

Policy Statement on Distance (including Online) Education

CAUT is committed to increasing equality and equity of educational opportunity for all ~~Canadians~~**students**. Distance education, including online instruction for whole courses and for “blended” ones, can provide students, particularly members of groups traditionally under-represented in higher education, flexibility and choice in place and time of access to instructors, peers, and learning materials.

~~Distance education allows institutions to teach and support students over a wide geographic area. However, it requires a shift in infrastructure requirements, from physical space to increased reliance on communication and information technologies.~~ The development and delivery of quality distance education courses require adequate specialized expertise provided by academic staff (~~faculty and librarians~~), instructional and web space designers, editors, graphics specialists, and programmers.

~~Distance education should not be conceived or implemented as a way to save money: for example, by enrolling hundreds of students in “pre-packaged” courses taught by Contract Academic Staff for minimal compensation.~~

~~Nor should distance education be conceived or implemented in a way that threatens or diminishes in any respect the control of curriculum and pedagogy by academic staff.~~

~~In other words, changes in platform and medium~~**Different platforms and media of course delivery** do not alter the core rights and responsibilities of those who teach. Technology in place or under development should serve **the pedagogical goals of** distance educators, including online educators, ~~and their goals, not vice versa.~~

Regardless of delivery mode, ~~t~~To ensure equity and quality in the delivery of distance education, academic staff associations ~~shall~~**should** negotiate **provisions in their collective agreements to provide that**~~contract language to ensure that:~~

- **Academic staff**, through collegial processes, **should determine the method of course delivery** and workload allocation.
- ~~Members~~**Academic staff** who create courses **should** retain their ~~copyright and~~ intellectual property rights relating to **the content of** those courses. ~~All revisions to copyrighted material must be approved by the copyright holder.~~
- ~~Courses shall be taught by fully qualified academic staff.~~
- ~~Class sizes shall be determined by collegial processes and workload standards set by the Collective Agreement.~~
- **Academic staff who teach distance and online courses should have the same academic freedom rights as those who teach through other modes of delivery.**

- **Courses should be taught by fully qualified academic staff. On-line and distance education should not be used to outsource work of the bargaining unit.¹**
- Academic staff **should** ~~shall~~ be fairly compensated for all components of the course, including but not limited to developing, teaching, monitoring, and participating in on-line discussions, responding to student questions, ~~assessment, etc.~~ **assessing student work, etc. Class sizes should be determined by collegial processes and workload standards set by the Collective Agreement.**
- ~~Academic staff shall determine the method of course delivery and the selection of course materials.~~
- Academic staff ~~shall~~ **should be provided with** ~~have~~ sufficient time and resources to ~~learn how to use~~ **further develop skills in** distance education pedagogy and new information technologies.
- ~~Academic staff shall have access to academic librarians and~~ **Academic staff should be provided with professional support (including but not limited to programmers, instructional designers, editors, library services for themselves, etc.)** and their students, especially in the areas of information literacy and reference services to support the ~~pedagogical resources to enable the effective~~ delivery of the course. **Students and Academic staff who are located away from the campus are entitled to library services on the same basis as those provided for students and academic staff on campus.**
- ~~Members shall be provided with professional support (including but not limited to programmers, instructional designers, editors, library services etc.) and pedagogical resources to enable the effective delivery of the cours~~
- **Health and Safety provisions should apply to all academic staff regardless of the location of their workplace.**

**Approved by the CAUT Council, May 2015;
Revised by the Executive Committee, September 2018.**

Endnotes

1. See CAUT "Policy Statement on Outsourcing".