



Distance Learning Faculty Handbook

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Welcome to Distance Learning at Panola College. It is the goal of this handbook to facilitate a smooth entrance into online teaching by outlining processes and procedures for creating and facilitating your course.

Distance Education Department

The Office of Distance Education is located in the Gullette Technology Building on the Panola College campus. The Distance Education Department is comprised of Distance Learning, Instructional Technology, and Information Technology Services. Below are names of personnel in the department that may be helpful to you.

Name	Phone	Email
Ann Morris, Dean of Distance Education	903-693-2014	amorris@panola.edu
Patti Rushing, DL and VCT Coordinator	903-693-2014	prushing@panola.edu
Julie Bertrand, Administrative Secretary	903-693-2040	jbertrand@panola.edu
Tina Duncan, Instructional Designer, WebCT Administrator/Trainer	903-693-2024	tduncan@panola.edu
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Definition of Distance Learning

Distance learning is defined as planned learning that normally occurs in a different place from teaching and as a result requires special techniques of course design, special instructional techniques, and special methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organizational and administrative arrangements (Moore & Kearsley, 1996).

Effectiveness of Online Instruction

Many have questioned if distance education is as effective as traditional education. A compilation of research findings entitled *The No Significant Difference Phenomenon* (NSDP) explores the effective use of technology, chiefly distance learning, compared to alternative methods or techniques of teaching. Reports, summaries, papers cite no significance difference between the variables.

Mission of Online Learning Programs

The mission of online programs at Panola College is to provide high quality educational opportunities to students who may be at a geographic disadvantage, have employer travel and other conflicts which prevent on-campus class attendance, have course conflicts or other reasons for requesting distance learning courses.

Terms

- Online – courses that are totally delivered online
- Online/hybrid – 75% or more of the class is offered online and the rest face-to-face
- Interactive Television (ITV) – using videoconferencing equipment to connect classrooms with two-way video and audio
- Interactive Television/hybrid – At least one half an ITV course if offered by Interactive Television and the rest online

WebCT

All distance learning courses are taught using the course management system WebCT. Instructors are expected to use WebCT. It should be noted that WebCT does not guarantee compatibility with AOL or Netscape.

Tina Duncan, Instructional Designer and WebCT Administrator/Trainer, assists instructors in learning how to use WebCT and other technologies in the Resource Lab located in the Gullette Building.

Faculty Development – Training

Instructors participating in the delivery of distance learning courses will have had training in the use of necessary technologies to enhance the skills required of them in teaching classes via instructional technologies.

Panola College is open to accept training and/or professional development offered by other institutions or providers such as the Center for Distance Learning Research, Texas A&M University and the Teletraining Institute as a means of faculty training/professional development off campus.

Panola College offers in-house training to faculty members to introduce and prepare them for teaching in a distance learning environment. Offerings include group workshops and individual training resulting in competency-based outcomes. Support during the teaching of a course is also available from the WebCT Administrator/Trainer.

Training is also available for Interactive Television (ITV) distance education classrooms. Facilitators for ITV classes are also provided basic instruction in how to operate and troubleshoot ITV equipment.

Course Development

Panola College strives to develop and offer distance learning courses that agree with the Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Delivered Courses.

The following items outline correct procedures for College (1) course development and (2) subsequent course delivery in the Panola College Distance Education Program.

All courses to be offered via distance learning will be included in Panola College's inventory of approved courses. These courses will be within the mission and goals of the institution. All courses offered via distance education will follow the approved process below.

1. Submit Online/Hybrid Course Development Proposal Form to the Office of Distance Education.
http://www.panola.edu/dl_faculty_handbook/Course_Development_Proposal_Form.pdf
2. Enroll in training for DL technologies and work toward completion of WebCT or ITV training. Tina Duncan, tduncan@panola.edu
3. Begin development of course.

4. Complete Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Delivered Courses Checklist.
http://www.panola.edu/dl_faculty_handbook/PGP.pdf ([Suggestions for implementing the Principles of Good Practice in Online Education.](#))
5. Submit Course Completion Form.
http://www.panola.edu/dl_faculty_handbook/course_completion_contract.doc

For additional distance learning faculty resources, see the DL faculty webpage at http://www.panola.edu/instruction/dl/faculty_resources.htm.

Interaction

In an online course there is interaction between instructor and students, among and between students, and there is also interaction with technology. Interaction is a key factor in the success of a course. Incorporating interactive strategies early in the course helps students overcome any apprehension they may have had in the beginning. Online students consistently ask for more interaction. Interaction keeps students from feeling like they're simply plodding through an electronic correspondence course. **Interaction contributes significantly to distance learning student satisfaction, success, and retention rates.**

Library Services

Cristie Ferguson is the Distance Learning Librarian. She offers her services to students as well as instructors. For more information, contact her at 903-693-2091 or cferguson@panola.edu. For more information regarding library services, go to <http://www.panola.edu/library.htm>.

The Virtual College of Texas

The Virtual College of Texas (VCT) is a collaborative of Texas' fifty community college districts and the Texas State Technical College System. As a Provider College, a Panola College instructor may request their distance learning course be listed in the VCT catalog. <http://www.vct.org>. VCT students are included in the head-count for stipend purposes and also participate in course evaluations.

To list your distance learning course in the VCT catalog, complete this form: <http://www.panola.edu/instruction/dl/VCTform.htm> and submit it to Patti Rushing, VCT Coordinator.

To learn more about Panola College as a Provider College:
http://www.panola.edu/instruction/dl/vct_provider.htm.

To learn more about Panola College as a Host College:
http://www.panola.edu/instruction/dl/vct_host.htm.

Division Directors are responsible for approving the VCT Hosted Course Syllabus.
http://www.panola.edu/dl_faculty_handbook/VCT_host_syllabus.doc.

For a detailed explanation of Panola College's responsibilities as a provider college go to www.panola.edu/instruction/dl/VCT_Host-Provider_Responsibilities.pdf.

Course Evaluations

The Office of Postsecondary Education has identified best practices and “Red Flags” in online courses. **The Department believes that accrediting agencies already have the authority to apply these best practices in their evaluation of distance education in the context of their individual standards.**
http://www.panola.edu/dl_faculty_handbook/red_flags.doc

The first semester an online course is taught, the course will be evaluated at mid-term by students. If mid-term evaluations indicate need for improvement, the Dean of Distance Education will meet with the instructor to form an Action Plan.
http://www.panola.edu/dl_faculty_handbook/action_plan.doc

All online courses taught the first time will be evaluated. If evaluations indicate need for improvement, the Dean of Distance Education will meet with the instructor to form an Action Plan.

In addition, all distance learning courses will be evaluated according to Panola College evaluation policy. Division Directors may use the Peer Evaluation instrument for online courses. http://www.panola.edu/dl_faculty_handbook/Online_Peer_Evaluation.htm. Faculty response to DL evaluations of courses will be the same as response criteria for face-to-face courses. The Office of Distance Education has the option of evaluating courses as any time. All formal evaluations are filed in the Office of the Vice President.

Compensation

Panola College agrees to pay a stipend for Online and Interactive Television courses taught. Panola College pays a stipend of \$10 per distance learning student. For ITV courses, only the remote site students are counted for determining stipend. Virtual College of Texas students are also counted. The number of stipends paid per semester is limited to two with a cap of \$500.00 per course.

Distance Learning Testing Services

At the Panola College Campus, Mr. Joe Pate provides testing accommodations in the Gullette Building for distance learning students unable to test with instructors. Limited testing services are also available in Center and Marshall. Go to <http://www.panola.edu/instruction/dl/testing.htm> for specific times and locations and other important information.

Faculty should remind students to take photo identification to the testing centers. Students must call ahead and reserve a seat with the testing center. Clear communication with testing proctors is vital.

At least two exams must be proctored. Instructors should proctor their own exam whenever possible, especially during finals. If the proctor is not a Panola College employee or a public school employee, then the Agreement of Proposed Proctor Not Employed by Panola College Form must be signed and returned to the Office of Distance Education.
http://www.panola.edu/dl_faculty_handbook/proposed_proctor.doc.

Turn-around time for tests varies depending on location and other factors. Online testing is strongly encouraged to eliminate turn-around time and the transporting of exams from one location to another.

Please do not ask proctors to make exceptions.

Copyrighted Material

The instructor may not use copyrighted material without proper clearance. Obtaining clearance to use copyrighted material is the responsibility of the instructor. To determine if clearance needs to be obtained, the following four factors should be considered:

1. The purpose and character of the use, including whether use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes
2. The nature of the copyrighted work
3. The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole
4. The effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work

(It is recommended that the instructor attends the “UT System’s Crash Course in Copyright” located at: <http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/cprtindx.htm>.)

Student Services

In addition to providing instruction, Panola College will employ a variety of electronic methods including Interactive Television to deliver counseling/advising and other student support services. Students also will have access to faculty and student services staff via face-to-face interaction. Each student enrolled in a Panola College course will be provided an email account.

Accessibility

Course materials should be accessible to students, regardless of disability. A text equivalent for every non-text element such as video or sound files should be included. A detailed set of guidelines can be found at the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) website: <http://www.w3.org/1999/05/WCAG-REC-fact>.

Panola College subscribes to *BrowseAloud*, speech enabled software that reads text to students. It is accessed from a link on the main College web page. Instructors should make students aware of *BrowseAloud*.

A student identifying him/herself as having a disability should be directed to Teresa Washington Brooks, Coordinator of Disability and Support Services, in the Miller Administration Building on the Panola College campus. She also can be contacted by phone (903-693-1123) or email (twbrooks@panola.edu). Reasonable accommodations will be arranged.

For all other issues, please contact the Office of Distance Education or refer to the Panola College Board Policy or the Faculty Handbook.