

SOM OP: 30.17, **Distinction Programs**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) policy and procedure is to provide guidelines for the design, delivery, management and evaluation of distinction programs.

REVIEW: This SOM Policy and Procedure shall be reviewed within each even-numbered fiscal year by the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee. Revisions will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean for publication.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

- 1. General:** This policy is intended to ensure effective provision of distinction programs in the TTUHSC curriculum that meet student educational needs and conserve human, fiscal and educational resources. It has been developed to help ensure the SOM maintains compliance with Liaison Committee on Medical Education element 6.5.
- 2. Definitions:** Distinction Programs are areas of focused study and experience
- 3. Distinction Program Requirements**
 - i) Components must occur in all three phases of the curriculum.
 - ii) Annual components may consist of individual electives, combinations of electives or accumulation of micro-credentials
 - iii) Distinction Program credit will be awarded once the requisite components are completed
 - iv) All distinction Programs should involve equivalent effort for completion
 - v) Distinction Program capacity will be limited to up to 20 students per year
 - vi) Students may only complete one Distinction Program during medical school
 - vii) Students must maintain good academic standing throughout all Distinction Program components
- 4. Approval of New Distinction Programs:**
 - (i) The Curriculum and Educational Policy is responsible for reviewing new distinction program proposals and determining actions related to each proposal.
 - (ii) Distinction Program proposals will be reviewed by the Electives and Distinction Program subcommittee of the CEPC. A program that meets SOM educational goals and objectives will be submitted to the CEPC for approval as part of the consent agenda.
 - (iii) All new programs will be developed using the methodology described in Thomas, PA et al, **Curriculum Development for Medical Education: A Six-Step Approach**
 - (iv) Any new distinction program must be approved before or at the May CEPC meeting for inclusion in the catalog for the next academic year.

- (v) Once approval has been received from the CEPC, a new elective course form will be required for any new component elective. These forms will be created by the Office of Academic Affairs and submitted to the Registrar so that a course number can be assigned and the course can be added to the catalog.
- (vi) A standard distinction program proposal form should be used for each new program and should include the following information:
 - (a) Name of Distinction Program (including short name for use in Banner)
 - (b) Leadership team (faculty director, student director(s))
 - (c) Program description
 - (d) Goals (SMART) and Objectives
 - (e) Target participants
 - (f) Capacity (no more than 20/program)
 - (g) Prerequisites
 - (h) Needs Assessment
 - (i) Sample schedule
 - (j) Requirements for completion
 - (k) Resources
 - (l) Assessment methods
 - (m) Course evaluation procedures
- (vii) A description of all Distinction Programs will be hosted on a website managed by the Office of Academic Affairs that includes course descriptions and application processes.

5) Management of Distinction Programs

- (i) Faculty and student directors are responsible for setting the Distinction Program course schedule, recruiting participants and booking rooms or other locations.
- (ii) There are no official budgets for Distinction Programs
- (iii) Faculty and student directors are responsible for tracking student participation/completion and ensuring that final grades are assigned in a timely manner, and that the distinction program has been completed. A distinction program must be completed no later than February of a student's Phase 3 in order for the annotation to be added on their transcript.
- (iv) Distinction programs must comply with all institutional and school policies and guidelines related to instruction, including but not limited to the following:

- a. Participation in any institutional curriculum review process in place at the beginning of each academic year
- b. Use of institutionally-approved course delivery programs (aka Learning Management System), including meeting all document and website accessibility standards as mandated under Title IV.
- c. Use of institutionally-approved software packages for functions such as discussion boards, attendance tracking, etc. The Division of Instructional Technology with the Office of Academic Affairs can provide information about acceptable programs and distinction programs should not use any unapproved programs.

6) Registration of students in Distinction Programs

- (i) Students interested in any Distinction Program must utilize a central application process through the Office of Academic Affairs.
- (ii) Applications will be collected by administrative staff in the Office of Academic Affairs and distributed to program directors for screening and acceptance
- (iii) Accepted students will be registered in applicable elective courses through Banner
- (iv) All students who complete final expectations for a Distinction Program will be notified by the program director. The Office of Academic Affairs will coordinate with the TTUHSC Office of the Registrar to ensure that the Distinction Program appears on the student's transcript, if that is allowed by institutional policies and procedures.
- (v) Any student who does not complete all Distinction Program requirements may still receive annotation of any completed electives that were part of the distinction program.

7) Assignment of credit hours

- (i) Elective components of Distinction Programs in Phases 1 and 2 will be created as zero credit hour electives.
- (ii) Elective components of Distinction Programs that occur in Phase 3 (capstone courses) may be eligible for 2 hours of credit. The CEPC will determine if a Distinction Program will earn credit, and the type of credit (clinical or non-clinical) based on course content and effort required.

8) Course Evaluation

- (i) All Distinction Programs must complete an annual evaluation process as developed by the CEPC.
- (ii) An evaluation rating of "Meets Expectations" is needed for approval of Distinction Program continuation.

1. References: Thomas, PA, Kern, DE, Hughes, MT, Tackett, S,A and Chen, BY. 2022. **Curriculum Development for Medical Education: A Six-Step Approach (fourth edition)**. Johns Hopkins University Press.