

Distance Education Application

POLICY

The Council requires that distance education programs and courses achieve the same outcomes as traditional education offerings.

The ~~increasing~~ use of technology as an instructional strategy in onsite classroom instruction has blurred the distinction between onsite instruction and distance education. ~~So-called H~~ybrid or web-enhanced strategies, which combine the use of technologically delivered instruction with face-to-face interaction with faculty and other students in a classroom at the instructional site, are becoming more ~~and more~~ common. Programs are not required to apply to the COA for approval of hybrid or web-enhanced courses if the course requires regular face-to-face interaction at the program site throughout the term.

DEFINITION

Distance Education in the context of nurse anesthesia education:

Distance Education: An educational process that is characterized by the separation, in time or place, between instructor and student and supports regular and substantive interaction between the students and instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The term includes courses in which 50% or more of instruction is provided via communication technologies, including Internet-based courses (both asynchronous and synchronous); two-way and one-way interactive ~~digital-, video-, and audio-~~conferencing; ~~and other, multimedia-, compact disk-, video cassette, and audio tape.~~

Distance Education Course: A course where 50% or more of required activities are offered at a distance. For example, a 2 credit course which is equivalent to 30 contact hours becomes a distance education course when 15 or more contact hours offered are conducted with a separation in time or place, between the instructor and/or student (see: Distance Education definition above.)

Plan of Study: Any curriculum plan that results in the award of a degree or certificate in nurse anesthesia.

Distance Education Program: A program where 50% or more of the total curriculum of any plan of study is offered via distance education and leads to the award of a degree or certificate. For example, if the curriculum of a plan of study consists of 40 credit hours and 20 or more are offered in a distance format the program is considered to be a distance education program.

Identity of a distance education student: Verification that the student who participates in class or course work is the same student who registers, completes the course and receives credit for the course. A program is expected to have security mechanisms such as identification numbers or other pass code information in place and to use them each time a student participates online. Other methods may include, but are not limited to, proctored exams or new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identity.

The COA considers the following distance education curricular change to constitute a major programmatic change.

- The first course offered by distance education to matriculated nurse anesthesia students as a part of their entry level or completion degree plan of study.
- The increase in the percentage of distance education offered re-classifies the plan of study as a distance education program (as defined above.)

The entire application, plus ~~corresponding information~~ relevant documentation, must be submitted at least 60 days prior to the next Council meeting. The application will be made available through programs' COAccess portals. Submit the required fee (see: Fee Schedule). Additional COA administrative expenses will be billed to the program, if applicable.

Programs applying for approval to use distance education for the first time must complete the following items.

1. Proposed date of implementation.
2. Curriculum plan or course titles and number of credit hours per course.
3. The percentage of total credit hours that the program currently offers via distance education and the percentage that would be offered if this application is approved.
4. Describe methods for interactions of faculty with students and students with students.
5. Describe and provide documentation (as indicated) regarding how the following resources/infrastructure are provided:
 - a. faculty training requirements for utilization of distance education technology (e.g., documentation of institutional policies and procedures, evidence of faculty completion of training/education, etc.)
 - ~~a. institutional support for course instructional design (e.g., documentation of completed faculty training in development of quality online courses, evidence of access to resource personnel expert in the pedagogy of teaching at a distance and use of distance education technology, etc.) or support for course instructional design and utilization of distance education technology~~
 - b. current technology support for students, including access to adequate equipment
 - c. access to educational resources (e.g., library, student services) for students to effectively participate in distance education
 - d. method to verify the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework including processes used to protect students' privacy
 - e. notification to students of any projected additional student charges associated with verifying student identity at the time of registration and/or **enrollment**
 - f. comprehensive plan to evaluate effectiveness of the distance education

component and comply with the criterion: “Distance education programs and courses satisfy accreditation standards and achieve the same outcomes as traditional educational offerings” as stated in the COA’s Standards for Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (submit a copy of the systematic evaluation plan demonstrating evaluation of distance education outcomes)*

6. ~~Identify by name any other nurse anesthesia programs that are affiliated with the distance education courses.~~

Programs already approved for distance education courses and wishing to apply as a distance education program must complete the following items.

1. Describe the goals for the distance education program.
2. Address questions 4 and 5 above.

*In the event that distance courses have only been offered online, achievement of comparable outcomes can be demonstrated by positive course and instructor evaluations, students’ final grades, programs’ National Certification Examination (NCE) pass rates, and graduation rates.

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