



## OHIO ASPIRE DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY

The United States Department of Education’s Office of Career Technical and Adult Education has authorized states to provide distance education (DE) as a formal option for delivering adult basic and literacy education services. This authorization acknowledges the reality that an increasing number of Aspire students have both the capability and desire to pursue their Aspire studies at a distance.

*Technology should be leveraged to provide access to more learning resources than are available in classrooms and connections to a wider set of "educators," including teachers, parents, experts, and mentors outside the classroom. It also should be used to enable 24/7 and lifelong learning.*

*States, districts, and others should develop and implement learning resources that exploit the flexibility and power of technology to reach all learners anytime and anywhere.*

U.S Department of Education, 2010

The Ohio Department of Higher Education Aspire Distance Education Policy defines the practices and procedures that govern the delivery of DE in Ohio Aspire Programs.

### State Context

Ohio Aspire recognized the need to explore DE in 2002 when the state joined Project IDEAL, a national project at the University of Michigan, funded to assist state adult basic education programs in establishing a distance option. State leaders recognized that a structured, monitored DE program could expand learning options for current students and increase access for educational services for Ohio’s eligible Aspire population. By incorporating technology, students who are not attracted to or are unable to attend traditional Aspire classes, as well as those who want to supplement their in-class instruction, have another avenue to improve their skill levels. Students enrolled in DE have the same opportunity as traditional students to receive quality instruction taught by educated, knowledgeable teachers.

The formal relationship with Project IDEAL ended in 2006, but the Ohio Department of Higher Education Aspire Office continues to support distance education. Ohio Aspire programs are required to offer distance education, either as a Providing Program and/or as a Referring Partner. See Appendix A: *Roles and Responsibilities*. The Distance Education strategy in the Aspire Instructional Grant provides details about each program’s distance education services.

### Definitions

As defined by the National Reporting System (NRS), *Distance Education* is a formal learning activity where students and teachers are separated by geography, time or both for the *majority* of the instructional period. Distance learning instruction is delivered through a variety of media including but not limited to, print, audio recording, video, broadcasts, computer software, web-based programs and other online technology. Teachers support distance students through communication via mail, telephone, e-mail, online technologies and/or software.

In Ohio, distance education is primarily delivered via online software programs. The media options for delivering distance education are being expanded through DE pilot programs.

Most DE students in Ohio will receive both distance and traditional classroom education during the program year. This is called a blended approach to instruction. At the end of the fiscal year, based on the number of attendance hours in the DE class and the traditional class, the student will be classified, for federal reporting, as either a traditional student or a DE student (if more than 50% of the hours are DE). *The priority for programs is not how the students are classified for federal reporting; more importantly, the priority for programs is to provide the DE opportunity for all students in order to increase student access to instruction and successful completion of goals.*

## Approved Curricula

Approved curricula are available for beginning, intermediate, and advanced level ABE, ASE, and ESOL students. Ohio Aspire recognizes the following as approved distance learning curricula:

Acellus	Common Core Achieve	i-Pathways	Ohio eTutoring (with approval)
ALEKS Numeracy	Contemporary ITTS	KeyTrain	Edmentum/ PLATO
Aztec	EdReady	Khan Academy Math	Rosetta Stone*
Burlington English	GED Academy*/ TABE Academy*	Odysseyware	USA Learns*

\*Curricula used by the DE Hub

See Appendix B for details about the approved curricula.

The Aspire office may approve additional curricula based on investigation and data analysis. Programs wishing to recommend additional distance learning curriculum for approval may submit a *New Curriculum Approval Application* and submit to [aspiregrants@highered.ohio.gov](mailto:aspiregrants@highered.ohio.gov). **New curriculum applications are reviewed in November and May.** See Appendix C.

## Instructional Methods

Distance students, as with classroom students, must have at least 12 hours of contact before they can be counted as enrolled for reporting purposes. Contact hours for distance students can be direct instructional time with a teacher or proxy hours, where the student and teacher are separated by time and distance.

Instructional hours earned via online, computer instruction that occurs at a site other than in the Aspire classroom (e.g., a student's home, a library, a learning center), will be considered as proxy contact hours. These are the two models currently used with Ohio DE-approved curricula to report proxy contact hours:

- **Clock Time Model**, which assigns contact hours based on the elapsed time that a student is connected to, or engaged in an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.
- **Learner Mastery Model**, which assigns a fixed number of hours of credit based on the student passing a test on the content of each lesson. Students work with the curriculum and materials and when they feel they have mastered the material, take a test. A high percentage of correct answers (typically 70%-80%) earn the credit hours attached to the material.

As with all services, the integrity of the curriculum and instruction are priority. Aspire programs are currently working with the Hub to pilot test the additional method below for reporting proxy contact hours. The goal is to expand delivery options for distance education.

- **Teacher Verification Model**, which assigns a fixed number of hours of credit for each assignment based on teacher determination of the extent to which a student engaged in, or completed, the assignment.

Examples may include:

- a) Synchronous learning activities
  - i. Broadcast via video, phone, chat
  - ii. Classroom instruction delivered via online technology such as Google Hangout, Blackboard
- b) Asynchronous learning activities
  - i. Moodle and other self-directed, Aspire-created courses
  - ii. Student instruction and support delivered through any means, including eTutoring

## Assessment

Formal educational functioning level (EFL) assessment, including pretests and progress tests, must occur in person at an Aspire program. Programs must establish procedures for notifying students as to when and where posttesting should occur. Decisions about posttesting should be made based upon evidence of student progress within the curriculum, hours of instruction the student has received and/or days of enrollment.

The Ohio Aspire Assessment Policy applies to all Aspire students, including Distance Education students. Posttesting must occur according to test publisher guidelines as indicated in the Ohio Aspire Assessment Policy.

## ABLELink Reporting

Distance Education students must be classified in ABLELink. The Referring Partners will set up DE classes in ABLELink. The Hub enters and record students' DE attendance hours. For Providing Programs, Appendix D: *Providing Program Model for ABLELink Data Entry Procedures* provides instructions. Classes are set up in ABLELink designated by the curricula used for distance education students. See Appendix B for the class naming in ABLELink; for example, DE – Plato. This naming convention is important for reporting purposes.

DE students will be counted in programs' Annual Performance Reports (APRs) as part of the unduplicated count of all enrolled students. In addition, distance education students are counted in two separate tables on the state level APR – Tables 4C and 5A.

## Funding for Distance Education

### Distance Education Hub

The Ohio Literacy Resource Center (OLRC) receives additional funding to support the DE Hub, which provides DE instruction to Referring Partner (RP) students, as well as oversight and facilitation of distance education.

### Referring Partner

A Program that refers students to the Hub may need to fund in-class instructional time and resources to support DE students.

### Providing Program

A Program that wishes to implement distance education in their own program may need to fund additional time and resources, including curriculum, to support distance education.

All questions related to implementing Distance Education can be directed to [de@literacy.kent.edu](mailto:de@literacy.kent.edu).

## Appendices

A: Roles and Responsibilities: Providing Program, Referring Partner, Hub

B: Approved Distance Education Curriculum

C: New Curriculum Approval Application

D: Providing Program ABLELink Reporting Directions

E: Referring Partner – Process for Referring Students to the Hub

**Providing Program (PP):** The program will offer distance education to its own students

**Required Trainings**

DE Basics and additional module(s) based on job roles

**Program Responsibilities**

1. Provide Aspire orientation to students that includes:
  - Providing students with a specific and detailed orientation to distance instruction;
  - Determining the student's computer skills and suitability for distance instruction  
*Note: The State Aspire Program has no explicit criteria to deny a student who is interested in being a distance education student from participating, but local programs are expected to explain the expectations of all students in distance education to ensure their maximum benefit;*
  - Developing the individual learning plan with the student;
  - Establishing a student portfolio for maintaining test results, RIF/R-RIFs, and other items;
  - Assisting the student with obtaining a free e-mail account if needed; and
  - Providing students with locations of computers that could be used for free (libraries, OhioMeansJobs centers, etc.).
2. Provide distance instruction using one or more of the approved curricula.
3. Collect information and input appropriate data into ABLELink for reporting purposes that includes:
  - Entering information monthly into ABLELink about the student, including progress, and seat time.
4. Provide supplemental instruction and required assessments which include:
  - Pre and progress testing the student with an approved standardized test per the Aspire Assessment Policy;
  - Delivering any face-to-face supplemental instruction needed by the distance student; and
  - Delivering instructional support and monitoring of student instructional activity.

**Referring Partner (RP):** The program will refer students who desire to study via distance to the OLRC Hub

### Required Training

DE Basics based on job role

### Program Responsibilities

1. Intake the student and maintain all records, including all required Aspire and local forms.
2. Conduct Aspire Orientation, including initial assessment and goal-setting.
3. Set up DE classes in ABLELink and enter the student.
4. Provide initial classroom instruction, if not immediately referring the student for distance instruction.
5. Complete the Student Referral Form to refer the student for distance instruction.  
See Appendix E: *Process for Referring Students to the Hub*
6. Provide supplemental in-class instruction as needed and record all in-class instructional hours (only) into ABLELink. The Hub will enter all distance hours on behalf of the RP.
7. Conduct all progress assessments.
8. Keep Distance Education Teacher apprised of any changes, including student achievement, exit, or other areas that may impact the student's instructional plan.

**OLRC Hub:** Provides DE oversight and facilitation to the Referring Partners

### Hub Responsibilities

1. Provide instructional and support services to distance education students that include:
  - Providing students with a more specific and detailed orientation to distance instruction;
  - Delivering instruction; and
  - Monitoring of student instructional activity.
2. Enter student attendance hours monthly into ABLELink.
3. Provide progress records, such as curriculum mastery and assistance needed, at least monthly, to the RP.
4. Communicate with RPs and distance education students that includes:
  - Informing students when it is time to return to the RP for progress-testing and communicating this to the RP.

## Appendix B: Approved Curricula for Ohio Aspire Distance Learning

Approved Curriculum	Description	Targeted Students	How seats are calculated	How seat time is tracked	Reports Provided	Website	Class Name in ABLELink
Acellus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading/ Language Arts</li> <li>Math</li> <li>Science</li> <li>Social Studies</li> </ul>	ABE – all levels	Enrolled seats	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reporting</li> <li>Progress reporting</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.acellus.com/">http://www.acellus.com/</a>	DE - Acellus
ALEKS Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math</li> </ul>	ABE – all levels	Enrolled seats	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress reporting</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.aleks.com">www.aleks.com</a>	DE – ALEKS
Aztec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language Arts</li> <li>Math</li> </ul>	ABE – all levels	Concurrent seats	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Testing results</li> <li>Mastery levels</li> <li>Start and completion dates</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.aztecsoftware.com/aztec">www.aztecsoftware.com/aztec</a>	DE – Aztec
Burlington English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English language skills development</li> </ul>	ESL	Per seat	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reporting</li> <li>Progress reporting</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.burlingtonenglish.com/">http://www.burlingtonenglish.com/</a>	DE - Burlington
Common Core Achieve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading/Writing</li> <li>Math</li> <li>Science</li> <li>Social Studies</li> </ul>	ABE Levels 5-6	Per Seat	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reporting</li> <li>Progress reporting</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="https://www.mheonline.com/programMHID/view/COMCOREACH/">https://www.mheonline.com/programMHID/view/COMCOREACH/</a>	DE - Common Core
Contemporary ITTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading</li> <li>Writing</li> <li>Math</li> <li>Language</li> </ul>	ABE Levels 1-4	Per Seat	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress reporting</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.glencoe.com/catalog/contemporary/online/insuite/online/insuite_sampler.html">http://www.glencoe.com/catalog/contemporary/online/insuite/online/insuite_sampler.html</a>	DE – ITTS
EdReady	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math</li> <li>Science</li> <li>Social Studies</li> <li>Reading/Writing</li> </ul>	ABE Levels 1-4	Enrolled Seats	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reporting</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	In the Student Moodle <a href="http://www.ohioable.org/learn/">http://www.ohioable.org/learn/</a>	DE – EdReady
GED Academy*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topics covered in the GED Test</li> </ul>	ABE Levels 5-6	Per Seat	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reporting</li> <li>Test results</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.passged.com">www.passged.com</a>	DE - GED Academy
i-Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topics covered in GED test</li> </ul>	ABE Levels 5-6	Per Seat	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reporting</li> <li>Test results</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.i-pathways.org">www.i-pathways.org</a>	DE – iPathways
Khan Academy Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math</li> </ul>	ABE – all levels	Open and free to participants	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reporting</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.khanacademy.org">www.khanacademy.org</a>	DE - Khan Math
KeyTrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topics covered by Workkeys</li> </ul>	ABE – all levels	Per Seat	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress reporting</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.keytrain.com">www.keytrain.com</a>	DE - Key Train
Odysseyware	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language Arts</li> <li>Math</li> <li>History</li> <li>Geography</li> </ul>	ABE – all levels	Concurrent seats  Per Seat	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reporting</li> <li>Progress reporting</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.odysseyware.com">www.odysseyware.com</a>	DE – Odysseyware



Approved Curriculum	Description	Targeted Students	How seats are calculated	How seat time is tracked	Reports Provided	Website	Class Name in ABLELink
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Science</li> </ul>						
Ohio eTutoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math</li> <li>Writing</li> </ul>	ABE – all levels ESL Levels 5 - 6	NA	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="http://estudentservices.org/e-tutoring">http://estudentservices.org/e-tutoring</a>	DE – eTutoring
Edmentum/ PLATO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language Arts</li> <li>Math</li> <li>History</li> <li>Geography</li> <li>Science</li> </ul>	ABE – all levels	Concurrent seats	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress reporting</li> <li>Time on task</li> <li>Mastery levels</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.edmentum.com/products-services/plato-courseware">http://www.edmentum.com/products-services/plato-courseware</a>	DE – PLATO
Rosetta Stone*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English language skills development</li> </ul>	ESL 3-5	Per Seat	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress reporting</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.rosettastone.com">www.rosettastone.com</a>	DE - Rosetta Stone
TABE Academy*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Math</li> <li>Language Arts</li> <li>Writing</li> </ul>	ABE – all levels	Per Seat	Online tracking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity reporting</li> <li>Test results</li> <li>Time on task</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.essentialed.com/products/tabe-academy.php">http://www.essentialed.com/products/tabe-academy.php</a>	DE – TABE Academy
USA Learns*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>English language skills development</li> </ul>	ESL 3-5	Open and free to participants	Learner mastery  2.5 hours per unit completed with 80%+ on the unit assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activity and progress monitoring</li> <li>Test results</li> </ul>	<a href="http://www.usalearns.org">www.usalearns.org</a>	DE – USALearns

\*Curricula used by the OLRC Hub

**Per Seat:** seats or licenses are reusable and can be reassigned once the student completes assignments or leaves the program.

**Enrolled seats:** seats or licenses are assigned to a single student and when the student completes assignments or leaves the program, the seat cannot be assigned to someone else.

**Concurrent:** licenses based on the number of seats that can be used simultaneously

Appendix C: Ohio Distance Education Application for New  
Distance Education Curriculum Approval



Please submit this form to [aspiregrants@highered.ohio.gov](mailto:aspiregrants@highered.ohio.gov). **Submissions for new curriculum are accepted twice a year – by November 30 or May 30 in order to allow for a revision of the DE Policy.**

Name of Program	Date submitted
Name of Aspire Administrator	
Email	Phone

**New Curriculum for Approval**

Publisher:	<p>Curriculum Information – Instructional Model</p> <p>___ Clock Time Model: assigns contact hours based on the elapsed time that a student is connected to or engaged in an online or stand-alone software program that tracks time.</p> <p>___ Teacher Verification Model: assigns a fixed number of hours of credit for each assignment based on teacher determination of the extent to which a student engaged in, or completed, the assignment.</p> <p>___ Learner Mastery Model: assigns a fixed number of hours of credit based on the student passing a test on the content of each lesson. Students work with the curriculum and materials and take a test when they feel they have mastered the material. A high percentage of correct answers (typically 70%-80%) earn the credit hours attached to the material.</p> <p>Adapted from “<i>Handbook of Distance Education for Adult Learners</i>” Project Ideal, 2008.</p>
Curriculum Product Name:	
Contact Name:	
Telephone:	
Email:	
Website:	

**Cost**

Approximate cost per student \$	Approximate cost to the program \$
Other information about cost or pricing:	

**Audience**

Educational Functioning Levels	Instructional Content e.g. speaking, listening, social studies
ABE levels	
ESOL levels	

**Additional Information**

Is the curriculum aligned to the Common Core/Ohio Aspire College and Career-Readiness Standards?
Describe the anticipated impact/effectiveness with adult students.
Describe the anticipated ease of use for the student.
What reports are available for teachers to monitor attendance and progress?
Is training provided with the curriculum? If yes, who will provide the training?

**ODHE Approval**

Approved    ____ yes                      ____no	Date
Typed Name:                              Title:	
Comments:	

## Appendix D: Providing Program ABLELink Data Entry Procedures for Reporting DE Students

### Setting up classes

- Create instructional classes for the curricula that your program uses for distance education students. Use the ABLELink naming conventions identified in the curriculum chart in Appendix B. Programs should only create classes for the curricula used. Place a check mark in the box identifying the class as Distance.

The screenshot shows the 'Add Class' form with the following fields and options:

- Class name \***: Text input field (highlighted with a red box).
- Start time \***: Text input field.
- End time \***: Text input field.
- Site assignment \***: Dropdown menu.
- Primary instructor \***: Text input field.
- Secondary instructor**: Text input field.
- # of times/week offered**: Text input field.
- Days met**: Text input field.
- Class size**: Text input field.
- Subject areas (check all that apply)**:
  - Basic skills
  - GED preparation
  - ESOL
  - Literacy
  - Family literacy
  - Distance education (highlighted with a red box)
  - Other subject(s)
- If other, please specify**: Text input field.

Buttons: Save, Cancel

### Entering students

- Select a Distance Education class as one of the student's classes
- No other changes to the Registration Form data entry process are needed. Enter the rest of the information the same as if the student was an on-site student.

### Recording attendance

- Choose the appropriate class and enter the number of hours for the student, remembering that distance hours should be entered into the appropriate distance class and face to face hours entered into the appropriate face to face class.

## Appendix E: Referring Partner – Process for Referring Students to the Hub

The process for referring students for distance education provided through the Hub is done online, initiated through the PD System. This will help to increase the security of student records and provide a fast method of transferring information to the Hub and to Distance Education Teachers.

Referring Partner staff whose roles are either as classroom teachers or other program contacts will have access to refer students. Students' names and contact information will be emailed directly to the DE teacher and will not be stored in the database. Other information, such as test scores and tracking subject, will be stored for access only by the student's ABLELink ID.

### To begin the process of referring students to the DE Hub, directors of Referring Partners will need to:

1. Log in to the PD System
2. Click on "Director access"
3. Click on "Set DE roles" under "Update/Change staff statuses"
4. Update the DE Role of any staff who will be referring students for distance education. The roles are:
  - a. Classroom teacher – instructional staff who are referring students for distance education.
  - b. Program contact – other staff who are not teachers, but who may complete the referral process on behalf of a classroom teacher or the program. Program contacts may also be contacted if the classroom teacher cannot be reached.
  - c. No distance education role – staff who are not directly involved with referring students for distance education
5. Click "Update staff DE Roles" at the top of the form when all staff are updated.

**Note:** Staff statuses can be updated at any time. As new staff is entered, the default DE Role is "No distance education role."

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### Sample setup screen

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Distance education roles for  
**Ohio Literacy Resource Center**  
Please select a distance education role for each staff member. Classroom teachers and program contacts will be the only staff able to refer students to the DE Hub.

Update staff DE roles

DE Role	Name	System ID	Position
Classroom teacher	<a href="#">Baycich, Dianna</a>		<i>Not listed</i>
Classroom teacher	<a href="#">Franks, Judy</a>		Literacy Projects Coordinator
No distance education role	<a href="#">Gambrill, Matthew</a>		Media and Technology Specialist
Classroom teacher	<a href="#">Gillette, Bethany</a>		Program Support Coordinator
No distance education role	<a href="#">Graves, Penelope</a>		Business Manager
Program contact	<a href="#">Lockhart, Susie</a>	...	Office Manager