

COLLEGE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MEMORANDUM No. 14 STANDARDS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES

This document provides a uniform standard for adapting courses for teaching via distance education. The goal of these standards is to promote high-quality distance education courses. For the purposes of this document, a “distance education course” is a set of materials and activities applied to teaching an institutionally-approved course, predominantly or entirely via the Internet and a course management system (CMS) or learning management system (LMS). Distance courses shall be hosted on a College server or within an approved CMS/LMS.

Online learning at Community College of Philadelphia is offered in three formats: traditional, fully online, and hybrid.

Traditional courses take place face-to-face in a classroom setting for all sessions. They use a variety of methods and materials, including but not limited to CMS/LMS course supplements, websites such as personal faculty web pages, publisher websites, and external web resources for information and enrichment. However, the educational experience in “traditional” courses is classroom-based.

Fully Online courses are conducted entirely via the Internet using the College’s CMS/LMS and do not require attendance at face-to-face class meetings.

Hybrid courses combine elements of traditional courses and fully-online courses. They involve the integration of regularly-scheduled in-class and online learning, where the online portion of a hybrid course is taught via the Internet using the College’s CMS/LMS. In hybrid distance courses, a portion of instructional time is spent face-to-face and a portion is spent online.

Distance Course design

Syllabus. An instructor will place a public version of the course syllabus on a publicly-available web page when he or she is assigned an online or hybrid course by the Department Head. Course information contained in the syllabus must be consistent with Departmentally approved course documents.

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

- Any additional hardware or software requirements for the course, beyond any posted generic hardware/software requirements; this includes requirements of the CMS/LMS;
- 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;
- Technological competencies required for the course;
- Requirements for examinations and in-person class meetings;

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- Required text and any supplemental materials, whether online, paper, or other materials;
- Expectations of students stated as learning goals or objectives including grading standards;
- General course policies regarding assignments, grading, and student participation, e.g., how often students are required to log on to the course;
- A statement regarding accessibility for students with disabilities.

Materials. In accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreements, the choice of instructional materials shall be made by the instructor(s) teaching a course. All materials should be made available online that can be done so practically, legally, and in accordance with academic standards. Course material may be provided either on the public web page or in a password-protected site, at the instructor's discretion. Other material may be provided in other non-electronic media such as paper or books.

Communication/interaction. In accordance with accepted standards in distance education, regular defined interaction or exchange between instructor and student shall occur in fully online and hybrid courses, as in traditional courses. Online interaction, using communication methods and media appropriate to the course, shall be integral elements of the course. These interactions include those among students, between the teacher and the students, and between the students and the content. Instructors shall maintain regular online communications with students on a schedule made known to their students.

Assessment of students. Online and hybrid courses shall include online tests and/or practice quizzes, projects, or other forms of assessment where appropriate. Student assessment need not occur online, but may, at the instructor's discretion or by Department policy. Provision for integrity of assessment should be part of the course design.

Course assessment. 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.

Support. The following forms of support shall be available for online courses:

- technical support for students via phone or e-mail by the Office of Distance Education and/or software vendor where available; this will not include general computer support;
- academic support for students by instructors via phone, e-mail, or online methods (including synchronous and asynchronous tools);
- technical support for instructors via phone or e-mail by the Office of Distance Education and/or software vendor where available;
- testing flexibility for students, especially with conflicts for those courses that require face-to-face evaluation;
- a brief manual of operation for the course platform, available online;
- library resources and other general services;
- adequate training for faculty; specifically, training includes instruction in online course conversion, in distance education practices, and compliance with relevant

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laws such as those related to copyright, students with disabilities, and use of the CMS/LMS;

- access to adequate technology to manage approved distance courses while in their on-campus office; this includes computer technology appropriate to distance education tasks, an adequate Internet connection, and required software being used in the course by students;
- for instructors of online courses who require additional necessary software directly related to their courses, a copy of the software for use at home. (This applies only to software that students are required to have purchased and not to proprietary development software.)

Online and Hybrid Course Approval and Faculty Training Process

In order for a course to be converted to fully online or hybrid format, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The appropriate Department Chair (representing the Department/Program) recommends courses for conversion to an online or hybrid format, and instructors who will participate in the conversion process.
2. Instructors intending to teach either a fully online (DIS) or in a hybrid (HYB) format for the first time at Community College of Philadelphia, must receive appropriate training, to be approved by the Office of Distance Education, in distance education and the currently-approved CMS/LMS. Further training is optionally available for all faculty who are converting or teaching fully online and hybrid courses.

Instructors who use the CMS/LMS as a supplement to a traditional course, and use the CMS/LMS for the submission of graded student work, must also receive appropriate training, to be approved by the Office of Distance Education, in distance education and the currently-approved CMS/LMS.

3. When the distance course conversion process is complete, the instructor and the Office of Distance Education conduct a final review and approval based on:
 - compliance with relevant laws such as copyright laws and the Americans with Disabilities Act;
 - a quality assessment of the product of the conversion process;
 - compliance with the other provisions of Policies and Procedures 14 and other College policies.
4. After the final course conversion review and approval, the Office of Distance Education forwards a recommendation for approval to the appropriate Department Chair. Converted courses may be offered after a final Departmental review and approval based on compliance with the officially approved course document.
5. Conversion of courses to fully online or hybrid format must be approved by the appropriate Division Dean.

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Course Design Quality Assurance

The Office of Distance Education shall develop and revise quality assurance measures to be used as part of the online course development process.