# OKLAHOMA ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY distance learning policy

(Updated 3/18/2020)

**Overview of Distance Learning in Oklahoma**

Distance learning is typically viewed as a way to help students overcome barriers to attending a traditional adult education classroom. These barriers include conflicting work schedules, family responsibilities, and transportation problems. Distance learning has the potential to attract new students deterred by these barriers. In addition, it has the potential to help existing students stay connected to their studies. These issues are not unique to rural Oklahoma; therefore, we must provide distance learning opportunities to all adults in Oklahoma in need of adult education services.

Today’s young adults are “digital natives.” As more “digital natives” and tech-savvy adults seek adult education services, Oklahoma adult education programs must view distance learning as a necessity. Distance education has the potential to offer instruction that better meets the learning styles and learning pace of some students and may provide a richer, more expedient educational experience than instruction delivered within the traditional classroom.

Distance learning will be a voluntary delivery option for adult education programs. Programs must be willing to incur any increased costs associated with distance learning and maintain traditional classroom instruction. Distance learning teachers and the program director are encouraged to participate in Project IDEAL’s Distance Learning 101 course prior to implementing distance learning.

Adult education programs must manage distance learning in accordance with the state’s Distance Learning Policy and Assessment Policy. Programs that wish to offer distance learning must contact the Adult Basic Education division at the Oklahoma Department of CareerTech. Support and technical assistance will be available by contacting one of the ABE specialists at 405-880-5235 or 405-564-3756.

**General Distance Learning Requirements**

***Definition of Distance Education***

Distance education is a formal learning activity where students and instructors are separated by geography, time, or both, for the majority of the instructional period. Distance learning materials are delivered through a variety of media including, but not limited to print, videotapes, DVDs, audio recordings, broadcasts, computer software, and Web-based programs and other online technology. Teachers support distance learners through communication via mail, telephone, e-mail, online technologies and software, or face-to-face instruction.

***Definition of Distance Learners***

Distance learners are students who receive distance education services as defined above. It is not uncommon for adult learners to receive both distance education and traditional classroom education during the course of the program year. A student’s hours in both distance learning and traditional classroom programs will be reported in Oklahoma’s management information system, Literacy and Adult Community Education System (LACES). A student will be reported as a distance learner for federal reporting purposes if he/she received 51% or more of his/her instruction at a distance (proxy hours). This determination will be made at the end of the program year.

***Measuring Contact Hours for Learners in Distance Education***

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, requires students in distance education to have at least 12 hours of direct contact with the adult education program before they can be counted as a fundable student in the National Reporting System (NRS). Direct contact hours involve interaction between the learner and program staff in real time where the identity of the learner can be verified. Direct contact hours may include face-to-face orientation, pre-assessment, post-assessment, goal setting, and instruction. In addition, direct contact hours may include contact through telephone, video, teleconference, or online communication. Live online discussions, telephone conference calls, and live video broadcast to remote locations are examples of direct contact hours that are countable under this definition.

***Proxy Contact Hours***

In addition to direct contact hours, adult education programs must report proxy contact hours to track the time students spend on distance learning activities. Proxy contact hours must be associated with one of the three approved distance learning models of instruction.

1. The ***Clock Time Model*** assigns contact hours based on time that a learner is engaged in a software program that tracks time.
2. The ***Teacher Judgment Model*** assigns a fixed number of hours based on teacher determination of the extent to which a learner engaged in, or completed, the assignment.
3. The ***Learner Mastery Model*** assigns a fixed number of hours based on the learner passing a test on the content of the lesson.

The model used in Oklahoma will vary depending on the curricula used. Currently, all state-approved DL curricula are web-based and use the ***Clock Time Model*** to assign proxy hours. The online programs track the time the student works in the program from logging in to logging out. Distance learning teachers will also maintain a record of student clock hours.

Proxy and direct contact hours will be recorded separately in LACES. This will determine whether the student will be reported as a distance student (51% or more hours of instruction via distance) or as a traditional classroom learner. Students who have received some distance instruction (50% or less of their total instructional hours) may not be reported as a distance learning student, but may be counted as a traditional student as long as the student has twelve contact hours.

***Assessing Distance Learners***

Oklahoma’s Adult Education and Literacy Assessment Policy will apply to all adult education students – distance and non-distance. Assessments will be conducted in a secure, in-person, proctored setting.

***NRS Reporting of Students in Distance Learning***

Distance learner data will be reported on NRS Table 4C and Table 5A. Proxy contact hours and actual contact hours for distance learning students will be reported on NRS Table 4C. Core follow-up outcome measures for distance learning students will be reported on NRS Table 5A. Data entry personnel for distance learning programs must enter data for distance learning students on a monthly basis.

**Funding for Distance Learning**

Additional funding will not be available to programs approved to offer a distance learning program. Programs must be willing to incur any increased costs associated with distance learning. Hopefully any increase in costs will be offset by an increase in students served.

**Contact Information**

If you have any questions about Oklahoma’s Adult Education and Literacy Distance Learning Policy or any of the requirements for reporting data about distance learners, contact one of the ABE specialists at 405-880-5235 or 405-564-3756.