

Distance Education Policies & Procedures

Distance Education Philosophy

It is the philosophy of Miles Community College to provide quality distance education in the form of interactive television or video conferencing, online learning and satellite conferencing. Miles Community College will provide distance classes to people working toward a degree or for continued education purposes and retraining of the current workforce.

Distance Education Student Policies

Registering for Distance Courses

To be officially registered in distance education courses, students and advisors using paper forms must turn a copy of their registration form into the distance education office to be signed and processed there. When signing up for distance education courses online in the student management system, SonisWeb, students and advisors may register for a course, but will receive notification that they are not officially enrolled in the course until it is authorized by the Distance Education office. Students will then be e-mailed confirmation of their acceptance and sent log-in instructions and contact information for ordering texts and materials.

Students requesting a course over the Interactive Television system will ask for a preferred Interactive Television site at the time of registration. They will be e-mailed a written confirmation of their acceptance into the ITV site of their choice and sent instructions and contact information for ordering texts and materials. Students who cannot take a course at their site of choice will receive a telephone call from the Distance Education office with other options available to the student. If they do not receive written confirmation, they are not registered with the Distance Education department.

Students are not to contact the ITV sites on their own to make arrangements for a class. Only a representative from Miles Community College may make these arrangements. Students who contact schools on their own may forfeit their rights to receive courses at that site from Miles Community College.

Drop/Add Procedures

To drop or add a distance course, students are required to contact their advisor via e-mail. The advisor will then

1. Complete the drop slip and give the pink copy to the Distance Education office so the student can be removed from the online platform before charges are incurred or proctors and site monitors at ITV sites can be notified not to expect the student.
2. Turn the white and canary copies of the drop slip into Student Services to be placed in the mailbox of the instructor for a signature.

3. The instructor will return the signed drop slip for processing in the Sonis system by the registrar.

Incompletes and Make-up

Should a student get behind by more than four weeks by the last day to withdraw without penalty, instructors should encourage complete withdrawal from the course. Incompletes will be given only for illness or unavoidable circumstances which prevent students from completing the last four weeks of a course during the regularly scheduled semester or course term. Unavoidable circumstances do not include poor planning in keeping up with course work or computer issues as the course can be completed from any computer.

Students have two weeks after the last day of the semester to complete their Incompletes online without penalty. Any student taking longer than two weeks to complete their coursework after the last official day of the semester will have to pay complete tuition and fees to reenroll in an online course and complete their work. Then, according to the Miles Community College incomplete policy, students have eight total weeks to complete their work after the last day of the class. If students receiving an “I” grade do not complete their coursework within eight weeks after the last day of the class, the “I” grade is automatically changed to an “F” grade.

Incomplete work will be graded and posted on the transcript within 30 days of completion.

Video Taping Classes

The Miles Community College Distance Education department will only be responsible for supplying the VCR tapes and postage to send students missed course content due to technical problems of the equipment at Miles Community College or a receiving site. Miles Community College will not supply tapes and the costs of mailing them to students who simply cannot make class. If a student wants a class taped that they will miss, they must supply the tape and enclose \$1.50 for postage.

Distance Education General Policies

Examination Considerations for Distance Courses

Instructors are given the option of having proctored, or non-proctored exams for their distance classes. Those who choose to have a proctor, must give written confirmation to the distance education coordinator, along with their test dates at the beginning of the semester, no later than one week after the beginning of the semester or seven days before their first test.

The Distance Education office will then set up proctors in the outlying sites in a location nearest to the address of where the class is being sent unless written notification is received from an academic program chair designating another consistent testing site. For communities that have five or fewer students taking no more than three classes, the public libraries will be contacted to provide the proctor services as part of their no-cost community service. An academic program chair may choose another testing site and assume the associated costs of the facilities and proctor. If a volunteer proctor cannot be found at a site that has five or fewer students, and an academic program has not assumed the proctor costs, the students will be required to pay the proctor fees or else travel to the nearest site where a proctor is located for testing.

For classes that have more than five students, or more than three classes that require proctors in their region, a proctor will be hired. A job announcement will go out in the local paper for that area, and general applications from the Montana Job Service will be accepted. Interviews will be held over the telephone as well as any job offers. For areas that have hired proctors, computer labs will be located for a testing site or Miles Community College will be responsible for providing a mobile testing lab.

Proctors will be hired, evaluated and managed by the Distance Education Coordinator. Proctor schedules will be sent out using the test dates provided by the instructors excluding the final exams. Therefore, instructors who require proctors must adamantly stick to their testing schedule. If they cannot stay on schedule, they will be required to contact the Distance Education Coordinator to arrange changes. This includes not only changing dates and times, but also changing their testing method, i.e. computerized tests to paper and pencil.

Make-up Exams

Make-up exams or quizzes for distance students will only be allowed for medical or family emergencies. Students must contact their instructor to get permission to change the exam date. If the instructor requires a proctored exam, the instructor will then contact the distance education coordinator concerning the change. Students will be assigned a new proctored test time that coincides with the proctors existing testing schedule. If the student cannot make the new test time, they will have to pay for the additional proctoring services or travel to Miles Community College for the make-up examination. Proctors will only be paid for scheduled test dates and times arranged by the Distance Education office. Any arrangements made between the proctor and students will not be reimbursed by Miles Community College.

Instructor Training

Instruction for faculty new to teaching over the Interactive Television systems will be given during the teacher workdays at the beginning of each semester. This two-hour course outlines best practices in distance education as well as an overview of the system.

Each semester, a course for online instructors will be held to teach new online instructors to build online courses, as well as prepare courses that meet the Quality Matters standards. These courses will begin during the instructor workdays built into the beginning of each semester and then continued weekly throughout the semester at a time convenient for all. After that initial semester course, instructors are provided technical support by Distance Education office as needed.

Continuing education opportunities for instructors actively teaching online or over the ITV system will be held during the teacher workdays at the beginning of each semester. During this time, new ideas for teaching online will be shared, as well as questions answered that have arisen during the semester.

Distance Education Committee meetings will be held at least once per semester to review policies, procedures, best practices and take care of any problems that arise in the distance education arena.

The distance education portion of an instructor's load will be evaluated by the Director of the Center for Technology and Learning and then shared with the Division Chair and/or Dean to be included in their overall evaluation. Part-time instructors will be supervised and evaluated by the Director of the Center for Technology and Learning.

Distance Education Interactive Television (ITV) Policies

Technical Support ITV

All Interactive Television sections are given a technician to help with the transmission of the course. The Distance Education Coordinator will hire and oversee all ITV technicians and provide training for each. Technicians are not allowed to be enrolled members of the course in which they are serving in the technician capacity. It is the belief of faculty and staff at Miles Community College that students will not be able to effectively operate the cameras and controls, send faxes, and troubleshoot the system while trying to take notes and participate in a course as a student. Upon hiring, each technician will be given a copy of the rules and procedures as follows:

ITV Technician Rules and Procedures

1. If you are the first class of the day, arrive 10 minutes early to get the system and televisions up and running.
2. All other technicians need to arrive at least 5 minutes prior to the start of their class.

3. Take role of your class sites, if you cannot visually determine which room is which, ask “Billings are you there?” “Sidney are you there?” etc.
4. If you are missing a site, immediately contact the Distance Education Coordinator or the Director of the Center for Technology and Learning via phone for a connection. If all sites are present, continue to monitor this throughout the class. It is possible to lose a connection midway through the class.
5. If you cannot reach the Center for Technology and Learning by telephone, walk down and look at the scheduling computer to verify the problem, and determine the next help number to call. (If it is after 6 p.m., immediately call Mid-Rivers.)
6. When a classroom doesn’t come up, immediately place a tape in the **RECORD VCR**, verify that it is on **L1** and then press the **red** record button.
7. If you are connecting to only one site, you may use a direct connect by pressing the Call Status Control button and choosing the school to connect to. At the end of class, you **MUST DISCONNECT** from a manual dial or the next session will be bumped.
8. Close both doors to the classroom at the beginning of class.
9. Once all sites are functioning, you are the **PRODUCER** of the class. Switch between instructor and students as necessary, as well as PowerPoint and instructor. Watch the TV screen directly in front of you hanging from the ceiling. What you see there is what the student’s at the Distance Sites see. If you can’t read it, neither can they!
10. The **ONLY** time you may work on **ANYTHING** else while in the technician seat is if the instructor is doing **NOTHING** but talking from a seated position for the entire class. As far as I know, there are only one or two instructors who fall into this category. If you are doing something else, you still need to check-in periodically and switch between instructor and students during questioning, as well as verify all of your sites are functioning properly. **Do not assume you will be able to study during your tech time.**
11. You may **NOT** use the computer in the classroom **or eat while working** at any time. The noise at the distance sites is very distracting, and the instructors find it distracting as well.
12. You must be as quiet as possible. You have a microphone on the control panel, so your every movement is echoed at the distance sites. Remember, everything you say or do is broadcast to EVERY other site. Even if you can’t see them, they can hear you!

13. You are **NOT** to enter into class discussions, or disrupt the class at anytime. Instead, you are to blend into the woodwork as part of the technology.
14. Faxing during class, bringing up PowerPoint shows or other computer programs is the technician's responsibility. The instructor is your supervisor during class time so you need to assist them as needed.
15. The system is to stay up during the day. However, if you are the last session at night, it is your responsibility to turn off all televisions. The system itself is to be left on. It will go to sleep on its own, so you do not have to press any buttons.
16. If you are ill, you need to contact the Distance Education Coordinator immediately to allow time to find a substitute.
17. Time cards must be kept through the 15th and turned in no later than the 16th of each month. Count your time to the nearest quarter hour. You must be 10 minutes into the next quarter hour to count it as a full .25. Keep your actual hours worked in the day box and then count the total hours for the weekly total on the right side of the card. Hours are to be listed as follows in this example:
 - 5
 - 5.25
 - 5.5
 - 5.75

Interactive Television Section Size and Payment Policy

Instructors will be paid \$10 per head, per credit for distance sections that meet the following criteria. The total class must contain at least 10 students, including on-campus and distance students. For each student over 10, that is a distance student on the ITV system, the instructor will earn the \$10 per head, per credit.

Example: There are 5 students in the classroom and 6 students over the ITV system. The instructor will be paid for 1 of the distance education students.

Example 2: There are 5 students in the classroom and 5 students over the ITV system, there will be no additional compensation for the class.

Example 3: There are 15 students on campus and 4 students over the ITV system, The instructor will earn \$10 per head, per credit for each of the 4 distance students.

Instructors will have no more than 5 sites per distance section. If they agree to teach to more than 5 sites, then they will be paid the \$10 per head, per credit for each distance student, regardless of number of students on campus. The Distance Education office will not schedule more than 6 sites per course due to the enormous workload this places on the instructor and the danger it creates in the erosion of course transmission.

If distance students total more than 25 students, they should be considered their own section, and an entirely different section should be opened for the distance students. That should alleviate the competition for the instructors time between distance students and on campus sections.

Mailing and Faxing Information to Interactive Television Students

Two weeks into each semester, a list of all distance sites, their addresses and fax numbers will be given to the Instructors along with proctor information. These lists will also be placed in the ITV classrooms for use by the technicians. A message will be sent along with the mailing and faxing information reminding instructors that faxes should be used sparingly, sending no more than 2 to 3 sheets per student. Multiple copies of faxes must be made for each student in the class, as no copying agreements have been made with the outlying schools. Therefore, large volumes of information should be mailed, or made available to the students on the Miles Community College website.

All tests must be mailed to proctors or distance sites through the Distance Education and Community Outreach office. Tests must be brought to the Distance Education Coordinator with a self-addressed envelope included for return of the tests. The Distance Education Coordinator will verify the addresses on the envelopes and stamp both the return and mailing envelopes. Whenever possible, instructors are encouraged to place their tests and quizzes online to ease the frustration of mailing and getting tests back and corrected in a timely manner.

Distance Education Online Course Policies

Technical Support Online

Our current online platform provides 24/7 technical support for students and instructors. However, all online courses must also list local telephone numbers for the Distance Education and Community Outreach department to provide local support as well as other technical assistance required of students.

Creating Online Courses

Instructors will be paid to create online courses for Miles Community College at the current overload rate. Once the course is created, approved, and the instructor paid, the course becomes the property of Miles Community College. Those instructors who wish to develop a course online without compensation on their own time and using their own equipment will retain ownership of their course. Courses developed in conjunction with instructors by the Distance Education and Community Outreach department will have shared ownership. The instructor will take the original course with them when they leave, and Miles Community College will have the right to utilize the course with modifications using a different instructor.

Instructors will be contracted to create a course at the beginning of a semester after attending the initial work session during teacher workdays. Once contracted, the instructor will use the entire semester to develop their course. When the course is completed, it will go before the Quality Matters committee during the following semester. When the course has completed the Quality Matters cycle and has been approved for payment of the contract it is ready for advertising and enrollments.

All online courses must go through the Quality Matters criterion outline below. A 3 – 4 person committee consisting of at minimum one person from the Distance Education Department, and an expert in the content area. After the course is critiqued, the Director of the Distance Education and Community Outreach department will meet with the instructor and go over suggested changes. After the changes are put into place, the course will be re-evaluated by the Director of the Distance Education and Community Outreach department, if all changes meet approval, payment on the contract will be completed and the course will be released for marketing if the department who would run the course determines a need for the course. On average, it will take one semester to build a course, and approximately one semester to go through the Quality Matters process, making the course unavailable until the third semester.

As stated above, once the course is developed and the contract paid, the course becomes the property of Miles Community College. The Distance Education Coordinator and any additional faculty hired to teach the course may make changes to the course upon approval by the Director of the Distance Education department. Substantial changes to the course will require a new Quality Matters review.

Outside adjunct faculty or current faculty who bring a developed course to Miles Community College will retain ownership of the course and receive a contract to that effect. When they leave the employ of Miles Community College, the course will leave with them. Each of the developed courses will be subjected to the Peer Course Review and required to meet the same standards as courses paid to be developed by Miles Community College. If personnel in the Distance Education and Community Outreach offices place the content online for the instructor, then the course is dually owned. The instructor will take the course with them in its entirety when leaving Miles Community College. The college will have the right to hire another instructor to teach the course in their place with slight modifications.

Miles Community College uses the following Peer Course Review of Online Courses developed by the University of Maryland with FIPSE money and the provision that the instrument developed is available for sharing with all other higher education institutions. A committee of at least three to four individuals will be comprised of a representative from Distance Education, possibly the dean or chair of the department in which the course belongs, and a faculty member with expertise in the field of the course being developed. Each member will be given two to three sections of the following rubric to evaluate.

**Peer Course Review Rubric
Standards with Point Value and Annotations**

I. COURSE OVERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION

General Review Standard: The overall design of the course, navigational information, as well as course, instructor and student information are made transparent to the student at the beginning of the course.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
I.1 Navigational instructions make the organization of the course easy to understand.	3	Instructions should guide the new student to explore the course website, provide a general overview, and tell them what to do first, rather than for a list of detailed navigational instructions for the whole course.
I.2 There is a statement introducing the student to the course and to how student learning is structured.	3	Look for a statement by the instructor that gives the new student an idea of how the learning process is structured. (e.g., Does the course consist of a linear sequence of units, or can modules be studied in random order? Is the course self-paced or not?)
I.3 Netiquette expectations with regard to discussions and email communication are clarified.	2	Netiquette expectations should be clearly articulated, however brief or elaborate they may be. Do not evaluate the expectations themselves.
I.4 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate.	1	The initial introduction should help to create a sense of connection between the instructor and the students. It should go beyond essentials, such as the instructor's name, title, field of expertise, email address and phone.
I.5 Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class.	1	Look for a request that students introduce themselves as well as for a instructions on where and how to do so. Do not evaluate the quality of the request or the students' introductions.
I.6 Minimum technology requirements, minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline, are clearly stated.	1	Explanations of technical requirements may be found within the course, in documents linked to the course, or in supporting material not on the course site. Look for a link to that content and/or a reminder of it for the entering student.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES (COMPETENCIES)

General Review Standard: Learning objectives are clearly defined and explained. They assist the learner to focus learning activities.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
II.1 The learning objectives of the course describe outcomes that are measurable.	3	<p>In order for learning to be meaningfully evaluated, learning objectives should describe outcomes which we are observable behaviors. If this is not possible, (e.g., internal cognition, affective changes), check for clear indications that the learning objective is meaningfully assessed.</p> <p><u>Special situations:</u> In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), objectives for the course are institutionally mandated and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such cases, consider reviewing standard II.1 in connection with standard II.5 below. If the specific learning outcomes on the module/unit level are measurable but the institutionally mandated learning objectives <i>for the course</i> are not, standard II.1 should be considered as met for scoring purposes. Please note in the "comments" box that the institutionally mandated learning objectives for the course are not measurable.</p>
II.2 The learning objectives address content mastery as well as critical thinking ability and increased learning skills.	3	Examine the learning objectives (course and unit level) as a whole. These skills should be present in some form. Not every single objective will contain all three components.
II.3 Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and easy to understand	2	Instructions may take various forms (e.g. narratives, bulleted lists, charts) and may appear at different levels within the course (e.g. module-based or weekly assignment sheets.) Instructions should be clear and complete.

<p>II.4 The learning objectives of the course are clearly stated and understandable to the learner.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Students should be able to easily grasp the meaning of the learning objectives. Use of jargon, confusing terms, unnecessarily complex language, and puzzling syntax should be avoided.</p> <p><u>Special situations:</u> In some cases (check the Instructor Worksheet), objectives for the course are institutionally mandated and the individual instructor does not have the authority to change them. For such courses, consider reviewing standard II.4 in connection with standard II.5 below. If the specific learning outcomes on the module/unit level are clearly stated and understandable to the learner but the institutionally mandated learning objectives <i>for the course</i> are not, standard II.4 should be considered as met for scoring purposes. Please note in the “comments” box that the institutionally mandated learning objectives for the course are not clearly stated and understandable.</p>
<p>II.5 The learning objectives of the course are articulated and specified on the module/unit level.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Module or unit level objectives may be written by the instructor or come from the textbook. If no module or unit level objectives are found or referenced on the website, reviewers should hold a conversation with the instructor to gather more information.</p>

III. ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT

General Review Standard: Assessment strategies use established ways to measure effective learning, assess learner progress by reference to stated learning objectives, and are designed as essential to the learning process.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
III.1 The types of assessments selected are consistent with course activities and measure the achievement of stated objectives and learning outcomes.	3	The assessment format used should be a meaningful way to measure the learning objective. Objectives, assessments, and learning activities should align. Examples of inconsistency: (1) The objective is to be able to “write a persuasive essay” but the assessment is a multiple choice test. (2) The objective is to “demonstrate discipline-specific information literacy” and the assessment is a rubric-scored term paper, but students are not given any practice with information literacy skills on smaller assignments.
III.2 The grading policy is transparent and easy to understand.	3	At issue here is not the degree of simplicity or complexity of a given grading system itself but the clarity of its presentation to the student. A relatively complex grading system can still be unambiguous and easy to understand.
III.3 Assessment and measurement strategies are designed to provide feedback to the learner.	3	Look for positive examples where feedback is designed into a given assignment and/or assessment. Examples: (1) Instructor participation in a discussion assignment. (2) Writing assignments that require submission of a draft for instructor comment and suggestions for improvement. (3) Quizzes that include informative feedback with each answer choice.

III.4 The types of assessments selected and the methods used for submitting assessments are appropriate for the distance learning environment.	2	(1) In most online courses, the types of assessments used are appropriate for the online environment. Check for evidence to the contrary (e.g. certain assessments in lab portions of a science course may not be appropriate for distance learning.) (2) Submission of text or audio files by email or 'drop-box' is appropriate. (3) Check for inappropriate use of online testing. (e.g. the entire assessment of a course consists of 5 multiple choice tests, taken online, with no enforced time limit, the print function enabled, and no other security feature in place.)
III.5 "Self-check" or practice types of assignments are provided for quick learner feedback.	1	Look for examples of "self-check" quizzes and activities, as well as other types of practice opportunities that provide rapid feedback.

IV. RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

General Review Standard: Instructional materials are designed to be sufficiently comprehensive to achieve announced objectives and learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields. (Materials, other than standard textbooks produced by recognized publishers, are prepared by the instructor or distance educators skilled in preparing materials for distance learning.)

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
IV.1 The instructional materials have sufficient depth in content and are sufficiently comprehensive for the student to learn the subject.	3	Decisions on this standard may be particularly difficult for individual reviewers whose expertise is not in the area of the course discipline, but reviewers should assume that the instructor/designer is a competent expert in his or her discipline. Scoring should be based upon the collective wisdom of the whole Review Team.

<p>IV.2 Resources and materials are easily accessible to and usable by the learners.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>If some of the course resources, including textbooks, videos, CD-ROM, etc., are unavailable within the framework of the course website, investigate how students would gain access to them, and examine their ease of use. Example: If textbooks and/or CDs are used, titles, authors, publishers, copyright dates, and information as to where copies can be obtained, are listed.</p>
<p>IV.3 The instructional function of the course elements (learning content, instructional methods, technologies, and course materials) is evident.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>How evident to the learner is the instructional function of all materials, technologies and methods used in the course? For example: a course may be richly garnished with external links to Internet resources, but students may not know whether those resources are for background information, additional personal enrichment, or whether they are necessary for an assignment.</p>
<p>IV.4 The instructional materials, including supporting materials - such as manuals, videos, CD ROMs, and computer software – are consistent in organization, and level of detail throughout.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Online courses often use multiple types of instructional materials, each of which may be organized differently: a textbook divided into chapters, video segments ordered by topic, the course website organized in lessons, and a tutorial CD-ROM with functional units such as “quizzes”, “images”, and “Internet Links.” Are such diversely formatted course materials integrated to the point where they are useful to the uninitiated student?</p>
<p>IV.5 All instructional materials are presented in a visual format appropriate to the online environment.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Can students who have the required technical equipment and software view the materials online? Examples of problems that might arise: (1) Certain requirements in science lab courses may not be formatted for online learning. (2) Text size may be too inconsistent for typical View/Text Size setting. (3) Large text files are presented without table of contents or unit numbering (4) Multimedia files require plug-ins codecs students do not have.</p>

V. LEARNER INTERACTION

General Review Standard: The effective design of instructor-learner interaction, meaningful learner cooperation, and learner-content interaction is essential to learner motivation, intellectual commitment and personal development.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
V.1 The types of activities selected are consistent with the achievement of stated objectives and learning outcomes.	3	"Types of activities" include everything from class discussions to practice quizzes, from tests to case simulation exercises. Look for examples of such activities where consistency with objectives can be demonstrated. Try to determine whether most of the objectives can reasonably be achieved by students engaging the learning activities found in the course.
V.2 The course design provides learning activities to foster instructor-student, content-student, and if appropriate, student-student interaction.	3	The learning activities in the course should foster at least instructor-student and content-student interaction, for example: Instructor-learner: Self-introduction; discussion postings and responses ; feedback on project assignments; evidence of one-to-one e-mail communication, etc. Learner-content: essays, term papers, group projects, etc. based on readings, videos, and other course content; .self-assessment exercises; group work products, etc. Learner-learner: Self-introduction exercise; group discussion postings; group projects; peer critiques, etc.
V.3 Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turn-around time for email, grades posted etc.)	3	Are the students given clear information about how quickly the instructor will respond and how frequently he or she is available? This standard does not prescribe what that response time and availability ought to be.
V.4 The requirements for course interaction are clearly articulated.	2	Clear articulation of requirements is particularly important when a type of interaction (e.g. participation in a discussion) is not optional. What are the penalties for non-participation? Impact on grade etc.?

V.5 The course design provides a variety of opportunities for interaction between instructor and learner.	2	The opportunities for interaction will vary with the discipline of the course. Look for different kinds of examples such as (1) an actively used and well organized discussion board (2) optional “electronic office hours” provided in the chat room or chat sessions on selected topics, archived/edited and posted as a FAQ; or (3) an invitation for the class to email the instructor with individual concerns.
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VI. COURSE TECHNOLOGY

General Review Standard: To enhance student learning, course technology should enrich instruction and foster learner interactivity.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What’s the idea?
VI.1 The selection and use of tools and media supports the learning objectives of the course and is integrated with texts and lesson assignments.	3	Students should know how the tools and media they are asked to use fit into their assignments and how they relate to the learning objectives. For example: A course might require viewing video materials, but it is not clear whether some of the video materials illustrate or support any learning objective.
VI.2 The selection and use of tools and media enhances learner interactivity and guides the student to become a more active learner.	2	Look for tools and media in the course that help students actively engage in the learning process, rather than passively “absorbing” information. Examples: automated ‘self-check’ exercises requiring learner response; animations, simulations, and games that require student input; software which tracks student interaction and progress; use of discussion tools with automatic notification or ‘read/unread’ tracking feature.

<p>VI.3 All technologies required for this course are either provided or easily downloadable.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>For this standard, the term “technologies” would most likely cover a range of plug-ins such as Acrobat Reader, media players, etc. In addition, courses may require special software packages (word processing, math calculators etc.). Check the instructor worksheet for any special prerequisite skills or competencies that might be required of the student to take this course. Look for clear instructions on how students can obtain needed plug-ins and software packages.</p>
<p>VI.4 The selection and use of tools and media are compatible with existing standards of delivery modes.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>As standards of delivery mode change over time (for example, from 28.8 modems to broadband) the reviewers may want to judge compatibility in a given case as a team. Example: A given course may incorporate DVD or streaming video, but the normal consumer cannot be expected to have the prerequisite technology at any out-of-the box home computer off campus.</p>
<p>VI.5 Instructions on how to access resources at a distance are sufficient and easy to understand.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Online students need to know about and be able to get to educational resources available to them by remote access to the Internet or to the local College Library. Information on these resources should be readily visible in the class and provide clear instructions on how to access them.</p>
<p>VI.6 The course technologies take advantage of existing economies and efficiencies of delivery.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Innovative technologies appear on the market all the time. Reviewers may need to pay particular attention to this standard in the case of courses that are older (check the instructor worksheet). Example: PowerPoint presentations are traditionally contained in large-sized files that take a long time to load. Newer technology now allows the instructor/designer to zip those files for almost instant replay within existing course platforms like Blackboard or WebCT.</p>

VII. LEARNER SUPPORT

General Review Standard: Courses are effectively supported for learners through fully accessible modes of delivery, resources, and learner support.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
VII.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered.	2	Technical support for online students differs from institution to institution. Look for evidence that students taking the course have access to those support services from within the course context, such as a clear description of the services. The purpose is not to review the adequacy of those services on an institutional level.
VII.2 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation as to how the College's academic support system can assist the learner in effectively using the resources provided.	2	Academic support for online students, and the scope of what "academic support" entails, differs from institution to institution. Look for evidence that students taking the course have access to those support services from within the course context such as a clear description of the services and an access link to them. The purpose is not to review the adequacy of those services on an institutional level.
VII.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the College's student support services can assist the learner in effectively using the resources provided.	1	Student support services for online students, and the scope of what such support entails, differs from institution to institution. Look for evidence that students taking the course have access to those support services from within the course context, such as a clear description of such support service and an access link to them. The purpose is not to review the adequacy of those services on an institutional level.

VII.4 Course instructions articulate or link to tutorials and resources that answer basic questions related to research, writing, technology etc.	1	Online students' access to tutorials and help with writing, technology, research, etc. differs from institution to institution. Look for evidence that students taking the course have access to those support services from within the course context, such as a clear description of the services available and how to get them. The purpose is not to review the adequacy of those services on an institutional level. This item does not refer to tutorials and resources specifically related to course content.
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VIII. ADA COMPLIANCE

General Review Standard: Access to course resources is in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act.

Specific Review Standards:	Points	Annotation: What's the idea?
VIII.1 There is evidence of some effort to recognize the importance of ADA requirements	3	ADA compliance is the most fluid of the review standards. At this time, both Blackboard and WebCT offer features that implement ADA; the use of either course management system is evidence to satisfy standard VIII.1. Look for a statement in the course that tells learners how to gain access to ADA services.
VIII.2 Web pages provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content.	1	Look for equivalent textual representations of images, audio, animations, and video in the course website.
VIII.3 Web pages have links that are self-describing and meaningful.	1	When instructors provide links to Internet content, they should also provide useful descriptions of what students will find at those sites.

At the conclusion of the review, the course developers will be given written confirmation of the items to be changed. Once those items have been changed and approved by the Director of the Center for Technology and Learning, the course will be available to go live and the contract will be paid to the developer of the course.

Online Course Scheduling Expectations

Instructors are expected to place calendars in their online courses outlining assignment completion expectations. It is at the discretion of the instructor if units will be closed according to this schedule or if late assignments will be accepted. Both of these items need to be clearly stated in the syllabus for the course. It is the philosophy of the distance education department, however, that discussions should not be allowed to be made up. In order to foster a learning community and make the discussions meaningful, all students need to be working on them in the same week. Each online course is required to hold one discussion per week.

Course Revisions

While it is common practice for instructors to change textbooks and their course content through the years at no additional compensation, the distance education arena will adhere to this same philosophy. Instructors will continue to tweak their courses through the existence of the course as they determine best practices. When an overhaul of the course is required due to a textbook change, the changes can be completed by the instructor without additional compensation or they can be submitted to the Distance Education office where they will be input to the teacher's satisfaction. The burden of the technology conversion then falls on the distance education office, but the teacher will be expected to provide the new lesson material, just as they would in a face to face classroom.

Online Instruction and Payment

Instructors are paid according to the overload policy in chapter IV, Section 6 dealing with overload pay. If a section has 8 students, then they will receive the full amount of per credit for overload pay as determined in the master contract agreement. For each student under 8, the instructors' pay will be dropped 10% or approximately \$50 per head. It is entirely up to the discretion of the instructor to determine the minimum number of students for which they will run a class. However, the Distance Education department has determined that no class will run with fewer than 3 students unless it is a requirement for graduation to complete the scope and sequence within a specific program.

General online courses will have no more than 20 students per course, while technical courses will have a limit of 15. If the course is larger than that, the instructor is given the option to open another section, along with approval by the Dean of Academic Affairs or the Director of Distance Education depending on which department is paying their contract. The carry over of students over and above the original section of 15 to 20 will be moved to the new section. Payment for the additional section will be calculated as outlined above with a section being considered full at 8 students. The Distance Education and Community Outreach office, however, may balance the online sections for the benefit of interaction among students.

Students are not allowed to enroll in online courses, after the official drop/add period of 8 class days has ended resulting in a full refund. Many courses are locked from week to week, once a new lesson is opened, students cannot go back into the older lessons. For courses set up this way, it is too difficult for students to find success if they have missed the prerequisite lessons.