![Heritage University logo]

Nursing Department
Policy #5
Distance-Learning

Status:	Originated 2025-09-15
Effective:	2025-09-19
Initiated by:	Curriculum Committee & Bylaws, Policies, and Handbooks Committee
WAC	WAC 246-840-546

PURPOSE

To establish written policies and procedures that ensure quality assurance controls, security, maintenance, and service support for distance-learning systems used by nursing students and faculty in compliance with WAC 246-840-546. Distance learning encompasses the following variations:

1. **Instructor Remote / Students On Campus:** Students meet in a classroom; the instructor teaches live by video.
2. **Students Remote / Instructor On Campus:** Instructor is in a classroom; students join by video.
3. **Fully Online (All Remote):** Instructor and students meet online (synchronously).
4. **Hybrid/Blended:** A planned mix of on-campus and online over the term.

Heritage University is committed to providing high-quality distance-learning experiences that are equivalent in rigor, scope, and student outcomes to traditional, in-person instruction. All distance-learning lectures must meet or exceed the academic and regulatory standards established by the Washington State Board of Nursing (WABON) and WAC 246-840-546.

AUDIENCE

This policy applies to all Heritage University Nursing Department (HUND) students, instructors, and staff. Faculty wanting to utilize any of the above formats for distance learning will need to inform the Director of the Nursing program for approval before implementation.

PLAN

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1.1 Compliance with Quality and Security Standards

    (WAC 246-840-546 (1))

- Instructional platforms must ensure data security, academic integrity, and ADA compliance.

Quality Assurance Controls:
- Heritage University Nursing program will adopt an internal Course Quality Checklist, informed by best practices such as clear learning outcomes, alignment of activities, assessment, regular and substantive interaction, and accessible design.
- All distance learning courses must meet all of the criteria on the checklist before each term to be completed by the Director of the Nursing program or their designee to ensure that the quality can be assured and maintained throughout the term. Please see Appendix A for the checklist.

Security and Privacy
- Security and privacy will be maintained during distance learning. The video conferencing platforms used will be primarily Zoom and/or Teams, which utilize Single Sign-on with multi-factor authentication. Faculty will ensure only authorized students are attending class to maintain the privacy of the students in class.
- Academic integrity will be maintained when using distance learning, the current Learning Management System, and additional software used, which are capable of lockdown tools and randomizers for test bank exams or quizzes.
- Any privacy or security issues are to be reported to IT as soon as possible.

Maintenance and Continuity

Any planned downtime will be posted by IT regarding the Learning Management System planned downtimes. The Course Head will be in charge of communicating and working around planned downtime.
If a system fails, faculty will use an alternative system if possible and communicate with the students regarding the plan of action and the ETA of restoration of the system if known.

Support and Training
Help desk information and hours are posted in every course and are accessible on the Learning Management System.
- Student training and orientation to the learning management system, video conferencing platform, and testing tool occur before the first graded work
  - Accommodation will be provided in compliance with the ADA. For information about student ability services on campus, please visit the Office of Ability Services webpage or email Officeofdisabilityservices@heritage.edu
- Faculty training: Will receive required training regarding distance learning provided by the institution in alignment with Department of Education guidelines. Refresher training will be offered as needed by the institution

Mode Specific Details:
Instructor Remote / Students On Campus
- A classroom proctor or designee verifies attendance, manages microphones/cameras, and supports testing logistics.
- A backup host (another faculty/staff) with rights to the session must be available if needed.

Students Remote / Instructor On Campus
- State expectations for participation (chat, polls, cameras) in the syllabus; provide privacy-respecting options when needed.
- Recordings that are required for study include captions and are posted promptly.

Fully Online (All Remote)
- Publish a weekly rhythm (what to do by when) and response/feedback timelines.
- Hold virtual office hours and at least weekly announcements.

Hybrid/Blended
- Publish a mode calendar by week (which sessions are on campus vs. online).
- List any differences in assessment or attendance between modes.

1.2. Written Policies and Support Systems

(WAC 246-840-546 (2))

- The HUND shall maintain formal, documented procedures for:
  - Quality assurance of course design and delivery
  - System maintenance and updates
  - Secure access and identity verification
  - Technical support for students and faculty
  - Training in online instructional methodologies

1.3. Curriculum Equivalency to In-Person Teaching

(WAC 246-840-546 (3))

- Distance-learning courses must deliver the same learning objectives, content depth, contact hours, and evaluation methods as in-person counterparts under the approved curriculum.
- Online lectures may only be utilized for didactic instruction or as supportive dialogue to complement in-person components and shall not replace required hands-on activities such as wet labs, skills labs, live simulations, or other clinical training experiences.

1.4. Ongoing Evaluation of Distance Learning Courses

(WAC 246-840-546 (4))

- The program will implement continuous evaluation processes, including:
  - Student satisfaction surveys occur twice; at midterm and at course completion
  - Course and instructor evaluations at the end of the semester
  - Outcome and performance data review of the above investigated by the HUND Program Evaluation Committee for these courses. This will occur after the end of the term, but before the start of the next course term.
    - Evaluation data will inform course revisions and professional development to be presented to the Curriculum Committee.

1.5. Commission Access to Distance-Learning Courses

(WAC 246-840-546 (5))

- All distance-learning course content, records, and supporting documentation shall be made available to the WABON upon request, including:
    - o Access to course syllabi
    - o Lecture recordings
    - o Online materials
    - o Student outcomes
    - o Evaluations

WAC

Washington State Legislature. (2016). WAC 246-840-546. *Distance-learning nursing education course or courses offered by approved nursing programs.*
https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=246-840-546

REFERENCES
No references are associated with this policy.

FORMS
Check List
Notice Form (see Jotform)
POLICY REVIEWERS
Proposed revisions of this policy should be reviewed by:
1) Curriculum Committee
2) Bylaws, Policies, and Handbooks Committee
3) Nursing Faculty Assembly

Nursing Director Signature:

Appendix A
Check List

Faculty:
1. Faculty to complete online education training provided by CILT (Center for Intercultural Learning & Teaching)
2. Fill out the notice form that will go to the Director/Chair (ideally 6 weeks but no later than 3 weeks before class starts), JotForm
   a. State format request for the synchronous distance learning format in alignment with Policy #5
3. Same Learning Outcomes and objectives posted clearly on the Learning Management System
4. Substantive interaction plan is articulated in the syllabus
5. If using a hybrid format, you must clearly articulate the dates in person and virtual
   a. Must be posted on the Learning Management system and visible and easily accessible to the students
6. Course Head will be available to the Curriculum Committee if needed for course evaluation

Director/Chair of the Nursing Department:
Review the faculty request for Distance learning by:

1. Ensure the faculty has taken the distance learning training provided by the university (must be done before submission to the Director/Chair)
2. Review student learning outcomes, substantive interaction, and syllabus before class start time
   a. Will instruct the course head to make changes if needed
3. Will review the synchronous distance plan if its hybrid format, described in Policy #5
   a. The director will then ensure the planned dates in person and online will be posted on the learning management site, and will be accessible and visible to students
4. Will review at the midterm and end of the term and assess whether the required substantive interactions have been consistently maintained throughout the class
5. The Director/Chair will participate in course evaluation and effectiveness, and with the Curriculum Committee and the Program Evaluation Committee for necessary quality assurance evaluation