



**DISTANCE EDUCATION
GUIDELINES, POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES**

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PRESIDENT**

Policy on Distance Learning for Faculty Delivery of Technology Mediated Instruction

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the faculty related to the expected levels of competence, necessary to plan and deliver a rigorous distance learning instructional program.

- The policy provides for faculty support services specifically related to teaching via an electronic system.
- The policy assures appropriate training by the institution for faculty who teach using technology.
- The policy is designed to assure that the program provides adequate equipment, software and communications to faculty for interaction with students, institutions and other faculty.

General Provisions

- 1.1 Nothing in this procedure is to be construed to prevent faculty from continuing to develop materials and conduct on-campus classes in accordance with the traditional guidelines of the Shorter College policy.
- 1.2 Depending on the availability of resources a developer of a distance delivered course may receive various degrees of financial support and other SC resources. Adopted materials are subject to the same evaluation process as developed materials.
- 1.3 Before the commitment of resources is authorized, the instructor must demonstrate to the Distance Learning Administrator that he or she is competent to develop distance learning instructional materials.

Procedures

- 2.1 The department associate dean or equivalent for a program will identify faculty who have been teaching an on-campus course and or who have the credentials to teach the course and who are interested in voluntarily participating in the distance learning instructor training and subsequent course development.
- 2.2 All online courses will be evaluated and approved by a distance education committee prior to implementation to ensure rigor, relevance, and engagement of students in online studies.
- 2.3 Online courses must be fully developed and approved one semester prior to implementation.
- 2.4 Faculty who develop online courses should be given release time equivalent to one course (e.g., 3 credit hours) during the semester the course is being developed, or compensation if no release time is provided.

- 2.5 Faculty teaching online courses should be evaluated comparable to the Shorter College's faculty evaluation system (i.e., student, peer, and chairperson evaluations).
- 2.6 The Deans Office will maintain a listing of faculty who have completed training in Distance Education delivery or who have acquired the training experientially.
- 2.7 Students enrolled in online classes must login and submit an assignment by the 11th day of class for Fall/Spring session. Students enrolled in online classes must login and submit an assignment by the 4th day of the summer sessions. Students who do not adhere to the allotted time frame will be administratively dropped for nonattendance.
- 2.8 Students enrolled in online courses should not be required to complete any assignments or examinations at a physical location. All assignments and examinations developed for online courses should be designed to allow students to complete all necessary components within Canvas.
- 2.9 Official communication between faculty and students enrolled in online courses should be conducted via Shorter College email only.

Curriculum and Instruction

Each course of study results in learning appropriate to the rigor

The course provides for appropriate interaction between faculty and students and among students. Academic standards for all courses offered electronically are the same as those for other courses delivered at the institution where the programs originate. Student learning in a course delivered electronically should be comparable to student learning in a course offered at the campus where the courses originate. None of Shorter's programs lead to professional licensure.

Course Syllabus

In addition to the items mandated by the Faculty Handbook, instructors of DE courses should include the following in their syllabi: The syllabus must adhere to the guidelines set by the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (**TRACS**). A statement of virtual office hours, and what you consider reasonable response time to students' queries via email, phone, the web, or by other means.

- A detailed statement of hardware, software, and information technology skills expected of students to participate in the course. It is important that the instructor is explicit about expectations for

students in the course description and in the syllabus. This includes not only what type of equipment students will need or what type of Internet connection, but also the instructor's expectations regarding student expertise in software applications. Along with other course requirements, students need to know if they will need to use the Internet or certain software applications in order to complete or submit course assignments.

- A statement that it is the student's responsibility to check any electronically submitted assignments for viruses. Any document that fails to pass your virus checker will not be opened.
- A detailed statement of your expectations regarding how frequently students should access the course website, post to discussion lists, etc., including how such class participation will affect their course grades.
- A Start Here Link that provides tutorials and resources for the course.
- A link to the SC network use policy so students are advised of their rights, responsibilities.
- An additional statement about plagiarism that includes materials obtained through the Internet and the consequences.
- An expanded definition of classroom disruption that includes "flaming", "spamming", and other forms of electronic/email harassment, plus a statement regarding the consequences for such disruption. Students may need to be encouraged or reminded of the need for courteous and professional behavior when sending email or engaging in online discussions. It might also be helpful to remind students that electronic communication within the course should be confined to topics directly relevant to the course content.
- A recommendation that students should make at least electronic backup copies of everything submitted.
- An explanation of what will be considered "nonattendance" and thus possible grounds for removal from class or reduction of grade.
- A statement of what students should do in the case of technical difficulties, such as downtime on the course server or disruption of Internet connection.

Course Standards

SC also endorses a set of best practices for individual Distance Education courses. These are based on accepted standards of best practice for teaching and learning regardless of the medium used. There is a general consensus that quality web-based or web-enhanced courses **involve**:

- Encouraging student-faculty interaction and contact.
- Students having the ability to contact faculty easily with the assurance of receiving a prompt response (e.g., within 24 to 48 hours).
- Faculty interaction with students that encourage engagement and provide sufficient data to assess student achievement of learning objectives.
- Encouraging student cooperation and interaction.
- Substantive, constructive, and meaningful feedback between students.
- Encouraging active learning.
- Substantive student responses to prompts.
- Assignments that encourage use of critical thinking strategies as well as an emphasis on time and task.
- Students interacting with, writing about, and incorporating what they are learning into their experience.
- Giving frequent and prompt feedback regarding student progress in the course.
- Frequent, periodic, and substantive work, including contact with the course site.
- Giving students guidelines on how much time they should expect to work on each segment of the course.
- Communication of high expectations.
- Learning objectives that communicate collegiate level learning appropriate to the course level (introductory, advanced, and graduate).
- Course content and requirements as demanding as face-to-face courses with similar content.
- Respect for diverse talents and ways of learning.
- Instructors who provide alternative ways of learning for student.
- Instructors who provide alternative ways of assessing student achievement.
- Letting students know what to expect.
- Information regarding the objectives, assessment deadline, grading policies, technology needed to succeed, etc.; clearly stated and easy for students to find.
- Making effective use of the technology.
- Technology appropriate for the learning objectives.
- Technology appropriate for the discipline.
- Support for students who need assistance with the use of the technology.
- The Learning Outcomes for every unit.
- Start Here navigation button.

Scheduling of Final Examinations

The Shorter College has a fixed schedule for final examinations based on a particular class' regular meeting time. Given that web-based classes do not have a traditional "regular meeting time", there may be uncertainty on the part of faculty and students about when a final examination, if one is given, should be scheduled. However, Students are not required to come to campus to take any examinations.

1. Final examinations in web-based classes should be scheduled during the same week that on-campus finals are scheduled.
2. Faculty should provide a minimum of a two day (48 hour) window during which students may take the final exam. Students would be allowed the same length of time to complete the exam as they would for an on-campus class. However, they would have the flexibility to take the exam any time during the 48hour window. This recognizes the fact that online students, just like on-campus students, could have several exams scheduled at the same time. It would also help them to work around any on-campus final exam that they must take.
3. If the instructor cannot allow a minimum of a two- day window, then it must be clearly stated in syllabus posted at the beginning of the class. Faculty must be willing to work with students who can demonstrate that this will cause them to have more than three final exams during the same 24 hour period.

Student email accounts are created within 24 hours of class registration and are an official means of communication with students. Faculty are encouraged to inform students about the importance of accessing their SC email even if/when communicating with them using other electronic communication tools such as Canvas email. Important Shorter College-related information will be sent to individual SC email accounts. Students are responsible for regularly reading SC email messages.

Establishment of Teaching Load for Distance Learning Faculty and Faculty Responsibilities

The impact of planning and/or delivering a technology-mediated class will vary. It is generally accepted that during the development or conversion phase the teaching load will increase. In general, the faculty member will be supported in the development and delivery of distance courses.

Procedures

- 1.1 The distance class enrollment is to be limited to not more than twenty students per section for a graduate course or thirty students per section for an undergraduate course.
- 1.2 In semesters following the initial offering, the distance course is to be considered in the same manner as on-campus courses in determining the teaching load of an instructor.

Faculty Responsibilities

All current policies outlined in the Faculty Handbook are applicable regardless of whether the course is conducted face-to-face. In addition, instructors using the latter should adhere to the following guidelines:

- The same grade appeal procedures and timelines will be followed. Phone calls or emails may count as contact. However, it is prudent to record all such contacts at the time to ensure due process for all parties. Ensure that students are advised of Shorter College Policy.
- Links that include in your course materials will take students to sites with ads or other solicitations. It would be prudent to warn students of such a possibility and that the link to that site does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by SC.
- Back-up must be done at the end of each semester of grade book and all assignments.
- If some form of e-pack is being used, it is the instructor's responsibility to explain to the students where and how they can obtain access codes. It is important for instructors to realize that students may be charged by the publisher for these access codes—in addition to other textbook or materials charges. It is the responsibility of the instructor to give the Canvas Administration access to all digital content.
- During the first eleven days of class the instructor should email request(s) stating any problems related to their courses or call (501) 374-6305 to leave a message.
- Instructors must have a fully developed course one week prior to the first day of class.
- Instructors who are using digital content must obtain the content before class starts.
- Instructors must know how to login and navigate the Canvas system.
- It is the responsibility of the instructor to incorporate the Learning Outcome for each module in the course.
- At the end of each semester it is the responsibility of the faculty to down-load the grade book.

Equal Access for Students with Disabilities

“It is the policy of the Shorter College to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of courses that result in barriers to inclusion of students with disabilities or to accurate assessment of achievement – such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or use of non-captioned videos – students are encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students with disabilities are also encouraged to contact the Disability Services Center at (501) 374-6305.

ADA Web Accessibility Policy

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (1990) and the Rehabilitation Act Section 504 (173), it is the policy of Shorter College to make SC Web page information and online course material (hereafter referred to as "Internet content") accessible to persons with disabilities in order to provide them with effective communication through the Internet. Communication should be, to the extent possible, as effective for persons with disabilities as it is for persons without disabilities. This includes information that departments, programs, faculty, or staff present over the Internet. The SC policy is designed to ensure that the communication available to Internet users with disabilities is effective and useful.

The policy does not cover the accessibility of sites outside of Shorter College to which a SC page may be linked. However, SC encourages other providers to make their content accessible. An exception: if outside links are required course content, this content must be accessible.

Department deans and directors are responsible for ensuring that full-time and part-time faculty/staff are aware that modifications to existing Internet content as well new Internet content should be made in accordance with this policy.

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Students may email grievances/complaints to

studentcomplaint@shortercollege.edu.

You may also call 1-888-374-6305

Student Grievances

A grievance is a formal complaint made by a student arising from an alleged action of the College or any of its faculty members, administrators, staff or students. Such action is one that is claimed to be unauthorized or unjustified and adversely affects the status, rights, or privileges of the student, including actions based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age or disability.

Any student who has a complaint shall make a reasonable effort to resolve the matter on an informal basis before initiating a grievance. Student may request a grievance hearing. A grievance hearing committee will be organized and a committee decision will be presented to the Dean of Student Affairs, Dean of Academic Affairs, and President.

All student grievances proceeding correspondence will be handled via email or otherwise documented and placed in a secure file. An electronic copy of all correspondence will also be maintained. Copies of this information will be placed in the student's official school file.

Student Grievance Policy

A grievance shall herein be defined as any act allegedly depriving a student of any the rights set forth in the statement of "Student Rights and Responsibility", or any State Federal, or local codes.

Student Grievance Procedure

Informal Action

The student (or group of students), who believes that an injustice has been done to him/her (them), shall first attempt to resolve the complaint by informal discussion with the employee(s) involved.

If the problem is not resolved in Step 1, an informal discussion should take place with the person at the lowest level of authority directly above the person(s) at which the complaint is directed, where authority exists to take corrective action.

The Dean of Student Affairs shall attempt to resolve the problem through informal meeting and discussion among the pertinent parties while remaining neutral on all issues involved. This informal meeting and discussion will attempt to involve the levels of administration concerned with the problem and should be completed within ten (10) school days. In the event the informal procedure fails, the formal procedure would be implemented.

Formal Action

The grievant may obtain a student grievance form from the office of the Dean of Student Affairs. After completion of this form, specifying the time, place, nature of the complaint and remedy or correction requested, it should be submitted to the Student Affairs Dean. This request must be submitted within

(5) five school days after the failure of the informal procedure. A day is defined as any day Monday through Friday that all normal college business is conducted.

The Dean of Student Affairs shall call a meeting of the Student Grievance Hearing Committee. This committee is comprised of the Dean of Student Affairs, the administrative designee, the Faculty Senate President or designee, and the Student Government President or designee. The Dean of Student Affairs serves as chair of the committee and shall not have a vote on the committee's decision. The Faculty Senate selects four voting members and submits names to the Dean of Student Affairs. The administrative designee shall serve as the Hearing Committee Executive Secretary, a voting member of the committee, and shall keep necessary records of the hearings. Grievance Committee members are to deal with all grievances in a confidential manner, except when both parties agree to a public hearing.

Formal Hearing

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee shall conduct its proceedings according to the following procedures:

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee must meet within ten (10) school days after informal action has been completed and grievant has requested a formal hearing.

The chair must notify both parties involved within five (5) school days before the hearing along with the written complaint, a copy of the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and a copy of the Grievance Policy.

Four members shall constitute a quorum by which business may proceed. The quorum must include at least one student member, one faculty member, and one administrative member.

Both parties shall have the right to present personal statements, testimonies, evidence, and witnesses. Each party shall have the right to be present, to be accompanied by the person of this choice, and to question witnesses who are present.

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee shall discuss the charge, hear the testimony, examine the witnesses, and receive all available evidence to the charge.

The hearing shall be closed to the public unless otherwise agreed upon in writing by both parties.

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee shall make decisions in private. The Committee shall record all findings and decisions. Copies of the findings and decisions, including majority and minority reports, are to be sent to each party and the College President. The Committee's decision shall be final unless appealed.

A recording of the proceedings shall be kept in a confidential file in the Office of Student Affairs and shall be available upon request to parties directly from the personnel files of the participants. After a period of four years, the grievance file shall be destroyed.

Reprisals of any kind will not be taken by the Board of Trustees or any of its agents, any party of interest, or any other participant in the grievance procedure by person of such participation.

Evidence and testimony given in each case presented shall not be the sole cause of initiating or filing further grievances.

If the grieved party does not respond within the time limits defined herein, the grievance is considered terminated and no further action will be taken.

The number of working days indicated at each step herein should be considered a maximum and every effort must be made to expedite the process. Time limits may be extended by mutual consent in writing or by decision of the Student Grievance Hearing Committee.

The Student Grievance Hearing Committee should attempt to reach a decision by discussion and consensus on a workable solution. Voting should be the last course of action.

The Appeal Process

If either party is dissatisfied with the recommendation of the Student Grievance Hearing Committee, he/she may appeal within ten days to the college president, if the President is not a party to the grievance. If the President is a party to the grievance, and the other party is dissatisfied with the recommendation of the Hearing Committee, an appeal may be submitted directly to the Board of Trustees.

Upon receiving the findings and recommendations of the Hearing Committee, and after examination of the appeal as requested by either party, the president may accept or reject the committee's decision.

If the President rejects the committee's decision, he/she shall submit his/her decision with the stated reasons for the objection to the Student Grievance Hearing Committee within ten school days. The Student Grievance Hearing Committee shall reconsider its decision within five school days and resubmit it to the president for his/her final decision.

The President shall send his/her final decision to both parties and the Faculty Senate within five school days. An appeal of the president's decision may be submitted to the Board of Trustees by either party. If unresolved, the appeal must be submitted within ten school days after the president's decision. The Board may review the appeal at its earliest reasonable opportunity before making a final determination of the matter on the college level.

In the event that a student, faculty or staff member matriculates through the adopted and approved grievance process, outlined in the Human Resource Manual, Student Handbook, and/or Faculty and Staff handbook, and believes that the resolution reached remains unacceptable, the student has the right to escalate said grievance by filing a complaint with a relevant and appropriate government agency outside of the Shorter College campus.

One such agency is the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS). The student may reach TRACS by mail at P. O. Box 328, Forest, VA 24551; by Telephone at (434)-525-9539; or by E-mail at info@tracs.org. The above process may be followed related to any relevant and appropriate government agency.

Another agency is the Arkansas Division of Higher Education. Students must follow the institution's published student grievance process before contacting the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE). Grievances regarding student grades or conduct violations are governed entirely by institutional policy and Arkansas law and will not be considered by ADHE. If a student must report an unresolved grievance, the student may contact ADHE at: <https://adhe.edu/students-parents/student-grievance-form>. Resolutions by ADHE are final.

Students must submit a written grievance to ADHE. The grievant also must provide written documentation from the college/university verifying that the institution's appeal process has been followed.

Institutions must inform ADHE of all unresolved formal grievances annually.

OUT OF STATE STUDENTS:

Out of state students enrolling in programs must follow the institution's published student grievance process first. Out of state students may also email at studentcomplaint@shortercollege.edu or call 1-888-374-6305.

If the is not satisfied, he/she may contact The Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE). Grievances regarding student grades or conduct violations are governed entirely by institutional policy and Arkansas law and will not be considered by ADHE. If a student must report an unresolved grievance, the student may contact ADHE at: <https://adhe.edu/students-parents/student-grievance-form>. Resolutions by ADHE are final.

Students must submit a written grievance to ADHE. The grievant also must provide written documentation from the college/university verifying that the institution's appeal process has been followed. *Institutions must inform ADHE of all unresolved formal grievances annually.*

SHORTER COLLEGE STUDENT COMPLAINT/GRIEVANCE FORM

Student Grievances

A grievance is a formal complaint made by a student arising from an alleged action of the College or any of its faculty members, administrators, staff or students. Such action is one that is claimed to be unauthorized or unjustified and adversely affects the status, rights, or privileges of the student, including actions based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age or disability.

Student Information

Student Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Student ID#:

Semester & Year:

Home Phone Number:

Work Phone Number:

Cell Phone Number:

Email address:

Complaint/Grievance Information

Reprisals of any kind will not be taken by the Board of Trustees or any of its agents, any party of interest, or any other participant in the grievance procedure. To do so constitutes a violation of college policy.

Name of Individual and/or department against whom the complaint/grievance is filed:

Describe your complaint/grievance in detail. Include date/s of occurrence (be as specific as Possible). Attach additional sheets, if necessary, along with any documentation that will help describe and substantiate the complaint. Are there any witnesses who should be interviewed? If yes, list names and contact information.

Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns and complaints through informal conferences with the appropriate instructor or campus administrator. Have you made an attempt to resolve this complaint or grievance with the individual and/or department involved? Yes No

If yes, describe the outcome: (Attach any additional comments, if necessary)

What outcome do you hope to achieve after talking with the appropriate college official(s)? Attach additional sheets, if necessary.

I understand that information contained in the grievance form will be held confidential to the extent possible. Grievance information may be shared with college officials in order to conduct a thorough

investigation. I hereby declare that the information on this form is true, correct, and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that any misrepresentation of information may result in disciplinary actions, accordance with college disciplinary policies.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENT GRIEVANCE POLICY

Students must follow the institution's published student grievance process before contacting the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE). Grievance policies can usually be found in the academic catalog, student handbook, or institution's website.

Grievances regarding student grades or conduct violations are governed entirely by institutional policy and Arkansas law and will not be considered by ADHE.

If a student must report an unresolved grievance, the student may complete the student complaint form at <http://www.adhe.edu/students-parents/colleges-universities/student-grievance-form/>. Resolutions by ADHE are final.

Students must submit a written grievance to ADHE using the form. The grievant also must provide written documentation from the college/university verifying that the institution's appeal process has been followed.

Institutions must inform ADHE of all unresolved formal grievances annually.

You may submit the attached form to Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

STUDENT COMPLAINT FORM

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

E-mail address:

Affiliation with institution named below:

current student former student

parent or guardian of student

other

Institution:

Degree level and major of student:

Date of attendance at institution:

Start:

End:

Have you gone through institution's formal complaint process?

If yes, attach documentation that you have gone through the complaint process.

If no, please explain in your detailed complaint description why you were unable to complete the complaint process. ADHE will only address complaints after the student has exhausted his or her appeals at the institutional level.

Complaint Description

Describe your complaint in detail, including the names of any faculty or staff you contacted about the complaint.

Give titles and contact information for the faculty of staff you contacted.

Will you be submitting additional documentation regarding this complaint?

By submitting this form, I affirm that I am a current or former student of the institution named above or the parent or guardian of a current or former student who is currently under age 18 and under my legal guardianship. I agree to allow the Arkansas Department of Higher Education to submit a copy of my complaint to the above named institution for a response. I further authorize the institution to transmit student records related to me or the individual under my guardianship affected by the institution's actions to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education for review. The information I have provided to the Arkansas Department of Higher Education is complete, true, and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Print name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Copyright

All members of the Shorter College intellectual community understand the importance of honesty and respect for the intellectual property rights of others. However, the new information technology sometimes blurs the boundaries of what is considered "fair use." It is important for faculty to keep abreast of the latest guidelines for fair use of materials obtained from the Internet and for placing other materials on the Internet for teaching purposes. It is also important that faculty be informed regarding adherence to the license rules and restrictions on use of software or library resources that the Shorter College makes available for use by members of the Shorter College community.