Distance Education Format Proposal
For A Proposed or Registered Program

Form 4

Version 2014-11-17

When a new or existing program is designed for a distance education format, a campus Chief Executive Officer or Chief Academic Officer should submit a signed cover letter and this completed form to the SUNY Provost at *program.review@suny.edu*. According to MSCHE, the 50% standard includes only courses offered in their entirety via distance education, not courses utilizing mixed delivery methods. Also, MSCHE requires that the first two programs for which 50% or more is offered through distance education be submitted for Commission review and prior approval of a substantive change.

- All campuses must complete the following sections: Sections 1 - 3, and Part B: Program Specific Issues.
- Part A must be completed if the proposing campus has not previously submitted this form with a completed Part A: Institution-wide Issues, or has made significant changes to its institution-wide distance education operations since last completing Part A. This applies even if the institution has programs registered to be delivered at a distance.

Section 1. General Information		
a) Institutional Information	Institution's 6-digit SED Code:	210500
	Institution's Name:	University at Albany
	Address:	*1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12222*
b) Registered or Proposed Program	Program Title:	Chemistry
	SED Program Code	03023, 89211, 82215, 28821
	Award(s) (e.g., A.A., B.S.):	B.S.
	Number of Required Credits:	Minimum [120] If tracks or options, largest minimum [120]
	HEGIS Code:	1905
	CIP 2010 Code:	40.0501
c) Distance Education Contact	Name and title: Billie Franchini – Director for the Institute for teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership Telephone: (518) 442-4850 E-mail: bfranchini@albany.edu	
d) Chief Executive or Chief Academic Officer Approval	**Signature affirms that the proposal has met all applicable campus administrative and shared governance procedures for consultation, and the institution's commitment to support the proposed program. *E-signatures are acceptable.*** Name and title: Carol Kim, Ph.D., Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs & Provost Signature and date: 9/28/21	
	If the program will be registered jointly[1] with one or more other institutions, provide the following information for <u>each</u> institution:	
	Partner institution's name and 6-digit SED Code: Name, title, and signature of partner institution's CEO (or **append** a signed letter indicating approval of this proposal):	

[1] If the partner institution is non-degree-granting, see SED's CEO Memo 94-04.

Section 2: Enrollment

Year	Anticipated Headcount Enrollment			Estimated FTE
	Full-time	Part-time	Total	
1	10	10	20	15
2	10	10	20	15
3	10	10	20	15
4	10	10	20	15
5	10	10	20	15

Section 3: Program Information

a) ***Term length*** (in weeks) for the distance program: 15

b) Is this the same as term length for classroom program? [ ] No [X] Yes

c) How much "***instructional time***" is required per week per credit for a distance course in this program? (Do not include time spent on activities that would be done outside "class time," such as research, writing assignments, or chat rooms.) ***NOTE:*** *See SUNY policy on credit/contact hours and SED guidance.*
50 minutes instructional time per week per credit-hour : same as in-person determination.

d) What proportion or percentage of the program will be offered in Distance Education format? Will students be able to complete 100 percent of the program online? If not, what proportion will be able to be completed online?

Chemistry is inherently a laboratory science oriented major which, to maintain American Chemical Society certification, must include 400 contact hours in hands-on lab instruction in all our ACS certified tracks. Therefore, only non-lab instruction can be offered via distance learning, including general education courses and lecture-only courses. Students will NOT be able to complete 100% of the program online, as all tracks require between 15-17 credits of lab courses which would have to be taken in-person. Therefore, distance learning would only be offered as a means of increasing access to non-traditional students already residing locally (for example, with job or child-care obligations), and NOT as a means of enrolling 100% remote students. Students will, at a maximum, be able to complete 75% of the program remotely (i.e., all non-lab required chemistry courses), although in all likelihood this percentage will be smaller as not all courses may be offered in remote format based both on student demand and availability of instructors able to develop online versions of specific courses.

e) What is the maximum number of students who would be enrolled in an online course section?

Since most online courses will be offered as a separate concurrent section of an in-person course, it will be up to individual instructors to decide the maximum number of online students. For example, a large-enrollment, non-interactive intro course may not have any practical limit on number of students able to enroll online for asynchronous instruction, while an upper-level seminar course may not be able to accommodate more than 3-5 remote students due to the synchronous, interactive nature of the instruction.

Part A: Institution-wide Issues: Submit Part A only for the **first** Distance Education program proposed by your institution using this form. SUNY and the State Education Department will keep this in a master file so that your institution will not need to resubmit it for each new proposed online program, **unless there are significant changes, such as a new platform**.

Part A.1. Organizational Commitment

a) Describe your institution's planning process for Distance Education, including how the need for distance access was identified, the nature and size of the intended audiences, and the provisions for serving those audiences, including how each student's identity will be verified.

b) Describe your institution's resources for distance learning programs and its student and technical support services to ensure their effectiveness. What course management system does your institution use?

c) Describe how the institution trains faculty and supports them in developing and teaching online courses, including the pedagogical and communication strategies to function effectively. Describe the qualifications of those who train and/or assist faculty, or are otherwise responsible for online education.

d) If your institution uses courses or academic support services from ***another provider***, describe the process used (with faculty participation) to evaluate their quality, academic rigor, and suitability for the award of college credit and a degree or certificate.

e) Does your institution have a clear ***policy on ownership of course materials*** developed for its distance education courses? How is this policy shared with faculty and staff? ***NOTE:*** *You may refer to SUNY's statement on copyright and faculty ownership of instructional content, and/or faculty contract provisions.*

Part A.2. Learner Support

a) Describe how your institution provides distance students with ***clear information*** on:

- Program completion requirements
- The nature of the learning experience
- Any specific student background, knowledge, or technical skills needed
- Expectations of student participation and learning
- The nature of interactions among faculty and students in the courses.
- Any technical equipment or software required or recommended.

b) Describe how your institution provides distance learners with adequate ***academic and administrative support***, including academic advisement, technical support, library and information services, and other student support services normally available on campus. Do program materials clearly define how students can access these support services?

c) Describe how ***administrative processes*** such as admissions and registration are made available to distance students, and how program materials inform students how to access these services.

d) What ***orientation*** opportunities and resources are available for students of distance learning?

Part B: Program-Specific Issues: Submit Part B for each new request to add Distance Education Format to a proposed or registered program.

Part B.1. Learning Design

a) How does your institution ensure that the ***same academic standards and requirements*** are applied to the program on campus and through distance learning? If the curriculum in the Distance Education program differs from that of the on-ground program, please identify the differences.

Any distance learning courses offered will fulfill the same curriculum as their in-person equivalents, as all degree tracks will still require 15-17 credit-hours of lab courses which must be completed in-person.

b) Are the courses that make up the distance learning program offered in a sequence or configuration that allows ***timely completion of requirements***?

Yes – although please note 100% distance learning completion is not possible due to the in-person lab course requirements, so significant in-person coursework will still be required.

c) How do faculty and others ensure that ***the technological tools*** used in the program are appropriate for the content and intended learning outcomes?

Only non-lab (i.e. purely lecture) courses can be offered via distance learning, therefore no special technology is needed beyond already existing Blackboard/Zoom infrastructure

d) How does the program provide for appropriate and flexible interaction between faculty and students, and among students?

Instructors of distance-learning courses will offer office hours via zoom, in-class discussions will utilize Zoom break-out rooms, and Blackboard message boards can be used for asynchronous communications.

e) How do faculty teaching online courses verify that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit?

Zoom attendance and Blackboard usage both require UAlbany single-sign-on credentials (with two-factor authentication) to verify student identity. Students will still have significant coursework that must be completed in-person (e.g. all lab courses), and assessments such as exams will occur under controlled conditions (see B2a below) to verify the identity of the student taking the course.

Part B.2. Outcomes and Assessment

a) Distance learning programs are expected to produce the ***same learning outcomes*** as comparable classroom-based programs. How are these learning outcomes identified – in terms of knowledge, skills, or credentials – in course and program materials?

All our chemistry BS degree tracks, including distance learning programs, are compliant with American Chemical Society requirements for learning outcomes, which establishes the required conceptual knowledge and practical skills that all students must demonstrate to receive an ACS certified chemistry degree. Specifically, ACS certification already mandates that" Classes taught partially or wholly online should provide at least the same skill development and content as the corresponding wholly face-to-face experience."

These learning outcomes are specified at https://www.acs.org/content/acs/en/education/policies/acs-approval-program/guidelines-supplements.html

This accreditation therefore already specifies the required learning outcomes for every core course required for all our BS chemistry tracks, including any taught via distance education. Students completing this curriculum are awarded a specific credential in form of an ACS certified chemistry degree.

b) Describe how the ***means chosen for assessing student learning*** in this program are appropriate to the content, learning design, technologies, and characteristics of the learners.

All our BS Chemistry tracks are certified by the American Chemical Society, which set the curriculum, technology, and skills our students must be exposed to. This is regularly assessed by the ACS committee for professional training via external review of syllabi, sample exams, lab manuals, and site visits. Distance learning

courses will only be offered if identical assessments as the classroom-based course can be implemented. For example, courses requiring term papers or student presentations as graded assignments are equivalent whether submitted online or in-person. Similarly, homework problem sets can be submitted electronically or via hard-copy to the instructor for grading. Exams, however, would require the distance learning student to arrange to take all exams under appropriately controlled conditions – for example, proctored in-person during instructor office-hours, joining the same exam period as for in-person students, or utilizing a professionally proctored testing center (such as the UAlbany Disability Resource Center) even if the student otherwise participates in the course entirely online. Per American Chemistry Society requirements, lab courses will only be offered in-person, ensuring all chemistry degree students receive the equivalent hands-on training regardless of the modality in which they attend lecture-only courses.

Part B.3. Program Evaluation

a) What process is in place to monitor and ***evaluate the effectiveness*** of this particular distance education program on a regular basis?

The Chemistry Department Undergraduate Committee will regularly assess student outcomes (i.e. course-specific grade distributions, in-major GPA, progress towards degree, graduation rates) of distance learning vs in-person students to ensure that offered distance learning programs are effective. Note that since our distance learning program is intended to provide flexibility to non-traditional students or students with jobs or childcare responsibilities, some traditional metrics (such as 4-year graduation or next semester retention) will be de-emphasized in favor of more holistic measures of student success (i.e. degree conferral rates, postgraduation job placement).

b) How will the evaluation results will be used for ***continuous program improvement***?

Significant deviations in SIRF scores and learning outcomes (i.e. final grade distributions) for distance-learning courses compared to their classroom-equivalents will trigger departmental review of the suitability of the distance-learning course offering. Our goal is not to replace any classroom-based offerings with distance learning, but rather to improve learning outcomes for non-traditional student populations via enhanced accessibility options (for example, if they cannot attend in-person lectures due to job or child-care obligations).

c) How will the evaluation process assure that the ***program results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth*** of the college degree or certificate awarded? Rigor and breadth of all BS Chemistry programs are already set by American Chemical Society standards. By only offering distance-learning courses where learning assessments can be ensured to be directly equivalent to their classroom-based equivalents (see section B.2.a), the same learning outcomes for distance learning vs. in-person students is ensured.

Part B.4. Students Residing Outside New York State

SUNY programs must comply with all "authorization to operate" regulations that are in place in other U.S. states where the institution has enrolled students or is otherwise active, based on each state's definitions.

a) What processes are in place to monitor the U.S. state of residency of students enrolled in any distance education course in this program while residing in their home state?

Distance learning students will be flagged in our integrated administrative system. This will allow regular querying so that we can identify any out of state students who participate from their home state. The University is a member of the National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA). This is a voluntary agreement among member states and U.S. territories that establishes comparable national standards for

interstate offering of postsecondary distance-education courses and programs. As a member institution, the University is approved to offer distance education courses to students outside of New York.

b) Federal regulations require institutions delivering courses by distance education to provide students or prospective students with contact information for filing complaints with the state approval or licensing entity in the student's state of residency and any other relevant state official or agency that would appropriately handle a student's complaint. What is the URL on your institution's website where contact information for filing complaints for students in this program is posted?

https://www.albany.edu/graduatebulletin/requirements_student_complaints.htm