

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER
POLICY ON DISTANCE EDUCATION

I. POLICY OVERVIEW

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the rules governing Distance Education. This policy applies to all students at the SULC.

The Southern University Law Center (“SULC”) may offer credit toward the Juris Doctor (“JD”) degree for study offered through distance education consistent with the provisions of this Policy on Distance Education (the “Policy”). Credit shall be awarded only if the academic content, the method of course delivery, and the methods of evaluating student performance are approved as part of SULC’s regular curriculum approval process. The substantive content of distance learning courses, as well as the staffing of those courses, is the responsibility of the Chancellor and the faculty of SULC, who have primary responsibility for maintaining the quality and integrity of all instruction regardless of the course format or method of delivery. No credit may be given toward the JD degree for any distance education course unless that course is approved and executed in accordance with this Policy.

II. DEFINITION

Distance education is a formal educational process in which the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a given course occurs when the students and the instructor are not in the same physical space.

a) Interactivity may be synchronous or asynchronous. Distance education includes courses offered principally by means of:

1. technological transmission, including Internet, open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, satellite, broadband lines, fiber optics, wireless, or other means of transmission;
2. audio or computer conferencing;
3. video cassettes or DVDs and CD-ROMs; or
4. correspondence.

b) A course is considered a distance education course if one-third or more of the course instruction consists of distance education. If less than one-third of the course instruction consists of distance education, the requirements set forth below shall not be required, but are advisable and are beneficial to the extent the course includes a substantial distance education component.

III. STANDARDS

To meet the needs of students, and to provide quality instruction, the following standards shall be applied to any proposal for a distance education course.

- a) SULC may award credit for a distance education course, and that credit may count toward the credit hours needed for a Juris Doctor degree if:
 - 1) there is ample interaction with the instructor and other students both inside and outside the formal structure of the course throughout its duration; and,
 - 2) there is ample monitoring of student effort and accomplishment as the course progresses.
- b) Courses offered through distance education shall have the same rigor and expected outcomes as if the courses were offered by SULC as non-distance education courses and be consistent and aligned with the role, scope, and mission of SULC.
- c) Courses offered through distance education shall have the same minimum class time requirements per credit as if the courses were offered by SULC as non-distance learning courses.
- d) All policies of SULC apply to the distance education courses.
- e) The technology used in distance education courses shall be appropriate to and correlate with the nature and objectives of the courses and expectations concerning the use of such technology. Such expectations shall be clearly communicated to the students prior to the time they are registered in the distance education course.
- f) Each distance learning course shall include interactivity, allowing faculty and students opportunities to interact that equal or exceed those found in a non-distance education classroom setting.

IV. ENROLLMENT IN DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES

- a) No student may enroll in distance education courses until the student has completed twenty-eight (28) credit hours toward the JD degree.
- b) No student may earn more than four (4) distance education credit hours in any given semester, nor may a student earn more than twelve (12) distance education credit hours toward the awarding of the JD degree.
- c) All students who register in a distance education course shall be trained and oriented in the applicable information technology resources and in all applicable distance education protocols prior to the commencement of the distance education course. Further,

students shall be given information technology support [consistent with \(III.e\)](#) during the duration of the course in the event they encounter technological difficulties.

d) All distance education students must abide by the SULC Code of Student Conduct Manual in all distance education courses and in other relevant aspects of the distance education course.

e) Prior to the commencement of the semester in which a distance education course is to take place, the SULC Office of Records and Registration will provide the instructor with a complete list of all students who are registered for the course. Additionally, an updated class list will be given to the instructor after the final date for students to drop or add courses. The SULC Office of Records and Registration will also verify that students are validly registered and enrolled in any applicable distance education course prior to receiving semester grades and credit for the course.

V. STUDENT EVALUATION

a) Faculty teaching distance education courses shall use the same best practices to ensure the highest standard of academic integrity in exams and other graded activities as those faculty teaching non-distance education courses. Students enrolled in distance education courses are expected to take examinations under the supervision of the instructor, an approved proctor, or pursuant to other techniques that ensure the integrity of the process. The instructor is responsible for providing the details of the exam process to the students.

b) Distance education courses will use the same course evaluation procedures as if the courses were offered by SULC as non-distance education courses. However, distance education courses shall also include an evaluation as to the effectiveness and efficiency of delivery systems, academic resources, student services, and access to faculty. This additional information will be used to help the Chancellor and the faculty assess the effectiveness of the distance education course going forward.

VI. FACULTY AND STUDENT INTERACTIVITY

a) Faculty members who develop or teach distance education courses must participate in mandatory distance education teaching training provided for by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs or his designee.

b) Faculty who teach distance education courses should provide feedback to students on student effort and performance throughout the duration of the distance education course.

c) Faculty teaching a distance learning course shall verify the identity of a student who participates in class or submits coursework.

d) Students will participate in class or submit coursework using a secure login and pass code supplied by SULC to access the technology by which the course is transmitted or delivered.

VII. OTHER

a) The ownership of materials produced by faculty in a distance education course, including copyright issues or other intellectual property issues, shall be resolved according to the SULC Intellectual Property Policy.

b) As with all courses, SULC shall protect the private, protected information of students enrolled in distance education courses in accordance with campus policy and state and federal legislation, including but not limited to the laws and regulations relative to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and the Americans with Disability Act.

c) Advertising, recruiting, and admission materials shall clearly and accurately represent the course.

DATE OF FACULTY APPROVAL:

Responsibility for administration of the policy lies with the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Responsibility for periodic review of the policy lies with the Academic Affairs Committee. The policy is effective for course registrations after fall 2014. The policy was last revised on the date of its faculty approval.