



Certifying Hybrid Classes (classroom instruction and distance learning combined)

Change in Certifying Procedures

For all terms beginning on or after August 15, 2019, School Certifying Officials (SCOs) will certify all courses which combine classroom instruction and distance learning (commonly known as hybrid courses) as in-residence training.

These procedures are not retroactive and terms beginning on or before August 14, 2019, will not be amended to account for these changes.

Examples:

- **Example 1:** A 3-credit undergraduate course requires students to physically attend class once a week for 1 hour. All the rest of the training is conducted online. You would certify this class as in-residence.
- **Example 2:** A 3-credit undergraduate course requires students to meet in class for the 1st day of term and attend all mid-terms and finals in person. All the rest of the training is conducted online. You would certify this class as in-residence.
- **Example 3:** A 3-credit graduate course meets once at the beginning of the term. All the rest of the training is conducted online. You would certify this class as in-residence.
- **Example 4:** A 3-credit undergraduate course allows students to voluntarily attend a course in-residence 1-hour a week, though the student has the option to take that hour online. You could certify this class as in-residence, if you have supporting evidence (i.e. sign-in sheet) that the student attended at least 1 of the in-classroom sections. If you do not have this supporting information, you cannot certify this course as in-residence and must report it as distance.
- **Example 5:** A 3-credit graduate course has an in-residence meet-up before the term begins. During the actual term all training is conducted online. You would be unable to certify this class as in-residence training. It would have to be certified as distance training.

Difference between Independent Study and Distance Learning

- **Distance Learning** – training which uses one or more technologies to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, synchronously or asynchronously.

For the purpose of distance learning, technologies include:

- Web-based training
- One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
- Audio conferencing

NOTE: If a course only utilizes training through the technologies outlined above, the course must be certified as distance training.

- **Independent Study** – education that is tailored to fit the interests of a specific student, which occurs outside the traditional “classroom/laboratory setting”, and is carried out under the direct supervision of a trainer. Independent Study can be offered via in-residence or distance learning.

Relevant Statutory, Regulatory, and Procedural References

- [38 United States Code \(USC\) 3313](#)
- [20 USC 1003](#)
- [38 CFR 21.4252](#)
- [38 CFR 21.4267](#)
- [38 CFR 21.9505](#)

The School Certifying Official Handbook will also be updated to reflect this information in Revision 5.6.2.

Questions About This Change

Questions regarding this update, or clarification requests of whether a course should be certified as in-residence or distance learning, should be submitted to the [Education Liaison Representative \(ELR\) of jurisdiction](#).