# LINCOLN UNIVERSITY eLEARNING
# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES*

*Approved by the Lincoln University Board of Curators:  September 9, 2010*

**LINCOLN UNIVERSITY eLEARNING
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

## I.  Institutional Policy and Issues for eLearning

A. **Purpose**:   The purpose of the Lincoln University eLearning Policies and Procedures is to assure high quality in the delivery of eLearning with regard to instruction and learning.   With effective eLearning Policies and Procedures, students will be provided the knowledge needed to achieve their professional and career goals in a student-centered learning environment.   Faculty and staff will be provided the guidelines, which govern the teaching, learning, and support services for eLearning.

B. **Principles of Good Practice for Electronically Offered Academic Degree and Certificate Programs**:  eLearning activities will comply with the underlying principles of Quality Matters and  the U.S. Department of Education and will be aligned with standards set forth by accrediting bodies such as the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (HLC-NCA), the Association for Collegiate Business School Programs (ACBSP), the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), and the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission (NLNAC).   The courses that are offered via eLearning will meet the same quality standards as those that apply to campus-based instruction.   Elements of single courses or programs are designed to address the specific needs of distance learners who are likely to enroll.

C. **Definition**:   For purposes of this policy, eLearning is defined as instruction delivered via the Internet or Intranet on the Lincoln University Learning Management System (LMS).

D. **Review of eLearning Policy**:   Initial approval of the eLearning Policy will follow the procedures as outlined in Section 2.25 of the Lincoln University *Rules and Regulations*.   The ongoing responsibility for evaluating and recommending revisions to the eLearning Policy resides with the Center for Innovative Instruction Advisory Committee, which is composed of faculty members, university administrators, students, and staff from the Office of Information Technology.

E. **Academic Integrity of eLearning Courses**: eLearning courses are comparable to campus-based courses in terms of: (1) syllabi, (2) textbooks, (3) grades, (4) methods of evaluation, and (5) expected learning outcomes. Online courses are subject to the same policies as stated in the University bulletin for campus-based courses.

F. **Oversight of Courses**:   eLearning at Lincoln University operates under the purview of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.   The Senate Curriculum Committee (SCC), which is made up of faculty from each college, reviews all

courses to be offered at Lincoln University in accordance with Section 2.25. eLearning adheres to the Lincoln University *Rules and Regulations* that all courses of the same prefix and number are equivalent, regardless of mode of delivery.

## II. Curriculum and Instruction for Online Courses:

A. **Definition of Online Course**: An online course is defined as a course in which 80% or more of the course is conducted online as published in the course syllabus. The determination of whether a course meets this definition is made by the department head.

B. **Converting an Existing Course to an Online Course**: The process for converting an existing course to an online course is as follows:
   1. The faculty member will convert the course following Lincoln University's guidelines for online courses and construct the course within the Lincoln University eLearning guidelines. Faculty are required to meet departmental standards using the procedures and policies developed by the department. It is recommended that faculty members work with the university's instructional designer throughout the development process to ensure the course meets the University's and appropriate accreditation standards for online courses.
   2. The instructional designer will evaluate the online course for the required standards as recommended in the Quality Matters Program Rubric and notify the faculty member, the appropriate department head and dean, and the Vice President for Academic Affairs when all the online course design criteria have been met. If the course does not meet Lincoln University's online course standards and is not aligned with the underlying principles and standards of Quality Matters, the proposal may be returned to the faculty member with recommendations for changes.
   3. All online courses will meet requirements established by this policy, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association (HLC-NCA) and other accrediting bodies (e.g., NCATE, ACBSP, NLNAC).

C. **Creating a New Course for the Online Program**: If a faculty member desires to create a course specifically as an online course, the course must first be approved following the procedures outlined in Lincoln University's *Rules and Regulations* for course approval. Once the new course has University approval, the online course must follow the same process as converting an existing course (Section II, B).

D. **Course Review:** The responsibility for ongoing assessment of online courses rests with the appropriate department and department heads. The department heads will work with the Center for Innovative Instruction in assessing course quality based on the Quality Matters Program Rubric and/or any other appropriate assessment tools.

E. **Faculty Member Interaction with Online Students:** Communication is essential to the success of all courses. Specific requirements for planned interaction and timely feedback between students and faculty are detailed in online course materials that are accessible through the Center for Innovative Instruction. Methods of interaction may include email, phone, fax, chat, discussion boards, or audio/video conferencing.

F. **Faculty Member Responsibilities:** The faculty member is responsible for the course content, delivery of instruction, evaluation of student progress in online learning courses, and timely communication with students. The faculty member will evaluate course content on a continuing basis to ensure currency of materials.

G. **Accessibility (ADA):** As with campus-based courses, students taking eLearning courses may request accommodations to meet individual needs of the learner with a documented disability. Special arrangements may be made to deliver the online course in an alternative format as needed to meet the student's accessibility needs. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the Lincoln University Disability/ADA Coordinator prior to the start of class to request these accommodations.

H. **Intellectual Property and Third Party Providers:** Online learning courses are frequently designed and disseminated by other colleges, universities, corporations, or nonprofit organizations. In the event that Lincoln University wishes to purchase or lease modules or entire courses from a third party, such courses or modules must be evaluated by the appropriate department and Center for Innovative Instruction to ensure alignment with the departmental and Quality Matters standards.

I. **University Academic Honesty Policy:** University policy states that it is the responsibility of each student to be familiar with the Code of Conduct and policies concerning academic honesty and proper scholarship. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aiding and abetting dishonesty, collusion, and unauthorized possession or distribution of academic materials. Plagiarism software may be utilized by faculty and students to evaluate submitted assignments for illegal use and poor scholarship. The conduct code and university judicial procedures will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.

J. **Copyright Compliance:** Faculty are expected to understand and adhere to the copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code), as updated by the Technology, Education, and Copyright Harmonization Act (TEACH Act). Copyright law must be followed when performances, displays, copies or other reproductions of copyrighted material are made available to students. This includes the posting of copyrighted material in the Lincoln University eLearning or other online sites. Under the TEACH Act, it is permissible to make copyrighted materials available to students, providing that such materials (1) do not exceed an amount or duration comparable to that typically displayed in a live classroom setting; (2) are

directly related to the course content; (3) are an integral part of the teaching content; (4) are intended solely for and are available only to students enrolled in the course; and (5) are retained only for the class session. The students must be notified that the materials may be subject to copyright protection.

K. **Proctored Testing Policies for Online Courses**:   If a faculty member is interested in setting up a proctored testing site, either on campus or at a remote location, that faculty member will work with the Center for Innovative Instruction in finding suitable accommodations..

1. **Proctored Examinations in Online Courses Offered through Lincoln University:**
Tests will be given as scheduled. The instructor is not obligated to repeat or remind students of tests and assignment dates. Each student is responsible for acquiring notes and assignments from the website. No makeup tests will be given unless approved by the faculty member.

2. **Test Site Procedures for Students Taking Lincoln University Proctored Examinations in Online Courses:**
   a. Present a valid **picture** I.D. (for example, state driver's license) to the instructor/off-campus center site manager/computer lab manager or other approved proctor personnel.
   b. Sign the test register before receiving the test.
   c. Leave textbooks, book bags, notes, etc. in an area designated by the proctor.
   d. Sit in the designated testing area.
   e. Do not take food or drink into the testing area.
   f. Have in their possession only the test and no additional materials, unless otherwise indicated by the proctor.
   g. Complete the test in one session by allowing sufficient time to finish the test in the appropriate designated time period.
   h. Present questions, concerns, or needs to the proctor for assistance.
   i. Do not talk to other students during testing.
   j. Do not leave the test area during testing, unless approved by the proctor.
   k. Turn in the completed test and any other materials approved by the proctor.
   l. Receive a receipt acknowledging test submission.
   m. Sign out upon completing the test.

3. **Policies Relative to the Role of Proctor in Online Courses Offered Through Lincoln University**
   a. The instructor of the course may approve the proctor.   However, undergraduate students should not proctor exams.  Examples of proctors include librarians and high school counselors as well as agency staff at testing centers and University Extension Centers.

b. When monitoring an exam, a proctor shall remain in the room where the exam is being taken for the entire duration of the exam, unless relieved by another proctor. Proctors may not authorize others to serve as temporary substitute proctors unless those individuals acting as substitutes are authorized by the institution to be proctors. Proctors may not leave the room unless important safety and health situations require it.

c. Proctors shall not be a social acquaintance or relative of a student taking the exam.

d. Proctors shall not be a subordinate who operates within the line of authority of the person taking the exam.

e. Proctors shall be cognizant of the proper role of a test administrator; such training shall include familiarity with Lincoln University policies affecting the administration of exams in a proctored setting.

f. Proctors shall report in writing to the Center for Innovation Instruction any cheating and all other forms of academic misconduct known to them as a result of the role of exam proctor.

g. Proctors shall not assist students in any way during the exam with regard to understanding, interpreting or answering questions on the exam.

h. Proctors shall make all efforts to maintain an environment in the examination room that is conducive to concentration and the taking of exams. Use of electronic communication devices (i.e. cell phone) is strictly prohibited for all people in the room. The proctor shall prohibit loitering or socializing in the exam room by persons not taking the exam. Other acts of socializing during the time of the exam that might disturb the environment in the exam room are prohibited.

i. Proctors and all others in the exam room may be monitored via a camera, with the approval of the site administrator.

4. **Proctored Online Testing for Overseas/Military Students Offered Through Lincoln University**
The test proctor is to be chosen by the student and approved by Lincoln University. The proctor should be someone in the company/military who is in a supervisory or human resource position and cannot be a peer or an immediate supervisor. Preferably, the proctor should be someone from the appropriate military testing center. Responsibilities of the proctors include:
a. Receiving, administering and returning exams.
b. Acting as the liaison between the local facility and Lincoln University.

III. **Faculty Teaching Online Courses:**

A. **Faculty Qualifications**: Faculty members who teach online courses must meet the same qualifications as outlined in the Lincoln University *Rules and Regulations* (Section 3.20). Adjunct faculty members are held to the same standards as full-time faculty.

B. **Faculty Training**: Lincoln University provides a variety of training workshops and individual training for faculty in the use of the Lincoln University LMS and other technologies used in eLearning. Faculty will work cooperatively with the Center for Innovative Instruction to ensure the delivery of quality online courses. Faculty who wish to teach online courses must complete an orientation workshop conducted by the Center for Innovative Instruction or provide evidence of prior professional development and/or effective teaching experience as related to online pedagogy.

C. **Faculty Evaluation**: Online faculty are evaluated in a comparable manner as those who teach campus-based courses. Anonymous student evaluations are completed in all online courses. The results are used to guide course revisions and are given to the faculty member and department head.

D. **Faculty Teaching Load:** Faculty members teaching online courses receive the same credit toward their teaching load as do faculty who teach campus-based courses. The decision as to how many online courses a faculty member may teach is left to the discretion of the department head. The department head, with guidance from the dean of each college, sets the enrollment limit for each distance course taught by that college. The recommendation for maximum enrollment is 20 students. However, this can be adjusted upon the request of the faculty member and approved by the department head and dean. The most important factors in setting an enrollment limit are (1) the enrollment limit already existing for the same course when offered on campus, (2) the special needs and requirements of the course, and (3) the recommendations of the professor teaching the course.

E. **Faculty Compensation:** Faculty teaching online courses shall not be guaranteed additional compensation for developing and/or teaching online courses. Academic departments may, however, offer incentives for faculty to develop and/or teach online classes.

F. **Faculty Office Hours**: Full-time faculty teaching online courses will still maintain 10 office hours per week; however, a portion of which may be online subject to the approval of the department head.

G. **Faculty Users Group**: In addition to faculty training and professional development related to teaching in eLearning formats, faculty meet periodically to share information and discuss ideas to enhance effectiveness of courses and quality of courses being taught.

H. **Faculty Support and Supervision**: Full-time and part-time online faculty are supervised as a regular activity of the department head. Online courses and programs are integrated into an appropriate management framework within the University.

## IV. Student Support Services for Online Courses

A. **Student Readiness:** Students need to be proficient in the following skills in order to be successful in an online class: time management, academic performance (2.0 GPA or higher), self motivation, reading ability, and computer skills. Tutoring will provide them with instructions on how to navigate through the Center for Innovative Instruction. A self assessment tool will assist students to determine if they can succeed in a eLearning class.

B. **Student Services**: Online students apply for admission, register for classes, and check course availability online, as do traditional students. Information is available online through the University WebAdvisor portal, financial aid, placement services, remedial services (math and writing), counseling, and academic advising.

Students should consult an advisor before registering for online classes. Advising services for degree-seeking students are available through faculty in the individual departments. Online advising is available to non-degree seeking students through the Center for Academic Advisement.

C. **Registration**: All registrations for online classes may be completed via e-mail.
   1. Degree-seeking students must register for classes with an academic advisor until 45 credit hours are completed.
   2. Non-degree seeking and visiting students may register for up to 24 credit hours online through WebAdvisor. Once 24 credit hours are completed, students must contact an advisor to discuss future academic plans and goals.

D. **Student Activities**: The Office of Student Affairs and the Student Government Association serve as liaisons between the faculty, administration, and the student body and assist with all student activities. Information concerning student activities and clubs/organizations is available online for both eLearning students and traditional students:

E. **Student Complaints/Grievance Procedure**: Any student who wishes to make a formal complaint to the University should refer to *Article VII, Section 1. Resolution* of the Lincoln University Student Handbook, which is available online.

F. **Student Identification**: Students enrolled in online classes only must request a student ID through the Division of Continuing Education. The request may be submitted by e-mail and the ID card will be mailed to the student. Online students who come to campus to utilize campus services must acquire a valid student ID prior to access. The online student ID must be presented with a valid photo ID (i.e., driver's license, passport, etc.).

G. **Marketing of Online Program:** Advertising, recruiting, and admissions information represents current online courses, requirements, and services available to students. All Lincoln University courses are advertised online and in print each semester.

H. **Library Resources:** The University ensures that students participating in eLearning courses have access to adequate and appropriate learning resources. Students have access to Page Library and also the virtual library resources within the State of Missouri with a current Lincoln University student ID. Library services available to distance students include the holdings that are accessed through the online library catalog, electronic books, online databases, full-text journals available online, research assistance, and inter-library loan.

I. **University Bookstore:** The Lincoln University website provides a link to the Nebraska Bookstore (the campus bookstore), http://www.lincolnubkstr.com/, which provides information for both online students and traditional students. All students may make bookstore purchases using the online service. The bookstore will mail the requested materials to the student.

V. **ELearning Facilities and Support Services for Online Courses**

A. **ELearning Equipment and Facilities:** Lincoln University provides the necessary equipment and facilities to effectively deliver synchronous courses at a distance. Computers with Internet access are available on campus for students who may need to use campus facilities for eLearning purposes. All courses that require laboratories and clinical site visits, which cannot be completed via technology-based eLearning, are handled with special arrangements made by the faculty member and the department head.

B. **Funding for eLearning:** Sufficient funds for the operation of eLearning programs have been allocated to maintain instructional offerings. The annual University budget provides for the maintenance of equipment and networks.

C. **Online Tuition and Fees**: Tuition and fees for online classes will be the same as on-campus, based on the student's residency status. The Late Registration Fee will apply based on the published registration schedule.

D. **Institutional Technology and OIT Responsibility**: The LMS Administrator and the Center for Innovative Instruction will provide the technical expertise necessary to maintain connectivity and to address faculty concerns with the technical issues of eLearning. A 24/7 telephone Helpdesk is available for faculty and students. In addition, the Center for Innovative Instruction provides training of faculty, staff, and students. The Center also schedules several training modules for professional development during each year and offers self-paced online training. Department heads may request additional training for faculty and staff on an as-needed basis.

## VI. Planning and Evaluation for Online Courses

A. **Institutional Planning:** Online learning is planned to meet the University mission, strategic initiatives, goals and objectives, and is consistent with the Lincoln University 2008-2012 Strategic Plan. Online learning is designed and evaluated according to the same guidelines used for on-campus programs. The effectiveness of online learning is assessed as discussed in this document. Finally, the results of the assessment are used to make appropriate changes to the strategic plan and to the program.

B. **Educational Effectiveness**: The Office of Institutional Research provides reports of educational effectiveness of online learning to ensure comparability to campus-based programs. This includes anonymous assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction. Lincoln University collects survey data each year for individual courses, faculty members, and for students. This information is used to make recommendations for course revisions and to better serve the student.

The University assesses student capability to succeed in online learning programs through a web-based self-assessment instrument and uses the information in advising the student. If the student does not possess the necessary skills, the student is referred to an advisor to discuss the skills needed to succeed in eLearning. All faculty provide syllabi and necessary course information for eLearning courses. A common syllabus is used for each particular course. Syllabi reflect course goals, the course requirements, and the expected outcomes, which refer to course goals, in addition to any on-campus requirements.