

3.13.4.a

Policy Compliance: Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports

Applicable Policy Statements

An institution includes a review of its distance learning programs in the Compliance Certification.

Documentation: In order to be in compliance with this policy, the institution must have incorporated an assessment of its compliance with standards that apply to its distance and correspondence education programs and courses.

Judgment

Compliance Partial Compliance Non-Compliance Not Applicable

Narrative

The Tennessee Technological University (TTU) Compliance Certification includes a review of the University's distance learning programs. An assessment of TTU's compliance with standards that apply to distance education programs and courses are incorporated throughout the report, reflecting the philosophy and practice that compliance to the standards are the same, regardless of delivery method of the courses or programs. Examples are noted below for both TTU distance education courses and programs as well as the Tennessee Board of Regents Online Degree Program courses and programs at TTU. There is no reference to correspondence programs since no correspondence programs and courses are offered at TTU at this time.

Core Requirement 2.7.1 (Program Length) indicates that the distance-based undergraduate and graduate programs at TTU meet the same minimum credit hour requirements of 120 semester credit hours for baccalaureate degrees and 30 semester credit hours for master's degrees.

Core Requirement 2.7.2 (Program Content) indicates that distance education degree programs and courses at TTU go through the same approval procedures as any on-campus degree programs and courses.

Core Requirement 2.8 (Faculty) provides a table of the number and distribution of faculty that includes the faculty members for distance education programs.

Core Requirement 2.9 (Learning Resources and Services) discusses various services the Angelo and Jennette Library provides online to on-campus and distance learning students. The library has a dedicated distance learning librarian to ensure that distance and off-campus students have access to library resources and services and to serve as a point of contact for questions and issues.

Core Requirement 2.10 (Student Support Services) describes various services provided to distance learning students through TTU offices and programs such as the University Library, Financial Aid Office, Student Success Centers, academic programs, etc.

Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1.1 (Institutional Effectiveness, Educational Programs) presents evidence that distance education programs have planning and assessment procedures that are consistent with on-campus programs. The online student learning assessments are included in the institutional effectiveness reports for the online Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, the online Master of Science in Nursing (MSN) program, and the online Master of Science in Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness (MSEXPW) program.

Comprehensive Standard 3.4.4 (Educational Programs: Acceptance of Academic Credit) indicates that the Graduation Office reviews for transferability of credit hours regardless of whether the course was offered in a traditional format or some form of distance education.

Comprehensive Standard 3.4.11 (Academic Program Coordination) provides a listing of all academic program coordinators, whether the program is delivered on campus or via distance education.

Comprehensive Standard 3.4.12 (Technology Use) describes the infrastructure and support that the Office of Information Technology Services provides to students, faculty, and staff. Instructors at TTU use Desire2Learn (D2L), the online classroom management system, to manage and communicate with their classes for the blended or totally online instruction.

Comprehensive Standard 3.6.4 (Post-Baccalaureate Program Requirements) describes the requirements for online graduate degree programs, including the core courses in the distance MBA program and four concentrations in the online Master of Arts in Exercise Science, Physical Education, and Wellness.

Comprehensive Standard 3.7.3 (Faculty Development) covers various programs and opportunities available for faculty professional development, from the workshop that helped faculty design or redesign their own online or hybrid courses to the Tablet Computing in Instruction Grant Program that enhanced the technological learning environment at TTU.

Comprehensive Standard 3.8.1 (Library and Other Learning Resources) describes various library services and support available to distance education students and the faculty members who teach courses online. The library website is a heavily used source for access to resources, library assistance, and library information.

Comprehensive Standard 3.8.2 (Instruction of Library Use) indicated that the TTU library offers four types of library instruction including course-integrated instruction, library-initiated instruction, one-on-one instruction, and self-service instruction. Users always have access to self-service instruction via the library website. Through the website, all library users, including distance education students, can learn how to search the library, research specific topic areas, avoid plagiarism, cite sources, search for patents, improve their presentation, design a poster, choose a research topic, apply fair use principles, use specific databases, and connect Google Scholar to the library.

Comprehensive Standard 3.8.3 (Library and Other Learning Resources: Qualified Staff) provides evidence that the library has a sufficient number of qualified staff to meet its goals in providing learning/information resources to the University and serving undergraduate and graduate students, both on campus and through distance education, and faculty members.

Comprehensive Standard 3.9.1 (Student rights) indicates that the TTU online Student Handbook includes a comprehensive explanation of students' rights and responsibilities, as well as policies on student privacy rights, the student disciplinary system, and the right to due process. The online Handbook is available to all students at all times.

Comprehensive Standard 3.9.2 (Student records) indicates that the information on students' right to privacy regarding educational records is available online in the student online Handbook and on the office of the Registrar's website.

Federal Requirement 4.8 (Distance and correspondence education) addresses the creation and maintenance of student account credentials and passwords, current available exam proctoring software, **students' rights to privacy, and confidentiality** for distance education. TTU's Regents Online Degree Program (RODP) office provides a secure proctor setting for the online instructors to use for proctored testing.

Conclusion

Distance education programs and courses at TTU are primarily delivered through online delivery

methods. The curricular approval for distance education degree programs and courses follows the same procedures as for on-campus degree programs and courses. Student learning outcomes for distance education programs are assessed in the same way as traditional on-campus programs, with the results of the assessment used for continuous improvement of the programs. TTU provides student support and services through electronic means for distance learning students. The TTU Innovation Technology Institute, the library, and many other offices/programs at TTU offer various supports for faculty teaching online. Additional faculty support is provided through TTU's Regents Online Degree Program for TTU instructors teaching in this program. Therefore, TTU demonstrates compliance with Comprehensive Standard 3.13.4a.