



HLC Accreditation 2016-2017

## Evidence Document

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Academic Affairs

Office of Online Learning

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# Online Learning Procedure Manual for Online Courses and Programs

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**Additional information:** This document outlines best practices and guidelines that the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires in order for Wichita State University to continue to offer online courses and programs. It serves as a guiding document for the administration of the Office of Online Learning at Wichita State University. It does not institute new policies, but rather describes how online learning will be administered in accordance to WSU policy, Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) policy, HLC guidelines, and best practices from current online learning research and the Online Learning Consortium's Quality Scorecard for Administration of Online Programs (2014). Available on the Office of Online Learning website [http://webs.wichita.edu/?u=onlineed&p=/online\\_learning\\_procedure\\_manual/](http://webs.wichita.edu/?u=onlineed&p=/online_learning_procedure_manual/) (accessed August 20, 2015.)

Wichita State University  
Office of Online Learning Procedure Manual  
Procedures for Online Courses and Programs

V. 2

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## Purpose

This document outlines best practices and guidelines that the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) requires in order for Wichita State University to continue to offer online courses and programs. It serves as a guiding document for the administration of the Office of Online Learning at Wichita State University. It does not institute new policies, but rather describes how online learning will be administered in accordance to WSU policy, Kansas Board of Regents (KBOR) policy, HLC guidelines, and best practices from current online learning research and the Online Learning Consortium's *Quality Scorecard for Administration of Online Programs* (2014).

Because online learning continues to evolve, this manual will be updated as needed to reflect changes in requirements and practices that promote successful online learning.

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## Changes

Changes to this edition include the addition of a new section on organization and governance (now section 1), subsequent renumbering, changes to the wording in the Intellectual Property Policy to reflect updates to the official WSU policy (now section 3), and additions for course evaluation, proctoring, and ADA compliance in faculty member's/instructor's roles (now section 5).

## 1. Organization and governance of the Office of Online Learning

### **A. Structure**

The Office of Online Learning was established as a hub-and-spoke model, which means that online programs and faculty do not report directly to online learning, but through their already established departments. Therefore, individual departments, in consultation with Online Learning, make all decisions related to curriculum, program development, and faculty load.

With this model, Online Learning will provide support, resources, coordination, and consultation to all colleges, departments, divisions, and university business units that reach online students. As such, it is not an academic unit, but will assist academic units in recruiting, assisting with online student enrollment, provide advising for online students, support for retention efforts, as well as oversight to ensure that all regulatory requirements are being addressed, especially as they relate to state authorization for providing distance education outside of Kansas, Title IV guidelines for distance education, and HLC and KBOR guidelines and requirements for distance education delivery.

Online Learning is a division within Academic Affairs and is overseen by a Director of Online Learning who reports to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs that oversees curriculum, assessment, and accreditation.

In an effort to ensure that faculty, staff, and students have an input into decisions about policies and procedures for the Online Learning, a faculty and staff advisory committee was established. Deans of each of the colleges (including Library and Graduate School) nominate one faculty member to serve for a two-year term. Other members may include staff representatives from other business units on campus with connections to online learning or online student support.

### **B. Faculty/Instructor Feedback**

Faculty/instructors that have feedback on issues (for example those related to compensation, load, quotas, and the use of TAs in online classes) are encouraged to reach out to their normal governance structures first (i.e., department, dean, college, etc.) that will then consult with Online Learning in order to address the issues.

### **C. Evaluation of Online Learning**

The Online Advisory Committee will evaluate the progress and actions of the Office of Online Learning on a three-year evaluation cycle by using the Online Learning Consortium's *Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs*. <http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/consult/quality-scorecard/>

The scorecard measures:

- Institutional Support
- Technology Support
- Course Development / Instructional Design
- Course Structure
- Teaching & Learning
- Social and Student Engagement

- Student Support
- Evaluations & Assessment

#### **D. Budgetary Oversight**

Online Learning draws its financial resources entirely from an online fee that is assessed on all fully online and hybrid online classes, and therefore receives no tuition dollars. The Director manages the budget with oversight by the AVPAA and the Provost.

The Director of Online Learning, AVPAA, Dean, and Department/Division Chair jointly decide on all budgetary issues related to support for online programs where the program resides, as resources are available. Individual departments where the program resides, in consultation with Online Learning, make decisions about appropriate faculty/instructor compensation levels and whether online teaching constitutes in-load work or out-of-load. Departments should not have an expectation that Online Learning would pay 100% of actual salary and operating costs. Actual budgets will be set as described above.

Departments that receive compensation will send an invoice to Online Learning every two months for actual costs incurred of any previously agreed upon funding. The department is expected to cover the up-front costs and receive reimbursements. No money will be transferred for expected costs. In the case that the amount would be too high for the department to cover, contracts and invoices are to be paid directly by the Office of Online Learning.

*Regional accreditation standard associated with this procedure*

- *Higher Learning Commission Protocol for Reviewing during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*
  - *Scope of Distance-delivered Courses and Programs*
    - *Organizational structures in place to ensure effective oversight, implementation, and management of the institution's distance-delivered offerings.*
  - *Institutional Planning for Distance-Delivered Offerings*
    - *Processes for planning and managing financial resources and their allocation for distance-delivered offerings.*
- *Higher Learning Commission Guidelines for Evaluating Distance Education (C-RAC), 2009.*
  - *On-line learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.*
  - *The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its on-line learning offerings*

*See also*

- *Online Learning Consortium's Quality Scorecard for Administration of Online Programs, 2014*
  - *Institutional Support*
    - *"The institution has a governance structure to enable clear, effective, and comprehensive decision making related to online education."*
    - *"The institution has a process for planning and resource allocation for the online program, including financial resources, in accordance with strategic planning."*
    - *"The institution has a governance structure to enable systematic and continuous improvement related to the administration of online education."*

2. Requirements related to faculty/instructors participating in professional development that prepares them for various roles in the online learning process.

The University seeks to ensure that faculty/instructors involved in online learning are adequately prepared and supported. Professional development activities will be organized around specific competencies associated with the following faculty/instructor roles:

- Faculty/Instructor Course Developer: the faculty member/instructor works with a team of professionals to design and develop online courses, and/or to periodically redesign/update online courses. In this role, the faculty member/instructor designs and develops learning activities, assignments, assessments and engagement and communication strategies aligned with WSU online course standards and guidelines.
- Faculty/Instructor Course Teacher: the faculty member/instructor is provided a “ready to teach” online course and successfully delivers/teaches the course. In this role, a faculty member/instructor must be able to update the course syllabus, add instructor-specific information, assess and report learning and student progress, and actively engage and communicate with students in accordance with WSU online course standards and guidelines.

Professional development related to designing and delivering online courses may be modularized and competency-based, and may be delivered via online, blended and face-to-face modalities. Faculty members/instructors may demonstrate attainment of learning outcomes through pre-assessment, and by-pass those modules, workshops and courses of instruction. Upon satisfactory completion of professional development activities, the faculty member/instructor may participate as a course developer or course teacher.

Information on professional development activities available to faculty/instructors is available on the Media Resources Center Instructional Design and Technology website: <http://www.wichita.edu/idt>

*WSU policy related to this procedure*

- *Policy 5.07/Professional Development*

*Regional accreditation standard associated with this procedure*

- *Higher Learning Commission Protocol for Reviewing during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*
  - *Staffing and Faculty Support*
    - *Processes for selecting, training, and orienting faculty for distance delivery.*
- *Higher Learning Commission Guidelines for Evaluating Distance Education (C-RAC), 2009.*
  - *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.*
    - *On-line learning faculties are carefully selected, appropriately trained, frequently evaluated, and are marked by an acceptable level of turnover.*
    - *The institution's training program for on-line learning faculty is periodic, incorporates tested good practices in on-line learning pedagogy, and ensures competency with the range of software products used by the institution.*
    - *Faculty are proficient and effectively supported in using the course management system.*

- *The office or persons responsible for on-line learning training programs are clearly identified and have the competencies to accomplish the tasks, including knowledge of the specialized resources and technical support available to support course development and delivery.*

*See also*

- *Online Learning Consortium's Quality Scorecard for Administration of Online Programs, 2014*
  - *Faculty Support*
    - *"The institution ensures faculty receive training, assistance, and support to prepare for course development and teaching online."*
    - *"Faculty are provided on-going professional development related to online teaching and learning."*



### 3. Intellectual property rights in mediated courseware.

*WSU Policies and Procedures Manual Section 9.10/Intellectual Property* sets forth the University's policy concerning intellectual property rights for online courses or "mediated courseware" as set forth in the policy. The University's policy is identical to the Kansas Board of Regents' policy on this subject, which provides, in pertinent part:

*Preamble:*

*The purpose of the Wichita State University Intellectual Property policy is to foster the free and creative expression and exchange of ideas and knowledge; to preserve traditional academic practices and academic freedom with respect to scholarly and creative/artistic work; and to establish principles and procedures for distributing income from copyrightable and patentable research. This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, and student employees.*

...

#### *4. Mediated Courseware*

*(a) When employees develop mediated courseware without specific direction by the University, unless otherwise agreed, the ownership of the courseware shall remain with the employee. Normally, no royalty, rent or other consideration shall be paid to the employee when that mediated courseware is used for instruction at the University and such mediated courseware shall not be used or modified without the consent of the creator(s).*

*The mediated courseware shall not be sold, leased, rented or otherwise used in a manner that competes in a substantial way with the for-credit offering of the University unless that transaction has received approval of the Provost and Senior Vice President. Should approval be granted to offer the course outside of the institution, the creator(s) shall reimburse the institution for substantial use of institutional resources from revenues derived from the transaction offering the course.*

*As owner, the creator is responsible for obtaining copyright registration, if desired, and granting permission for use of copyrighted courseware materials, provided that such registration or permission is consistent with this policy.*

*(b) When the University specifically directs the creation of mediated courseware by assigning one or more employees to develop the mediated courseware and supplies them with materials and time to develop the mediated courseware, the resulting mediated courseware belongs to the University and the University shall have the right to revise and decide who will utilize the mediated courseware in instruction.*

*The University may specifically agree to share revenues and control rights with the employee. In the event that an agreement has been reached between the University and employee to share rights of the courseware prior to the development of such courseware, a written contract should be agreed to between the University and the employee(s) before the project begins. The contract should include details regarding revenue sharing, derivative works, licensing to external parties and control of the mediated courseware. The Office of Research and Technology Transfer will manage these contracts.*

*The University is responsible for obtaining copyright registration and granting permission for use of the copyrighted courseware materials. The employee will cooperate with the University to secure the copyright, at the University's expense, including, without limitation, disclosing such courseware to the University, providing copies thereof, and signing any documents necessary to perfect the University's rights in the courseware materials.*

This procedure and University policy provides guidance for:

- the faculty member's/instructor's role, as a University employee, in online course development and re-design which falls within the faculty member's/instructor's scope of employment;
- the University's right to ensure that each online course meets and maintains University standards;
- the University's right to assign use of online courses to other faculty members/instructors.

*WSU policy related to this procedure*

- *Policy 9.10/Intellectual Property*

*Kansas Board of Regents policy related to this procedure*

- *Kansas Board of Regents Policy, Chapter II, A.8.a.1.1. / Mediated Courseware*

*Regional accreditation standard associated with this procedure*

- *Higher Learning Commission Protocol for Reviewing during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*
  - *Staffing and Faculty Support*
    - *Practices and procedures of distance delivery faculty and staff and their alignment with those of face-to-face faculty and staff and with institutional policies and processes.*

*See also*

- *Online Learning Consortium's Quality Scorecard for Administration of Online Programs, 2014*
  - *Institutional Support*
    - *"The institution has a policy for intellectual property of course materials; it specifically addresses online course materials, and is publicly visible online."*

#### 4. Faculty members'/Instructor's roles and responsibilities in the online course development process.

A number of persons in the University community may recommend that a new online course be developed, including faculty/instructors, department chairs, deans and the Office of Online Learning. A decision to develop a new online course is based on the University's course selection criteria. See *Procedure 5 related to course and faculty/instructor selection.*

Once course development has been approved per Procedure 5 (course and faculty/instructor selection), a faculty member/instructor qualified to teach the course will function as a member of a course development team, which will collaboratively design and develop the online course. Faculty/instructors participating in course development will do so voluntarily, and will be eligible for this role after demonstrating University-defined professional development competencies associated with course development. See Procedure 5 for details.

Faculty members/instructors are recognized as the primary source of subject matter expertise and course learning outcomes. Faculty/instructors will work alongside instructional designers and team members with specialized knowledge of learning assessment and technology assigned to the course development project. The instructional designer will manage the project and ensure that resources are provided to all team members to support the development of a quality online course.

Faculty/instructors duties will include:

- developing a course "map" of all learning activities, content and learning assessment;
- providing all necessary learning content at designated benchmarks and in accordance with the development timeline and the University's course development standards;
- development of an expanded syllabus to guide learners successfully through the course in accordance with the University's course development standards;
- aligning all course learning activities with assessments in which students demonstrate all learning outcomes associated with the course in accordance with the University's course development standards;
- ensuring the course meets University course development and assessment procedures related to ADA requirements;
- final editing and initial testing of the course;
- making minor adjustments to the course during the first term it is delivered.

*WSU policy related to this procedure*

- *Policy 5.08/Statements on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty*

*Regional Accreditation Standard associated with this procedure*

- *HLC/Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)*
  - *On-line learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.*
    - *The institution's faculty have a designated role in the design and implementation of its on-line learning offerings.*
  - *Curricula for the institution's on-line learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.*

- *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.*

*HLC Protocol for Reviewing Distance Delivery during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*

- *Curriculum & Instructional Design*
  - *Processes for developing, approving, and assuring quality curricula for distance-delivered programs.*
- *Staffing & Faculty Support*
  - *Processes for selecting, training, and orienting faculty for distance delivery.*

5. Faculty members'/instructor's roles in the teaching/delivery of online courses.

This Includes:

- Faculty members'/instructor's role in scrutinizing the integrity of student work;
- Strategies used to support student engagement/interaction;
- Response times for responding to student questions/posting and for returning graded work.

All WSU online courses are taught by a faculty member/instructor approved and assigned by the academic department chair in consultation with the Director of Online Learning. Faculty teaching online courses have the same academic qualifications as faculty/instructors who teach on-campus courses. Prior to teaching online, faculty members/instructors must successfully complete structured professional development activities in which the faculty/instructor demonstrates readiness to teach online. *See Procedure 1 related to professional development.*

Faculty members/instructors teaching an online course are expected to utilize consultation, implementation, and evaluation support from the Office of Online Learning. This office maintains partnerships with other University academic and student support units (i.e. University Library, the Office of Institutional Research, Student Affairs, the Media Resources Center and its instructional design and technology support staff, etc.). The University will offer continuing professional development to support the continuous improvement of online faculty/instructors, including proficiencies in the methodology and the technologies used in online learning.

**A. Teaching the Course – Recommended General Practices**

Effective online courses foster student-student, student-instructor, and student-content interaction (Garrison, Anderson, Archer, 2000). The response times described below are based on best practices in online education, and are suggestions - not requirements. According to Wuensch et al., "Instructor interaction had the largest influence on student satisfaction with the distance course. Student-instructor interactions enhance student retention, self-motivation, and pass rates.... Satisfaction with technology and with quick instructor responses regarding course work was positively related to student performance." (Wuensch et al., 2008, p. 525-6) Responding in a reasonable time to student work will help with student-instructor interaction in online classes.

**Office hours.** All faculty/instructors are required to have posted office hours per WSU policy 2.05 / Student Access to Faculty – Office Hours. For online courses this can be done via telephone, email, instant messaging, or videoconference.

**Update the syllabus.** The syllabus should give clear indications to students about course policies and faculty/instructor expectations. The course syllabus must be updated at least 2 weeks prior to date the course is available to students and in a way consistent with University online course standards.

The following Information that must be updated for quality assurance purposes includes:

- The week-by-week course schedule template;
- Measurable course goals/objectives and outcomes;
- Grading information and criteria;
- Descriptions of projects that students must complete;

- A statement of how the faculty member/instructor will enforce the University's academic honesty policy (see "academic integrity" below);
- A statement regarding the faculty member's/instructor's policies regarding acceptable and unacceptable student behavior in the course, including net-etiquette.

**Initial Communication.** Prior to the start of class, send an email via WSU's student email system to all of your students giving them instructions on how to access the course.

**Content Delivery.** Online faculty/instructors will provide feedback often and engage students with course interaction and group projects. Faculty/instructors should respond to student communication promptly, but within reason, such as within 24-48 hours from receipt.

**Learning Assessment.** WSU online courses have been designed, developed and approved for delivery, based in part on the quality of learning assessments in the course. Because assessments are tied to learning objectives for the course and individual units or modules within the course, learning assessments are not to be modified or removed from the course without permission of the faculty/instructor course developer and instructional design team.

Faculty/instructors are expected to periodically assess student attainment of course learning outcomes. Assignment and assessment strategies include: team projects; research/position papers; quizzes; exams. Feedback on quizzes and short assignment should be provided in a short time frame, such as within three to five days; faculty/instructors review of major papers and exams in which there is extensive writing must be provided within a reasonable time frame such as one to two weeks. This procedure does not preclude faculty/instructors teaching the course to add additional assessments, within reason, as needed to ensure a higher level of learning in the online course.

**Monitoring Discussion Boards.** Faculty/instructors will monitor course discussion boards regularly and carefully to promote meaningful and civil student-student interaction (including enforcing net-etiquette and student behavior policies established in the syllabus) and facilitate a student-instructor and student-content interactions.

**Academic Integrity.** WSU Policy 2.17, Student Academic Honesty, states, "A standard of academic honesty, fairly applied to all students, is essential to a learning environment. Students who compromise the integrity of the classroom are subject to disciplinary action by their instructor, their department, their college and/or the University... Faculty members need to be aware of the possibility of academic misconduct, watchful for any instances of academic misconduct and diligent in addressing those who do not maintain the standards of academic honesty." See section "B" of this procedure for more guidance regarding the matter of academic integrity and its relationship with student identity verification.

**Course Learning Outcomes.** In order to maintain the academic integrity of the course that was originally approved for delivery across multiple sections, learning outcomes and the general description of the course must remain consistent across all sections where a "master" course is in use and may not be changed by individual faculty members/instructors.

**Assignments and Projects.** WSU online courses have been designed, developed and approved for delivery, based in part on the quality of learning assignments in the course. Because assignments are tied to learning objectives for the course and individual units or modules within the course, assignments and projects should not to be modified or removed from the course without approval of the

faculty/instructor course developer and instructional design team. This procedure does not preclude faculty/instructors teaching the course to add additional assignments, within reason, as needed to ensure a higher level of learning in the online course.

## **B. Course Evaluations**

After having assessed various course evaluation options and weighed their pros and cons for online learning, the Online Advisory Committee and Online Learning recommend that all faculty/instructors teaching online courses use the online IDEA survey for all end-of-course evaluations. However, faculty/instructors should consult with their department or college to ensure that they are following the standards and practices regarding course evaluations in their area.

## **C. Proctoring**

In the case of courses in which proctoring is required, faculty/instructors need to indicate to students ahead of time what the requirements for the proctoring are (e.g., if they must be done at a proctoring center). Students also must be made aware that they are responsible for any off-site proctoring costs. When scheduling a course that requires proctoring, departments should indicate in the course schedule a note such as “This course may require extra fees for proctoring. Consult the Counseling and Testing Center Fee Schedule.”

To help faculty/instructors, you may choose to use the following syllabus language template:

### **Exam Proctoring**

**This course requires proctoring for the following exam(s):**

- [exam type(s), e.g. Midterm, Final, etc.)

**These are the proctoring options:**

- 1. If you are able to come in person to Wichita State University for the group-proctored exam administered by the department/faculty, there is no fee:**
  - a. [exam type, date and time, place]
  - b. [exam type, date and time, place]
  - c. ...
- 2. You can take your exam 24/7 within the specified window of time for a fee through ProctorU. Please go to <http://www.proctoru.com/portal/wichita/> to find information on how to establish a ProctorU account, comply with minimum technical requirements, schedule and pay for exams, and what to expect in taking an exam with a virtual proctor.**
- 3. The WSU Counseling and Testing Center can usually help locate an authorized testing center which will proctor exams for a fee if you live outside of Wichita. Please contact our online testing coordinator at the Counseling and Testing Center by calling 316-978-6104 or via email at [distanceexam@wichita.edu](mailto:distanceexam@wichita.edu). Test fees and available times will vary by location.**

**4. If you want to take an individually-proctored exam at WSU for a fee, call 316-978-6140 to schedule your Distance Education Exam during available testing times at the WSU Counseling and Testing Center on the main campus.**

**Faculty can make arrangements for all distance proctoring needs with the Counseling and Testing Center by calling 316-978-6104 or emailing [distanceexam@wichita.edu](mailto:distanceexam@wichita.edu). Students may do the same.**

#### **D. Student identity verification**

Regional accrediting standards require that the University demonstrates that the student enrolling in a WSU online course is the student that does the work and earns the grade. WSU faculty/instructors are expected to use these practices to ensure verification:

1. Secure login into University's LMS. All WSU courses must use the LMS as the gateway to course information, content, communication and assessment.
2. Pedagogical and related teaching and authentic assessment practices that are effective in verifying student identity (video chat, review sessions, etc.). The University will provide professional development and instructional design consulting to support the faculty member's/instructor's use of authentic assessment strategies.

Faculty members/instructors who teach online also have a responsibility to identify and address issues related to changes in students that may indicate irregularities. These could include sudden changes in academic performance, change in writing style, conflicting statements made by students in discussions or on email, etc.

#### **E. ADA Compliance**

It is the responsibility of every faculty member/instructor teaching online courses to ensure that their courses are reviewed for ADA compliance for distance education. Faculty/instructors should contact the Office of Online Learning to arrange consultation with the Instructional Design team who will work with the Office of Disability Services to review courses and implement changes to ensure reasonable accommodations have been made.

Each faculty member/instructor should also be aware of his/her program's essential functions/technical standards for minimum competence in a student's discipline.

#### **F. FERPA**

WSU Policy 3.12, Security and Confidentiality of Student Records and Files, requires that university employees (including faculty/instructors) be knowledgeable about, and in compliance with FERPA.

#### **G. Plagiarism & Plagiarism Detection Software**

University faculty/instructors may use or require the use of plagiarism detection software as part of their course. WSU sanctions the use of anti-plagiarism tools and therefore faculty/instructors should include the following statement on their syllabus indicating the use of the system for plagiarism detection:



*All required assignments may be subject to submission for content similarity review to an anti-plagiarism tool for the detection of plagiarism.*

## **H. Kansas Board of Regents Social Media Policy**

University faculty/instructors are advised to be aware of the current Kansas Board of Regents Social Media Policy:

Policy, Chapter II, F.6. / Use of Social Media by Faculty and Staff:

[http://www.kansasregents.org/policy\\_chapter\\_ii\\_f\\_use\\_of\\_social\\_media](http://www.kansasregents.org/policy_chapter_ii_f_use_of_social_media)

*WSU policies related to this procedure:*

- *Policy 2.04/Class Policies*
- *Policy 2.05/Student Access to Faculty*
- *Policy 2.17/Student Academic Honesty*
- *Policy 3.12/ Security and Confidentiality of Student Records and Files*
- *Policy 5.08/Statements on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty*

*Kansas Board of Regents policies related to this procedure*

- *Policy, Chapter II, F.6. / Use of Social Media by Faculty and Staff*

*Regional Accreditation Standard associated with this procedure:*

- *The Higher Learning Commission's Federal Compliance Program: A Guide for Institutions and Evaluation Teams (August 2014)*
  - *Practices for Verification of Student Identity*
    - *Commission Policy FDCR.A.10.050*
      - *An institution offering distance education or correspondence education, as specified in the federal definitions reproduced herein solely for reference, shall have processes through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in the distance education or correspondence education courses or programs is the same student who participates in and completes and receives the academic credit.*
      - *Commission Review. The Commission will review an institution's student identity verification protocols when an institution requests permission to add programs in distance delivery as well as during a comprehensive evaluation. The Commission will also require that institutions submit information about student identity verification protocols on the Commission's Institutional Update.*
- *HLC/Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)*
  - *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.*
    - *b. The institution's training program for on-line learning faculty is periodic, incorporates tested good practices in on-line learning pedagogy, and ensures competency with the range of software products used by the institution.*
  - *The institution assures the integrity of its on-line learning offerings.*

- *The institution has in place effective procedures through which to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit. The institution makes clear in writing that these processes protect student privacy and notifies students at the time of registration or enrollment of any projected additional costs associated with the verification procedures. (Note: This is a federal requirement. All institutions that offer distance education programming must demonstrate compliance with this requirement.)*
- *Training for faculty members engaged in on-line learning includes consideration of issues of academic integrity, including ways to reduce cheating.*

See also

- *Online Learning Consortium's Quality Scorecard for Administration of Online Programs, 2014*
  - *Course Structure*
    - *"The online course includes a syllabus outlining course objectives, learning outcomes, evaluation methods, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and other related course information, making course requirements transparent."*
    - *"Instructional materials are easily accessed by students with disabilities via alternative instructional strategies and/or referral to special institutional resources."*
  - *Evaluation and Assessment*
    - *"Program demonstrates compliance and review of accessibility standards (Section 508, etc)."*

See also:

*Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education model. The Internet and Higher Education, 2(2-3), 87-105.*

*Wuensch, K. L., Aziz, S., Ozan, E., Kinshore, M., & Tabrizi, M. H. N. (2008). Pedagogical characteristics of online and face-to-face classes. International Journal on E-Learning, 7(3), 523-532.*

6. University practices related to the selection of courses to be developed, and the faculty who are selected to develop them, including compensation or other incentives.

The design and development of online courses is a resource-intensive process. For this reason, the University seeks to use its resources strategically by carefully selecting courses for development. By specifically identifying online courses for development, the University will allocate its resources to develop courses that may be taught not only by the faculty/instructor who developed the course, but also by other qualified faculty/instructors over time (i.e. “master courses”).

**A. Selection of courses for online development.** Proposals to design and develop online courses may be submitted to the Office of Online Learning by individual faculty/instructors, department chairs and deans. All such proposals will be reviewed for consideration using selection criteria, among which are the following:

1. The course is required to satisfy distribution requirements in degree programs previously selected for online development.
2. The course has not previously been developed and delivered at WSU.
3. The proposal has been endorsed by department chairs and appropriate deans.
4. A team of faculty course developers is associated with the course.
5. The course has a documented history of enrollment (this is especially important for courses that are electives).
6. For online courses previously developed and taught, the proposal must include a sound rationale for its re-development.
7. The proposal includes a description of how each learning outcome can be addressed and assessed.

**B. Approval of online courses prior to teaching/delivery.** A course selected for online development must be reviewed and approved as ready for delivery prior to its being offered. *See Procedure 7 related to approval of online courses.*

**C. The selection of faculty/instructors who will participate in the development of an online course** is not necessarily part of the course selection process. Faculty/instructors may nominate themselves, be nominated by their department chair and may be nominated as part of the course development proposal. Because developing online courses is time-intensive it should not interfere with the tenure and promotion process. Therefore, faculty/instructors who demonstrate the following criteria would be given preference for developing a course:

1. Successful completion of professional development needed to certify readiness for course development.
2. Successful completion of additional professional development related to online course development.
3. Documented evidence of successful teaching and student learning in campus-based courses.
4. Documented evidence of her/his ability to assess specific learning outcomes.
5. Documented evidence of active participation in scholarly development.
6. Documented evidence of active participation in service to the university.

The Director of Online Learning, in consultation with appropriate discipline department chairpersons and deans, will make the final determination of faculty/instructors selected to participate in online course development.

**D. Compensation or other incentives**

Pursuant to consultation with the dean and department chairpersons, the office of Online Learning may provide monetary compensation for the design and delivery of online courses, or the college or department may offer other incentives appropriate to the faculty member's/instructor's responsibilities.

*WSU policy related to this procedure*

- *Policy 5.08/Statements on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty*

*Regional Accreditation Standard associated with this procedure*

- *HLC/Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)*
- *HLC Protocol for Reviewing Distance Delivery during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*

7. University practices related to the creation of courses that have not been selected and approved for sanctioned development.

The design and development of online courses is a resource-intensive process, requiring a substantial investment of faculty member/instructor time and supporting university resources. For this reason, the University seeks to use its faculty/instructors, instructional design, and technology resources strategically by carefully selecting courses for development. By specifically identifying online courses for development, the University can better allocate its resources to develop courses that are of uniformly high quality and which fulfill targeted degree completion.

In situations in which a faculty member/instructor proposes development of an online course that is endorsed by her/his department chair and dean, but is not selected for development by the Office of Online Learning (see Procedure 5 above), course development may proceed under the following circumstances:

1. The faculty member/instructor agrees to have lower priority access to the university course development resources, including instructional design assistance.
2. Procedure 7 related to requirements pertaining to course approval, and the selection of faculty/instructors to teach the course must be met, with the following additional conditions:
  - a. The course to be developed may not be scheduled for delivery until the course has received final approval.
  - b. The online course may not be scheduled without the approval of the Office of Online Learning. Such approval takes into account current student demand for access to the course in an online format.
  - c. The faculty/instructor course developer will be the only faculty member/instructor who can teach/deliver her/his version of the online course.
  - d. The Office of Online Learning may not approve scheduling of online course versions in which there is a documented history of poor student success and completion rates, as well as documentation of other measures related to course quality.

*WSU policy related to this procedure*

- *Policy 5.08/Statements on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty*

*Regional Accreditation Standard associated with this procedure*

- *HLC Protocol for Reviewing Distance Delivery during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*
  - *Curriculum & Instructional Design*
    - *Processes for developing, approving, and assuring quality curricula for distance-delivered programs.*

8. The process by which online courses are reviewed and approved as “ready to teach” and the process by which courses are periodically reviewed, redesigned as necessary and re-certified.

A course selected and/or approved for online development must be reviewed and approved as ready for its initial delivery. During the development/redesign process, the project’s faculty/instructor course developer and lead instructional designer will set benchmarks for ongoing review of the course’s readiness to meet University course development standards. For final approval, a team composed of a University instructional designer and a faculty member/instructors from the discipline will review the course. Issues directly related to course design standards will be referred back to the faculty/instructor course developer to be addressed. Once the review team finds that all issue standards have been met, the course will be approved for initial delivery.

All WSU online courses must be periodically reviewed, redesigned as necessary, and re-approved for delivery. At a minimum, this review will occur every three years to ensure that links and material are current and updates, if needed, are undertaken. A course may be scheduled for a review and redesign more frequently when a *course change* occurs or when a *curriculum or program change* occurs through the University’s *curriculum change process*. A team composed of a University instructional designer and a faculty member/instructor from the discipline will review the updated and/or redesigned course to certify that the course meets all University standards. A course undergoing periodic review and redesign may be re-scheduled for delivery if it has not been re-reviewed.

Courses and course versions developed prior to the establishment of University-wide standards will be identified for review and redesign within three years of the date of last delivery. And then will be revised by the same schedule as other online courses.

*Regional Accreditation Standard associated with this procedure*

- *HLC/Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)*
  - *On-line learning is incorporated into the institution’s systems of governance and academic oversight.*
    - *The institution ensures the rigor of the offerings and the quality of the instruction.*
    - *Approval of on-line learning courses and programs follows standard processes used in the college or university.*
    - *On-line learning courses and programs are evaluated on a periodic basis.*
  - *Curricula for the institution's on-line learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.*
    - *Course design and delivery supports student-student and faculty-student interaction.*
    - *Curriculum design and the course management system enable active faculty contribution to the learning environment.*
    - *Course and program structures provide schedule and support known to be effective in helping online learning students persist and succeed.*
  - *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.*
    - *Student course evaluations are routinely taken and an analysis of them contributes to strategies for course improvements.*

- *Evaluation strategies ensure effective communication between faculty members who design curriculum, faculty members who interact with students, and faculty members who evaluate student learning.*
- *Higher Learning Commission Protocol for Reviewing during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*
  - *Curriculum & Instructional Design*
    - Processes for developing, approving, and assuring quality curricula for distance-delivered programs.

9. Requirements related to the preparation of faculty/instructors currently teaching online.

The Higher Learning Commission's Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning) include a *hallmark* that focuses on the preparation of faculty/instructors to teach online. Institutions are expected to demonstrate that "faculty are proficient and effectively supported in using the course management system" and that "the institution's training program for on-line learning faculty is periodic, incorporates tested good practices in on-line learning pedagogy, and ensures competency with the range of software products used by the institution."

In order to teach online, WSU faculty/instructors will go through professional development to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills pertinent to the tools and methods required for teaching the specific course online.

*WSU policy related to this procedure*

- *Policy 5.07/Professional Development*

*Regional accreditation standard associated with this procedure*

- *Higher Learning Commission Protocol for Reviewing during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*
  - *Staffing and Faculty Support*
    - *Processes for selecting, training, and orienting faculty for distance delivery.*
- *Higher Learning Commission Guidelines for Evaluating Distance Education (C-RAC), 2009.*
  - *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.*
    - *On-line learning faculties are carefully selected, appropriately trained, frequently evaluated, and are marked by an acceptable level of turnover.*
    - *The institution's training program for on-line learning faculty is periodic, incorporates tested good practices in on-line learning pedagogy, and ensures competency with the range of software products used by the institution.*
    - *Faculty are proficient and effectively supported in using the course management system.*
    - *The office or persons responsible for on-line learning training programs are clearly identified and have the competencies to accomplish the tasks, including knowledge of the specialized resources and technical support available to support course development and delivery.*

*See also*

- *Online Learning Consortium's Quality Scorecard for Administration of Online Programs, 2014*
  - *Faculty Support*
    - *"The institution ensures faculty receive training, assistance, and support to prepare for course development and teaching online."*
    - *"Faculty are provided on-going professional development related to online teaching and learning."*



10. Matters related to continuous program improvement including: a) evaluating the effectiveness of online courses and b) evaluating the effectiveness of the delivery of online courses.

Institutions approved by the Higher Learning Commission to deliver online degree programs must evaluate the effectiveness of their online programs to ensure program goals are achieved, must demonstrate how evaluation data is used to inform program improvement.

In the case that the department chair and faculty/instructors have determined that the roles of online course development and delivery should be given to separate faculty/instructors, the following procedure accounts for the separation. However, a single faculty member/instructor can fulfill both roles. The description below does not indicate that all courses must have separate faculty/instructors working on development and delivery.

**Development:** The University uses online course standards to guide the initial development, and the periodic redesign of online courses. The use of standards in course design is one means by which the institution can ensure the integrity; quality and consistency of its online offerings (see Procedure 7 related to course review).

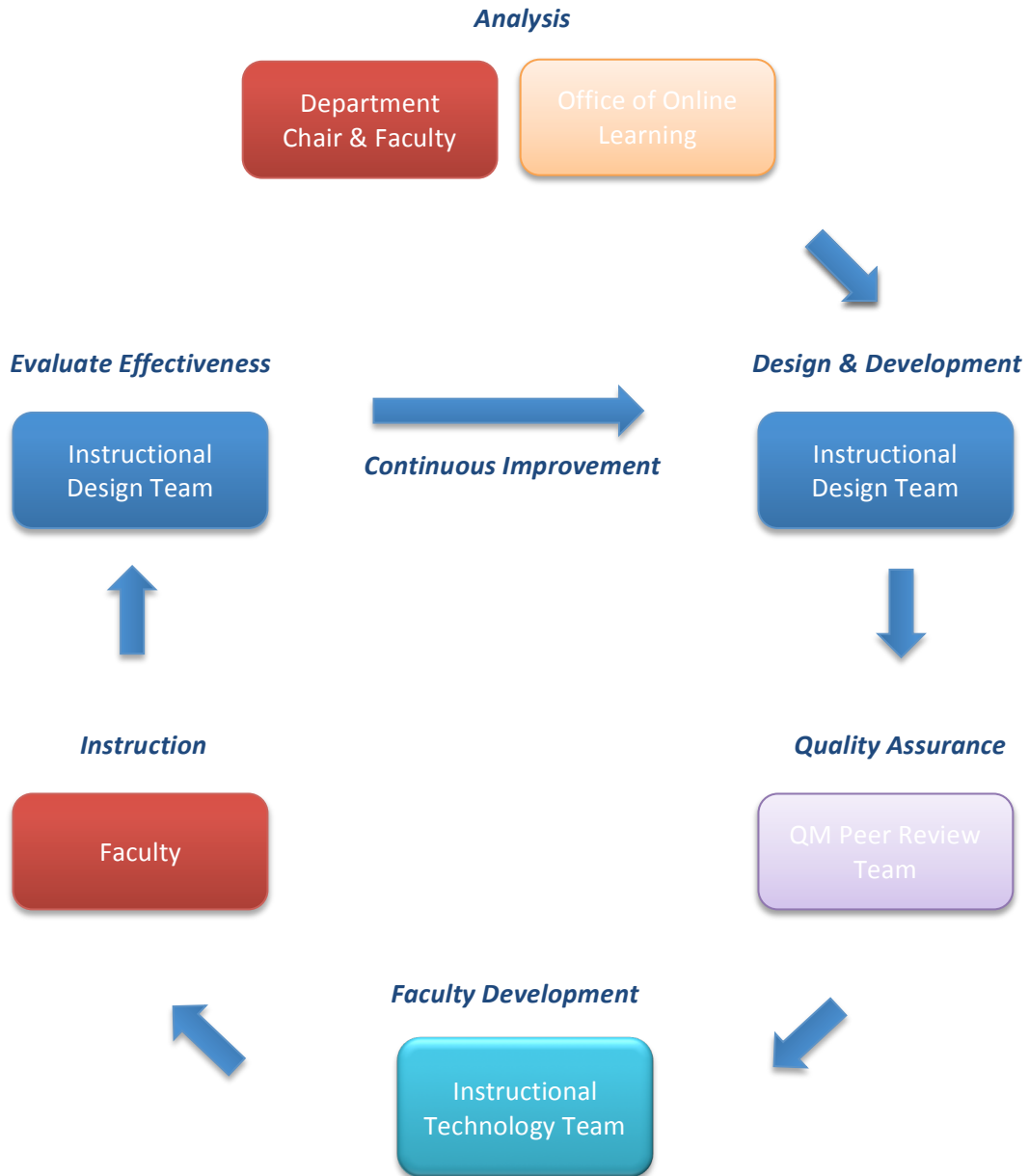
**Delivery:** Once a course is approved, and then delivered, the Office of Online Learning periodically assesses online courses, academic and student support services, and the online program using a variety of measures, to include:

- student participation, as reported by LMS analytics and SIS data
- student success
  - analysis of grades earned
  - course attrition rates
  - student retention
  - program completion/graduation rates
  - attainment of course and program learning outcomes
- student opinion of instruction
- student opinion of academic and student support services
  - Orientation
  - Financial Aid
  - Library
  - Tutoring
  - Advising
  - Counseling
  - Services for students with disabilities
  - LMS help desk and technology support services
- student complaints and grievances
- faculty/instructor survey on the adequacy of the Office of Online Learning's faculty support services.

The Office of Online Learning, in collaboration with appropriate faculty/instructors, department chairs and deans and the Office of Planning Analysis, will periodically collect, aggregate, report and analyze evaluative data for improvement purposes.

The University's continuous improvement model:

### WSU Instructional Design and Continuous Improvement Process



*Regional Accreditation Standard associated with this procedure*

- *HLC/Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)*
  - *On-line learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.*
    - *The institution ensures the rigor of the offerings and the quality of the instruction.*
    - *On-line learning courses and programs are evaluated on a periodic basis.*
  - *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.*
    - *Student course evaluations are routinely taken and an analysis of them contributes to strategies for course improvements.*
    - *Evaluation strategies ensure effective communication between faculty members who design curriculum, faculty members who interact with students, and faculty members who evaluate student learning.*
- *Higher Learning Commission Criteria for Accreditation (CRRT.B.10.010) (June 2014)*
  - *Criteria Four. Teaching and Learning: Evaluation and Improvement*
  - *Criteria Five. Resources, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness*
- *Higher Learning Commission Protocol for Reviewing during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*
  - *Curriculum & Instructional Design*
    - *Processes for developing, approving, and assuring quality curricula for distance-delivered programs.*

#### 11. Procedure used to guide identification of programs for online development.

The design and development of fully online degree programs is a resource-intensive process. For this reason, the University seeks to use its resources strategically by carefully selecting programs for development. The primary criterion for selecting programs for online development is the degree to which the program will address workforce needs.

To facilitate this process, a needs and market analysis will be conducted of identified programs. Nominated programs will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Workforce demands for graduates of nominated programs.
- For online programs that will duplicate campus-based programs, the ability of the market to support programs in both on-ground and online modalities.
- The availability of qualified faculty to participate in online course development and in the delivery of the program.
- The assurance that all courses leading to the degree can be successfully designed and delivered online.
- Student demand and acceptance of program if delivered online.
- Employer acceptance of the program if delivered online.
- For programs that require additional approvals, the likelihood that approval will be granted by the appropriate specialized accrediting agency and/or state Board.

Deans of colleges and chairs of departments, schools, or programs, in conjunction with the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Office of Online Learning, may nominate programs for development. The Online Advisory Committee will evaluate the evidence of the need and market analysis and generate recommendations regarding resources needed for program development and the program launch date. A final determination will be made by the office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

#### *Regional Accreditation Standard associated with this procedure*

- *HLC/Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (On-line Learning)*
  - *On-line learning is incorporated into the institution's systems of governance and academic oversight.*
    - *Approval of on-line learning courses and programs follows standard processes used in the college or university.*
  - *Curricula for the institution's on-line learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.*
- *Higher Learning Commission Protocol for Reviewing during Comprehensive Evaluation and Quality Checkup Visits (v. 2, March 2013)*
  - *Curriculum & Instructional Design*
    - *Processes for developing, approving, and assuring quality curricula for distance-delivered programs.*

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Wichita State University Policy:

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*Policy 2.05/Student Access to Faculty*

*Policy 2.17/Student Academic Honesty*

*Policy 3.12/ Security and Confidentiality of Student Records and Files*

*Policy 5.07/Professional Development*

*Policy 5.08/Statements on the Professional Rights and Responsibilities of Faculty*

*Policy 9.10/Intellectual Property*

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