coordination and communication concerning DE programs and courses between NMSU campuses. This will help strengthen NMSU functioning as a system.
- 2) The proposed revisions to 6.55 will strengthen the alignment between NMSU policies and the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) criteria as follows:

Criterion Three, Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources and Support.

3.A. The institution's degree programs are appropriate to higher education.

3.C. The institution has faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services.

3.D. The institution provides support for student learning and effective teaching.

Criterion Four, Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement.

4.A. The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs.

4.B. The institution demonstrates a commitment to educational achievement and improvement through ongoing assessment of student learning. See Supplement 2.

- 3) The proposed revisions to 6.55 will strengthen the alignment between NMSU policies and its compliance with the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education 2011 Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Guidelines. As a State Authorized Reciprocity Agreement ([SARA institution](#)), NMSU can legally provide DE courses to students in other SARA member states without the burden of applying in each state and in some instances paying fees. Currently, all 50 states and the District of Columbia are either approved SARA states or in the process of joining SARA. See attached C-RAC Guidelines.

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- 4) The proposed revisions to 6.55 will support the growth of DE programs with a strategic approach through the planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating stages.