

IDT 7007

Research Exercise

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Identify a specific graduate degree program in instructional technology, distance education, or both, that is offered *entirely or primarily via distance education*. Identify just one program at one university. Answer the following questions:

Part I: The institution and its programs (1 point each, unless otherwise indicated)

1. List the name, mailing address, and website URL of the institution. [.5 point]

Online University in South Florida

2. What degrees and majors are offered in the identified program? For instance, NSU offers an EdD in instructional technology and distance education. Florida State University offers an MS in instructional systems design. [.5 point]

The University offers the Instructional Design and Technology MEd, EdS, and PhD online programs. This research exercise focusses on the PhD in Instructional Design and Technology.

3. For how long has the institution been offering the identified program at a distance?

There is no information about how long the program has been offered, but the admission office estimates that this program has been offered for no more than seven years (D. Messenbugh, personal communication, September 15th, 2021).

4. What course delivery technologies are used? Be specific: general terms such as “Web-based” are insufficient. Also, be inclusive, bearing in mind that many programs use a variety of technologies in addition to a course management system.

“Blackboard Learn is the University’s online platform and learning management system. Students enrolled in online courses can easily find their orientation, course information, and additional resources here.”

5. Is there a face-to-face component of instruction? If so, where is it conducted, and for what duration?

This is an online program. There is no information about face-to-face instruction. But doctoral students are required to complete two residences. One in the first year of the program, and the second prior taking Advanced Research: Pre-Proposal and Literature Review class.

6. How long does it take to earn a degree in the identified program? (Indicate either the briefest amount of time required or the amount of time most students require.

To receive a Doctor of Philosophy in Instructional Design and Technology, students should complete 60 semester credit hours. Students are schedule to take one or two classes concurrently every term and each term is eight weeks long. Full time students complete

their course work in two and a half years. Part-time students complete their course work in three and a half years. After completing all the course work, students usually spend about a year and a half to complete their dissertation (D. Messenbugh, personal communication, September 15th, 2021).

7. *Is the institution accredited? If so, by what organization? [.5 point]*

The institution is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award certificates and degrees at the associate, baccalaureate, masters, specialist, and doctoral levels.

Is the institution public or private? If private, is it for-profit or not-for-profit? [.5 point]

It is a private not-for profit institution.

8. *What is the total enrollment of the institution? How many students are enrolled in the identified distance-delivered program?*

The total enrollment of the institution is approximately 13,000 students. The University's online and international students represent fifteen percent of the total student population. There is no information on the website about the total enrollment in the PhD program in Instructional Design and Technology. I contacted the admission office, and they did not have this information (D. Messenbugh, personal communication, September 15th, 2021).

9. *What is the tuition (per course or per year)?*

Below is description of the tuition cost for all PhD programs in the institution.

Tuition Charge Per Semester

Doctoral Degree Programs	
12 credits	\$13, 848.00
9 to 11.99 credits	\$10,386.00
6 to 8.99 credits	\$6,924.00
3 to 5.99 credits	\$3,462.00

Doctoral Program–Dissertation (4 credits per semester) \$7,232.00
Doctoral Residency 1 On Campus Training \$1,600.00
Doctoral Residency 2 On Campus Training \$794.00

Part II: The institution's website (1 point each)

1. ***How would you rate the visual appeal of the site? What elements are visually appealing, and which aspects are less so?***

The website is visually appeal. It has five tabs that each represent the most important areas of the institution. High-definition pictures and videos are used with the only purpose to make the website attractive to current and prospective students. The student registration webpage was the least attractive to me. The image has low definition if compared to the rest.

2. ***Is the site easily navigable and well organized? Provide examples.***

The website is easily navigable and well organize. I navigated through the website and found most information without a problem. I went to the online section under academic y found all PhD programs and easily found the Instruction Design and Technology program. I clicked and all the program information was there. When looking for the course delivery technology, I went to the students' tab and all the information about Blackboard was there.

3. ***Does the site contain sufficient information to answer questions 1-10? If not, provide details.***

The website contains sufficient information to answer most of the questions. Nevertheless, some questions were difficult to find their answers to. For some questions I had to use the browser tool because it is not clearly shown, the cost of tuition is one of them. Other questions, like number three, there is no information on the website. Therefore, I had to contact the Admission Office to answer it.

4. ***What is the most positive aspect of the website?***

The most positive aspect is the News and Events section. It includes social media, blogs, events calendar, and new releases. I navigated through each of them. And they were up to date. This mean they make sure the website is updated with the most recent news and upcoming events.

5. *What aspect of the site is most in need of improvement?*

Information about the cost of tuition and fees is crucial when deciding whether to apply for an institution or not. This information is not easily accessible on the website. Finding this information took me time until I decided to type on the website's browser. I navigated through the entire admission session and no information was found. I decided to use the browser tool and the Graduate Catalog popped up. I looked at the Table of Content and found tuition on page 76.

The tuition information in the catalog is very confusing. It is not by credit. It is by semester and each semester's tuition depends on the number of credits a student takes. I do not understand how they make these calculations and why there are different tiers based on the amount of credit per semester a student takes. In my opinion this information needs to be more easily understandable and more accessible to everyone who would like to know more about the institution.