

# COLLEGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM No. 14

## STANDARDS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

Date of Issue: November 29, 2001MMMM DD, YYYY

This document provides a uniform standard for adapting and teaching distance education courses. The items included are considered fundamental to quality courses. The goal of these standards is to make complete information available to the students, and ensure meaningful interaction at a distance between instructor and student.

### **Internet-based Courses**

(An Internet-based course utilizes the College-approved e-mail and the Internetonline Course Management System (CMS) for transmission of information, assignments and support.)

1. A public syllabus shall be placed on a course web page. The course web page shall be hosted on a College server or a server of an institution selected by the College. Course content on the web page may be made directly available online, referenced from the web using a hyperlink, or may consist of descriptive text referring to materials in the student's possession. This course information should be consistent with approved course documents. Reading and other assignments may be available either on the public web page or in a password protected area at the instructor's discretion.

The public syllabus shall include, but not be limited to:

- Any additional hardware or software requirements for the course, with instructions for purchasing or downloading, beyond any posted generic hardware/software requirements.
  - ♣• The e-mail address of the instructor and other contact information
  - ♣• The department name and the course name and number
  - ♣• Any pre-requisites or co-requisites
  - ♣• Requirements for examinations and in-person class meetings
  - ♣• Required text and any supplemental materials
  - ♣• Expectations of students stated as learning goals or objectives including grading standards.
  - ♣• General course policies regarding assignments, grading, student participation, etc.
  - ♣• Statement regarding accessibility for special needs students with disabilities
2. Regular defined interaction or exchange between instructor and student shall occur. Students shall submit at least some written assignments through the online facilityCMS. Communications with students via the Internet shall be an integral element of the course. This may include some form of e-mail, a threaded forum or message archive, and optionally any other communications appropriate to the nature of the course, including, but not limited to, chat rooms or other virtual space, or group e-mail.
  3. Online courses shall include the availability of some course content through the InternetCMS. Quantity should be sufficient to support some assignment activities. Although all readings may not be made available through the CMSInternet, the online course material should include more than a syllabus. All materials that practically can be made available online, should be online. Other material may be in other media such as books, CDs and/or tapes (audio or video)DVDs.

4. Online courses shall include online tests and/or practice quizzes where appropriate. Evaluation need not occur online, but may, at the instructor's discretion. Some provision for evaluation integrity should be part of the course design.
5. Instructors of online courses shall develop, as part of the written syllabus, explanatory material a brief course manual, as part of the written syllabus that guides students in the “navigation” of their particular course. Examples of topics discussed in the manual explanatory material include how often students must log on; how students submit assignments online; how students communicate questions; how they get assistance, etc. Each manual should be specific to each set of course requirements. A general “mechanics” document will be available.
6. Instructors shall check their online communications at least twice daily or on some similar regular schedule made known to their students. It is expected that instructors will make a reasonable effort to contact students who have not been in contact with the instructor within one week at any point in the semester.
7. Instructors shall have their online courses reviewed by the Office of Distance Education for meeting online standards and by their departments for meeting departmental academic standards.
8. The College will provide the following forms of support for online courses:
  - Technical support for students via phone or e-mail by the instructors and/or Office of distance Distance education Education and/or software vendor where available. This will not include general computer support since students are expected to have their own computer supported by their vendor and manufacturer.
  - Academic support for students via phone, e-mail, or online methods (synchronous and/or asynchronous tools) by instructors.
  - Online help (in various forms). Where possible, documents shall be available online.
  - ♣• College to provide testing flexibility for students, especially with conflicts for those courses that require face-to-face evaluation.
  - ♣• Brief printed manual of operation for course platform, available for download online.
  - ♣• Library resources and other general resources (e.g. tutoring) made available to students.
  - ♣• Instructors of online courses shall be provided with adequate training and technology to manage courses while in their on-campus office. Specifically, this includes a computer, Internet connection, e-mail and required software being used in the course by their students.
  - ♣• Instructors of online courses who require additional necessary software *directly related to their courses* shall be provided a copy for use at home. (This applies only to software that students are required to have purchased and not to proprietary development software.)