

3.13.4. "Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Subsequent Reports"

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

Compliance Non-Compliance

Proof/Explanation:

The Tennessee Technological University Compliance Certification includes a review of the University's distance learning programs. An assessment of TTU's compliance with standards that apply to distance and correspondence 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 TTU Tennessee Board of Regents Online Degree Program courses and programs that are accredited separately at the TBR level by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. (There is no reference to correspondence programs since no correspondence programs and courses are offered at TTU at this time.)

1. Institutional Context and Commitment

Distance Education at Tennessee Technological University is offered to fulfill the University's mission of offering degree programs and courses that provide greater access to educational opportunities to students in the University's service area, the nation, and the world. Students in any of the distance education programs must meet the same admissions requirements as other any student admitted to the University.

2. Curriculum and Instruction

The Distance Education degree programs and courses at Tennessee Technological University go through the same rigorous approval procedures as any on-campus degree programs and courses. Undergraduate courses and programs are approved by the University Curriculum Committee, following approval at the department and college level, just as all undergraduate courses and programs are approved, regardless of delivery method. Graduate courses and programs are approved by the Graduate School Executive Committee, following approval at the department and college level, regardless of delivery method. Additionally, Tennessee Tech's Regents Online Degree Program (RODP) courses and degree programs must receive approval through the Tennessee Board of Regents RODP Curriculum Committee at either the undergraduate or graduate levels before being submitted to the institution for approval through the individual campus processes.

Tennessee Technological University's distance education programs and courses have the same program and student learning outcomes as on-ground campus courses or programs to assure the same quality for students taking courses and programs delivered via distance learning. Program and student learning outcomes for distance education programs and courses are assessed in the same way as traditional on-campus courses, with the results of the assessment used for continuous improvement of the courses and programs in the same way as for traditional on-campus courses.

Qualified full-time and adjunct faculty are used in teaching distance learning courses and programs, just as for on-campus programs and courses. All distance learning faculty members are hired, supervised, and evaluated by the academic department in which the course or program resides.

3. Faculty Support

Faculty support is offered through the Tennessee Technological University Technology Institute. The mission of the Technology Institute is to foster the effective and innovative use of technology supporting excellence in the educational mission of the faculty of TTU (1). The Institute provides training in a

classroom setting, as well as one-on-one support with resources for use in a classroom or online. Support is available via phone, email, and walk-ins for anyone (student and faculty) needing assistance with the campus electronic learning environment and other learning tools. Additional faculty support is provided through TTU's Regents Online Degree Program for Tennessee Tech instructors teaching in this program (2). The University also employs a faculty mentor for RODP instructors who provides them with comprehensive assistance. A link to faculty support and resources is also available on the RODP website (2).

4. Student Support

Tennessee Technological University has a strong commitment to providing student support services through electronic means for students taking online courses. These services are provided through the Tennessee Tech website and through the Regents Online Degree Program websites discussed below.

Tennessee Technological University's website has a wealth of information for online students giving them access to information on all of the online degree programs offered through the University (3). Links on the website give them online access to the departments that the on-campus students can also access, including information on admission requirements (4), career services (5), student forms in the Records Office (6), Disability Services (7) and technical help through the Technology Institute (1).

Students enrolling in the online Interdisciplinary Studies and Professional Studies degree programs offered through Tennessee Tech's Regents Online Degree Program can also go to the links on the website to get information and support services (8). Students will find links to degree programs, course descriptions, syllabi, admission information, financial aid information, tuition, and fee information for the institutions in the dropdown boxes. In the yellow box entitled "Student Access" students have links to the bookstore (9), the library (10) and tutoring (11). Links to this are also in each course.

Additionally, a link to "Go to Class" provides the secure login for the course. This site provides links to the information for the secure login username and password, student orientation, contact information for the 24/7 technical helpdesk, how to obtain a proctor for exams, and a link to the RODP Student Privacy and Personal Data security statement.

5. Evaluation and Assessment

Tennessee Technological University's Regents Online Degree Program (RODP) administers student services evaluations approximately four weeks into every semester and course/faculty evaluations at the end of each semester. The evaluations are collected anonymously on a secure server at another Tennessee Board of Regents institution. The Vice Presidents of Academic Affairs and other RODP administrators at the Tennessee Board of Regents RODP institutions are given access to the evaluations for review to help in making improvements to the programs. As part of the Tennessee Board of Regents' Regents Online Campus Collaborative (ROCC), Tennessee Tech's RODP also has access to the ROCC Online SACS Document Center which is designed for program reviews, accreditation reports, administrative assessments, and overall evaluation of ROCC. The Regents Online Campus Collaborative Online Document Center is an on-going activity. The document center provides a detailed collection of materials to denote the vision, mission, implementation, and evaluation of ROCC programs, faculty, central staff, students, committees, campuses, and the operations of the collaborative.

Tennessee Technological University's distance education courses are evaluated with the IDEA evaluation forms which are also used for the on-campus courses for faculty/course evaluations. Data is also collected on learning outcomes, student retention, graduation rates, student satisfaction, and exit surveys. This data are collected and used by the departments and faculty to enhance and make improvements in the distance education programs and courses in the same manner as is done for the campus on-ground programs.

Additional RODP Resources for Online Students and Faculty:

Example links on rodp.org showing degree programs information:

<http://www.rodpc.org/degree-programs-courses/bachelors/bps-organizational-leadership>

Link to Course Catalog:

<http://www.rodpc.org/degree-programs-courses/course-catalog>

Link to Course Listings:

<http://www.rodpc.org/degree-programs-courses/course-catalog>

Students can click on course title to get a copy of the generic course syllabus for information on the course before registering

Link to Term Calendar:

<http://www.rodpc.org/degree-programs-courses/term-calendar>

Link to course login:

<https://elearn.rodpc.org/>

Link to information on 24/7 Technical Helpdesk for students:

<http://www.rodpc.org/current-students/technical-support>

Link to Student Orientation:

<http://www.rodpc.org/current-students/orientation>

Link to Proctoring information for students:

<http://www.rodpc.org/current-students/test-proctoring>

Supporting Documentation:

1. <http://www.tntech.edu/institute/home/>
2. <http://www.rodpc.org/faculty-resources/training>
3. <http://www.tntech.edu/academics/onlineprograms/>
4. <http://www.tntech.edu/admissions/home>
5. <http://www.tntech.edu/career/home>
6. <http://www.tntech.edu/records/forms>
7. <http://tntech.edu/disability/home>
8. <http://www.rodpc.org>
9. <http://www.bkstr.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/StoreCatalogDisplay>
10. http://vl.rodpc.org/RODP_login.htm
11. <http://services.smarthinking.com/login/login.php?>