



M UNIVERSITY *of*
MONTEVALLO

Student
Distance Education Handbook
2022-2024

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This handbook features policies, services, and resources pertaining to distance learning. All students should also consult UM’s student handbook, [The Fledgling](#), and [the Bulletin](#) for important policies and resources related to academic standards and student life.

The following guidelines and policies for the development and delivery of University of Montevallo (UM) distance education courses have been reviewed by the following campus entities: the Distance Education Advisory Committee, the Council of Department Chairs, the Deans’ Council, the Graduate Council, the Undergraduate Curriculum and Standards Committee, and the President’s Executive Cabinet. These guidelines are based on national standards broadly agreed upon by a range of education and distance education organizations (e.g., [Quality Matters](#), [Online Learning Consortium](#)). The purpose of these recommendations is to ensure the quality and rigor of UM’s distance education courses in terms of instructional delivery, learning outcomes, and student experience.

UM Distance Education

Definitions

All courses at the University of Montevallo (UM) are *web-enhanced*, meaning that faculty use the learning management system (LMS), at a minimum, to provide access to course documents (e.g., syllabi) and communicate with students. *Traditional or in person (TR)* classes are taught exclusively in person but may be designated as *flexible (FX)* if students have the option to participate in the course either in-person or virtually.

The University defines an *online course* as a course that never meets in-person; all content is delivered online through the LMS (e.g., Canvas), email, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams. Online courses may be synchronous, asynchronous, or a combination of the two. An *online synchronous (OS)* course requires students to log in at a scheduled time (e.g., in order to participate in a live-streamed session). In an *online asynchronous (OA)* course, students may be required to meet deadlines for work submissions, but they are not required to log in at a scheduled time. *Online hybrid (OH)* courses use a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

A *hybrid course* is a course that includes at least one traditional (in-person) meeting but meets less than 50% of the time in person. Traditional *hybrid (HY)* courses use a combination of in-person and asynchronous online instruction. *Hybrid remote (HR)* uses a combination of in-person and synchronous online meetings. A full list of the [schedule definitions](#) can be found on the Registrar’s webpage.

The following charts list contact hours for traditional (in-person) and hybrid courses:

Traditional (In-Person) Delivery

Semester Credit Hours	Minimum Required Contact Minutes	Corresponding Number of 50-Minute Class Sessions (M-W-F)	Corresponding Number of 75-Minute Class Sessions (M-W & T-TH)	Corresponding Number of 150-Minute Class Sessions (once/week)
4	3000	60	40	20
3	2250	45	30	15
2	1500	30	20	10
1	750	15	10	5

Hybrid Delivery

Semester Credit Hours	Minimum Required Contact Minutes	Corresponding Number of 50-Minute Class Sessions (M-W-F)	Corresponding Number of 75-Minute Class Sessions (M-W & T-TH)	Corresponding Number of 150-Minute Class Sessions (once/week)
4	50-1499	1 - 29	1 - 19	1 - 9
3	50-1124	1 - 22	1 - 14	1 - 7
2	50-749	1 - 14	1 - 9	1 - 4
1	50-349	1 - 7	1 - 4	1 - 2

Note: Asynchronous courses share the minimum required contact minutes as outlined for traditional (in-person) delivery. However, in an asynchronous context, contact minutes refer to time spent engaged with course learning experiences instead of a corresponding number of classroom sessions.

Technical Recommendations

The technical recommendations for delivery of distance education courses vary from minimal requirements to sophisticated, costly components. The Information Services and Technology (IS&T) department maintains a [Software and Systems webpage](#) with usage, support, and system requirement information. Use the links listed below to access information, including technical recommendations, for the main software used to support distance education at UM.

The recommendations are provided in generic terms without the intent to endorse particular brands or products. The software recommendations provided indicate UM-approved software. Requests for approved software should be submitted via the Solution Center. Requests for non-UM approved software must be submitted using the form found on the [Software Purchase/Download page](#).

- [Canvas](#): UM's Learning Management System (LMS)
- [Zoom](#): Video conferencing tool
- [Respondus Lockdown Browser & Monitor](#): Testing security (lock-down and/or recording)
- [Turnitin Originality](#): Paper comparison (plagiarism check) tool

Numerous technology tools are available to facilitate distance education. For purposes of consistency, accuracy, quality and ease of use, the Distance Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) recommends the following:

- Logitech webcam (C525 most highly recommended) if an external webcam is needed.
- Zoom (for recording video)
- Camtasia (for editing and captioning audio or video)
- Adobe Acrobat DC for published documents

University Commitment

The University will

- Provide distance education faculty and students access to reliable and appropriate technologies for carrying out the instructional goals of distance education courses (i.e., a stable, password-protected platform for delivering content).
- Provide distance education faculty and students appropriate levels of training and training materials related to the use of distance education technologies.
- Provide distance education faculty and students with a pre-course assessment tool that allows students to determine their preparedness to take a distance education course (i.e., preparedness in terms of skills, knowledge of technologies, & learning styles).
- Provide distance education faculty and students access to a centralized technical support center that provides timely assistance on technology questions and problems.
- Provide a course coding system in the published schedule of course offerings that allows instructors and departments to flag courses as online, distance education (live-streamed remote instruction), hybrid, or traditional (in-person) format.
- Provide distance education faculty and students with digital access to library services, materials, and resources.
- Provide distance education students with access to remote administrative and support services: enrollment services, financial aid services, bookstore services, advising and counseling services, and disability support services.
- Provide distance education students with timely information on the technical equipment and skills required for success in the distance education courses offered at UM. This includes information on how to log in to the University's learning management system (e.g., Canvas) and the University's system.
- Provide access to an [online orientation](#) of the [learning management system \(LMS\)](#) for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs of study at UM.

Student Commitment

Students who enroll in distance education courses at UM are expected to

1. Take the initiative to learn about the technical equipment and technical skill requirements for the course in advance of the course start date and access training materials related to the course technologies when and where appropriate.
2. Ensure they have consistent and reliable access to the online environment and have a backup plan in place to prevent incomplete or late assignments. Instructors may choose not

to accept incomplete or late assignments resulting from technology issues that are not widespread events.

3. Complete the given [“Online Readiness Assessment”](#) indicating preparedness for taking an online or hybrid course (i.e., preparedness in terms of skills, access to required technologies, and learning styles).
4. Adhere to the UM [Student Code of Conduct](#) which can be found in *The Fledgling* (student handbook).
5. Use UM email and Canvas Conversations (Canvas’ messaging system) for the duration of the distance education course and check both frequently (preferably daily) for course communications.
6. Review details of the course syllabus by the first day of the start of the course, taking note of all course requirements, including any synchronous meetings.
7. Pay the full cost of each course prior to the first day of classes as required by UM policy.
8. Drop or withdraw from a distance education course according to the procedures, policies, and deadlines established for traditional (in-person) courses.
9. Demonstrate participation in a given distance education course within the first week of the class or become immediately eligible for an administrative drop/withdrawal.
10. Maintain weekly participation that provides an indication of “attendance.”
11. Respond to instructor-initiated emails and inquiries within a timely manner (within two working days unless a different timeline is stipulated).
12. Understand that frequent participation in a distance education course (i.e., completing assignments, responding to emails, posting messages, taking course exams, etc.) is a requirement for UM classes.
13. Access Solution Center services for the duration of the course as needed.
14. Voice concerns about courses to the appropriate instructor and follow the [University’s student complaint process](#) as outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct](#) found in *The Fledgling* (student handbook).
15. Access enrollment services, financial aid services, bookstore services, advising and counseling services, disability support services, library services, and other college resources as needed.
16. Complete and submit the University course evaluation available at the end of the semester.
17. Understand the Academic Rights of Students as outlined in the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Guidelines

Acceptable Use Policy

Use of University computing resources is a privilege extended to authorized students, employees, alumni, and other individuals for legitimate purposes related to education, public service, research, and administration. By using any University computing resource, the user agrees to abide by all applicable laws, copyright and licensing requirements, and University policies.

Users of University computing resources further agree not to utilize those resources for illegal, malicious, or destructive purposes or intentionally damage or disrupt any University computing resource or process.

Users of University computing resources further agree not to engage in cyber bullying. Cyber bullying is an act of aggression that intentionally intimidates, harasses, or imposes a reasonable fear of harm to an individual or the individual's property. Cyber bullying may also impose a clear disruption of the daily activities of an individual through malicious, hateful, threatening or harassing digital information and/or digital communications, including, but not limited to, LMS, text, instant, and email messaging; cellular telephone communications; social media forums; and Internet chatrooms, blogs, and other postings.

For students, failure to comply with these regulations will result in disciplinary action including but not limited to restrictions, suspension, probation, expulsion, and legal or civil action. For employees, failure to comply with these regulations will result in disciplinary action including but not limited to restrictions, reprimand, suspension, termination, and legal or civil action.

Additional restrictions may be imposed by the department providing access to computer resources. For additional information regarding the appropriate and authorized use of University computing resources, please see [University of Montevallo Use of Information Resources](#).

ADA Statement

The University of Montevallo provides equal opportunity to qualified students. If you have a disability (medical, physical, learning, psychological, etc.) and wish to request disability-related accommodations to complete course requirements, contact Disability Support Services (located in Main Hall, rear entrance; 205-665-6250). Course requirements cannot be waived, but reasonable accommodations may be provided based on disability documentation and course objectives. Accommodations cannot be made retroactively.

Attendance in Distance Education Courses

In a distance education context, documenting that a student has logged into an online class is not sufficient, by itself, to demonstrate academic attendance by the student. A school must demonstrate that a student participated in class or was otherwise engaged in an academically-related activity such as contributing to an online discussion or initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a course-related question.

According to the U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid Handbook, examples of acceptable evidence of academic attendance and attendance at an academically-related activity in a distance education program include the following:

- Student submission of an academic assignment
- Student submission of an exam
- Documented student participation in an interactive tutorial or computer-assisted instruction
- A posting by the student showing the student's participation in an online study group that is assigned by the institution
- A posting by the student in a discussion forum showing the student's participation in an online discussion about academic matters
- An e-mail message from the student or other documentation showing that the student initiated contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course

Academically-related activities **do not include** the following:

- Living in institutional housing
- Participating in the school's meal plan
- Logging into an online class without active participation
- Participating in academic counseling or advisement

Course Evaluation

Department chairs are responsible for the oversight and quality of distance education courses offered in their program areas. Students will be provided with a digital means for evaluating distance education courses.

Identity Verification

Subject to change based upon findings of the Data Governance Committee.

In order to verify that the student who registers for an online or hybrid course is the same student who participates in and completes the course and receives academic credit, students must use a secure login and pass code to access course material. Faculty may also require proctored examinations and/or make use of technology that is effective in verifying student identity.

All methods of verifying the identity of students enrolled in distance education courses must protect the privacy of students' information as stated in [The Fledging](#) student handbook (under Confidentiality of Student Records in the Academic Standards section) and in [Policy 01:211 – Privacy of Student Data](#).

Currently, there are no additional charges associated with verification of student identity. Personally identifiable information collected by the college may be used, at the discretion of the institution, to verify identity. For example, a student requesting that his or her learning management system password be reset by the Solution Center will be asked for two or more pieces of personal information for comparison with personally identifiable information on file. No passwords will be reset via email.

Identification Cards

Subject to change based upon findings of the Data Governance Committee.

Each University of Montevallo student is required to obtain an official UM ID card that displays the student's photograph. The card is required to use the library, receive financial aid, and take advantage of the services and activities at the University. Students may apply for an ID card in person at the Solution Center in Carmichael Library. Alternatively, students may begin the application process online via the [GET app](#) and complete it by picking up their ID card at the Solution Center.

Loss or theft of cards should be reported to the Solution Center (this can be done through the [GET app](#)) and to the UM Police Department. A student who uses the UM ID card in an illegal manner will be subject to disciplinary action.

Privacy of Student Data

Subject to change based upon findings of the Data Governance Committee.

As provided for in the Faculty Handbook Section 4.13, [Confidentiality of Student Records](#), all employees must familiarize themselves with the provisions of FERPA. Faculty and staff are responsible for complying with FERPA and are required to review FERPA information and successfully complete the FERPA quiz. In accordance with this policy:

- Faculty will not publicly post any grades or personal information for any student. Faculty who wish to make grades available online are urged to use the password-protected student grade book in Canvas and email accounts.
- To further protect the privacy of students, all faculty must contact students using either University email or secure Canvas messaging.
- No student personal information, other than directory information as defined by FERPA, will be stored on faculty or staff personal devices or University owned devices, mobile or otherwise, which do not contain at least 128-bit encryption software such as BitLocker.
- In the event of theft or loss of a device that contains student data, faculty will report the loss to University Police, the Solution Center Manager or Information Services & Technology Asset Manager, and the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- Online gradebooks other than the one in Canvas must be password protected and/or encrypted to ensure the security of student data.
- A student may provide written consent to release personally identifiable information which names the party or class of parties to whom disclosure may be made and what information may be released. Such documentation shall be maintained by the Registrar.
- University employees who have access to student records must report any improper requests for access to student records to their supervisors.

Respondus LockDown Browser & Monitor

Faculty members may elect to use Respondus LockDown Browser and/or Monitor for added online testing security in their courses. Respondus LockDown Browser © is a custom browser that locks down the quizzing environment within Canvas. When students use LockDown Browser to access an assessment, they are unable to print, copy, go to another URL, or access other applications. Students are locked into an assessment until it is submitted for grading. Respondus Monitor™ © is a companion product for LockDown Browser that enables higher education institutions to protect the integrity of non-proctored, online exams. Students use their own computer and a webcam to record assessment sessions, all without leaving the institution's learning management system.

Students can use their own computers to take exams using Respondus LockDown and/or Monitor. They can also elect to take exams at Carmichael Library, where select workstations have been configured for Respondus testing.

Resources & Services

Admissions, Distance Orientation, & the Registrar's Office

Students may apply to the University through UM's [Admissions](#) and, once admitted, may participate in distance orientations that provide information about systems access, University contacts, campus services, and tips for success. Helpful information regarding registration and other initial steps can be found at "[I'm Accepted . . . Now What?](#)" for undergraduate students and [First Steps for Graduate Students](#). Once admitted, records are available online through Banner. Students who have questions or concerns about their records should call the [Registrar's Office](#) at 205-665-6040 or email registrar@montevallo.edu.

Career Development Center

The [Career Development Center](#) offers career counseling and a variety of tools and resources to address career planning, career exploration, job market strategies, and professional development. We provide personality testing, resume assistance, interview coaching, and job opportunities. We will work with you in ensuring your career success. Contact us to schedule an appointment: 205-665-6262 | career@montevallo.edu | Farmer Hall, second floor. Visit our website: www.montevallo.edu/career.

Carmichael Library Services

[Carmichael Library](#) offers a number of services for students enrolled in distance education courses, including a [LibGuide](#) to assist students in locating resources. Through the [library's website](#), students also have access to the following:

- 100+ [databases](#) and thousands of academic journals, newspapers, streaming videos, streaming music, and over 200,000 e-books.
- Scan and Deliver service—Provides access to articles and book chapters from the library's print journals and book collection.
- [Interlibrary Loan](#) (ILL)—Students may request journal articles and books that Montevallo does not hold to be mailed to their homes. ILL will also mail up to five books in the library's collection to distance learners at home.

- [Digital research guides](#)—Curated resources for classes by discipline. Also includes guides on citations, digital learning, open access resources, and more.
- [Research assistance](#) from librarians via email, chat, or phone.
- Assistance with creation of videos and other digital media via the [Digital Media Lab](#)

Carmichael Library [hours](#) can be found on their website or by calling 205-665-6100.

UM has a partnership with 10 other universities in Alabama (including Birmingham Southern College, Miles College, Samford University, and University of Alabama at Birmingham) through the Network of Alabama Libraries (NAAL). University of Montevallo students have full borrowing privileges at [NAAL's Library Access Program participating institutions](#). They must show a valid UM ID.

Counseling Services

University of Montevallo [Counseling Services](#) offers individual counseling, case management, and emergency assistance. These services are available to all currently enrolled degree-seeking students who also meet state legal and ethical limits of services.

Students needing assistance can contact [Counseling Services](#) by phone at 205-665-6245 or via email at counseling@montevallo.edu. Students experiencing an emergency outside of normal business hours can contact the UMPD at 205-665-6155 or the Crisis Center at 205-323-7777. If you are experiencing a life-threatening emergency please call 911 or go to the closest emergency room.

Disability Support Services

[Disability Support Services](#) coordinates services and accommodations for students with documented disabilities, including those students who are taking online/ hybrid courses. Accommodations may include but are not limited to extended time on tests, alternate format materials, ASL interpreters, remote real time, or closed captioning, etc. Accommodations and services may be requested at any time, but reasonable notice to DSS and Faculty is required and some services do have priority deadlines. Accommodations are not retroactive.

The [DSS website](#) can serve as the initial point of contact for students. Students may apply for services via the [DSS Student Portal](#). After submission of the documentation and an intake meeting, students will continue to use that DSS Portal to submit requests for accommodations and other services. Faculty should expect to receive a Faculty Notification Letter via email and then asked to log into the DSS Faculty Portal to confirm receipt. Students are expected to follow-up with each faculty member after DSS sends the DSS notification to clarify and discuss details of the accommodations as needed. Email delivery of the notification by DSS does not replace the required follow-up discussion. DSS staff are available to assist with additional negotiation of accommodations or for assistance related to technology or alternate format materials.

Students or faculty needing additional assistance and clarification should contact DSS at 205-665-6250 or DSS@montevallo.edu. It is located in the rear lower level of Main Hall (directly off Vine Street).

Falcon Success Center (Academic Support and Advising)

The overall goal of the Falcon Success Center is to help students succeed. We offer individualized student success plans, academic counseling, and at-risk student advocacy. We

also provide guidance for students as they begin to navigate their college experience, leading them to the most helpful campus resources. Undergraduate students enrolled in distance education courses can contact the [Falcon Success Center](#) at falconsuccesscenter@montevallo.edu, call 205-665-6092, or text 205-900-4668 for assistance in connecting with academic support resources.

Financial Aid

Students may locate financial aid information, options, and applications through [UM's Student Aid website](#). All guidelines and forms are available online. Remote appointments may be set up to facilitate necessary meetings. For questions, contact the Student Aid Office by phone at 205-665-6050 or via email at finaid@montevallo.edu.

Harbert Writing Center (HWC)

In the HWC, trained writing consultants work with students in every discipline at every stage of the writing process—from brainstorming to polishing. You may schedule appointments—virtual or in-person—through Montevallo.mywconline.com. Additional information, including current hours, may be found on the [HWC's website](#).

Information Services and Technology (IS&T): Solution Center (Helpdesk)

The Solution Center offers assistance to faculty, staff, and students with UM computer services and network issues. Computer services include maintenance of UM computer labs, UM-provided desktop services, email services, username services, and assistance with software such as Banner, Canvas, and EllucianGo. Network services include issues connecting to FalconNet and printing issues. The Solution Center cannot perform repairs on personal equipment.

The Solution Center is located on the first floor of Carmichael Library and is available Monday through Thursday from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM and Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM during regular terms. These times are subject to change. For current hours, please check the [University of Montevallo Solution Center website](#). The Solution Center may be contacted by phone at 205-665-6512 or via email at SolutionCenter@montevallo.edu.

IS&T: Technical Assistance with Email Use

E-mail is considered an official medium for communicating with students. All students are responsible for checking their University of Montevallo issued email accounts in a timely fashion and on a regular basis. The official email system for students is identified by **userID@forum.montevallo.edu** and can be accessed by visiting the [University's main website](#) and scrolling to the bottom of the page.

For questions about UM email, please contact the Solution Center or find additional information on the Information Services & Technology website. UM passwords can be reset online at Office 365, passwordreset.microsoftonline.com, after completing the sign-up process using your existing UM email address and password or by contacting the Solution Center.

IS&T: Computer Labs

Information Services & Technology manages computers in a total of fifteen computer labs across campus, eight are general use labs. The most up-to-date information on location, hours, and usage can be found on the [UM Computer Labs](#) webpage.

Learning Enrichment Center (Tutoring)

The Learning Enrichment Center (LEC) offers tutoring at no charge to all undergraduate students enrolled at the University of Montevallo pending availability of a peer tutor in the subject(s) for which requests are made. For more information or to request tutoring, visit the [LEC's website](#), call: 205-665-6113, text: 205-810-1665, or email enrichment@montevallo.edu.

Student Accounts

Students may [pay](#) on their accounts and check account balances through Banner Self Service. They may contact the [Student Accounts Office](#) at 205-665-6065 or by email at cashier@montevallo.edu.

Student Learning Environment

The University of Montevallo is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution and prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetic information, disability, or disabled veteran/Vietnam-era veteran status in the University's educational programs; admissions policies; faculty, staff, and student employment policies; financial aid; or other school-administered programs and services. The University of Montevallo prohibits any form of harassment related to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, genetic information, disability, or veteran status of and by faculty, staff, and students. Further information is available in [The Fledgling](#) and through [Human Resources](#).

TRIO McNair Scholars Program

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (McNair Scholars Program) is one of the federally-funded TRIO programs designed to assist first-generation and limited-income students as well as those students underrepresented in graduate education to successfully earn the baccalaureate degree, enter graduate school, and earn the doctoral degree. Scholars receive services such as GRE preparation, academic counseling, personal development, and other services based on individual needs. They are also exposed to graduate school campuses, cultural events, and professionals in their areas of interest. Scholars participate in monthly seminars, academic programs, and undergraduate research. To determine eligibility, students must go to the [McNair Scholars Program site](#) to complete an online pre-application. Once determined eligible, interested students then complete the program application and participate in an interview.

TRIO Student Support Services Program (TRIO SSS)

Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, TRIO SSS is designed to increase the retention and graduation rates of low-income, first generation college students, and students with disabilities. TRIO SSS provides a wide array of services including tutoring, advising, counseling, and seminars/workshops addressing academic, personal, and professional/graduate school plans. Participants receive ongoing and consistent support throughout their time at UM. All services are free of charge.

TRIO SSS is an exclusive program and can serve only 200 students each academic year. Students must be eligible to participate by at least one of the criteria above. For more information, visit the [TRIO SSS website](#).

TRIO Upward Bound/Upward Bound Math & Science Program

The Upward Bound/Upward Bound Math and Science Programs (UMUB) provide experiences for first-generation and low-income high school students who generate the skills and motivation necessary to complete a program of postsecondary education. The purpose of TRIO Upward Bound is to increase the rate at which participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from institutions of postsecondary education. The program employs faculty members and tutors who help students become successful in high school and select a field of study. The office is located in Sharp House. If you would like additional information, please visit [the Trio Upward Bound Programs website](#).

University Bookstore

Textbooks and other course materials will NOT be sent automatically to students. Materials may be purchased online for a standard shipping charge. The [University Bookstore](#) is located on 845 Main Street in Montevillo and can be contacted via phone at 205-665-6575.