

# Homeland Security, Cert.

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## Delivery of Program

Asynchronously via DE technology

## Sources of Data

There will be three forms of data used to examine the effectiveness of the Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security (CHLS) distance education program: course student learning outcomes, course evaluations of online vs on campus courses, and an analysis chart of the CHLS distance education program's nine hallmarks of quality distance education.

### Source of Data 1 – Student Learning Outcomes Comparison Online versus On-Campus

Our main source of data is the student learning outcomes review conducted each year. In the Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security (CHLS) program, we compare the learning outcomes of the online and the residential on-campus program courses to ensure we have the same learning outcomes and demonstrated student learning success for each course. Therefore, when we look for evidence of learning via student papers and a rubric, we do that for both the online and on campus version of the course. Specifically, we look at the CHLS core required graduate course of PSAA 656, Fundamentals of Homeland Security to compare the student learning outcomes between the online and on campus course.

#### Findings:

Overall, online students met all learning outcomes of Content - Homeland Security Strategies and Policies; Content - Homeland Security Organizational and Operational Responsibilities; Critical Thinking; Research Competence; and Communications.

In fact, the residential, on campus program did not meet the learning outcomes in two areas of research competence and communications. This may be somewhat due to the small sample size of three papers.

In sum, the student learning outcome data suggests that the online program is as strong and successful in achieving learning outcomes as the on-campus program. In fact, it may even be more successful in the instruction of Homeland Security Communication and Homeland Security Research Competence.

**Program Learning Outcome (PLO) 1: Content - Homeland Security Strategies and Policies.** Target: Seventy-eight **78%** percent of graduate certificate students will achieve a rating of proficient on outcome 1, the Content - Homeland Security Strategies and Policies component of the rubric. **In both the Residential and the Online Format, this target was met.**

**Online:** Fourteen student papers were assessed. 86% of students achieved proficient and 14% developing, thus meeting the target. **Residentially,** three student papers were assessed and rated. 100% of the students achieved proficient status. When combined, Eighty-three percent 88% of students—online and on campus—achieved proficient status thus exceeding the target of 78%. This finding suggests that students are excelling in content-strategy and

policy. They are interpreting and assessing key homeland security concepts, strategies, and policies, to include of the jurisdictional responsibilities under the National Response Framework.

### **Program Learning Outcome (PLO) 2: Content - Homeland Security Organizational and Operational Responsibilities.**

The target was met overall in all program formats. Online met it with 93% proficiency and residential met it with 100% proficiency. There were less samples available in the residential program which may account for the 7% difference in meeting the learning outcome.

#### **(PLO) 2 Findings – Online Format**

The target was **met in the online** program format. Ninety-three percent **93%** of students achieved proficient status thus exceeding the target of 78% achieving proficiency. Out of the **14 students** papers assessed, 13 were considered proficient or 94%, 1 developing or 7%, 0 novice or 0%, and 0 no evidence or 0%. This finding suggests that students are excelling in **online courses** in Content - Homeland Security Organizational and Operational Responsibilities learning outcomes area. They are successfully applying subject matter knowledge in key national homeland security organizational and operational issues.

#### **PLO 2 Findings – Residential Format**

The target was met in the residential, on campus program format. **All three students** scored proficient in the Content - Homeland Security Organizational and Operational Responsibilities area of the rubric. Thus, one hundred percent **100%** of students on campus achieved proficient status thus exceeding the 78% target of proficiency. This finding suggests the residential students are excelling in Content - Homeland Security Organizational and Operational Responsibilities. The students are successfully applying subject matter knowledge in key national homeland security organizational and operational issues.

### **Program Learning Outcome (PLO) 3: Critical Thinking in Homeland Security**

**The target was met overall in all program formats.** One hundred percent **100%** of students achieved proficient status thus exceeding the target of 78%. Out of the 17 students' papers assessed, **17 (14 online and 3 residential) ALL were considered proficient or 100%**, 0 developing or 0%, 0 novice or 0%, and 0 no evidence or 0%. This finding suggests that students in both the online and residential, on-campus program are excelling in critical thinking. This also indicates there is no difference between achieve the critical thinking learning outcome in both the residential and on campus program. Students are successfully thinking critically in research in order to solve problems pertinent to homeland security issues.

### **Program Learning Outcome (PLO) 4 Research Competence - Research Competence**

The target was **met** in the online format, however, it was **not met in the residential** format. This indicates that the online students are meeting this learning outcome, but on campus students are not meeting the learning outcome and may need more support. However, the

residential students not meeting the learning outcome may be influenced by the few number of samples able to be obtained (3 samples) for the residential program.

#### **PLO 4 Findings – Online Format**

**The target was met in the online program format.** One hundred percent 100% of students achieved proficient status thus exceeding the target. Out of the 14 students papers assessed, 14 were considered proficient or 100%, 0 developing or 0%, 0 novice or 0%, and 0 no evidence 0%. This finding suggests that the majority of online students are demonstrating effective research skills while conducting research in original source material, to include government documents; and, applying the research of others to homeland security problems.

#### **PLO 4 Findings – Residential Format**

**The target was not met in the on campus format.** This may be in part due to the few amount of samples located. We obtained three samples of on campus Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security (CHLS) student papers from PSAA 656 Fundamentals of Homeland Security on campus, out of ten requested.

Of the three on campus sample student papers, 2 students or **67%** achieved proficiency just falling slightly short of the requisite 78% to achieve the target. And then 1 achieved developing or 33%.

#### **PLO 5 Communication: All Students - Combining all the residential and online formats.**

Overall, the target was **met in the online** format, but it was **not met in the on campus**, residential format.

#### **PLO 5 Communication Findings – Online Format**

**The target was met for the online format.** Seventy-nine percent 79% of students achieved proficient status. Out of the 14 students papers assessed, 11 were considered proficient or 79%, 1 developing or 7%, 0 novice or 0%, and 0 no evidence or 0%. This finding suggests that students are demonstrating communication competence.

#### **PLO 5 Findings – Residential Format**

**The target was not met in the on campus format.** This may be in part due to the few number of samples located. We obtained three samples of on campus Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security (CHLS) student papers from PSAA 656 Fundamentals of Homeland Security on campus, out of ten requested.

Of the three on campus sample student papers, 1 paper was assessed proficient or 33%, 0 developing or 0%, 2 novice or 67%, and 0 no evidence or 0%. This finding suggests that students are need more support in communication competence with thesis and communication support.

### **Source of Data 2 - Aggregated Student Course Evaluations Review and Comparison**

We will review the aggregated student course evaluation survey results of the required core courses that all students take in the CHLS program. We will compare select questions from the two course formats of the online student course evaluation results to the on campus student course evaluation results to look for students' perceptions of program strengths and weaknesses. Any online program deficiency will be addressed with an improvement plan. Specifically, we analyze the online/residential course evaluations of the CHLS core required graduate course of PSAA 656, Fundamentals of Homeland Security, for indicators of comparable and superior quality.

**Findings:**

Overall, the student course evaluations between the on campus and the online courses were comparable. See chart following of online and on-campus course evaluations.

In summary, course evaluations indicated students similarly and positively perceived the value of both the online courses and also on campus courses. *Students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed it was a good course in both the online and on campus formats.* This indicates that students are satisfied with both formats of courses – online and on campus.

In addition, students indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed they could apply knowledge from the class to their primary field of interest both the online and on campus formats. There were three undecided online students in that area, however, the amount undecided on that question was not significant enough to warrant concern. However, we will watch to make sure the numbers do not grow.

Course Evaluation	Percentage Evaluation Response	Good Course	Apply Knowledge from Class to Primary Field of Interest
Online PSAA 656-700 Fall 2023	71% (10 of 14)	6 Strongly Agree (60%) 4 Agree (40%)	7 Strongly Agree (70%) 1 Agree (10%) 2 Undecided (20%)
Online PSAA 656-700 Spring 2024	86% (12 of 14)	10 Strongly Agree (83%) 2 Agree (17)%	10 Strongly Agree (83%) 1 Agree (8%) 1 Undecided (8%)
Residential PSAA 656-600 Spring 2024	50% (9 of 18)	7 Strongly Agree (78%) 2 Agree (22%)	6 Strongly Agree (67%) 3 Agree (33%)
Online PSAA 656-700 Summer 2024	30% (3 of 10)	1 Strongly Agree (33%) 2 Agree (67%)	1 Strongly Agree (33%) 2 Agree (67%)

### Source of Data 3 – Analysis Chart of the Distance Education Program’s Nine Hallmarks of Quality Distance Education

The analysis chart will outline how the Online Graduate Certificate of Homeland Security meets the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Nine Hallmarks of Quality Distance Education. The nine hallmarks addressed in this analysis chart will include and be addressed from an integrated university and program level: 1) On-line learning is appropriate to the institution’s mission and purposes. 2) The institution's plans for developing, sustaining and, if appropriate, expanding on-line learning offerings are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes. 3) On-line learning is incorporated into the institution’s systems of governance and academic oversight. 4) Curricula for the institution's on-line learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats. 5) The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its on-line learning offerings, including the extent to which the on-line learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals. 6) Faculty responsible for delivering the on-line learning curricula and evaluating the students’ success in achieving the on-line learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported. 7) The institution provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in on-line learning offerings. 8) The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its online learning offerings. 9) The institution assures the integrity of its on-line learning offerings.

In sum, the gathering of the data about the 1) Student Learning Outcomes Comparison Online versus On-Campus Courses, 2) Aggregated Student Course Evaluations Review and Comparison, and, 3) the Analysis Chart of the CHLS Distance Education Program’s Nine Hallmarks of Quality Distance Education will help yield a comprehensive analysis of CHLS student success and the distance education experience.

#### Findings:

The chart verifies that the Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security Program is following Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) Nine Hallmarks of Quality Distance Education (also called Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education) from both the university and the program level: [See relevant documentation under *Supporting Documentation.*]

#### Implications

The findings from the Student Learning Outcomes Comparison Online versus On-Campus, the student course evaluations, and the Nine Hallmarks of Quality Distance Education chart, all indicated the overall effectiveness of the Online Graduate Certificate in Homeland Security given its unique mode of delivery. In fact, the online program often outperformed the on-campus program in program learning outcomes achievement.

## Supporting Documentation



### Guidelines for the Evaluation of Disance Education - Nine Hallmarks of Quality Distance Education

#### Bush School Graduate Certificates – 100% Online Program Format - 2023 - 2024 DE Assessment

	Hallmark of Quality	Institutional	Graduate Certificate Program – School and Program Levels
1	On-line learning is <b>appropriate</b> to the institution’s <b>mission and purposes</b> .	<p>Appropriate for the Texas A&amp;M <a href="#">mission</a> statement and outreach through education. Example: “Its mission of providing the <i>highest quality</i> undergraduate and graduate programs is inseparable from its mission of developing new understandings through research <i>and creativity</i>.”</p> <p>Texas A&amp;M has a <a href="#">special website about distance education</a> to assist 100% online prospective students and students. <a href="http://distance.tamu.edu">http://distance.tamu.edu</a></p>	Appropriate for the educational mission and the outreach component of the Bush School of Government & Public Service’s mission to educate, to explore, and to engage our communities, the nation, and world through a lifelong commitment to public service.
2	The <b>institution's plans</b> for developing, sustaining and, if appropriate, expanding on-line learning offerings are <b>integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes</b>	<p>Online education/digital learning is a part of strategic planning processes at Texas A&amp;M University. Mentioned in <a href="#">university strategic plan 2020-2025</a> page 13 under <b>Cultivate academic innovation in graduate and professional programs</b> via “Develop infrastructure and learner support services to ensure a <b>high-quality digital learning environment</b>, foster graduate and professional student community, and propagate the “Aggie” experience for all students.”</p> <p>Digital learning is also mentioned and a recommended initiative in the recent <a href="#">Texas A&amp;M University Academic Roadmap</a>.</p>	<p>Distance education is a part of the strategic planning process in the Bush School and its programs. It is discussed in school and departmental strategic planning.</p> <p>A distance education task force was created in Fall 2022/Spring 2023 to ensure continued distance education outreach, growth, and quality. The task force is ongoing into 2023 and 2024.</p> <p>Distance education programs at the Bush School complete the <a href="#">Distance Education Program Assessment Review process</a>.</p> <p>A Bush School Distance education subcommittee was created in 2024 as a part of the Academic</p>

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		Distance education program analysis is a regular part of the <a href="#">Texas A&amp;M University Program Assessment Process</a> .	<p>Affairs Committee at the Bush School, composed mostly of voting faculty members, along with non-voting staff, who review academic and curricular initiatives.</p> <p>The Bush School Office of Extended Education, who facilitates online student success of online graduate programs at the Bush School, ensures strategic planning for online programs includes adequate budgeting, specific growth goals, technology planning, and student support services, along with faculty engagement in that planning and processes.</p>
3	On-line learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of <b>governance and academic oversight</b> .	<p>Incorporated into Texas A&amp;M University's regular processes of governance to include curricular approval processes such various level curricular committees and faculty senate. Advising follows university procedures and the graduate procedures of the Graduate and Professional School processes.</p> <p>Rigor of online courses ensured via curricular processes that require demonstration of faculty reviewed student learning outcomes, correct amount of contact credit hours, and rigor of the online course comparable to on ground course.</p>	<p>Governance and curricular processes follow all school and departmental processes and procedures.</p> <p>Academic oversight of courses and programs is at the departmental level in alignment with residential processes.</p> <p>Rigor of online courses in 100% online graduate programs at the Bush School are ensured through in-depth course review processes by both faculty and instructional design staff. Review includes documented quality course check lists.</p>
4	<b>Curricula</b> for the institution's on-line learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.	<p>Curriculum approvals, including online courses, follow all university procedures and approvals. Syllabi reviewed by various committees at multiple university levels to ensure academic rigor equivalent to residential courses.</p> <p>Program assessment activities help ensure and prove comparability of online programs to traditional format programs.</p>	<p>Instructional designers assist faculty in coherent and cohesive online course design that follow andragogical principles and proven best practices.</p> <p>Bush School departmental faculty committees review all syllabi to ensure equivalency in rigor to residential courses.</p> <p>Rigor of online courses in 100% online graduate programs at the Bush School are ensured through</p>

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			<p>in-depth course review processes by both faculty and instructional design staff. Review includes documented quality course checklists.</p> <p>Program assessment activities help ensure and prove comparability of online programs to traditional format programs.</p>
5	<p>The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its on-line learning offerings, including the extent to which the on-line learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals.</p>	<p>Completed via yearly <a href="#">Distance Education Program Assessment</a> activities.</p>	<p>Completed via yearly <a href="#">Distance Education Program Assessment</a> activities.</p> <p>Improvements to online programs made to enhance attainment of online learning goals.</p> <p>Informal distance education program assessment is conducted at the Bush School at the online graduate program level. Additional internal surveys, focus groups, and testimonials are gathered to gauge student success and make program improvements.</p> <p>Effectiveness assured through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Instructional Design experts who assist faculty in quality online course design that follow pedagogical and andragogical principles.</li> <li>● A rigorous online quality control checklist that every Bush School Online course must complete.</li> <li>● Online student retention plan that ensures student participation</li> <li>● Faculty engagement checkpoints to make sure faculty have the needed online classroom support</li> </ul>
6	<p>Faculty responsible for delivering the on-line learning curricula and</p>	<p>Faculty who teach online follow the same hiring procedures and approvals as</p>	<p>Online faculty follow the same approval processes as residential faculty.</p>

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	evaluating the students' success in achieving the on-line learning goals are <b>appropriately qualified</b> and <b>effectively supported</b> .	<p>residential faculty. The faculty qualification process is the same.</p> <p>Online faculty utilize the same support offices as residential faculty such as the Center for Teaching Excellence, the Aggie Honor Code Office, 24/7 Technical Support and 24/7 Canvas support, and more!</p> <p>University-wide Faculty Support Website of <a href="https://lms.tamu.edu/keep-teaching">https://lms.tamu.edu/keep-teaching</a></p>	<p>Faculty are supported by staff and administrators, as well as the offices at Texas A&amp;M University.</p> <p>Like residential faculty, the online faculty are guided by the curricular department head.</p> <p>Bush School Faculty members teaching in the 100% online environment are required to complete the Online Teaching Orientation Course prior to teaching in the online classroom. This teaches pedagogy for successful online teaching as well as the technical aspects of the Learning Management System (LMS).</p>
7	The institution provides <b>effective student and academic services</b> to support students enrolled in on- line learning offerings.	Texas A&M University provides all of its services to all students—on campus and online. Examples of services for all students include technical support, Canvas support, career services, financial aid, writing center support, Veterans services, psychological and mental health resources, and more!	The Bush School of Government & Public Service provides support to both online and on campus graduate students, including advising support, the writing center, career services, and extracurricular opportunities.
8	The institution provides <b>sufficient resources to support</b> and, if appropriate, expand its <b>online learning offerings</b> .	<p>Resources provided to support online learning via the <a href="#">Center for Teaching Excellence</a> (see Digital Learning selection) that provides training resources and manages <a href="#">the Canvas Learning Management System</a>.</p> <p>Library resources are available remotely through the Get It For Me Service <a href="http://library.tamu.edu">http://library.tamu.edu</a></p>	<p>Faculty and students have the support of all the existing university and school resources. In addition, online student support resources are also provided by the Office of Extended Education – online faculty and online student support unit. Resources for online students include: prospective student recruitment, specialized student advising, and personalized student communications for online students. Additionally, advisors educate online students about the resources available to them, and they help online students navigate the resources of the university.</p> <p>The Office of Extended Education plans the yearly budget for online graduate programs for the Bush School that includes consideration of Marketing, Training, and various Technological Resources.</p>

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<p>9 The institution assures <b>the integrity of its on-line learning</b> offerings, including the extent to which the on-line learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals.</p>	<p>Academic Integrity Assured Through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NetID authentication to verify student identity in online courses.</li> <li>● Academic Integrity via the Student Rules <a href="https://student-rules.tamu.edu/aggiecode/">https://student-rules.tamu.edu/aggiecode/</a></li> <li>● Tools used such as Turn It In to identify plagiarism</li> <li>● Academic Integrity addressed in all syllabi</li> <li>● Aggie Honor System Office helps ensure and enforce Academic Integrity <a href="https://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/">https://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/</a></li> </ul>	<p>Academic Integrity Assured Through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Faculty training emphasizing how to use Turn It In, and the procedure to report Aggie Honor Code violations.</li> <li>● Academic integrity addressed in orientations and in syllabi for students.</li> </ul>
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