

# BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

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## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**AREA:** Academic Affairs

**NUMBER:** Policy 2.29

**SUBJECT:** Technology Mediated Instruction and Distance Learning

Technology Mediated Instruction (TMI) is defined as *all forms of instruction that are enhanced by or utilize electronic and/or computer-based technology. It specifically includes distance education, instructional modules delivered via mass media, and computer assisted instruction.* Technology Mediated Instruction and Distance Learning will embrace “Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs” of the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

### 1. **Instructional Methods and Academic Responsibility**

Faculty have final responsibility for determining the pedagogies and instructional methods most appropriate for the instructional modules, courses, and/or academic programs which the College offers. Among the factors to be considered in determining the suitability of a particular course for TMI are the following:

- (a) Is the use of TMI appropriate to the course?
- (b) Does the use of TMI improve the quality of the course?
- (c) Does sufficient student demand exist?
- (d) Are the necessary instructional and student support resources available to facilitate the use of TMI (for example, access to advising and information sources)?

### 2. **Quality**

The quality of instructional modules, courses, and academic programs delivered by or using TMI must be at least equivalent to the quality of curricular offerings currently approved at Blue Mountain College. The purposes of TMI are to increase the quality of instruction and to increase the access of students to faculty, to educational resources, and to each other. If TMI results in increased class sizes or student-faculty ratios beyond traditional classroom and curricular standards, additional resources or workload adjustments necessary to maintain the quality of instruction will be provided.

Criteria for assessing technology mediated instruction shall be developed by appropriate committees and the academic units from which the instruction originates. TMI courses and sections shall be held to the same standards as traditional classroom instruction when reviewed by department and College committees.

### 3. **Resources in Support of Technology Mediated Instruction**

Needs for enhancement in areas such as access to library resources, information technology, instructional design and technical support, faculty development in the use of TMI, computer and network support, and student services should be identified at the department and college levels so that the College can plan for the appropriate infrastructure to support TMI. Cross-unit and cross-institutional sharing of learning and resources, to the extent possible, is expected.

# BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

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5. **Compensation for Course Development**  
Faculty developing TMI courses will be compensated at the rate of \$500 per course or will be released from teaching a three hour course.
6. **Impact on Faculty Load**  
Faculty teaching TMI courses will maintain the normal teaching load and the TMI course will be included in the total load. Class size for TMI courses will be limited to 25 students.
7. **Coordination of this Policy with Other College Policies**  
Other matters related to TMI (assessment of curriculum quality, ownership of intellectual property, determination of the fair use of copyrighted material, and long-range academic planning and capital budgeting) are governed by other College policies.
8. **Student Support and Information**
  - A. The program or course provides students with clear, complete and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, prerequisite technology competencies and skills, technical equipment requirements, availability of academic support services, financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.
  - B. Distance learning courses and programs will provide an opportunity for interaction between students and the faculty member responsible for the course, so that students can receive prompt responses to their questions. Faculty should respond to student requests in most cases within 24 hours.
  - C. The Class Schedule will clearly identify distance learning courses through the use of the course section designated with an "O" or in other appropriate ways so that students have access to this information before enrolling in a course or program.
  - D. The College will use admissions criteria to assess whether the student has the background, knowledge and technical skills required for undertaking the distance learning course or program.
  - E. Advertising, recruiting and admissions materials will clearly and accurately represent the distance learning program and the services available.
  - F. Criteria for student success and expected outcomes in distance learning courses and programs will be as rigorous and comprehensive as those used in classroom-based courses and will be communicated to students in all distance learning materials.
  - G. Students enrolled in distance learning courses are subject to the same College policies and procedures applicable to students attending courses on campus. Academic standards regarding cheating, plagiarism, and appropriate TMI behavior will be clearly communicated to students in distance learning courses and programs.
  - H. Each student enrolled in a distance learning course or program will be informed of available instructional support, student services, library resources, and disabled student support services. There will be coordination between faculty and library staff and student services staff to ensure adequate access and training for online distance learning students.

# BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

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- I. Technical support consistent with that available to on-campus students will be made available to students enrolled in distance learning courses.

## 9. Faculty Support Rights and Responsibilities

- A. In courses with sections offered through distance learning and in classroom settings, sections of distance learning courses will meet all course objectives normally covered in the classroom-based course and expectations for student outcomes will be the same.
- B. The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring that the course evaluation forms for distance learning courses are administered. Because of the nature of the course offered through TMI, the procedures for evaluating the courses may be different from those used by the institution for the evaluation of faculty teaching classroom-based courses, but the overall standards will be equivalent.
- C. The College will make available appropriate training and support services to faculty to prepare and support them in developing and teaching TMI courses. No faculty will be allowed to teach courses in the TMI format unless they have availed themselves of these services and training. The College will make available appropriate support, and training as required.
- D. Any course that includes some TMI will indicate so in the course syllabus/outline. In addition to information required in the syllabi, the following information will be included in course outlines for TMI courses:
  - 1) How participation in TMI activities will be assessed and graded (e.g., participation in chat sessions, frequency of web access, postings, etc.);
  - 2) Whether and how the instructor will track student TMI activities, for example, by maintaining a copy/log of TMI discussions and chat session, etc.;
  - 3) Weekly deadlines for posting and due dates need to be stated (dates and times);
  - 4) Office/contact hours (including items such as how quickly the instructor will respond to e-mail questions and TMI assignments, how often the instructor will be online, and alternate communication options);
  - 5) Safeguards as to how student work will be authenticated;
  - 6) Appropriate TMI behavior;
  - 7) Technical competencies expected or required of the students;
  - 8) Minimum computer hardware and software specifications, and course website access requirements;
  - 9) Whom to contact in case of technical problems;
  - 10) Alternative procedures for submitting work, in the event of technical problems.

## 10. Approval of Distance Learning Courses and Programs

- A. New Distance Learning Programs

Distance Learning degree programs (including majors, minor, emphases, and concentrations) will be reviewed in accordance with Policy 2.31: Curriculum and Program Approval and Program Closure and the provisions of this document. Any department or program offering distance learning programs (those in which more than half of the units are offered through distance learning) will be required to meet the standards of the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of College and Schools.

# BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

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B. New Distance Learning Courses

Consistent with Policy 2.31: Curriculum and Program Approval and Program Closure, the Academic Dean's Council and/or the Graduate Council will review any TMI course that is proposed for degree credit.

C. Converting Existing Courses or Sections to an TMI Format

When a course has been approved in accordance with Policy 2.31: Curriculum and Program Approval and Program Closure, and one or more sections of the course are redesigned using an TMI format, the department proposing the change will provide evidence to the Academic Dean's Council, including a revised course syllabus, that the objectives and content of the course are comparable to the classroom-based course and adhere to this policy. The faculty will review the documentation and forward a recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Existing courses that were approved as classroom-based courses will not be offered as TMI courses without appropriate curriculum review and approval.

11. **General Information for Distance Learning Courses**

A. Technical Requirements

Students should satisfy the technical proficiencies required for the distance learning course.

If the distance learning course has a required real-time interactive component, students must have access to a computer and the internet at the time(s) required and must participate in real-time interactions at the time(s) indicated in the syllabus.

Current students enrolled in both classroom based and distance learning courses must have access to personal computers other than those owned by the College.

Registered students are given a BMC email account which stays active as long as a student is enrolled at the institution. Distance Learning students and professors are required to use their BMC email accounts throughout coursework, not personal accounts. All correspondence regarding distance learning courses will be emailed to the student's BMC email account.

B. Registration and Enrollment of New Students

Students not previously enrolled at the College should consult the distance learning schedule for application registration deadlines.

All students must be registered at the College in order to participate in a class and receive credit.

C. Registration and Enrollment of Current Students

Policies concerning course registration, withdrawal, satisfactory progress, grading and other academic matters apply to distance learning courses.

Current students must obtain approval from their academic advisor and the Vice President for Academic Affairs before registering for a distance learning course.

# BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

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Registration for a distance learning course by currently enrolled students is the same as for classroom based courses. Current students may complete registration in the Office of the Registrar.

D. Student Agreement Required

Students enrolled in distance learning courses must agree to a user statement enabling the instructor to publish any student work produced for the course.

E. Transfer of Credit for Non-Blue Mountain College Students

If a student intends to transfer credit from the distance learning course to another institution, it is the student's responsibility to obtain approval from the institution (if the institution to which the credit is to be transferred requires prior approval) and to request transfer of the credit after the course is completed.

F. Financial Aid

Financial assistance is available for degree-seeking, eligible students enrolled in distance learning courses. Students must meet federal eligibility requirements and be enrolled for a minimum of six credit hours. For more information, students should contact the Office of Financial Aid.

G. Tuition and Fees for Online Distance Learning

1. Tuition

Tuition will be the same for distance learning courses as that charged for all other courses. Tuition rates are posted on the Prospective Students Section on the BMC Web site at [www.bmc.edu](http://www.bmc.edu).

2. Fees

Students will be assessed a registration fee and a technology fee for each distance learning course. Registration and technology fees are posted on the Prospective Students Section on the BMC Web site at [www.bmc.edu](http://www.bmc.edu).

## 12. **Withdrawal from Distance Learning Courses**

Students who register for distance learning courses incur an automatic non-refundable \$100 fee. A student may receive a refund of course tuition, less the \$100 non-refundable fee, if the withdrawal is prior to receiving access to course content. After receiving access to course content, no refund is available. Both the tuition for the course and the technology fee are non-refundable after the student receives access to the course content. Students may not withdraw from a distance learning course after the fifth week.

SOURCE: Board of Trustees: October 08, 2010; October 02, 2009; November 27, 2006; June 19, 2006