TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
DISTANCE EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GUIDE FOR INCORPORATING
THE PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE
INTO ELECTRONICALLY-BASED COURSES

Introduction

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, through the Distance Education Advisory Committee, commends and encourages the development of online courses and other electronically delivered courses that enhance access to higher education throughout the state of Texas. THECB works closely with Texas college and university systems as well as with ICUT (Independent Colleges and Universities of Texas) to ensure that the quality of distance education is high. To that end, all course providers and all institutions are encouraged to use the *Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs* as developed by the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (WCET), a program of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and as endorsed by THECB.

The document below is a recommended guide and evaluation to be utilized by institutions when development of a new electronically delivered course is completed. It is designed to determine whether the course confirms to the *Principles*.

Institutions seeking approval for distance education plans through THECB must demonstrate that all courses adhere to the *Principles.* Use of a course evaluation document such as this one is one way to demonstrate adherence to the *Principles*.

The document is adapted from one developed by the University of Texas System TeleCampus.

Course Information

Please be sure that information is accurate and complete.

Title of Course, Number:

Name (s), title (s), component (s) of instructional faculty:

Name, title, phone number and e-mail of principal contact person:

Is this course for credit?

Is this a non-credit course?

Prerequisite (s) and/or required academic skills/background of students:

Number of students recommended:

Brief course description:

Technical Notes

Note: As you complete this section of the self-study, please consult with the appropriate staff at your institution.

Course Management Platform (for example, Prometheus, Blackboard, WebCT, other)

Indicate which one:

Students will use a variety of browsers and hardware. Have you tested your course on a combination of browser versions and hardware platforms? (For example, Netscape 3.X on an older Pentium PC, or Explorer on a Mac running OS7.X). Please provide details.

Student Discussion/Chat:

      Asynchronous (Threaded Discussion):   _____ yes _____ no
      Synchronous (Live Chat):   _____ yes _____ no
      Email: _____ yes _____ no
      Additional Information:

Audio:
      Number of segments: _____
      Length of longest segment: _____
      Method of delivery: Streaming via RealAudio _____; Quicktime or other _____;
      CD-ROM _____
      Transcript of Audio Included   _____yes _____ no

Additional information as appropriate

Video:
Number of segments: _____
Length of Longest segment: _____
Method of delivery: Streaming via Real/Media _____; Quicktime or other _____;
CD-ROM _____
Transcript of Video Included: _____ yes _____ no

Additional Information as appropriate

Does the program or course meets the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act and specifically the Rehabilitation Act Amendments in Section 508. For information on the actual guidelines, see the following: http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahom1.htm or http://www.access-board.gov/508.htm.

Yes _____ No _____

Course Copyright and Permissions

It is the responsibility of the instructor and his/her colleagues to ensure that all copyright provisions are met and that permissions have been obtained as appropriate.

Have you confirmed that the inclusion of all course materials in the course not developed by the copyright holder meet "fair use" guidelines, or that you are otherwise exempt from liability from infringement, or you have received appropriate permissions from all copyright holders? Please work with your home institution in ascertaining this and in obtaining appropriate permissions.

Information on copyright laws relating to the use of intellectual materials is available through institution inserts its own link to materials. (An example would be the UT System Copyright Crash Course Tutorial that is online at the UT TeleCampus. A link to this is: http://www.telecampus.utsystem.edu ->Faculty Resources -> First Steps.)

In any case where the institution and/or course author (s) contribute copyrightable expression, the institution and/or course author (s) warrant that they are the only owner (s) of the course and have full power and authority to make this agreement; and that the course does not infringe any copyright, violate any property rights, or contain any scandalous, libelous or unlawful matter.

Name (s) of copyright holders:

Have you confirmed that the course materials and any course materials not developed by the copyright holder are "fair use" or that you are otherwise exempt from liability from infringement?

Yes _____ No _____ In Process _____

If not, have you acquired permission to use or link to the materials?

Yes _____ No _____ In Process _____

Additional Information/Comments as appropriate:

Principles of Good Practice

The Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs were developed by the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications and adopted by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. These principles provide an outline for consideration when developing, teaching or evaluating the quality of electronic instruction. Therefore, the Distance Education Advisory Committee of THECB recommends that all instructors complete this Guide as an assurance that all courses offered through distance learning in Texas meet these guidelines. It is not necessary for you to provide a positive answer to each question. However, those questions for which you report a negative answer may well represent areas in which should provide additional information/rationale for that decision.

Assumptions of the Principles of Good Practice

1. The program or course offered electronically is provided by or through an institution that is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and authorized to operate in the state where the program or course originates.
2. The institution's programs and courses holding specialized accreditation meet the same requirements when offered electronically.
3. The "institution" may be a single institution or a consortium of such institutions.

4. These principles are generally applicable to degree or certificate programs and to courses offered for academic credit.
5. It is the institution's responsibility to review educational programs and courses it provides electronically and certify continued compliance with these principles.
6. Institutions offering programs or for-credit courses are responsible for satisfying all in-state approval and accreditation requirements before students are enrolled.

Principles of Good Practice: Curriculum and Instruction

1. The course results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.

   Yes _____ No _____

   Degree or certificate (if applicable) _____

2. The course offered electronically is coherent and complete.

   a. Necessary course materials are identified. Information on how to purchase or obtain materials online or via phone is provided, if necessary.

      Yes _____ No _____

   b. If students are not required to meet on campus, they can complete the course without physically visiting the institution offering the course. (i.e. all necessary instruction and support infrastructure is in place to serve the off-campus student.)

      Yes _____ No _____

   c. The course includes:

      Note: A positive response is not required for every item below. This section should be used as a checklist and should be dependent upon the course content and the target audience.

      - Introduction   Yes _____ No _____
      - Course Title   Yes _____ No _____
      - Course prerequisites   Yes _____ No _____
      - Syllabus includes:

❑ Course number and title   Yes _____ No _____
❑ Instructor name/contact number   Yes _____ No _____
❑ Required text including purchase information
                                              Yes _____ No _____
❑ Learning objectives   Yes _____ No _____
❑ Descriptions of lessons/modules   Yes _____ No _____
❑ Information on course assessment   Yes _____ No _____
❑ Links to appropriate library and other learning resources
                                              Yes _____ No _____
❑ Policies and Procedures of the course Yes _____ No _____
❑ Calendar of all assignments   Yes _____ No _____

- Pages of content
  - ❑ Graphical and multimedia elements   Yes _____ No _____
  - ❑ PDF and other downloadable files   Yes _____ No _____
  - ❑ Links to other web sites   Yes _____ No _____
  - ❑ Interactive exercises   Yes _____ No _____
  - ❑ Evaluation instruments   Yes _____ No _____
  - ❑ Link to online conference or chat   Yes _____ No _____

- Technical support information or link   Yes _____ No _____
- Technical requirements for the course   Yes _____ No _____

3.   The course provides for appropriate interaction between faculty and students and among students.

    a. Interaction with and among students is achieved through (check all that apply):
        Asynchronous discussion _____
        Synchronous chat _____
        Team projects _____
        Individual email _____
        Group email _____
        Audioconference _____
        Interactive Video (ITV) _____
        Student posting of projects/assignments for review by faculty/other students: _____
        Other _____

    b. Feedback for students on assignments and questions will be provided in a timely manner and guidelines for feedback are defined or outlined in the syllabus or course menu.

        Yes _____ No _____

Additional information as appropriate:

 c. When teaching the course, the faculty member (s) will be available to support and communicate with the students and oversee student projects and evaluation.

  Yes _____ No _____

 d. Students have the opportunity to interact with each other and with faculty and administrators outside of class to build a learning community.

  Yes _____ No _____

4. Courses offered electronically are offered on the campus of the institution where the programs or courses originate.

 a. Is this course part of the institution's course inventory?

  Yes _____ No _____

 b. Did this course obtain approval through the regular approval process used for all courses?

  Yes _____ No _____

5. Academic standards for all programs or courses offered electronically will be the same as those for programs or courses delivered by other means at the institution where the program or course originates.

 a. The course provides students with clear, complete and timely information on course goals and objectives.

  Yes _____ No _____

 b. The course specified necessary technology competence and skills.

  Yes _____ No _____

 c. This course meets the institutional standards for content, reflective learning, competencies, etc. as other courses?

  Yes _____ No _____

d. Student learning online is comparable to student learning offered at the campus where the program or course originates?

Yes _____ No _____

Principles of Good Practice: Institutional Context and Commitment

1. The course and associated technology requirements are consistent with the institutional technology policies.

    Yes _____ No _____

2. Course announcements and catalog entries provide appropriate information about the course and services associated with the course. Note: If 50% of the course content is delivered electronically or off-campus, it must be listed as a distance learning course in the official schedule of courses and in all promotional materials.

    Yes _____ No _____

3. Enrolled students have reasonable and adequate access to the range of student services and student rights appropriate to support their learning.

Financial Aid:	Yes _____	No _____
Library Resources:	Yes _____	No _____
Counseling:	Yes _____	No _____
Special Student Services	Yes _____	No _____
Career Services	Yes _____	No _____
Technical Support	Yes _____	No _____

4. The institution has admission/acceptance criteria in place to assess the extent to which a student has the background, knowledge and technical skills required to undertake the program or course.   This would include, if appropriate, prerequisite technical and/or content background.

    Yes _____ No _____

5.   The institution provides your and your co-developers (when applicable) support services specifically related to teaching via an electronic or distance format.

      Yes _____ No _____

6.   The institution provides training for you and your co-developers who teach via the use of technology.

      Yes _____ No _____

      What training have you and your co-developers received (check those that apply):
      a.   General technology skills workshops _____
      b.   Web-course development and delivery workshops _____
      c.   Other training _____

7.   The institution provides support for you and your co-developers as they revise the course.

      Yes _____ No _____

8.   The institution provides adequate equipment, software, and communications access to you and your co-developers to support the interaction with students, other faculty and other institutions or services.

      Yes _____ No _____

9.   Courses offered electronically may also be offered on the campus of the institution where the programs originate. Indicate below the status of this course as it relates to on-campus sections of the same course.

      a.   A separate section of this course is sometimes taught on campus.

            Yes _____ No _____

10.   Will this course be a part of or in addition to the assignment of you and your co-developers?

            Yes _____ No _____

Principles of Good Practice: Evaluation and Assessment

1. Students will be given an opportunity to evaluate this online course.

    Yes _____ No _____

2. Student achievement in the course will be assessed.

    Yes _____ No _____

3. The effectiveness of the course will be evaluated by students at regular intervals.

    Yes _____ No _____

4. You and your co-developers will use the results of assessment to make necessary revisions of this course at regular intervals.

    Yes _____ No _____

Faculty and Institutional Commitment/Approval

This signature page must be completed and returned along with the answers to the self-study. It should be completed and signed by the instructional faculty and the appropriate dean or vice president.

Faculty Commitment

The answers to the questions in this self-study are accurate and truthful. All efforts have been made to ensure that copyright permissions have been obtained. All efforts have been made to comply with institutional policies regarding technology and other learning resources.

Signature: _____Printed Name _____

Signature: _____Printed Name _____

Departmental Approval (if appropriate)

The answers to the questions in the self-study are consistent with departmental policy.

Signature: _____Printed Name_____
Title: _____Date: _____

Institutional Commitment (Dean or, if appropriate, Vice President)

The answers to the questions in the self-study are consistent with college and/or University policy.

Signature: _____Printed Name_____
Title: _____Date: _____

Completed self-study will be housed in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs or an office designated by the VPAA and used as part of the institutional plan for distance education activities as required by state law and coordinated through the Distance Education Advisory Committee of THECB.

Adopted: _____

Adopted by the Distance Education Advisory Committee of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on March 28, 2002.