



Presidencia

UNIVERSIDAD CENTRAL DE BAYAMÓN

PO Box 1725, Bayamón, P.R. 00960•1725 • Tel. (787) 786•3030 • Exts. 2001•2002 • Fax. (787) 740•2200

Executive Order ACA. 11-09 (*Amended*)

December 20, 2011

DEANS
DIRECTORS OF ACADEMIC COLLEGES
DIRECTORS OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

POLICY FOR COURSE OR PROGRAM IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Bayamón Central University in harmony with its mission and vision facilitates the exchange of knowledge electronically stimulating the growth of human values and ethical behavior in each subject area. As an institution of Higher Education, BCU serves the needs of its students by providing educational mechanisms that evolve according to the times. Emerging technologies and processes derived from these guide the University to develop and adopt new teaching methods, with distance education being essential at this time. To this end, the University establishes the institutional policy for distance education, thereby organizing and managing processes and activities, as well as humanizing through technological means.

Distance education or distance learning is a field of education that focuses on teaching methods and technology with the aim of delivering teaching, often on an individual basis, to students who are not physically present in a traditional educational setting such as a classroom. It has been described as "a process to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both.

BCU MISSION AND VISION

Vision

Bayamón Central University projects itself as a unique center of Christian humanist formation and social transformation through its cutting edge student-centered academic programs and quality of university life. Professional training responds to the most essential needs of social, cultural, economic, and ecclesiastic institutions, in accordance with state of the knowledge, technological advancements, and the values of the Gospel.

Mission

Bayamon Central University is an independent nonprofit Catholic institution. It offers undergraduate and graduate courses and degrees in the fields of arts, science, and technology. It is a Puerto Rican university community that identifies with its cultural values and social redemption, yet opens to universal fraternal solidarity.

In fulfillment of institutional goals -research, teaching and service, among others- the university nurtures the holistic development of the individual in the spiritual, community and professional dimensions, as well as in the academic and cultural realms. This development is achieved within a Christian-humanistic perspective, integrating human knowledge, social commitment and the message of the Gospel. The harmonious communion among faith, life, culture, and service is nourished by an interdisciplinary dialogue, in accordance with the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas and the traditions of the Dominican Order

Scope

The Institutional policy and procedures for COURSES OR PROGRAMS IN DISTANCE EDUCATION OF BAYAMON CENTRAL UNIVERSITY applies to the entire university community including participants in proposals, collaborative projects, special students, visitors, staff, faculty and students participating in courses or distance learning programs.

PURPOSE

Bayamon Central University provides higher education and / or technical careers and continuing education to all individuals who fulfill the requirements. In compliance with our institutional goal BCU provides a flexible curriculum with multiple teaching methods, among them: online courses and hybrid courses. BCU establishes the policy for Distance Education in accordance with the following principles:

1. Distance Education should reflect the Vision and Mission of BCU.
2. Distance Education should provide equal opportunities to access information by overcoming barriers of time and space.
3. BCU understands and defines distance education as a mode of teaching-learning where the instructional process or part of it is taught while teacher and student are in different places and time.
4. To achieve an effective learning process, faculty integrates the Institution's platform of choice as the fundamental process of the course. Technology is the liaison between teacher and learner.
5. The process of Distance Education or Distance Learning can be offered through the integration and development of courses in the platform selected by the institution to manage content and / or the various emerging technologies such as Internet, television, video conferencing, webcast or other reliable means.
6. Academic programs and / or courses offered as distance education must comply with the standards, laws, institutional requirements and accreditation agencies as courses offered in the traditional manner.
7. Distance education courses must meet the needs of students with disabilities.
8. The Institution guarantees every student enrolled in programs or courses in Distance Education the same opportunities and privileges of online resources such as online registration, student email, access to digital reserves, intranet access, access to databases COBIMET, Mandarin catalog access, among others, and while these resources are available and in use by the institution.

MEDIA USED FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

Distance education uses diverse technologies to create an effective teaching/learning environment that meets the requirements established for the course. Distance education is supported via the Internet and

through the implementation and development of online courses and programs created on platforms developed for the management and administration of online content. The learning process can be complemented by the integration of other technologies or resources such as video transmission, audio transmission, video conference, webcast, video courses, television, online courses, web blogs, wikis, discussion forums, web quest, virtual classrooms, email, and more.

Distance education should promote learning strategies that foster communication and interaction between teacher-learner and learner-learner. To achieve this, online courses or programs must be fully developed and available on the server prior to the start of the course or program. Every course should provide the student synchronous and asynchronous communication strategies such as: discussion forums, chats, emails, journals, wikis, announcements, access to pages in text format, access to content pages in website format, reference links, online assignments, and online tests, among others. These communication strategies ensure that the student who participates in is the same student who completes the course and receives the academic credits.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Bayamon Central University committed to academic excellence through Distance Education is responsible for the following:

BCU RESPONSIBILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Administrative

1. Provide online academic offerings that reflect the institutional vision and mission.
2. Develop and maintain an administrative structure for the process of Distance Education.
3. Offer technical support to faculty and students.
4. Establish the academic calendar for online courses.
5. Comply with requirements of accrediting agencies.
6. Name a distance education coordinator.
7. Develop an evaluation system for distance education faculty.
8. Develop and maintain the same quality standards for online courses and classroom courses.
9. Comply with the duties, responsibilities and qualifications required of faculty that offer online courses according to the statutes and institutional accrediting agencies.
10. Implement policies and procedures to ensure intellectual property rights, copyright, ethics in the use of technology and the right to privacy of the student.
11. Offer professional development for faculty to include the use, management and administration of distance education platforms.

Technological

BCU is responsible for the following:

1. Maintain and publish on the web page academic offerings and courses
2. Ensure student access to courses no matter their physical location.
3. Establish appropriate security measures

4. Establish a backup in case of technical failure.
5. Establish a data backup for each server
6. Provide access accounts for faculty and student.
7. Establish a Help Desk for faculty and student in online courses
8. Provide maintenance of support systems.

STUDENT

Students enrolled in distance education are responsible for the following:

1. Have access to a computer
2. Have internet access, preferably high speed
3. Have an updated version of internet navigator (Internet Explorer, Mozilla, Safari, Opera or other)
4. Meet all admission requirements as established by the Office of Admissions at BCU.
5. Meet all financial aid requirements (if applicable) as established by the Financial Aid Office of BCU.
6. Possess the necessary skills to participate in online courses or programs. It is understood that every participant must master at least the following:
 - a. Navigating the Internet
 - b. Uploading and downloading
 - c. Mastery of Word, Excel, Power Point or other equivalent programs
 - d. Managing email account
 - e. Managing a webcam
 - f. Managing microphone

Students enrolled in an online course are responsible for the following:

1. Verifying access to course content
2. Notifying any difficulties regarding access
3. Setting personal work pace to meet course requirements
4. Participating in the activities presented by the professor both synchronously and asynchronously
5. Verifying deadlines and topic schedules for courses

FACULTY

Faculty offering online courses is responsible for the following:

1. Completing and publishing the content requirements for an online course.
2. Submitting contact forms with students, such as: email, online office hours, in-office hours.
3. Publishing the course syllabus in a format accessible to students.
4. Including clear instructions to access course materials.
5. Setting online meeting dates and frequency of visits to courses
6. Complying with assessment policies

7. Including accessible instructional materials
8. Accessing the online course frequently
9. Responding electronically to student communications
10. Meeting report or notification deadlines requested by Chair, Dean of Academic Affairs, Director of College or Office Service Institution.
11. Fulfilling the same duties, responsibilities and qualifications required of full time and part time faculty according to BCU Faculty Handbook.
12. Possessing the necessary skills in managing technology and instructional design of online courses.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

For the reasons set forth above and in order to encourage and support distance learning programs and classroom programs, the following is stated:

1. Programs and online courses should highlight institutional mission and vision
2. The Distance Education Coordinator will provide a technical support system for students and faculty.
3. The Distance Education Coordinator will provide faculty training and support.
4. The Academic Dean and distance education coordinator will establish and define a reliable enrollment process.
5. BCU protects the privacy of students enrolled in distance education by creating separate accounts for each participant.
6. Establishes strategies and procedures to ensure safety and proper use of the system.
7. Faculty who offer courses in distance education must comply with the same duties, responsibilities and qualifications required of classroom faculty.
8. Instructional design, content and assessment strategies must be aligned to the characteristics of distance education students.
9. All courses will facilitate a systematic and flexible interaction between faculty and students, students and students.
10. Establish and maintain a system of continuous assessment evidencing student learning and effectiveness of the courses.
11. It is the responsibility of each Academic College to recommend a course for distance education and faculty for the course.

Administrators are responsible for promoting, disseminating and ensuring compliance of policy for courses and / or programs for distance education.

This policy is in effect immediately and repeals Executive Order ACA 09-02 and any previous guidelines, rules, policies or procedures conflicting with what is provided herein.

Approved:


Lillian Negrón-Colón, Ph. D.
President