National Institute of Social Development
Guidelines for Distance Learning

Guideline Title: Guidelines for Distance Learning

Guideline Number: 03

Functional Area: All Academic Staff and Non-academic staff

Effective Date: 11.07.2024

Approving Authority: The Governing Council

3.1. Rationale & Purpose:

The National Institute of Social Development (NISD) is committed to providing high-quality education through distance learning, ensuring accessibility, flexibility, and support for students pursuing academic programs and Diploma, Certificates programs. These guidelines outline the principles, responsibilities, and best practices for students, faculty, and staff engaged in distance learning.

3.2. Objectives

3.2.1. Enhance Accessibility:

- Provide educational opportunities to students regardless of their geographical location.

3.2.2. Maintain Quality:

- Ensure that distance learning courses meet the same academic standards as traditional on-campus courses.

3.3.3. Support Student Success:

- Offer resources and support to help students succeed in a distance learning environment.

3.3. Principles

3.3.1. Equity and Inclusion:

- Distance learning programs should be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities, ensuring equitable participation.

3.3.2. Academic Integrity:

- Uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty in all distance learning activities.

3.3.3. Effective Communication:

- Foster clear and consistent communication between students, faculty, and support staff.

3.3.4. Student-Centered Learning:

- Focus on the needs and experiences of students, providing flexible and engaging learning opportunities.

3.4. Responsibilities

3.4.1. Students:

- Engagement: Actively participate in all online learning activities, including discussions, assignments, and assessments.
- Time Management: Manage time effectively to meet deadlines and balance coursework with other responsibilities.
- Technical Requirements: Ensure access to necessary technology, including a reliable internet connection, a computer, and required software.
- Communication: Maintain regular communication with instructors and peers, seeking help when needed.
- Academic Integrity: Adhere to NISD's policies on academic integrity, avoiding plagiarism and cheating.

3.4.2. Faculty:

- Course Design: Develop and deliver online courses that are engaging, interactive, and aligned with learning objectives.
- Availability: Be accessible to students through virtual office hours, email, and other communication channels.
- Feedback: Provide timely and constructive feedback on assignments and assessments.
- Technology Use: Utilize appropriate digital tools and platforms to enhance the learning experience.
- Support: Identify and support students facing challenges in the online learning environment.

3.4.3. Support Staff:

- Technical Support: Offer technical assistance to students and faculty, addressing issues related to online platforms and tools.
- Academic Support: Provide resources such as online libraries, tutoring, and counseling services to support student learning.
- Training: Offer training sessions for students and faculty on effective use of distance learning technologies and best practices.

3.5. Best Practices

3.5.1. Course Organization:

- Clearly structure online courses with a detailed syllabus, course calendar, and clear expectations.

3.5.2. Interactive Learning:

- Incorporate interactive elements such as discussion forums, group projects, and multimedia content to engage students.

3.5.3. Assessment:

- Use a variety of assessment methods, including quizzes, essays, projects, and participation, to evaluate student learning.

3.5.4. Feedback:

- Provide regular and constructive feedback to help students improve and stay motivated.

3.5.5. Flexibility:

- Design courses with flexibility in mind, allowing students to learn at their own pace while meeting deadlines.

3.5.6. Accessibility:

- Ensure all course materials are accessible to students with disabilities, following best practices for digital accessibility.

3.6. Technology and Tools

3.6.1. Learning Management System (LMS):

- Utilize the designated LMS for course delivery, assignments, and communication. Ensure all course materials are uploaded to the LMS.

3.6.2. Communication Tools:

- Use tools such as email, video conferencing, and discussion forums to facilitate communication and collaboration.

3.6.3. Multimedia Resources:

- Incorporate videos, podcasts, and other multimedia resources to enhance learning and provide diverse content.

3.7. Evaluation and Feedback

3.7.1. Course Evaluation:

- Collect feedback from students on the effectiveness of distance learning courses and use this feedback to make improvements.

3.7.2. Continuous Improvement:

- Regularly review and update online courses to ensure they remain relevant and engaging.

3.7.3. Professional Development:

- Encourage faculty to participate in professional development opportunities related to online teaching and learning.

3.8. Policy Compliance

3.8.1. Adherence:

- All participants in the distance learning program must adhere to NISD policies and guidelines.

3.8.2. Reporting Issues:

- Report any issues or concerns related to distance learning to the appropriate department for resolution.

3.9. Support Services

3.9.1. Technical Support:

- Contact the IT helpdesk for technical assistance with online platforms and tools.

3.9.2. Academic Support:

- Access online tutoring, library resources, and academic advising for additional support.

3.9.3. Counseling Services:

- Utilize available counselling services for mental health and wellness support.