COVID-19 Guidance for Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education Academic Affairs Policy
(Chapter 3)

Approved by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education on September 3, 2020

State Regents Academic Affairs policies specified in Chapter 3 of the Oklahoma State Regents *Policy and Procedures Manual* remain in effect. However, as institutions respond to the needs of students during this crisis, some modifications to limit negative impacts on students may be necessary.

Effective March 15, 2020 with the Governor's emergency declaration for all 77 counties, and until further notice, higher education institutions in the State System are empowered to comply with the spirit of the Academic Affairs policy manual and Procedures Handbook while allowing appropriate flexibility to ensure mitigation of any negative impacts to students and their academic progression due to the COVID-19 crisis. Any action taken by a State System institution that is not in strict compliance with policy and deviates from the specific guidance provided must 1) be consistent with the spirit of the policy, 2) must not be a blatant circumvention of policy, and 3) must be reported to the State Regents monthly until return to regular operations as determined by the Chancellor. State Regents staff will provide a template for such reporting and will assist with questions regarding reporting. This guidance may be updated and modified in response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.
Due to the COVID-19 issues impacting all students and higher education institutions in Oklahoma, some broad policy issues are addressed through the following guidance:

Grading. Since grading will have implications for progression/graduation, major degree requirements, scholarships, graduate admission, etc., please consider the following:
1. Encourage faculty to assign letter grades as planned for the 2020-2021 academic year.
2. For a specified period of time following the posting of grades, provide students the option to elect to change a letter grade for course in the 2020-2021 academic year to S/U or P/NP. The window of time for students to make this election may be determined at the discretion of the institution.
3. Discourage W or WF grade assignments as much as possible. If necessary, a policy exception will be made by the State Regents for the semester deadlines during the 2020-2021 academic year for the assignment of the automatic W in response to this unique circumstance.

Please note the following:

- Institutions must provide clear information and instructions to all students regarding all grading issues.
- By policy, P/F grading is only allowed as an option for students in specified courses where the student understood this as the grading option prior to enrollment, its use is discouraged.
- Grades of "S"-"U"/ "P"-"NP", "W", and "AW" are GPA neutral, but count in hours attempted for retention and earned hours for graduation.
- Institutions may want to draft a document that explains the ramifications of the GPA-neutral grades and require a signature from the student if such documentation is not a standard requirement for a grade change.
- A letter grade of "F" is calculated into the GPA.
- The grade "I" is at the instructor's discretion, but cannot substitute for the "F" grade. The time limit to satisfy the incomplete requirements from the assigned "I" grade is at the discretion of the institution.
- Institutions will need to specify if an assigned grade of "F" will be considered eligible for change to a "U" or "NP" once assigned.

- Some institutions are submitting A-C grades and providing an automatic P/NP or S/U for grades of "D" and "F" without election by the student. If done, clear information and guidance needs to be provided to the student regarding the implications of a GPA neutral grade and provide them an opportunity to object, even if unlikely.

Concurrent Enrollment. To mitigate negative impacts on concurrent enrollment students, the following guidance is provided:
1. Institutions are expected to reach out to concurrent enrollment students to ensure that they have access to adequate technology to complete their coursework, and if not, direct them to appropriate resources for connectivity or ways to complete instruction for the course(s).
2. For concurrent admission and enrollment during the 2020-2021 academic year, institutions may use emails and/or other electronic methods from parents and counselors/principals in lieu of original signatures on permission forms.
3. For academic year 2020-2021 concurrent enrollment, institutions may use alternative methods for admission and course placement in lieu of a currently prescribed curricular and performance standards if the student does not have and/or cannot access standard assessments and/or records.
4. All alternative admission and placement methods must be reported to the State Regents monthly in the template provided.

Admission and Assessment & Placement. For the 2020-2021 academic year, the following guidance is provided:

Admission. For entering undergraduate students (either concurrent high school students or high school completers) unable to provide academic records for curricular or performance requirements, the institution may:
1. Admit the student as degree-seeking (including "Undecided") without academic records/transcripts demonstrating the student meets curricular and performance requirements. Students admitted under this exception must be reported monthly to the State Regents on the report template provided.
2. Admit the student as a "Special Non-Degree Seeking" student, with the limit of nine (9) credit hours of enrollment in this special admissions category.
3. Exceed the nine (9) credit hour enrollment limit without academic records meeting curricular and performance requirements for admission under the "Special Non-Degree Seeking" category. Exception requests must be reported monthly to the State Regents on the report template provided.

Assessment & Placement. For admitted undergraduate students (both concurrent and high school completers) unable to provide academic records for curricular or performance requirements, the institution may make informed judgements for all information available to:
1. Enroll the student in the college-level course as part of a corequisite model with flexibility for faculty to modify the required support for students who are doing well in the college course, as demonstrated via course assessments and other relevant assignments.
2. Enroll the student in college-level coursework but shall require the student to be assessed not later than the end of the first semester of enrollment to determine subsequent enrollment options.
3. Any secondary course placement assessments must be controlled with some form of proctoring.
4. All students enrolled without standard assessment measures will be reported to the State Regents on the report template provided.

Electronic Delivery Approval. To address issues from the COVID-19 crisis, institutions have migrated all instruction to electronic and/or alternative and remote delivery modalities. To facilitate this need in our State System, the following guidance is provided:

1. For the 2020-2021 academic year, institutions are not required to seek electronic delivery approval for any program not already approved for this method of delivery.
2. Institutions will be requested to report on electronic, alternative, and remote delivery modalities that have not been approved through traditional processes when operations return to normal. A report template will be provided.
3. Institutions are encouraged to develop electronic, alternative, and remote delivery modalities for lab instruction.

Teacher Education. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (OEQA), the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (OSRHE) and the State Department of Education (OSDE) are working together to address issues impacting coursework and certification requirements as a result of COVID-19. Some of those provisions, resources and guidance for teacher education programs follow:

1. In addition to the guidance below, please refer to the following agency websites for additional information and resources:
    1. https://www.ok.gov/oeqa/
    2. https://www.okhighered.org/
    3. https://sde.ok.gov/

2. **Regarding Student Teaching**: With P-12 school closures, and with the expectation that the impacted clinical experiences remain as close as possible to the minimum requirements set by the state for initial and advanced certification fields, Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) can engage in augmented instruction that includes the following options:
    1. Arrange temporary placements in other appropriate settings;
    2. Provide virtual learning opportunities; and/or
    3. Implement alternative assignments and instruction.

   EPPs will submit their plan for meeting the student teaching/internship requirement to OEQA for approval. Any modifications to the regular student teaching/internship requirement for graduation that are approved by OEQA and the EPP/IHE, meets OSRHE approval for this specific coursework requirement.

3. **Regarding Certification Testing:** Students who are in the middle of certification testing or completing performance assessments:
    1. Accommodations are being made for students whose testing centers have been closed for cleaning due to COVID-19. If necessary, these students can be re-assigned to other testing centers that are available.
    2. PPAT Task 4 deadline extensions – Submission deadline - May 8, 2020 (at 2PM ET); Score reporting to candidates – June 2, 2020; Resubmission registration deadline – June 16, 2020; Resubmission Task Submission Deadline – June 23, 2020 (at 2PM ET).
    3. Candidates that have completed PPAT Tasks 1-3, and who are unable to submit Task 4 due to school closures, will be provided test fee vouchers for the Oklahoma Professional Teaching Examination (OPTE). Qualified candidates must be verified by their EPPs and numbers and names of recipients provided to OEQA.

4. **Regarding Faculty Professional Development:** Distance/virtual learning activities with P-12 students and faculty can be used by EPP faculty to meet the 10-hour requirement whenever

possible. When this is not an option, EPPs must document this in the 2020 Annual State Report that goes to OEQA and the OSRHE.

5. **Regarding all other requirements:**

    1. The State Regents' response to institutions will be ongoing and fluid with events surrounding COVID-19 and we will work with OEQA and SDE to address issues pertaining to teacher preparation.

English Proficiency Testing. The following guidance is provided for English Proficiency Requirements for admission for the 2020-2021 academic year.
1. Institutions are allowed to explore online and at-home testing opportunities for currently approved English proficiency assessments.
2. If currently approved tests are unavailable to an institution's target student(s), institutions may utilize Duolingo and PTE Academic assessments.
3. Institutions using alternative assessments must document and report such use to the State Regents monthly on the reporting template provided.
4. More information on ETS Testing is available at: https://www.ets.org/s/cv/important-update/

Students are still required to meet the minimum score set by the State Regents. For institutions accepting the Duolingo and/or PTE Academic assessment to determine English proficiency, the following concordance tables are provided.

Undergraduate students must meet the following minimum scores:	
Assessment	**Minimum Score**
TOEFL ibt	61
IELTS	5.5
PTE Academic	42
Duolingo	85

For undergraduate students OU requires a minimum score of 79 on the ibt TOEFL, a 6.5 on the IELTS, a 58 on the PTE Academic, and a 100 on the Duolingo.

Graduate students must meet the following minimum scores:	
Assessment	**Minimum Score**
TOEFL ibt	79
IELTS	6.5
PTE Academic	58
Duolingo	100

Students not meeting the above required scores may be eligible for 12 weeks of study at an approved Intensive English Program by meeting the following scores:

Undergraduate students must meet the following minimum scores:	
Assessment	**Minimum Score**
TOEFL ibt	48
IELTS	5.0
PTE Academic	36
Duolingo	75

Graduate students must meet the following minimum scores:	
Assessment	**Minimum Score**
TOEFL ibt	61
IELTS	5.5
PTE Academic	42
Duolingo	85

Online Biology Labs. To mitigate negative impacts on students completing Biology courses, the following guidance is provided:

The "Course Equivalency Project" (CEP) is a faculty-driven process by which State System institutions establish statewide course equivalencies among institutions. "Course Equivalency Project Matrix" is the listing of courses determined to be equivalent through the CEP process. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, several **Biology** courses (noted below) on the CEP required at least 75% of the lab component to be face-to-face instruction (CEP notation indicates this requirement was added to CEP Biology listings in 09/2011). The CEP process requires courses to identify student learning outcomes (SLOs) developed by discipline faculty groups for each course listed on the CEP. For any course to be listed on the CEP for guaranteed transfer, 100 percent of the SLO's must be included within the course. Course credit and transfer does not depend on the modality of the course but rather the SLO's. All State System institutions are approved by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) for distance education. Consistent with this approval, and guidance provided by HLC and developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), institutions have demonstrated that "curricula for the institution's on-line learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats."

As policy guidance for transfer and articulation, all Biology courses with labs listed on the CEP and that appear on student transcripts completed in the 2020-2021 academic year will be accepted for transfer and application to degree requirements, regardless of the modality of instruction for the lab portion of the

course. CEP Biology faculty and the Council on Instruction will provide a review and final determination as soon as possible to create a permanent change.

*Biology courses that previously required face-to-face lab instruction:
- *BI 102 General Biology (Majors)*
- *BI 103 General Biology I (Majors)*
- *BI 104 General Biology II (Majors)*
- *BI 201 General Botany*
- *BI 205 Plant Anatomy*
- *BI 301 Microbiology*
- *BI 401 Comp Vertebrate Anatomy*
- *BI 406 Human Anatomy*
- *BI 425 Human Anatomy and Physiology*
- *BI 465 Human Physiology*
- *BI 701 General Zoology*
- *BI 714 Invertebrate Zoology*
- *BI 724 General Entomology*
- *BI 905 Introduction to Cell Biology*