



## PROPOSED NEW POLICY

### Policy on Instructional Modalities (to replace Policy on Alternative Academic Patterns) (initial review)

The ABHE Accreditation Standards and Essential Elements apply to all modes of delivery, including distance, correspondence, and competency-based education. Institutions are responsible for the quality of programs and instruction regardless of instructional modality, and for ensuring that all educational programs and courses/instruction offered include access to student services and resources that support student success and development. Institutions are expected to refer to current best practices for delivering instruction and student services for the chosen modality. All courses/instruction for credit or leading to a credential (degree, certificate) must be under the direct control of the institution’s administration, regardless of instructional modality. The initiation of courses/instruction or programs in a new instructional modality requires compliance with the **Policy on Substantive Change**.

The ABHE Commission on Accreditation expects institutions not only to meet the Standards and Essential Elements for all instructional modalities, but also to comply with all related COA policies and with regulations in all jurisdictions in which it operates. Outlined below are definitions of instructional modalities and a summary of COA standards and policy statements related to distance, correspondence, and competency-based modalities.

#### Definitions of Instructional Modalities

Modality (synonyms)	Proportion of Instruction* Delivered in a Face-to-Face** Setting	Description	Requires Substantive Change to do 50% or more of a program?
<b>Face-to-Face</b>  (traditional classroom, hybrid classroom)	51% or more	Course content is delivered in a mandatory face-to-face setting. May use some technologically-mediated educational engagement strategies to enhance the course and/or to replace some face-to-face meetings.	No

<p><b>Distance Education</b> (distance learning, remote learning, online education, synchronous online, hyflex)</p>	<p>0-50%</p>	<p>Characterized by instructor and students being separated by space and/or time; most course activity is done via technologically-mediated educational strategies including but not limited to video conferencing, audio conferencing and learning management systems; courses include substantive and regular faculty-student interaction.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Correspondence</b></p>	<p>0%</p>	<p>Instructional materials are delivered via mail or electronic means; there are no required face-to-face sessions within the course and no requirements for on-campus activity; interaction between the instructor and the student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student; courses are typically self-paced.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Mixed Modality</b></p>	<p>Student Choice</p>	<p>Students can choose between two or more modalities for class sessions and/or learning activities depending on the student's schedule and learning preference.</p>	<p>Institution or Program must be approved for 50% or more of each modality used</p>
<p><b>Competency-Based Education</b></p>	<p>Variable</p>	<p>An outcomes-based system of instruction in which the student's demonstrated proficiency in specified knowledge or skills is the basis for measuring satisfaction of course, program, or degree requirements, regardless of time spent in class.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

\*Instruction = interaction between students and instructors and among students

\*\*Face-to-face = synchronous interaction in the same physical space

These descriptions were informed by the working definitions from the Online Learning Consortium and SACSCOC.

### **Related Policies for Distance Education**

1. Guidelines for Ensuring Integrity in Correspondence and Distance Education
2. Guidelines for Sharing Online Courses
3. Policy on Compliance with U.S. Department of Education Regulations
4. Policy on State/Government Authorization

### **Related Policies for Correspondence Education**

Correspondence education is not distance education, and correspondence courses are not eligible for Title IV financial aid. Correspondence education is not within ABHE's scope of recognition by the U.S. Department of Education.

1. Guidelines for Ensuring Integrity in Correspondence and Distance Education
2. Policy on State/Government Authorization

### **Related Policies for Competency-Based Education**

1. Policy on Competency-Based Education
2. Policy on Compliance with U.S. Department of Education Regulations
3. Policy on State/Government Authorization

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