Purpose

The purpose of these policies and procedures is to increase the probability that the full potential and value of the UT TeleCampus will be realized. The TeleCampus is a central support unit where students and faculty may come together to learn, and also the place where traditional campus services are provided. These services include access to online library materials, admission, registration and financial aid information, bookstores, and a full range of other student- and faculty-oriented support mechanisms, particularly those that are critical to distance or distributed learning.

The TeleCampus also provides access to courses designed in an asynchronous format that allows students to learn without time and/or place restrictions. In addition to meeting the needs of the truly distant learner, the TeleCampus format is valuable to students, who, although living near a regular campus, cannot schedule their courses at convenient times.

Goals

The goals of the policies and procedures are summarized below:

On-campus student goals: Some on-campus students wish to supplement their regular classroom instruction with asynchronous courses to satisfy degree program requirements, including courses not otherwise available on that campus. They also seek to add these courses without restrictive and/or cumbersome advising, registration or tuition payment procedures that differ from the traditional on-campus procedures. Finally, on-campus students continually seek ways to supplement their learning experience by accessing services online.

Off-campus student goals: Many off campus or distance education students are looking for full degree programs that require either very little or no on-campus experience for instruction or related services. These students seek an environment in which they can interact with a single point of contact and then fulfill requirements for a single university's degree within the framework of established policies and procedures. They, too, seek a rich set of asynchronous courses and online services that will help them meet their particular degree program requirements. The distance learner desires the same procedures for registration and other services across the UT institutions.

Faculty goals: The UT System faculty wishes to utilize asynchronous distance learning technologies to teach students without the distractions of special off-campus issues. They seek a teaching and learning environment that includes a full range of services so they can focus on delivery of content and interaction with students related to that content. They also seek an environment where they can reach students who would not otherwise come to the universities and enroll in their classes. Furthermore, many seek to increase their personal financial well being by adapting traditional course delivery mechanisms to the rapidly growing field of on-campus, technology-enhanced learning.

University Administrator goals: The administrators on the campuses of the UT universities seek a TeleCampus environment that allows them to reach off-campus students and other asynchronous learners without significantly altering their traditional procedures and methods of supporting their on-campus students. These administrators also desire an environment where they may use their most effective strategies to reach different markets, some of which are price sensitive and others of which are content sensitive. Administrators also seek to reach these goals without undue expense. Consequently, many may wish to offer full degree programs without having to teach all of the asynchronous courses required themselves.

Policies

Program Quality Control: Oversight committees have been formed to address quality issues of courses offered through the UTTC. Oversight of the development and delivery of a program will be provided by these committees, which will meet regularly to make decisions, and to share ideas and experiences. Ongoing monitoring of courses and program quality will be the responsibility of both the institutions and these collaborative groups.

The UTTC recommends that an Academic Affairs Committee (AAC) and an Executive Committee (EC) be formed for most online degree programs. The AAC should consist of no more than two faculty members from each participating institution, appointed by the dean of each respective college. This committee will be responsible for the quality of all deliverables associated with the program and will take a pro-active role in ensuring that all content, prerequisites, simulations, and faculty are appropriately selected and properly utilized. In this manner each institution is able to maintain academic control over the quality of the program. The EC will be strategic in nature and will have the responsibility to set overall strategy and goals for the online program.

Cost Recovery: Funding for the basic operation of the TeleCampus is treated as an overhead expense collected from each university based upon a simplified allocation formula. Consequently neither the students nor the institutions incur any additional charges directly from the TeleCampus. The tuition and fees charged to the student are determined entirely by the institutions offering the courses and programs.

Tuition and Fees: The individual institutions will be permitted to set the tuition and fees for their own courses in any manner consistent with state law. Specifically, the institutions are permitted to waive certain mandatory fees for services that are not accessible to students at a distance. In addition, they have the option to waive designated tuition and graduate differential tuition if they deem it appropriate. Courses taught to non-resident students living outside of Texas may not be submitted for state formula funding (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Rules, Subchapter H). For these courses, campuses may choose to charge traditional non-resident tuition and fees, or they may charge a flat rate fee for the course (in either case deposited in designated funds accounts).

The only exception to the institutionally established tuition and fee policies will be for collaborative degree programs. All collaborative degree programs will be priced in accordance with the program members' agreement.

Formula Funding: Formula funding will flow to the institutions in which the students are registered for courses. If a course is cross-listed such that students can register at institutions other than the providing institution (see below), normally it will be necessary to have the receiving institution reimburse the providing institution. To facilitate that process, the TeleCampus will maintain a record of credit hours produced and received along with agreed upon reimbursement rates (rates for continuing education fee registrations may differ from reimbursement for tuition registrations). Courses may be cross-listed in the receiving institution's catalog and class schedule so that the receiving institution's student may register for a regular on-campus course. To meet all accreditation requirements for cross-listed courses, the sending institution's faculty member of record will receive a "zero-time" appointment at the receiving institution. Only when the receiving institution's faculty agree to such a zero-time appointment will courses be cross-listed. An institution's willingness to include in their catalog courses produced by another university as if they were their own will be entirely at the discretion of that institution's faculty. Furthermore, both institutions must agree upon the per credit hour reimbursement rate and file that agreement with the TeleCampus.

Course Development Funding: The TeleCampus will continue to offer grants to institutions for the development of strategically important courses and/or programs. All grants will flow through the office of the President in order to hold the institution accountable for the grant expenditures. However, the most common method of funding in the future will be for the university to pay for faculty release time

and other extraordinary costs. The TeleCampus will continue to provide at its expense support services for the creation of new asynchronous courses, which may include assistance with production, marketing, and evaluation/assessment of programs. Campuses may contract with the TeleCampus for technical and human resources that support the creation of online courses on a cost recovery basis. Campuses that do not have the venture capital to create new courses may request loans from the TeleCampus to be repaid from course revenues once the courses are placed on the market. All courses funded by the TeleCampus grant program must be cross-platform unless the courses are designed for a specific closed market.

Instructional Materials and Site Licensing: In consultation with and at the request of the institutions, the UT TeleCampus may acquire site licenses for instructional and library resource materials. Materials may be in the form of course modules, online databases, digital journals, CD ROM's, videotapes, etc. Those materials will be made available to faculty and students within the UT System in accordance with the terms on the appropriate site license. Site licenses for instructional materials may be obtained from UT institutions, universities outside the UT System, and commercial vendors. When the site license is obtained from a UT institution, it will be the responsibility of that university to have made all appropriate arrangements with authors and holders of copyrighted materials embedded in the instructional resources. Dependent upon the type of material and the cost associated with the licensing agreement, costs for such materials may be shared by all parties involved. However, this decision will be made on a case by case basis.

Sale of Other Services: The UT TeleCampus may engage in the sale of other specialized services in support of distance learning and asynchronous teaching. When appropriate, these other activities will be supported by contracts, grants, and the direct sale of professional services. Services may be sold to other state agencies, school districts, and other organizations.

Courseware Management System: The UT TeleCampus will maintain and support the Blackboard 6 courseware management system. UT institutions wishing to use other platforms are responsible for maintaining those platforms, the associated servers, and all necessary links to the TeleCampus home page or other related pages operated from the TeleCampus server. The UT TeleCampus will not subsidize the acquisition and maintenance of other platforms unless they are a part of a specifically designed and authorized test and assessment project. The TeleCampus will facilitate the transfer of instructional materials from other platforms to the standard course platform, usually at no cost to the institution.

Since the UTTC is the only virtual campus authorized by the UT System Board of Regents, all UT System institutions are encouraged to develop online courses through the UT TeleCampus. All courses funded through the UTTC are required to use the Blackboard 6 courseware management system. All UTTC courses must meet the [Principles of Good Practice](#) [163KB] 📄.

Access issues include making sure the course design considers any platform used (PC, Mac, Unix, etc.), availability of the course on a 24 x 7 basis, and arrangements made to answer questions within a reasonable period of time (e.g., within 24 hours).

Good practice in the area of technology support encourages contact between students and faculty. Technologies that provide opportunities for interaction between faculty and students are integral to the success of online courses. Increased opportunities for interaction with faculty apply equally to communication with fellow students. Since learning requires active participation by the student, it is important that a range of technologies to encourage active learning be available. As previously stated, the capability to provide prompt feedback is essential. Prompt feedback to students' questions concerning technological problems is very important in providing a satisfying experience in an online course.

As part of the Principles of Good Practice Self-Study, the institution will address the technology issues

related to student support. The UT TeleCampus provides 24/7/365 technical support for courses funded through the UT TeleCampus. This support is also available for other online courses.

Every faculty member that develops a course for the UTTC will be required to take the Copyright Tutorial developed by Georgia Harper, UT System Office of General Counsel, and the UTTC Instructional DesignTutorial.

Course Catalog: Courses available through the TeleCampus will be identified with institutional numbers and titles. To be compliant with Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) rules, each institution participating in a collaborative online degree program must provide data about courses from collaborating institutions that are part of the degree program. A link will be sufficient. Courses that require student participation at a particular place or time such as videoconference or other onsite requirements will be identified as such.

Student Transcripts: In accordance with SACS guidelines, student transcripts must include the grade, title of course, and the host institution for all courses taken through the UT TeleCampus. The grades must be computed as part of the total GPA.

Customized Courses and Contract Sales: UT institutions may choose to customize programs and courses for particular clients (e.g., all algebra teachers in a school district). Such courses may have special content, be offered at special rates or be scheduled at special times. The TeleCampus will support such customization and restrict enrollment in accordance with the institutional restrictions.

Participating Institutions' Policies: Students must adhere to the rules and policies of the UT System institutions at which they are enrolled. Examples of such policies include Academic Dishonesty, Use of Information Technology, Adds/Drops, Refunds, etc. It is the responsibility of the students to be aware of the policies and guidelines of the institutions from which they take courses.