I. PURPOSE & INTENT

Non-traditional education offered by the University of South Florida System (USF System) includes the online delivery of credit and non-credit courses and programs, and all self-supporting continuing education courses and programs regardless of the delivery method. To ensure these courses and programs meet compliance and accreditation requirements, this Policy establishes authority and assigns accountability for online and continuing education courses and programs offered by University of South Florida (USF), University of South Florida St. Petersburg (USFSP) and University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee (USFSM).

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The USF System non-traditional courses and programs shall be in compliance with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Principles of Accreditation for Distance Education, the State University System Florida Board of Governors (BOG) requirements, and USF System Regulations, Policies, and Procedures.

III. APPLICABILITY & AUTHORITY

All non-traditional education courses and programs must adhere to the requirements of
regulatory and accreditation agencies, including the requirements and procedures that are mandated through: 1.) BOG Regulation 8.002, Continuing Education, 2.) SACSCOC Policy for Distance Education, 3.) USF System Regulations, Policies and Procedures, and 4.) state authorization requirements.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. Online Learning: The USF System, adopting the SACSCOC definition for distance education, defines online learning as noncredit and credit-earning courses and programs where greater than 50% of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) is delivered in an online format, and students and instructors are not in the same place. This definition for online learning differs from the definition referenced in BOG Regulation 7.003 which authorizes universities to assess distance learning fees on courses where at least 80% of the direct instruction of the course is delivered using some form of technology when the student and faculty member are separated by time, space, or both.

B. Continuing Education: Continuing Education is defined and regulated by BOG Regulation 8.002 as a.) non-state fundable, self-supporting college credit courses or programs, b.) non-credit professional development courses or programs designed to upgrade existing technical or professional skills, and c.) courses that are provided primarily for personal enrichment. Self-supporting college credit courses or programs include the following two funding models:

1) **Cost-recovery courses/programs:** These self-supporting courses/programs must charge appropriate fees to students for the purpose of recovering ALL costs associated with offering the courses/programs. These courses/programs are not authorized to generate residual revenue.

2) **Market-rate tuition courses/programs:** These self-supporting courses/programs generate residual revenue for reinvestment in academic programs, in addition to recovering all costs associated with offering the courses/programs. Based on tuition rates of similar programs from five institutions, including both private and public, fees are
established for an approved graduate-level degree program or approved credit-earning graduate certificate program. Excess funds may be used for reinvestment in academic programs. Based upon existing BOG Regulations, the USF System is authorized to propose only five new programs per year.

V. PROCESS STEPS

A. To ensure compliance, Innovative Education shall serve as the unit responsible for establishing policies and procedures, and reporting on the following:

1) **System Roles and Responsibilities:**

   a. Administering USF System market tuition programs -- graduate degree and graduate certificate programs authorized by the BOG for delivery at market rate.
   
   b. Procuring State authorization for all USF, USFSP, and USFSM fully online courses/programs to accommodate USF System students who reside outside the State of Florida.
   
   c. Collecting, compiling, and submitting data from the USF Colleges and USF System Member Institutions for reporting to the BOG.

2) **USF Role and Responsibilities:**

   a. Working through the USF SACS Liaison to ensure USF compliance with SACSCOC Principles of Accreditation for Distance Education, including but not limited to:

      i. Establishing best practices for delivery of courses/programs where instruction is 50 – 100% in an online format.
      
      ii. Defining and communicating the unique roles and qualifications of faculty for online instruction.
      
      iii. Ensuring the availability and accessibility of professional development activities and training that focus on the successful delivery of distance education.
iv. Engaging faculty in the design, development, and academic oversight of the course conversion process, and ensuring faculty maintain ownership of the course.

3) USF Academic Affairs Roles and Responsibilities:

a. The framework and guidelines for converting traditional face-to-face courses/programs offered by USF Academic Affairs to an online delivery format.

b. The non-curricular support of all USF Academic Affairs online courses/programs, regardless of the location of the student, i.e., students in residence at USF, commuter students who are also enrolled in online courses, and fully online students within the State of Florida, the United States, or at an International location.

c. The non-curricular support of all USF Academic Affairs cost-recovery, noncredit and credit-earning courses/programs, whether face-to-face or online and including approved degree and certificate programs.

d. The utilization of distance learning fees to ensure full recovery of the incremental costs of using shared services for the development and non-curricular support of online learning.

e. Coordinating among the USF Colleges the selection of courses/programs to be marketed and delivered as self-supporting continuing education opportunities.

f. Securing approval for USF Academic Affairs proposals for cost recovery courses/programs and market tuition programs, which include at a minimum a business plan that includes market analysis; projected enrollments, revenues, expenditures, cost recovery, and residual; and methodology for tracking degrees or certificates earned.

g. Recovering the incremental cost of using shared services, including fees that are not waived, for all cost recovery and market tuition courses/programs.

B. USF Innovative Education and the USF Health Sciences Center (for its component Colleges/Schools and other academic units)(“USF Health”) shall enter into and maintain an
Intra-University Agreement (“IUA”) to provide for the delegation of authority and responsibility to the USF Health CEO and the Dean/Director of each College/School or other component academic unit within USF Health, for developing and implementing non-traditional education programs, ensuring compliance for both external and internal polices, and reporting information to Innovative Education in compliance with this Policy.

C. USF System colleges and member institutions are responsible for:

1) Notifying USF Innovative Education when considering the delivery of self-supporting continuing education courses or programs.

2) Ensuring no E&G resources are supporting cost recovery and market tuition courses/programs.

3) Ensuring student learning outcomes and the academic content of distance education courses/programs, as well as the qualifications of faculty teaching distance education courses/programs, comply with requirements and procedures that are mandated through the BOG, SACSCOC, and USF System Policies and Procedures, including but not limited to:
   a. Establishing procedures to ensure the comparable assessment of student learning outcomes for traditional and non-traditional courses and programs.
   b. Documenting appropriate qualifications for faculty teaching distance education courses, considering best practices identified and communicated by Innovative Education.
   c. Providing evidence in faculty files of regular evaluation of distance education faculty, considering best practices identified and communicated by Innovative Education.
   d. Ensuring distance education faculty members engage in training and professional development that focus on the successful delivery of distance education.
D. Proposals for exceptions to the USF System Non-traditional Education Policy shall be submitted to the CEO, Innovative Education.

Current Responsible Office*: Academic Affairs

*Refer to the appropriate Responsible Office website for a current name of the Vice President or other Responsible Officer.

History: New 4-22-14, Amended 7-31-18 (technical).