

## Issue Brief: Distance Learning Fees

### Overview

Florida's public colleges and universities may assess a per-credit-hour distance learning course fee to support the development and delivery of distance learning courses and is authorized under section 1009.24(17), Florida Statutes, for universities and section 1009.23(16)(a), Florida Statutes, for state colleges.

First authorized in 2008, the distance learning course fee allowed colleges and universities to recover the additional costs associated with delivering distance learning courses (e.g., technology infrastructure, instructional design, and faculty support).

- Distance learning fees are not mandatory; institutions may choose whether to assess a fee for courses listed in the FloridaShines Distance Learning Course Catalog. The Florida Virtual Campus (FLVC) provides this statewide online course catalog to help students compare distance learning offerings and costs.
- The fee must not exceed the additional costs of services provided which are associated with the development and delivery of online instruction.
- It is applicable only to distance learning courses, not to face-to-face or hybrid formats.

### Statutory & Regulatory Authority

#### Universities

##### **Section 1009.24(17), Florida Statutes:**

*(17)(a) A state university may assess a student who enrolls in a course listed in the distance learning catalog, established pursuant to s. [1006.73](#), a per-credit-hour distance learning course fee. For purposes of assessing this fee, a distance learning course is a course in which at least 80 percent of the direct instruction of the course is delivered using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time or space, or both.*

*(b) The amount of the distance learning course fee may not exceed the additional costs of the services provided which are attributable to the development and delivery of the distance learning course. If the distance learning course fee is assessed by a state university, the institution may not assess duplicative fees to cover the additional costs.*

*(c) If an institution assesses the distance learning fee, the institution must provide a link to the catalog within the advising and distance learning sections of the institution's website.*

##### **Board of Governors Regulation 7.003(20)(f):**

*Distance Learning Fee - Universities may assess a distance learning fee to any student enrolled in a course listed in the distance learning catalog. The average distance learning fee amount assessed by a state university may not exceed \$30 per credit hour.*



## State Colleges

### **Section 1009.23(16), Florida Statutes:**

*(16)(a) Each Florida College System institution may assess a student who enrolls in a course listed in the distance learning catalog, established pursuant to s. 1006.73, a per-credit-hour distance learning course user fee. For purposes of assessing this fee, a distance learning course is a course in which at least 80 percent of the direct instruction of the course is delivered using some form of technology when the student and instructor are separated by time or space, or both.*

*(b) The amount of the distance learning course user fee may not exceed the additional costs of the services provided which are attributable to the development and delivery of the distance learning course. If a Florida College System institution assesses the distance learning course user fee, the institution may not assess any other fees to cover the additional costs. By September 1 of each year, each board of trustees shall report to the Division of Florida Colleges the total amount of revenue generated by the distance learning course user fee for the prior fiscal year and how the revenue was expended.*

*(c) If an institution assesses the distance learning fee, the institution must provide a link to the catalog within the advising and distance learning sections of the institution's website.*

## Implementation & Oversight

- Institutional Boards of Trustees must approve the distance learning fee and determine the amount.
- Fee amounts and justifications must be submitted to the Board of Governors (universities) or the State Board of Education (colleges).
- Institutions are required to publish the fee clearly on their websites.
- Courses with an associated distance learning fee must be published in the FloridaShines catalog and links to the catalog must be prominently displayed on the institution's advising and distance learning web pages.
- FLVC produces web compliance reports and alerts an institution when no links have been identified.

## Reporting Requirements

- Institutions must justify how the fee revenue is used, typically for activities such as the following:
  - Learning Management Systems (LMS)
  - Instructional design and course development
  - Faculty support and training
  - Online proctoring and student authentication
- State colleges must annually report fee revenue and expenditures. State level reports are available at: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/about-us/finance/afr.stml>.

## Florida Auditor General Oversight

The Florida Auditor General (AG) conducts regular audits of state colleges and universities.



Reviews assess whether:

- Distance learning fees are properly authorized, calculated, and justified
- Revenue is spent in compliance with statutory requirements

Institutions should maintain clear documentation to support:

- The rationale behind the fee
- That the fee reflects only the additional costs for online delivery

FLVC may receive data requests from the AG during audits, and it will notify institutions when data is provided.

## Recent Legislative Activity (2025)

As of the 2025 legislative session, no significant statutory changes have been enacted. However, legislation occasionally proposes changes to fee caps or reporting. Institutions should monitor for updates.

## Resources

- Section 1009.24, F.S. – State University Student Fees:  
[http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1009/Sections/1009.24.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1009/Sections/1009.24.html)
- Section 1009.23, F.S. – Florida College System Institution Student Fees:  
[http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App\\_mode=Display\\_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1009/Sections/1009.23.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=1000-1099/1009/Sections/1009.23.html)
- Board of Governors Regulation 7.003 – Fee, Fines and Penalties:  
<https://www.flbog.edu/regulations/active-regulations/>
- Florida Virtual Campus Distance Learning Catalog:  
<https://www.flvc.org/>
- Florida Distance Learning Task Force Final Report (2009):  
[https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/0051\\_0185\\_1789\\_309-SPASOC-4B-2009\\_03\\_05-FDLTF-Rprt-Ex-Summ.pdf](https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/0051_0185_1789_309-SPASOC-4B-2009_03_05-FDLTF-Rprt-Ex-Summ.pdf)
- The Cost of Online Education (2016):  
[https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/03a\\_2016\\_10\\_07\\_FINAL-CONTROL\\_Cost\\_Data\\_Report\\_rev.pdf](https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/03a_2016_10_07_FINAL-CONTROL_Cost_Data_Report_rev.pdf)



**DISTANCE LEARNING  
& STUDENT SERVICES**  
SUPPORTING THE LEARNING NEEDS OF FLORIDA STUDENTS

## About Florida Virtual Campus

The Florida Virtual Campus is a publicly funded entity authorized under Section 1006.73, F.S. It provides integrated library services, distance learning support, and student services. FLVC is hosted by Florida State University.

## Connect with Florida Virtual Campus

### Visit Our Website

[dlss.flvc.org](https://dlss.flvc.org)

### Follow Us on Socials

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[Florida Virtual Campus](https://linkedin.com/company/florida-virtual-campus)

### Contact Us

[help@flvc.org](mailto:help@flvc.org)