



General FAQ

Q: What is the difference in distance learning and digital learning? The two terms are used synonymously. Distance learning is a general term for any type of educational activity where participants are at a distance from each other and may or may not be separated in time. Digital learning is blended or online learning.

Q: What is blended learning? Blended learning is any time a student learns partially from a brick-and-mortar location (school) and partially through online delivery with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace. (iNacol, 2011)

Q: What does F2F mean? F2F is an abbreviation for face-to-face and signifies a face-to-face meeting between a teacher and student.

Q: What does LMS stand for? A Learning Management System is the technology platform through which students' access online courses. A LMS generally includes software for creating and editing course content, communication tools, assessment tool, and other features for managing the course, (Northwest Educational Technology Consortium, 2005)

Q: What does "home-grown" mean? Content developed and delivered by a teacher, school, or district for use in instruction, as compared to content developed by outside agencies, companies or vendors. (iNACOL, 2011)

Q: How many students can an online instructor have in a day? Arkansas Rules and Regulations for Distance Learning state that student-teacher daily limits do not apply to asynchronous instructors. This provides greater flexibility to online instructors. There are recommended limits based on the course delivery structure.

Q: What are the requirements for my distance learning facilitator? The Arkansas Rules and Regulations for Distance Learning state that there must be an adult facilitator in the room with students that access courses from school. It is helpful if the facilitator is trained in classroom management, ethical testing strategies, and other applicable areas. The facilitation requirements beyond these listed will be dependent on the online provider.

Q: Who modifies the content for special education students? The district is ultimately responsible for this; however, the online provider should work with the facilitator/student to accommodate in the online environment as well.

Q: What changes should I make to my Student Handbook? It is recommended that high schools add the Act 1280 provision of a required digital learning course beginning with the 2014-2015 9th grade class.

Q: Does an instructor of a course that meets Act 1280 have hold an Arkansas license? According to Act 1280, the instructor must be highly qualified but is not required to hold an Arkansas license.

Implementation FAQ

Q: How do I know if my blended or online learning scenario will meet the requirements of Act 1280? The best gauge is to ask yourself which of the four components students have some element of control over in your scenario. True blended and online learning environments are student-centered by giving the student some element of control over the time, place, path or pace. A district can request a consultation with ADE to acquire feedback on their vision. This is accomplished by contacting the local cooperative distance learning coordinator.

Q: If a district is implementing a home-grown digital learning course using a district teacher to design content and deliver the class, do they need to become an approved online provider? No. Districts that utilize internal district resources to implement a blended or online course, do not need to seek approval to be an online provider.

Q: Are there any waivers for a student on this requirement due to disability? There are no waivers. Online courses should be designed according to Universal Design Principles and meet the ADA Section 508 law for universal accessibility. This is a question that districts should ask the online provider before contracting for services.

Q: If a district plans to offer a course digitally that is already on the ADE approved course list, do they need to seek additional course approval? No, any course that is on the course approval list at ADE is approved to be taught by the district however the district decides to teach it.

Q: If a district plans to offer a course digitally that is NOT on the ADE approved course list, they need to seek approval? Yes.

Q: If a district chooses an online provider from the ADE approved provider list, does this mean that every course that provider offers is available for the district to offer students? No. It is the district's responsibility to determine if the course offered is on the ADE approved course list. If that course is NOT on the list, the district should seek course approval through the Curriculum and Instruction Unit. There is a clear and separate distinction between an ADE approved course and the Act 180 Online Provider approval.

Q: Is a district required to utilize the approved provider list if they are using a district teacher to implement the course using a provider's course content? No. Districts that use their own teacher as the teacher-of-record may choose any software programs suitable for their scenario. It is recommended that districts utilize the "Checklist for Choosing an Online Provider" in the decision-making process.

Q: Is a district required to utilize the approved provider list if they are using a provider's teacher as the teacher-of-record? Yes. It is recommended that districts utilize the "Checklist for Choosing an Online Provider" in the decision-making process.

Q: Can public school students access online courses from home or another location besides school? That is a district decision. It is recommended that districts make provisions for hardware, software, connectivity for public school students that access online courses from home.

Q: Will my Computer Business Applications meet the requirements of Act 1280? If the design and delivery of the course uses technology to provide a student some element of control over the time they access the content, the place they access the content, the learning path they take, or the pace in which they master the content.

Q: Can I use Virtual Arkansas software and my teacher to offer a class? Yes. Virtual Arkansas will have courses available for use by Arkansas districts.

Q: Is there a stated amount of coursework that must be on line versus that offered by direct instruction? (Science lab activity is 20%). No.

Q: Will a flipped classroom meet the requirements of Act 1280? If the design and delivery of the course uses technology to provide a student some element of control over the time they access the content, the place they access the content, the learning path they take, or the pace in which they master the content.

Q: Will my current business classes count towards meeting Act 1280? If the design and delivery of the course uses technology to provide a student some element of control over the time they access the content, the place they access the content, the learning path they take, or the pace in which they master the content.

Q: Will Virtual Arkansas classes count towards meeting Act 2180? Yes. These courses are designed to provide students choice of learning path and pace within certain timelines. The organization of time and place is determined by the district.

Q: Will E.A.S.T. lab classes count to meet Act 1280? If the design and delivery of the course uses technology to provide a student some element of control over the time they access the content, the place they access the content, the learning path they take, or the pace in which they master the content.

Q: If I provide my own digital learning class, how does the state know it is legitimate? Assurances for meeting Act 1280 will be added to the yearly assurances that Arkansas public school superintendents sign each year for ADE.

Q: Who is responsible for determining highly qualified status of a teacher if I contract for content and instructor? The district is responsible for the highly qualified status of a teacher contracted through an online provider. It is recommended that the district utilize the “Checklist for Choosing an Online Provider” provided by ADE.

Q: If an approved provider offers a course that is part of the 38 required units do I have to be sure it meets the Arkansas frameworks since you only approve providers and not courses? Yes. It is the district’s responsibility to ensure that the course meets the Arkansas frameworks.

Q: What is the penalty for not complying with Act 1280? As with any other requirement, the school district will receive a flag for non-compliance. The student would not meet the requirements for graduation in Arkansas.