Distance Education Handbook

Lamar State College Orange

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I. Introduction

The mission of the Distance Education Program at Lamar State College Orange is to provide quality distance education opportunities for students in support of the vision and mission of the college. In support of this mission, the purpose of the Lamar State College Orange Distance Education Handbook is to collocate the definitions, standards, guidelines, and procedures needed for the design, development, delivery, and assessment of distance education courses and programs.

A. Accrediting Institutions

The Distance Education Program of LSCO adheres to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) rules and best practices for distance education as well as maintains compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and School (SACSCOC) definitions and standards. LSCO was approved to offer distance education courses from THECB before the year 2000, and SACSCOC on March 15, 2007.

Additionally, LSCO complies with the Higher Education Act of 1965 from the US Department of Education. Specifically:

> *If an institution is offering post-secondary education through distance or correspondence education to students in a State in which it is not physically located or in which it is otherwise subject to State jurisdiction as determined by the State, the institution must meet any State requirements for it to be legally offering post-secondary distance or correspondence education in that State. An institution must be able to document to the Secretary the State's approval upon request.*

> *(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1001 and 1002)*

Pursuant to the provisions of 2012 Edition of the U.S. Code, Title 20-Education, on request, LSCO will provide the stipulated documentation to the Secretary of the Department of Education regarding instruction offered to Distance Education students living outside of Texas. In addition, as of Spring 2022 LSCO is finalizing its application with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to participate in the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA). Sara is a voluntary nationwide reciprocity agreement for provision of distance education, and is open to Lamar State College Orange as a consequence of the College's accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

B. Definitions
The following are the definitions of distance education from our accrediting institutions.

1. THECB
Distance Education--The formal educational process that occurs when students and instructors are not in the same physical setting for the majority (more than 50 percent) of instruction.

Distance Education Course--A course in which a majority (more than 50 percent) of the instruction occurs when the student(s) and instructor(s) are not in the same place. Two categories of distance education courses are defined:

   (A) **Fully Distance Education Course**--A course which may have mandatory face-to-face sessions totaling no more than 15 percent of the instructional time. Examples of face-to-face sessions include orientation, laboratory, exam review, or an in-person test.

   (B) **Hybrid/Blended Course**--A course in which a majority (more than 50 percent but less than 85 percent), of the planned instruction occurs when the students and instructor(s) are not in the same place.

Distance Education Degree or Certificate Program--A program in which a student may complete a majority (more than 50 percent) of the credit hours required for the program through distance education courses.

2. SACSCOC

For the purposes of the SACSCOC's accreditation review, distance education is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place.

Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. A distance education course may use the internet; 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 if used as part of the distance learning course or program.

C. Complaints

In compliance with the language passed in the Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2008, the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) conducted a Negotiated Rule Making Process in 2010, institutions offering distance education must provide enrolled and prospective students with contact information for filing complaints with its accrediting agency and with the appropriate state agency for handling complaints in the student's state.

1. Complaint Resolution Process

Students desiring to file initial complaints about services, faculty and staff, or activities should bring the complaints to the attention of the appropriate department head for resolution. If an acceptable resolution is not reached with five working days, the student can then file a formal written complaint. In the event that a student wishes to file a formal written complaint, a Complaint Intake Form may be completed in the office of the Dean of Student Services or may be accessed remotely on the Lamar State College Orange Blackboard Learn Student Services tab, in the Student Resources module. After the formal complaint is received, the form will be referred to the appropriate department, and the complaint will be resolved within ten (10) workings days and the complainant notified in writing. Procedures for specific types of grievances can be found on Blackboard Learn in the Texas State University System Rules and Regulations manual, the LSCO Faculty Handbook, the LSCO Student Handbook and the LSCO Catalog.

If the issue is unable to be resolved internally, a student may file a complaint with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the regulatory agency governing post-secondary education in Texas.

a. THECB

To file a formal written complaint with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), a complainant must first exhaust all institutional options for resolving the complaint.

 If after that the matter is unresolved, the complainant must follow the procedure outlined on the THECB's Student Complaints website, accessible via the following link:

https://www.highered.texas.gov/links/student-complaints/

Submissions must include a signed "THECB Student Complaint and Authorization Form" with documentation of the completion of the institutional procedures and evidence to support to complainant's claim. Submission may be made online by uploading the required documents to StudentComplaints@highered.texas.gov or by ground mail to:

> Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
> Office of General Counsel
> P.O. Box 12788
> Austin, Texas 78711-2788

The complaint form can be accessed via the following link: https://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/agency-publication/blank-forms-templates/student-complaints-form/

To file a formal written complaint with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), a complainant must submit two signed copies of the SACSCOC Complaint Form, sent via ground mail, to:

> President
> Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
> 1866 Southern Lane
> Decatur, GA 30033-4097

The complaint form can be accessed via the following link: https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2020/01/ComplaintPolicy-1.pdf

c. Students Enrolled in Distance Education Courses

Complaints should be filed in the state where the student is receiving instruction, not in the state in which the student resides. For example, a student residing in Louisiana but taking courses in Texas should file his/her compliant with the state contact for Texas.

Complaints against a SARA participating institution must first go through the institution's own grievance procedures. All complaints regarding student grades or conduct violations are governed by the institution and the laws of the institution's home state.

If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the institutional grievance process, the student may appeal, within two years of the incident, to the SARA portal agency of the institution's home state.

For all complaints regarding Texas degree-granting postsecondary institutions participating in SARA, complete the Student Complaint and Release Form and email the form to Student.Complaints@highered.texas.gov

II. Governance

A. Distance Education Committee

The Distance Education Committee (DEC) is the body which provides the Distance Education Program with the oversight needed to empower faculty to provide quality distance education opportunities for students in support of the vision and mission of the college.

The members of the DEC are charged with:

- Maintaining the *Distance Education Handbook.*
- Reviewing and adhering to the [Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs Offered at a Distance](#).
- Approving new distance education courses, ensuring alignment with course standard quality requirements
- Reviewing prior distance education courses, confirming alignment with course standard quality requirements
- Recommending and designing proper evaluation tools for distance education
- Researching and discussing new learning technologies
- Reviewing and recommending policies for distance education student success
- Evaluating and responding to issues/needs regarding the Learning Management System
- Acting as a liaison for the distance education committee and corresponding educational departments
- Recommending and designing pedagogical training for distance education faculty
- Creating an ongoing list of best practices for faculty
- Addressing areas of concern for distance education

The DEC shall include:

- Director of Learning Technology (*Committee Chair*)
- Application Supports Analyst
- Learning Technology Development and Training Assistant
- One representative from the Information Services Department
- Three representatives from the Health, Workforce, and Technical Studies Department
- Three representatives from the Academic Studies Department
- One representative from the Learning Center
- One representative from the Library
- The Provost (*ex officio*)
- The Director of Institutional Research and Effectiveness (*ex officio*)
- The Chair of the Curriculum Committee (*ex officio*)
- The President of the Faculty Senate (*ex officio*)
- Dean of Health, Workforce, and Technical Studies (*ex officio*)
- Dean of Academic Studies (*ex officio)*
- SGA representative (*ex officio)*

Members of the Distance Education Committee serve a minimum of a two-year term. Appointments are made by the appropriate director or dean. Members of the DEC can serve more than one term on the committee with permission from their director or dean. All voting members of the DEC must have completed the Blackboard Certification.

The DEC will meet monthly during the fall and spring semesters unless there are no pressing issues for the committee to address. The DEC will not meet during the summer semesters unless necessary. The Director of Learning Technology will coordinate meetings to best meet the committee's needs. The DEC will appoint a secretary to take minutes of the

meetings. The committee minutes and materials will be provided to a closed group consisting of the current DEC on Blackboard.

B. Office of Learning Technology

The Office of Learning Technology is led by the Director of Learning Technology. The Office strives to meet the following goals:

GOAL I: PROMOTE SUCCESS THROUGH CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION THAT ADDRESS STUDENT LEARNING NEEDS THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING.

OUTCOMES

1. Maintain an academic course inventory delivered via distance learning that provides a solid foundation of general education, fully transferable to senior institutions.

2. Develop and maintain vocational/technical certificate and degree programs offered online, that are relevant to student interests and labor market demands.

3. Ensure quality instruction in distance learning through effective course design and assessment.

GOAL II: PROVIDE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS THAT COMPLEMENT DISTANCE LEARNING AND ADDRESS STUDENT NEEDS.

OUTCOMES

1. Support library with resources that enhance distance learning for students.

2. Offer advising/counseling activities that provide a foundation for student success in distance learning.

3. Provide a learning environment for student success and retention in distance learning that is equivalent to traditional learning.

GOAL III: PROVIDE DISTANCE LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES TO FACULTY, STAFF, AND ADMINISTRATORS.

OUTCOMES

1. Provide opportunities for professional development.

2. Provide appropriate technologies and facilities to meet the needs of instructional services.

III. Course Design

A. Required Course Components

Each course taught at LSCO is required to utilize the current LMS to house specific information regardless of the course format. Those components are:

- Syllabus
- Course Schedule
- Communication (instructor email/how the student should reach the instructor)
- Office/Virtual hours
- Attendance
- Grade book

B. LSCO Course Standards

LSCO hybrid and online courses are evaluated using the LSCO Online Course Evaluation Rubric, which is derived from Quality Matters standards for online courses. Instructors seeking to create or adapt a course for hybrid or online delivery should consult these standards during the design process in order to ensure the course meets approval.

The LSCO Online Course Evaluation rubric can be found online in Blackboard>Academic Resources>Distance Education, or can be requested from the Director of Learning Technology.

C. Professional Development/Tools

Training in the use of the LMS, Office 365, and various learning tools are provided by the Office of Learning Technology. Any faculty or staff member needing training in a specific tool should reach out to this office.

1. Quality Matters

As a member of Quality Matters, LSCO will sponsor training in online course design, delivery, and assessment for a set number of faculty and staff each year. Quality Matters courses are typically two to three weeks long, and require at least ten hours a week of commitment. Since the LSCO Online Course Evaluation Rubric is derived from Quality Matters Standards, these courses provide a solid foundation of knowledge for instructors to design successful online courses.

2. Blackboard (Current LMS)

Instructors teaching a hybrid or online course must complete Blackboard certification. Instructors can find additional help with Blackboard by attending a scheduled training session from the Office of Learning Technology or by visiting:

- https://help.blackboard.com/
- https://community.blackboard.com/home

3. Recording Studio

The LSCO Recording Studio is used for creating videos that will be used for faculty/ staff solely for campus projects or teaching videos. The studio offers: a teleprompter, sound proofing, backdrop, high quality microphone and camera, computer and video recording and editing software.

Reservations must be made to use the recording studio. Faculty/Staff can find the reservation form in Blackboard>Academic Resources>Distance Education>Recording Room Request Form

Faculty/ Staff are responsible for all transcription of the videos. (YouTube provides an automatically generated transcription.)

The video editor will do their best to complete editing and return it at the requested time.

Due to the location of the LSCO Recording Studio, videos will only be recorded by appointment Tuesday and Thursday after 2pm and all day Friday.

IV. Development and Approval

Instructors should work with their dean and the Director SACSCOC Reporting to determine if online course approval will constitute a change in modality for the overall program(s).

- Course Development Process
  - o   Online Course Development Form is completed and signed by the Dean and the Director of Learning Technology.
  - o   The online course proposal is approved by the DEC.
  - o   After approval is granted, the instructor develops the entire course (content, assignments, etc.).

- o The DEC assigns three peer reviewers and the Director of Learning Technology to review the course.
- o Upon report from the afore-mentioned subcommittee, the DEC votes to approve or disapprove the course.
- o Any necessary revisions are made to the course.
- o Course is implemented.

Timeline and Checklist: Summer /Fall	Fully Online, Hybrid, E-Pack Course
December 31	Submit proposal for new course to be taught during the coming summer/fall semester. The dean for the subject area will submit the proposal to the director of learning technology.
January	The request is given to the Distance Education Committee to approve the instructor to proceed with course development
January-February	Develop the course in a Blackboard course shell
March 1st	The course should be completed and ready for DEC approval process
March	DEC will review the course for specified and required criteria. The DEC will provide a decision to approve, disapprove, and/or suggest changes.
April 1st	Any changes necessary for the course to meet approval are made and submitted to the appropriate dean and director of learning technology.
April	Final approval/disapproval is made by DEC, and instructor and appropriate dean are notified by the director of learning technology.
June-August	Teach the summer/fall course.

Timeline and Checklist: Spring	Fully Online, Hybrid, E-Pack Course
August 30	Submit proposal for new course to be taught during the coming summer/fall semester. The dean for the subject area will submit the proposal to the director of learning technology.
September	The request is given to the Distance Education Committee to approve the instructor to proceed with course development
September-October	Develop the course in a Blackboard course shell
November 1	The course should be completed and ready for DEC approval process
November	DEC will review the course for specified and required criteria. The DEC will provide a decision to approve, disapprove, and/or suggest changes.
November 15	Any changes necessary for the course to meet approval are made and submitted to the appropriate dean and director of learning technology.
November 30	Final approval/disapproval is made by DEC, and instructor and appropriate dean are notified by the director of learning technology.
January	Teach the summer/fall course.

V. Delivery

A. Best Practices

Here are some best practices to consider during the delivery of a hybrid or online course. These practices should be followed in order to be considered for the Distance Education Award.

Pre-Semester

- Courses are made available to students two days prior to the official start of class.
- Faculty should have, at a minimum, the syllabus and course textbook information posted when the course becomes available to students.
- Faculty should make students aware of any requirements regarding proctored tests on the first day of class, especially the costs and technology required.

Communication/Interaction

- Faculty will communicate with students Monday through Friday with a 24-hour response time.
- Student emails that arrive after noon on Friday through Sunday will be answered Monday at the instructor's earliest convenience.
- Faculty should be engaged in distance education courses, creating appropriate synchronous and/or asynchronous learning opportunities.
- According to the LSCO Faculty Handbook, "Conference hours are to mirror the method of delivery (i.e., face-to face sections with on campus office hours, hybrid with on campus and virtual conference hours, and distance learning sections with virtual conference hours). During posted on campus conference hours, the faculty member will be available in his or her office or other designated, posted location. During posted virtual hours, the faculty member will be available via email, discussion board, or chat room."

Grading

- Faculty are charged with keeping an up-to-date gradebook. Faculty should update gradebooks each week and maintain clear guidelines for grading practices.
- Student work should be graded within two weeks during a long semester, and one week during an eight-week semester.
- Faculty should keep students informed concerning grading delays or other concerns.
- Faculty should check students' course progress weekly, and report students who are falling behind through the early alert system.
- All faculty will archive final gradebooks at the end of each semester. They will then submit the gradebook to the appropriate dean for the subject area**.**

Attendance

- Attendance for fully online classes is determined by the last participation in a course assignment or activity. Student attendance is not determined based on last login attempt.
- Keep attendance records for your course and utilize the GATOR Pass alert for students who are falling behind, not submitting work, not attending class, or failing assignments.
- **Non-Attendance and Financial Aid**: If you are receiving financial aid, federal regulations require you to have begun attending the courses for which you are enrolled on or before the census date (e.g., 12th day of each fall and spring long semester and 4th day of class each 8-week session). Attendance in an online course is verified by substantial participation in the course on or before the census date. LSCO defines substantial participation in online courses as logging in to the online course **AND** completing/participating in at least one requirement of the course. **NOTE: Logging in to your online**

course does not warrant "attending". For this course, you will be required to complete the start here quiz before the census (12ᵗʰ class day for fall/spring or 4ᵗʰ class day for 8-week session) date in order to be marked as "attending" for purposes of financial aid. Students documented as "not attending" a course upon the census date are assumed (for financial aid purposes) to have NOT begun attendance for that course, negatively affecting their financial aid disbursements**.**

B. Proctoring

LSCO offers online students the opportunity to take their exams at home by using BioSig-ID and BioSight-ID which ensures the academic integrity of the exam for the institution. This proctoring service allows students to complete their assessment at any location with a webcam, microphone, computer, and reliable internet access. There are no fees associated with this service.

BioSig-ID is an authentication tool that uses biometrics to make it more difficult for unauthorized users to access secure data or commit fraud as another individual. It is also used to minimize academic dishonesty in online courses. It is a requirement of SACSCOC that member institutions verify the identity of distance education students, and BioSig-ID helps us to fulfill that requirement.

BioSight-ID is an exam monitoring alternative to traditional live proctoring methods by providing a passive, proven way to monitor students during exams.

VI. Assessment

Pending Subcommittee framework. Will be filled with new process for course reviews.

VII. Recognition

A. The Distance Education Award

The Distance Education Award recognizes superior online teaching, creative methods of using technology and the learning management system, and instructors who demonstrate best practices in online learning pedagogy, assessment, learning engagement, and use of tools.

LSCO employees can nominate themselves or peers for the award. To nominate an LSCO employee, complete the link sent with the award criteria or send an email to the Director of Learning Technology with the instructor's name, a brief explanation as to why they are a candidate for the award, and a list of exemplary classes.

All nominations are due by March. Once nominations are complete, the Distance Education Committee will organize a subcommittee to begin the process of reviewing candidates using the Distance Education Award Rubric. The award winner's name will be sent to the President's Office by April 1. The award will be presented at the spring LSCO employee lunch.

To be eligible to receive the award the employee must,

- have LSCO Blackboard Faculty Training course completed
- meet the requirements of the Delivery section of the Distance Education Handbook
- teach a fully online course
- work 40% for the college

The Distance Education Award Rubric addresses four main areas of criteria outlined by the United States Distance Learning Association: pedagogy, assessment, learning engagement, and use of tools. Please see the LSCO Distance Education Award Rubric for more information about award criteria.

VIII. Appendices

A. LSCO Online Course evaluation rubric

B. Copyright Law and Recommendations

C. Americans with Disabilities Act

D. Distance Education Privacy Statement

E. Blackboard and ADA

F. SACSCOC Guidelines for Curriculum and Instruction

G. Best Practices for Distance Education—Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

Appendix A: LSCO Online Course Evaluation Rubric

Standard	Criteria	Points Possible
1: Course Overview and Introduction		
1.1	Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.	3
1.2	Communication expectations for online discussions, email, and other forms of interaction are clearly stated.	2
1.3	Course and institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated within the course, or a link to current policies is provided.	2
1.4	Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.	1
2: Learning Objectives / Competencies		
2.1	The course learning objectives, or course/program competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies.	3
2.2	The module/unit-level learning objectives or competencies describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives or competencies.	3
2.3	Learning objectives or competencies are stated clearly, are written from the learner's perspective, and are prominently located in the course.	3
2.4	The relationship between learning objectives and learning activities is clearly stated.	3
2.5	The learning objectives or competencies are suited to the level of the course.	3
3: Assessment and Measurement		
3.1	The assessments measure the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	3
3.2	The course grading policy is stated clearly at the beginning of the course.	3
3.3	Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learner's work, and their connection to the course grading policy is clearly explained.	3
3.4	The assessments used are sequenced, varied, and suited to the level of the course.	2
3.5	The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress with timely feedback.	2
4: Instructional Materials		
4.1	The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	3

4.2	The relationship between the use of instructional materials in the course and completing learning activities is clearly explained.	3
4.3	The course models the academic integrity expected of learners by providing both source references and permission for the use of instructional materials.	2
4.4	A variety of instructional materials are used in the course.	2
5: Learning Activities and Learner Interaction		
5.1	The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.	3
5.2	Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that supports active learning.	3
5.3	The instructor's plan for interacting with learners during the course is clearly stated.	3
5.4	The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.	2
6: Course Technology		
6.1	The tools used in the course support learning objectives or competencies.	3
6.2	Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.	3
6.3	A variety of technology is used in the course.	1
6.4	The course provides learners with information on protecting their data and privacy.	1
7: Learner Support		
7.1	The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it.	3
7.2	Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's academic support services and resources that can help learners succeed in the course.	3
7.3	Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's student services and resources that can help learners succeed.	1
8: Accessibility and Usability		
8.1	Course navigation facilitates ease of use and readability.	3
8.2	The course provides accessible text and images in files, documents, LMS pages, and web pages to meet the needs of diverse learners.	3
8.3	The course provides alternative means of access to multimedia content in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.	2
8.4	Course multimedia facilitates ease of use.	2

Appendix B: Copyright Law and Recommendations

It is important to LSCO that faculty understand copyright law and Blackboard. Blackboard does not exempt a faculty member from his or her responsibilities to adhere to copyright law because it is a password-protected program.

Faculty should observe the following guidelines:

1. Only post materials on the LMS for a non-profit, educational use.

2. Include proper attributions and citations for all posted materials.

3. Access to the LMS course materials should be limited to faculty and students enrolled in

    a particular course, and students should not have access to the course materials once

    the course is completed.

4. Web content should be directly linked rather than copied in Blackboard.

5. Carefully consider whether materials can be used under fair use. According to Rich Stim

    of Stanford University, "The four factors judges consider are:

    a. the purpose and character of your use
    b. the nature of the copyrighted work
    c. the amount and substantiality of the portion taken, and
    d. the effect of the use upon the potential market" ("Measuring Fair Use: The Four Factors").

6. Be careful! If in doubt, ask permission from the copyright holder.

7. Faculty are encouraged to use E-Reserves and work with the library to protect copyright

issues.

Appendix C: Americans with Disabilities Act

Blackboard is in compliance with Section 508 of the federal Rehabilitation Act guidelines. Blackboard provides a text equivalent for every non-text element which allows screen readers and users to interact with the software. Blackboard documents are organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet, and the frames of Blackboard are titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation. Blackboard also continues to research and evaluate the current software and will release patches or upgrades as needed to comply.

In addition, LSCO currently uses Ally, the Blackboard ADA compliance feature. Faculty will be provided with training opportunities to learn more regarding ADA compliance. Since technology constantly evolves, so will ADA needs. The DEC and Director of Learning Technology will continue to address ADA issues and work to review guidelines put in place. Deans and the Director of Learning Technology will continue to monitor all classes to ensure ADA compliance.

Appendix D: Distance Education Privacy Statement

1. Protecting the Privacy of Distance Education Students
    a. The privacy of all students, including Distance Education students, is protected through strict adherence to the rules of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.
    b. LSCO's statement regarding the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act can be found in [LSCO's Student Handbook](#), page 70.
    c. Distance Education students are issued a unique, nine-digit campus-wide student identification number (CWID) during the admission process at LSCO. The CWID number is the unique identifier for all individuals throughout their academic careers at LSCO.
    d. Distance Education students are issued a unique username and password. The username and password combination are required for login to the Learning Management System.
    e. Distance Education students must follow LSCO's IT policy requirements for password length, complexity, and frequency of change, and must accept responsibility for the security of their personal passwords. The penalty for failure to protect username and password security can include
        i. Loss of access to LSCO information resources,
        ii. Disciplinary action up to and including termination for employees and suspension or expulsion for students, and
        iii. Civil or criminal prosecution.
        iv. Refer to [LSCO's Administrative Policies and Procedures](#) manual, pages 289 – 292, for more information.
    f. The privacy of Distance Education students is protected by:
        i. Controlled access to the Learning Management System for students and faculty; and
        ii. LSCO-issued username and password login requirement for course access;
    g. The Learning Management System provides protection for student and faculty information through security processes that are built in and maintained by the provider;
        i. LSCO's Learning Management System, Blackboard, [privacy policies](#) can be found on the [Blackboard Help](#) website.
    h. Instructors in a distance education course and/or program may require proctoring of assignments; however, they must provide alternative proctoring solutions for students who wish to preserve their privacy while completing online assessments and do not wish to allow an online proctoring service to access their webcams and/or microphones in order to verify identity and/or ensure academic honesty. Alternatives may include, among other solutions, permitting use of the LSCO Testing Center or use of a remote proctor, subject to instructor approval of the proctor and site. See "Proctor Guidelines and Form" in the Distance Education module under the "[Academic Resources](#)" channel in Blackboard for additional information.
    i. Distance learning faculty will inform students of ways their information or work may be used by the college.
        i. Any student work used in conducting institutional research will be redacted to remove all personal identifying information (PII) and/or archived in a secure physical or electronic location with closely restricted access.
        ii. Students whose work may be used in research projects or initiatives will be asked to sign a release form and student privacy will be of the utmost importance.
2. Release of Student Information
    a. Federal privacy laws protect all LSCO Distance Education students. Student information will not be divulged to third parties, including parents and legal guardians of students;
    b. All requests by third parties for student information shall be directed to the Registrar's Office.

c. Access to student information by faculty and staff is restricted by policy and practice to only those officers who can demonstrate a legitimate need to know in order to perform work-related duties such as advising, scheduling, or counseling. Additional information can be found in LSCO's Administrative Information System/Banner manual, pages 6 – 8.

d. Release of information via the Open Records Act public information protocols can be found on our website, www.lsco.edu.

Appendix E: SACSCOC Guidelines for Curriculum and Instruction

Follow this link to the SACSCOC Guidelines: https://sacscoc.org/pdf/DistanceCorrespondenceEducation.pdf

Follow this link to the THECB Best Practices: http://reportcenter.highered.texas.gov/sites/docid/cache/file/801171AA-D6F1-B416-71F569F8980FEA1D.pdf