

# Policy on Authoring Online Courses by UHCL Faculty and Staff 2025-2026

## 1. SCOPE

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to maximize the creative efforts of faculty and staff for the mutual benefit of the University and its faculty and staff.

1.2 No part of this policy is intended to circumvent the authority vested in the Office of the Provost regarding curricular matters.

1.3 This policy:

1.3.1 governs the authoring and delivery of credit and non-credit online courses by full-time faculty and adjunct faculty offered through the University course management system.

1.3.2 generally follows policies governing other courses offered at the University.

1.3.3 reaffirms the UH System Standing Committee on Intellectual Property Policy adopted by the Board of Regents in August 2025 and designated as Section 21.08.2. The policy addresses patents, trade secrets, copyright, and commercialization.

1.3.4 seeks to make the System policy operational within the University environment.

1.3.5 seeks to delineate the roles, responsibilities, and benefits related to University-developed and delivered online distance education credit courses.

1.3.6 applies to any University employee engaged in authoring, developing, delivering, or commercializing online courses. References to financial compensation in this document apply only to full-time faculty and staff.

1.3.6.1. Compensation of part-time faculty, adjuncts, and other less than full-time employees of the University is not subject to this policy.

1.3.7 is not intended to infringe on the job description of persons hired by the University. Faculty members not hired specifically to develop, deliver, or support online courses may choose not to participate in such activities.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Distance Education Delivery Methods - includes providing instruction and answering questions via telephone, television, or the Internet via electronic mail exchanges, discussion forums, chat room sessions, news groups, and other electronic means. This policy covers courses in which the delivery mode is fully online and all class instruction is delivered and

course requirements are fulfilled online, day-to-day instructional activities connected with offering courses, including lecturing, or interacting with students via fully online distant delivery methods to accomplish the goals of the course, or all instruction is delivered online but could require students to attend mandatory orientation, class presentations or in-class examinations.

### **3. APPROVAL OF ONLINE COURSES**

3.1 Colleges' Responsibility in the Approval of Online Courses – Colleges have exclusive control over curriculum quality issues including class size. Each college has by-laws guiding internal decision-making on matters of policy and curriculum, which are listed below:

3.1.1 Approving University-supported online courses authored by faculty or staff.

3.1.2 Approving revisions to existing online courses.

3.1.3 Approving any proposed online courses developed external to the University.

3.1.4 Approving instructors and faculty to deliver online distance education courses.

3.1.5 Approving non-credit online courses.

### **4. ONLINE COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

4.1 New Course - before a course can be developed for online distance education it must:

4.1.1 go through the appropriate curriculum review process of the college offering the online course, THEN

4.1.2 be approved by the appropriate dean for development and delivery as an online course, THEN

4.1.3 go through the University's course development processes for online courses AND appear in the University's official inventory.

4.2 The design, layout and format for online courses must meet University standards, including accessibility standards established by Section 508 Subsection 1194.22 of the Rehabilitation Act.

4.3 Nothing in this section is meant to preclude employees of the University from developing online courses without substantial assistance from the University. ~~Faculty members are free to contract with commercial web publishers to develop online courses, subject to the UH System Intellectual Property Policy.~~ However, before a course can be offered online via distance education, as a part of the University's curriculum, it must undergo the normal processes for college and University approval.

## **5. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS**

Once an online course is developed, but before it can be delivered, the course must go through the University's quality assurance (QA) process at the college level. The QA process ensures that the course meets the distance education quality criteria set forth by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

5.1 An online course goes through the course development and the College QA process if:

- 5.1.1 A brand new online course is being developed.
- 5.1.2 An existing online course has been migrated from one course management system to another.
- 5.1.3 The mode of delivery is changing from either face-to-face or web-enhanced to online.

## **6. ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY**

6.1 Prior to delivering an online course, the University and the instructor(s) must enter a written agreement covering its delivery.

- 6.1.1 For the delivery of the online course:
- 6.1.2 The University retains the right to offer any necessary online course sections using the course, including the author's materials, during any semester.
- 6.1.3 For as long as the author is employed by the University, the author retains the right of first refusal to instruct sections using the online course subject to workload guidelines and negotiations with the appropriate dean. Should the author decline to serve as instructor, the University may offer sections using the online course, including the author's materials, to another faculty member or adjunct as instructor.
- 6.1.4 Should the author leave the University, the University retains ownership of the online course and the right to reuse or modify the course. The author may re-use the online course materials at a subsequent place of employment after institution identifying information, logos, and trademarks are removed.

## **7. COMPENSATION**

Compensation to the author for the development or revision of an online course is determined within each college.

- 7.1 As long as the author remains a University employee, the author is eligible to receive residual compensation for each section using the online distance education course taught by another faculty member or adjunct, provided the author has not been compensated by the University for the development of the online course.

7.2 Compensation to the author, based on the sale, lease, license, rent, or trade of online courses or modules comprising the online distance education course by the University, will be in accordance with the UH System Intellectual Property Policy.

## **8. PROCEDURES FOR ONLINE COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

Consult the Online Course Development Information section on the Office of Information Technology (OIT) website which provides the most current online course development process:

[Online Course Development | Office of Information Technology | University of Houston-Clear Lake](#)