



NAECOB

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION AND
EQUIVALENCY COUNCIL OF THE BAHAMAS

GUIDELINES FOR REGISTRATION AND APPROVAL (PRIMARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS)

**DISTANCE,
ONLINE LEARNING &
HYBRID EDUCATION**



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PREAMBLE

It is the institution's responsibility to demonstrate that its programmes, procedures, policies, and processes are within The National Accreditation & Equivalency Council of the Bahamas' (NAECOB) recognized standards and scope of authority. NAECOB reserves the right to circumscribe its review functions to the types of institutions and programmes that are within its recognized standards & scope of authority and to liaise with specialized consultants. NAECOB also reserves the right to decline undertaking the review of institutions and programmes that are determined to be outside of NAECOB's purview, capacity, competence, or where information presented by the institution is not apropos for a substantive evaluation.

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INTRODUCTION

This manual was developed by The National Accreditation and Equivalency Council of The Bahamas (NAECOB). Its purpose is:

- i. To provide guidelines and approval for registered institutions seeking to offer *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/ programmes.
- ii. To provide an assessment framework for institutions in the process of designing and developing *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses / programmes.
- iii. To act as a quality assurance evaluation tool for those institutions already involved in *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses and programmes offerings.

These guidelines comprise eleven (11) standards of quality assurance for *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* programmes as adapted NAECOB.

PRINCIPLES OF REGISTRATION

Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education Courses/Programmes

Guidelines

Institutions should consider the following guideline statements in the implementation of /and reporting on *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes.

Institutions are required to submit a Substantive Change Form- Distance Education available on our website www.naecob.org.

Mission

If an institution offers *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses or programmes, it should be reflected in the institution's mission statement. Further, online and hybrid courses should be designed to serve the academic needs and interests of the various student population, and delivered in a way that allows for the best possibility of learning and student success.

Suitability

The institution must confirm that the course content and learning outcomes are suitable *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes offerings.

Academic Standards

- *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses or programmes must reflect the same standards of academic integrity, rigor and quality of instruction as traditional classroom-based courses.
- The technology used must be appropriate to the nature, structure and objectives of the courses and programmes, and expectations concerning the use of such technology are clearly communicated to students.
- *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses or programs policies are clear concerning copyright issues, ownership of materials, and the creation and production of software, tele-courses, or other media productions.
- An institution entering into consortia arrangements or contractual agreements (i.e. AA or MOUs) for the delivery of courses/programmes and or related co-curricular activities or services offered by *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses or programmes, must ensure that sound and acceptable practices for determining the effectiveness, and quality of the courses/programmes offered by all of the participants are employed.
- Academic and technical support services are appropriate and specifically related to *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programs.
- Programme length is appropriate for each of the institution's *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses or programs.

- For *Online* courses, **100% of the content** is delivered online; there are no required face-to-face sessions within the course and no requirements for on-campus activity. Additionally, at least two (2) proctored activities are required: on-site exams, laboratory activities, and other activities as deemed necessary by the institution.
- For *Hybrid Learning* courses, **75-85%** of instruction is delivered online and a **minimum of 15%** is delivered face-to-face (institutional verification is required) or via synchronous Web conferencing or Interactive video. Additionally, at least two (2) proctored activities are required such as Lab experiments, final examination and other activities identified by the institution). Course development forms must include percentage of online content and list resources/activities that will constitute that percentage.

Please Note: *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* course offerings must offer the same comparable learning opportunities and total hours of classroom instruction as traditional face-to-face courses.

Faculty

- An institution offering *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programs ensures that there is a sufficient number of faculty qualified to develop, design, and teach the courses/programmes.

Institutional Effectiveness

- The institution has clearly written policies and definitions of procedures that governs the assessment, design, development, implementation, and evaluation of its *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes.
- Comparability of *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses or programs to campus-based programmes and courses are ensured by the evaluation of educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction.
- The institution regularly assesses the appropriateness and effectiveness of its provision of library, learning, technological, and other essential resources and student support services for *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programs students.

Library and Learning/ Information Resources

- Students have adequate and appropriate access to Virtual Library or related collections and services.
- Access is provided to laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes.
- The institution ensures that appropriate learning resources, including software are available to students.

Technological Resources

- The institution regularly assesses the appropriateness, effectiveness and relativeness of its technological infrastructure to support the courses/programs' methodology.
- Appropriate and current resources and technical expertise required for *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programs are available and maintained.

Teaching Resources

- The institution regularly analyses the appropriateness, effectiveness and the relativeness of its Learning Management System in the delivery of courses/programmes.
- The institution ensures that appropriate and current teaching tools are available to students.

Student Services

- The institution ensures that appropriate communication access and resources are available to students.
- Students have adequate access to the range of services appropriate to support the courses/programmes for which they are enrolled.
- Students enrolled in *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes have adequate guidelines for filing complaints.
- Documented procedures assure that security of students' personal information is protected during assessments and evaluations and in the dissemination of results.
- Students enrolled in *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes are able to use the technology employed, have the equipment necessary to succeed, and are provided assistance in using the technology employed.
- Students are provided with clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technological competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, and academic support services specific to students' location and mode of delivery.
- Class schedules and registration materials for students should clearly indicate which method of instruction will be utilized in a course i.e. online, distance, hybrid, web-enhanced and what technological requirements, if any, are required.
- Students are provided with appropriate information to include: online navigation tutorial, introduction to the Learning Management System (LMS), course syllabus, institutional policies governing *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes, instructor office hours and communication contacts, email addresses, LMS support system, attendance & grading policy, and system requirements.

Facilities and Equipment

- The institution ensures that the required physical, financial, communication, academic, and technological resources are available to students enrolled in *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes to facilitate learning and enhance student learning outcomes.
- The institution ensures that the facilities, equipment and technical expertise are appropriate to meet programme or course objectives, and a plan for obsolescence is evident.

Security Services

- The institution ensures that identity of students enrolled in *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes is securely maintained and consistently verified.
- The institution ensures that integrity is maintained with regard to test taking for students enrolled in *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses/programmes.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

There should be a technical requirement for all *Distance, Online Learning and Hybrid Education* courses or programmes.

To facilitate all digital courses, institutions must ensure and/or where necessary, have a policy to ensure that students are proficient in the following:

- i. Access to and the ability to use computers and related digital devices;
- ii. Access to and the ability to use Internet browsers; (Internet Explorer, Microsoft office etc.);
- iii. Access to and the ability to use their student portal in the Learning Management System (LMS);
- iv. Access to and the ability to use internet on a regular basis.

Institutions must identify and satisfy the need of students for skill strengthening, so that all students are proficient in digital learning.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance Learning, also called Remote Learning and Virtual Instruction or Training, is a formal process of delivering instruction, educational services or support to students via electronic or other media (one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVD'S, and CD-ROMS) regardless of the location of the student or the instructor. However, the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools-Commission on Colleges, June 1997; Western Association of Senior College and University Commission 2008).

ONLINE COURSE

A course where the instruction is entirely online and delivered through the use of technology. It eliminates geography as a factor between the student and the institution (Panola College, 2019).

HYBRID LEARNING

Hybrid Learning (also known as Blended Learning) combines web-based learning with traditional (face-to-face) classroom environment. Most course activity is completed online, but there are some required face-to-face instructional activities such as lectures, discussions, labs, or other in-person learning activities. (Panola College, 2019).

RELATED TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Online learning

A form of distance learning where the bulk of instruction is offered via computer and the Internet (Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 2008).

E-learning

Any electronically assisted instruction (Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 2008).

Web-enhanced course

The use of online resources or activities to enrich a component of a traditional synchronous classroom or complements in-person class sessions without reducing the number of required class meetings (Panola College, 2019).

MOOCs

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are free online courses that provide an affordable and flexible way to learn new skills, advance your career and deliver quality educational experiences at scale such as college preparations, supplemental learning, lifelong learning, and corporate eLearning & training (Commonwealth of Learning, 2016).

Open Learning

Learning based on independent study or initiative rather than formal classroom instruction (Connick, 1999).

Synchronous

A real-time learning event in which a group of students and/or instructors engage in learning at the same time, be it face-to-face or mediated technology (Connick, 1999).

Asynchronous

Web-based learning/communication which takes place between students and instructors at different times and places. It offers a choice of where and when you will access learning (Connick, 1999).

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