

Community College of Southern Nevada
Distance Education Standards and Guidelines
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Community College of Southern Nevada

Distance Education Standards and Guidelines

I. Introduction

A. The Community College of Southern Nevada offers online and hybrid courses in a learning centered environment that fulfill the same objectives, meet the same outcomes, and are assessed with the same rigor as traditional courses. Just as traditional courses observe standards appropriate to that mode, online and hybrid courses observe the guidelines and standards defined in this document.

B. This document will include, but is not limited to, guidelines and standards for online and hybrid courses including:

- course development, delivery, review, and evaluation
- copyright and ADA compliance,
- IP/Video
- technical and support services for faculty and students,
- faculty qualifications, responsibilities, and evaluation
- professional development and training.

C. This document should be considered a dynamic document that will be reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis as the online environment is not static. The guidelines and standards defined in this document should be revisited and revised for necessary adjustments every two years so CCSN's online environment may remain a center for excellence in teaching and learning.

II. The DEO

A. At CCSN, the Distance Education Office (DEO) functions to support educators in the development and delivery of on-line courses under CCSN's Distance Education Policy. Although each course is developed independently, they should ultimately coordinate, integrate and standardize with the existing and future on-line education system at CCSN.

B. The DEO, in cooperation with OTS, has the responsibility of assisting departments and faculty through:

1. Consulting services
2. Assigning instructional designers to work with faculty in course development
3. Creating on-line training, printable guides and support resources
4. Providing asynchronous/synchronous applications and services for faculty to use in classroom/conference presentations
5. Providing "front-line" technical support and assistance to faculty and students using Learning Management Systems (LMS)
6. Assisting with LMS and content generating applications
7. Providing faculty training through The Center for Academic and Professional Excellence (CAPE).
8. Serving as a resource to faculty on copyright issues, and assisting faculty in obtaining copyright permission when requested
9. Providing online access for students to Student Course Evaluation forms for all online courses each semester and forwarding responses to Department Chairs/Program Directors
10. Providing support services for students and faculty as requested
11. Providing and/or introducing new and innovative technologies, tools and software for enhancing access and learning to complement the educational experience.

III. Definitions

A. Online Course - An online course provides all instruction in an asynchronous manner and has no required oncampus components, with the exception of proctored assignments when applicable. Synchronous chat room activities may be used when appropriate.

B. Hybrid Course - A hybrid course shall have flexible learning formats to enhance student learning. It shall include an in-class component, but the format may differ from a traditional

course by using flexible class meeting times, online components, and/or other delivery modalities (such as video, interactive video, cable media, other).

C. Traditional Course - A traditional course conducts all class sessions on campus in a synchronous manner. Traditional courses may use Web resources such as class notes, quizzes, and other class resources. Web assignments for traditional courses may be asynchronous. Students enrolled in traditional courses with important or required web components may access any online course components through CCSN computer labs.

IV. Faculty

A. Qualifications

1. Before being approved to teach an online course, faculty must meet the following qualifications:
 - a. Have previous experience with the current LMS, experience with online courses, or show successful completion of necessary training and/or professional development as listed below in the training section.
 - b. Possess requisite skills in the use and knowledge of computer hardware and software, computer file management, document preparation, e-mail, internet, and web development for successful online instruction
 - c. Be well qualified in subject matter area
 - d. Understand and be willing to observe the institution's policies regarding intellectual property and copyright.
 - e. Understand and be willing to observe the institution's guidelines and procedures for online delivery.
 - f. Be willing to learn new technologies, tools and software necessary to improve the success of student learning through online delivery.
2. Faculty members utilizing compressed video or television delivery should be proficient in the following areas:
 - a. Operation of the equipment
 - b. Video etiquette
 - c. Presentation techniques and applicable software
 - d. Contingency planning for equipment breakdown and problems
 - e. Class interaction strategies
 - f. Proctor responsibilities
 - g. Contact information
3. Faculty who are new to online teaching must attend training before being approved to develop an online course, or be willing to work with an instructional designer.
4. Faculty who are experienced in online teaching are encouraged to attend continuing education activities.

B. Training

1. The institution provides appropriate training for faculty who teach in distance education programs. It is important for faculty who are engaged in the delivery of distance learning courses to take advantage of appropriate professional development experiences.
2. It is the responsibility of the academic department to ensure that instructors have the indicated requisite skills necessary to deliver distance education courses.
3. Faculty may become proficient in development and delivery of distance education courses and programs, web delivery and compressed video delivery by successfully completing professional development sessions offered each semester by CAPE. The training sessions may be a combination of lectures, group meetings, individual consults, hands-on labs and web-based instruction.

4. The institution provides appropriate training for Department Chairs/Program Directors, or their designee, who will be involved in evaluating DE programs, courses, and faculty.
5. The institution provides appropriate training or the opportunity for exposure to new and innovative technologies, tools and software for enhancing access and learning.

C. Responsibilities

1. Faculty/Student Interaction

- a. Faculty should respond to student email within 48 hours.
- b. Faculty should return graded assignments in a timely manner, usually within one week of the assignment expiration date.
- c. Faculty will announce to students the availability of faculty-student interaction that, in a traditional class room setting, would be available through office hours. The availability will be in the form of a schedule or notices as to the physical in-office time, phone availability, email availability, chat or other synchronous communication for the semester.

2. It is recommended that faculty:

- a. Seek out and participate in opportunities that expose them to various pedagogical strategies that are well suited to the distance learning environment.
- b. Seek out opportunities for collaborations and interactions with faculty that have had success in the distance learning environment. Those faculty who have had success in distance learning should take a mentorship role with those who are seeking assistance.
- c. Participate in the evaluation and selection of the software products used for course development.
- d. Seek out and participate in ongoing training and technical support for various distance learning development and delivery tools.
- e. Understand the implications of teaching via distance, e.g., the unique challenges presented by the various technologies.

D. Evaluation

1. Online and Hybrid course faculty shall be evaluated using the same procedures, forms, and timelines used to evaluate faculty teaching traditional courses.
2. Department Chairs/Program Directors, or their designee, evaluating online and hybrid course faculty must be sufficiently familiar with online teaching methods, and the approved guidelines and standards defined in this document, to effectively and fairly perform the faculty evaluations.

V. Academic Departments

Departmental responsibilities for curriculum, staffing, academic quality, and faculty/student interaction in online courses will follow the same CCSN directives that exist for site-based courses, and as described in the CCSN Distance Education Policy.

A. Course Offerings & Development

1. Each department is responsible for determining and developing programs and courses that will be offered in an online format.
2. It is the ultimate responsibility of the department to have on record, if required, approval and/or copyright permissions and clearance for all multimedia that will be used in their courses.
3. The department is responsible for maintaining faculty qualified in the specific disciplines and in online course assessment and evaluation.
4. Academic departments are responsible to assure that faculty teaching online and hybrid courses are proficient in both course delivery and in the course subject matter.
5. The department is responsible to ensure the faculty member uses a syllabus that complies with CCSN policy.

6. When a departmentally-based course is taught through distance technologies, a summary of the Course Learning Objectives will be on-file in the department.

B. Faculty Workload

1. Each department shall determine online faculty workloads as dictated by department needs and resources, and in accordance with the Workload Policy.
2. Each department is responsible for identifying and assigning faculty, full-time and/or part-time, to teach online courses.

C. Course Maintenance and Evaluation

1. Each department is responsible for monitoring and assuring the academic quality and rigor of their courses.
2. Each department is responsible for evaluating their courses according to CCSN Policy and bylaws.

D. Department DE Committee

1. The Department DE Committee is composed of:
 - a. the Department Chair/Program Director or their designee
 - b. 1-2 consenting faculty members, selected by the Department Chair/Program Director, experienced in the development and delivery of online courses and the guidelines and standards defined in this document
 - c. at least one faculty member trained as a QM peer reviewer
 - d. if a department does not have 1-2 qualified faculty members available to serve on the Department DE Committee, a faculty member from another department or an instructional designer may be invited to serve on the committee
 - e. additional members may be added to the Department DE Committee at the discretion of the Department Chair/Program Director
 - f. service on the Department DE Committee is considered college service, and is not eligible for a stipend or release time
2. The responsibilities of the Department DE Committee include:
 - a. using the QM Peer Review Rubric to review newly developed online and/or hybrid courses for approval prior to the course being offered
 - b. serving as a resource to faculty members in the development and/or the delivery of online/hybrid courses when requested
 - c. serving as a resource to the Department Chair/Program Director and/or Dean in matters pertaining to Distance Education
 - d. reviewing newly developed distance education courses, and either approving the course for scheduling or declining the course and providing recommendations to the course developer
 - d. approving or declining Course Revision Proposals and Course Revision Reviews (described in Section VII), and forwarding approved forms to the Dean or returning declined forms to the submitting faculty member

VI. Course Development and Delivery

A. Course Development

Guided by program, department, and student needs, departments determine which courses will be offered in an online format. New online course development may be proposed by an individual faculty member, a Department Chair/Program Director, a Dean, or the VPAA. Development of online courses approved to meet program, department, or student need will be eligible for a development stipend. Faculty members proposing development of a course that does not meet program, department, or student needs may do so with the approval of the Department Chair/Program Director, but may not request a development stipend.

1. Development of Courses Proposed by a Department

a. Course Development Guidelines

- 1) A departmental course may be proposed by a faculty member, the Department Chair/Program Director, or the Dean.
- 2) If a course is proposed by a faculty member, the faculty member shall be considered the subject matter expert (SME). If a course is proposed by the Department Chair/Program Director or Dean, a consenting faculty member will be selected to serve as the SME.
- 3) The SME is responsible for course development, including:
 - a) creating Course Learning Objectives for a new course
 - b) utilizing current Course Learning Objectives on file, if available, for an existing course in the develop of the course for online delivery
 - c) if Course Learning Objectives are not on file for an existing traditional course, the SME will create (in cooperation with other full time faculty who teach the existing course) the Course Learning Objectives for the course
 - c) creating course content
 - d) obtaining approved copyright permissions and clearance for all multimedia that will be used when required.
 - e) utilizing the QM Peer Review rubric in course development
- 4) It is expected that online and hybrid courses will have the same Course Learning Objectives and level of rigor as equivalent traditional courses.
- 5) Faculty members may request the help of an instructional designer in developing or revising an online course.
- 6) All new online and hybrid courses must be reviewed and approved by the Department DE Committee once development is complete, and prior to scheduling.
- 7) Any course that has not been previously approved by the Curriculum Committee must go through all CCSN Curriculum approval procedures prior to a request for online development.

b. Course Development Procedure

- 1) SME submits Distance Education Course Development Proposal form to the Department Chair/Program Director.
- 2) Department Chair/Program Director submits approved proposal to the Dean, or returns the denied proposal to the faculty member
- 3) Dean forwards the approved proposal to the VPAA and notifies the Department Chair/Program Director of the course approval, or returns denied proposal to the Department Chair/Program Director
- 4) The Department Chair/Program Director notifies the DEO and the SME of course approval, and requests a Course Shell from the DEO.
- 5) If a stipend is being requested, the SME submits the Distance Education Course Development Compensation Agreement to the DEO.
- 6) SME develops the course.
- 7) SME submits the completed course and the New Distance Education Course Review form to the Department DE Committee for review.

- 8) Department DE Committee either approves the course, using the QM review rubric, or makes recommendations to the SME for changes to the course.
 - 9) If the course is approved, the Department DE Committee forwards the New Distance Education Course Review form to the Department Chair/Program Director and Dean for notification.
 - 9) The Dean submits the approved New Distance Education Course Review to the DEO for stipend payment.
 - 10) Approved courses can be scheduled for inclusion in the next Class Schedule.
- c. Exceptions to the Course Development Procedure require approval of the Department Chair/Program Director and the Dean.
2. Development of Courses Proposed/Requested by the VPAA
 - a. The VPAA may request that a course be developed by a department.
 - b. Departments may decline development of a course for academic reasons.
 - c. If the department is developing the course, a consenting faculty member will be selected to serve as the Subject Matter Expert (SME).
 - d. If there are no qualified or interested faculty members, the department will work with the VPAA to facilitate course development.
 - e. Courses requested for development by the VPAA may follow the same procedure as outlined for courses proposed by a department or, with departmental consent, may proceed as determined by the VPAA.
 3. Course Development Compensation
 - a. the payment of course development stipends will follow the guidelines outlined in the CCSN Distance Education Compensation Schedule.
 - b. The stipend schedule will be evaluated on an annual basis so that the amount is comparable to the adjunct instructor pay rate.
 - c. The following conditions apply to receipt of compensation for the development of distance delivered courses:
 - 1) The faculty member will complete the Distance Education Course Development Compensation Agreement prior to receiving compensation.
 - 2) Distance Education course development compensation will occur during the first semester that the course is taught and has a minimum enrollment of ten students.
 - 3) The Vice President of Academic Affairs can make a determination to pay Distance Education course development compensation with the minimum enrollment if the course was developed to fill a need of the college.
 - d. Course Development Stipends are paid by the DEO.
 4. Course Development Stipends and Intellectual Property Rights

The following statements are taken from the NSHE Board of Regents Handbook. For additional information on copyright and intellectual property rights, refer to Title 4, Chapter 12 of the Board of Regents handbook.

 - a. "Copyrightable works" shall include...distance education courses or programmed instructional materials
 - b. "Work for Hire" is defined by the copyright laws of the United States...as a work prepared by an employee within the scope of his or her employment.

c. It is the policy of the UCCSN that all rights in copyright shall remain with the author/creator unless the work is a work for hire....is supported by a direct allocation of funds through the UCCSN for the pursuit of a specific project, is commissioned by the UCCSN, is created with the significant use of UCCSN administered resources, or is otherwise subject to contractual obligations.

d. The UCCSN owns all rights, intellectual and financial, in copyrightable works created in the course of scholarly projects specifically funded by UCCSN sponsored agreements or other UCCSN funds...except in those situation where the funds were specifically paid to support the development of inventions or copyrightable works.

5. Multiple Online Sections

a. All courses for which a stipend is paid will be eligible to be taught by any qualified full-time or part-time instructor assigned by the department.

b. Courses developed by a SME without compensation may be assigned to other qualified faculty members only with the consent of the SME.

c. Multiple sections may be offered as needed to fill program or degree requirements, to meet student demand, and within the limitations of qualified instructor availability.

d. Multiple sections of the same course taught by the same instructor will each be assigned a separate course shell

e. Multiple sections of the same course must use the same Course Learning Objectives.

f. Full-time and/or part-time faculty members may customize different sections of the same course, as long as the Course Learning Objectives remain constant for all sections. Customization of an existing course does not qualify for a development stipend.

B. Courses NOT Acceptable for Online Development and/or Delivery

The following types of courses may not be offered:

1. Courses with e-mail only correspondence (syllabus is sent and assignments are received)

2. Courses that are built while they are being taught

3. Sections of the same DE course with insufficient enrollment

4. Courses that fail a QM Peer Review three consecutive times

5. Courses that do not follow the developmental guidelines described in this document

6. Courses that are designed and offered as complete courses by independent publishers, unless approved by the Dean. (This does not apply to supplemental materials offered by publishers to accompany a textbook)

C. Course Delivery

1. All CCSN courses will be delivered in the accepted LMS.

2. Course Administration

1. Departments are responsible for offering and staffing all online courses within their discipline.

2. Departments should be responsive to the needs of online programs in scheduling adequate sections, and within the limitations of identifying and assigning qualified instructors.

3. If multiple sections of a course are taught by part-time instructors, the Department may choose to assign a Lead Faculty to supervise and review these sections. Appropriate release time may be assigned to a Lead Faculty member for these responsibilities, depending on the resources of the department and the number of sections being supervised.

4. The Department, or designated Lead Faculty, is responsible for:
 - a. providing a Course orientation for all new part-time instructors
 - b. evaluating all part-time instructors using the same procedures used to evaluate part-time instructors in a traditional class
 - c. monitoring delivery of sections taught by part-time instructors to ensure quality (if the department has chosen to allow course customization by part-time instructors) and effective instructor-student interaction
 - d. monitoring delivery of sections taught by part-time instructors to ensure the standards and guidelines in this document are being met.
 - d. checking and updating hyperlinks within the course every semester
 - e. updating the course every 2-3 years, or more frequently when necessary, to ensure currency and quality of content
 - h. selecting methods of delivery and assessment that assure the integrity of student work
5. It is recommended that Lead Faculty responsible for online courses:
 - a. work with an instructional designer to determine new technologies and information available to improve the course
 - b. attend at least 2 workshops each academic year pertaining to online instruction and technology
6. The institution is responsible for maintaining testing center locations and hours that support student needs.

D. NSHE and CCSN Policy

All online courses will adhere to NSHE regulations and CCSN Policies.

VII. Course Revisions and Updating

Course revision and updating is expected of DE instructors just as it is expected of traditional and hybrid course instructors. Due to the technological requirements inherent in DE courses, course revision and updating may go beyond the normal scope of this task, and may be eligible for a Course Revision Stipend.

A. General Considerations

1. A faculty member (designated SME, course developer, or Lead Faculty) may request compensation for course revisions no more than every two years, and only for extensive replacement or revision of core course content.
2. Faculty must have a Distance Education Course Revision Proposal approved BEFORE beginning any course revisions for which a stipend is expected.
3. Only one version of a course may be revised for a stipend. If one version of a course has received QM approval, this version will be eligible for the revision stipend. If no version of the course has yet received QM approval, only revisions done with the intent to qualify the course for QM approval will be eligible for a revision stipend. In this case, the department chair will select one consenting faculty member to revise the course.
4. Faculty members revising a course to customize it for their teaching style are not eligible for a revision stipend and do not need to submit a Distance Education Course Revision Proposal.

B. Course Revisions qualifying as extensive replacement of core course content include, but are not limited to:

1. incorporation of new technology into the course
2. selection of a new textbook resulting in substantial revisions to the course
3. addition of significant new components to the course

C. Course Revisions considered part of normal instruction and not eligible for compensation, include, but are not limited to:

1. semester revisions to the Instructor syllabus
2. change of textbook edition and/or e-pack by the instructor or publisher
3. course instructor change

4. creation of additional course section
5. updating hyperlinks
6. test bank updates
7. rearrangement of course content, with no substantial rewriting, in response to a new edition or new textbook
8. new version of LMS

D. Procedure for Course Revisions

1. A faculty member submits a Distance Education Course Revision Proposal form to the Department DE Committee
2. The Department DE Committee forwards approved Distance Education Course Revision Proposals to the Department Chair/Program Director for approval, or returns denied requests to the faculty member with recommendations.
3. The Department Chair/Program Director forwards approved Distance Education Course Revision Proposals to the Dean, or returns denied proposals to the Department DE Committee with recommendations.
4. The Dean forwards approved proposals to the DEO for information.
5. If the request is approved, the faculty member proceeds to update the course. If the request was denied, the faculty member may submit a new request.
6. When approved course revisions are complete, the faculty member will submit the revised course, along with the Distance Education Course Revision Review form to the Department DE Committee.
7. The Department DE Committee reviews the revised course, and approves or denies the Distance Education Course Revision Review form.
8. Submission and forwarding of a Distance Education Course Revision Review form follows the same steps outlined for Distance Education Course Revision Proposal forms.
9. The Dean forwards approved Distance Education Course Revision Review forms to the DEO for information and stipend payment..
10. Course Revision stipends are paid during the semester the revised course is taught.

VIII. Course Quality, Design, and Presentation

A. Course Quality

Extensive research has shown that the eight general standards listed below can be used to effectively assess the quality of an online course. CCSN has adopted the Quality Matters Course Review rubric as the primary guideline in development and review of online courses. These eight general standards addressed in the QM Course Review rubric are used to guide course development and course reviews. See Appendix II for additional information about the QM Course Review rubric.

1. Course Overview and Introduction: 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.
2. Learning Objectives: Learning objectives are clearly defined and explained. They assist the student to focus learning activities.
3. Assessment and Measurement: Assessment strategies use established ways to measure effective learning, assess student progress by reference to stated learning objectives, and are designed as essential to the learning process.
4. Resources and Materials: Instructional materials are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve announced objectives and learning outcomes and are prepared by qualified persons competent in their fields.
5. Learner Interaction: The effective design of instructor-student interaction, meaningful student cooperation, and student-content interaction is essential to student motivation, intellectual commitment and personal development.
6. Course Technology: To enhance student learning, course technology enriches instruction and fosters student interactivity.

7. Learner Support: Courses are effectively supported for students through fully accessible modes of delivery, resources, and student support.

8. Accessibility: The course is accessible to all students.

B. Course Design and Presentation

1. It is in the students' best interest for all courses to be logically structured and to follow consistent navigation strategies. CCSN instructional designers are familiar with effective template design, and can help instructors in designing courses appropriately. For recommendations, see Appendix III.

2. All CCSN online courses will conform to the same NSHE regulations, CCSN policies, and Accreditation standards that apply to traditional courses.

3. General Course Considerations

a. Homepage Appearance

1). Appearance of the Course Homepage is determined by the LMS.

2) The Course Homepage should be designed to provide access to all major course elements and organizer pages.

b. All text and graphics should comply with Section 504/508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (avoid blinking or animated icons; include link text).

c. Course Learning Objectives

1) All activities should be aligned to Course Learning Objectives

2) Learning objectives should be identified for each topic/unit/module and learning activities should be clearly related to these objectives.

d. Learning Assessments

1) All assessment activities should be closely tied to learning Course Learning Objectives

2) It is the responsibility of faculty members and academic departments to assure the integrity of student work.

4. Copyright Law

a. Faculty are responsible for identifying copyrighted materials used in their course, citing the material appropriately and obtaining written permission to use it in the Web environment prior to course construction when required. Permission for use of materials must come from the media originator/copyright owner when required.

b. Creating original work/content is preferred, except in the case of multimedia resources. Original development of animations, video, etc. can be very time-consuming and expensive. Publisher multimedia resources, when available, are preferred.

IX. Peer Course Review and Course Evaluation

A. Peer Course Review

1. CCSN is committed to developing and maintaining quality online courses. Online course review is a peer review process designed to help course developers and instructors improve their online course in a supportive environment. The course review process is NOT a course or instructor evaluation for use in tenure, promotion, or any other employment application, and the Course Review report may not be used for these purposes. The Course Review report will be kept with Department Course/Instructional records, and will not be part of an employee record.

2. CCSN subscribes to the Quality Matters (QM) Course Review program. Developing and/or teaching online courses is a matter of faculty choice, and faculty who chose to develop and/or teach online courses should understand the role of the QM Course Review.

- a) Use of the QM Course Review Rubric in Course Development
 - 1) Faculty desiring to develop an online course should be familiar with the QM Course Review rubric
 - 2) The QM Course Review rubric is used by Department DE Committees to review developed courses for final approval.
 - b) Use of the QM Course Review Rubric in reviewing existing online courses
 - 1) All CCSN courses selected for a QM Peer Review should work toward meeting the Quality Matters standards to be designated as approved QM courses.
 - 2) Existing online courses which fail to meet the standards of the QM Course Review for three consecutive reviews (or fewer, at the discretion of the Department DE Committee) may not be taught again until they have met the QM Course Review standards.
3. Details of the QM program are available at www.qualitymatters.org, and the QM Course Review rubric is available in Appendix II.
- B. Peer Course Review Process
Courses selected for peer review will follow the peer review process as established by Quality Matters. Additional information is available at www.qualitymatters.org.
- C. Course Evaluations
 1. CCSN online courses will follow the same evaluation procedures used for traditional courses.
 2. Online Course Student Evaluations will be made available to students in an online format by the DEO for each online course every semester

X. Appendices

- Appendix I - Sample Course Learning Outcomes
- Appendix II - Quality Matters Course Review rubric
- Appendix III - Recommended Characteristics for Online Courses

XI. Forms

- A. New Online Course Development Proposal
- B. New Online Course Review
- C. Online Course Revision Proposal
- D. Online Course Revision Review
- E. QM Peer Course Review Request

APPENDIX II: Quality Matters Review Rubric
 Visit www.qualitymatters.org for additional information

All Quality Matters Rubric Standards with Assigned Point Values

	Standard	Points
Course Overview and Introduction	I.1 Navigational instructions make the organization of the course easy to understand	3
	I.2 A statement introduces the student to the course and to the structure of the student learning and, in the case of a hybrid course, clarifies the relationship between the face-to-face and online components	3
	I.3 Etiquette expectations with regard to discussions, email, and other forms of communication are stated clearly	2
	I.4 The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and available online	1
	I.5 Students are requested to introduce themselves to the class	1
	I.6 Minimum technology requirements, minimum student skills, and, if applicable, prerequisite knowledge in the discipline are clearly stated	1
Learning Objectives	II.1 The course learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable	3
	II.2 The module/unit learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives	3
	II.3 The learning objectives are stated clearly and written from the students' perspective	2
	II.4 Instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are adequate and stated clearly	2
	II.5 The learning objectives address content mastery, critical thinking skills, and core learning skills	2
Assessment and Measurement	III.1 The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources	3
	III.2 The course grading policy is stated clearly	3
	III.3 Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of students' work and participation	3
	III.4 The assessment instruments selected are sequenced, varied, and appropriate to the content being assessed	2
	III.5 "Self-check" or practice types of assignments are provided for timely student feedback	1

Resources and Materials	IV.1 The instructional materials support the stated learning objectives	3
	IV.2 The instructional materials have sufficient breadth, depth, and currency for the student to learn the subject	3
	IV.3 The purpose of each course element is explained	2
	IV.4 The instructional materials are logically sequenced and integrated	1
	IV.5 All resources and materials used in the course are appropriately cited	1
Learner Engagement	V.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of stated learning objectives	3
	V.2 Learning activities foster instructor-student, content-student, and if appropriate to this course, student-student interaction	3
	V.3 Clear standards are set for instructor response and availability (turn-around time for email, grade posting, etc.)	3
	V.4 The requirements for course interaction are clearly articulated	2
	V.5 The course design prompts the instructor to be active and engaged with the students	2
Course Technology	VI.1 The tools and media support the learning objectives, and are appropriately chosen to deliver the content of the course	3
	VI.2 The tools and media enhance student interactivity and guide the student to become a more active learner	2
	VI.3 Technologies required for this course are either provided or easily downloadable	2
	VI.4 The course components are compatible with existing standards of delivery modes	1
	VI.5 Instructions on how to access resources at a distance are sufficient and easy to understand	1
	VI.6 The course design takes full advantage of available tools and media	1
Learner Support	VII.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered	2
	VII.2 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's academic support system can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided	2
	VII.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student support services can assist the student in effectively using the resources provided	1

	VII.4 Course instructions articulate or link to tutorials and resources that answer basic questions related to research, writing, technology, etc.	1
Accessibility	VIII.1 The course acknowledges the importance of ADA requirements	3
	VIII.2 Course pages and course materials provide equivalent alternatives to auditory and visual content	1
	VIII.3 Course pages have links that are self-describing and meaningful	1
	VIII.4 The course demonstrates sensitivity to readability issues	1

To meet Quality Matters review expectations a course must: Answer 'Yes' to all 3-point Essential Standards: I.1, I.2, II.1, II.2, III.1, III.2, III.3, IV.1, IV.2, V.1, V.2, V.3, VI.1, VIII.1 **AND** Earn 68 or more points

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APPENDIX III: Recommendations for Online Course Structure

When this reference was prepared, CCSN was in the process of transitioning from WebCT 4.1 CE to Blackboard/WebCT 6.0 CE. It is intended as recommendations that can apply to most Learning Management Systems.

I. Entry Page Contents.

- A. It is recommended that an online course Homepage include these links:
1. Welcome (basic course information)
 2. Contents (course materials)
 3. Communication (mail, discussion, chat, whiteboard)
 4. Calendar (assists students in tying course tools together)
 5. Assessments (assignments, quizzes, tests and graded activities)
 6. Resources (references, student tools and support service)
- B. At instructors' discretion, additional links may be added; research has shown that excessive links often tend to overwhelm students and impede navigation. Regardless, links should be organized in a logical manner with consistent use of icons as appropriate.

II. Organization.

- A. Welcome Page
1. The following items are recommended content for the Welcome page:
 - a. Instructor's Syllabus. This is the guideline for students that explains the delivery of the content. Academic freedom applies to the methods and approaches chosen by the instructor to deliver any fixed content within the syllabus. All syllabi must comply with CCSN's Syllabus Policy document.
 - b. Expectations for minimum participation (logins per week, messages, etc.).
 - c. Description of the main tools and sections used in the course.
 - d. Description of the nature of content delivery.
 - e. A statement encouraging students to make use of the CCSN Library (when applicable) with the URL link.
 - f. A link to the CCSN Online WebCT training (when available).
 2. Optional items for the Welcome page might include:
 - a. Personal greeting from the instructor.
 - b. Description of a typical week's module's sequence of activities, responsibilities, and due dates from the perspective of a student.
 - c. List of directory information for classmates who agree to be listed.
 - d. Links to optional download software, sites, and utilities.
- B. Content Considerations.
1. The instructor should develop a consistent method for delivering the contents of the course (i.e., html documents or rich text files). **Note:** proprietary formats such as MS Word may be inaccessible to students who have not purchased this software; PowerPoint may be viewed via free viewer software, but these files are often inaccessible to vision-impaired students.

2. Recommended components for each Content Module page include:
 - a. An upper text block or header image (banner graphic) that displays the title of that Module.
Ex: Week 1 (or Chapter 6, or Critical Thinking Unit, etc.)
 - b. Headings or Titles to mark major concepts within the module.
 - c. Indent collapse/expand relationships among contents.

C. Communication Tools.

1. If not already available through the home page, this page should include the following minimum components:
 - a. A descriptive header above the icons labeled appropriately.
 - b. Discussion or Bulletin Board link.
 - c. Email link.
 - d. My Grades link.
2. Optional components for this page can include:
 - a. Chat link.
 - b. Whiteboard link.
 - c. Student Homepages link.
 - d. My Progress link.

Note: Synchronous activities must be optional for students in online classes. Use of synchronous activities should be carefully weighed for all types of courses.

D. Calendar.

1. Although classified as a Communication tool by many LMSs, the Calendar is a vital tool for online learners. As such, a link to the Calendar should appear on the home page. When students who are enrolled in multiple courses at CCSN can rely upon a standardized placement and use of the Calendar tool, their ability to succeed in managing their time online will increase.
2. Suggestions for optimizing the calendar include:
 - a. Course content links (i.e., begin unit 1 today with link to unit 1).
 - b. Assignment/project/lab report due dates.
 - c. Discussion open/close dates.
 - d. Exam or Quiz dates.
 - e. Virtual office hours (if instructor opts to include these).
 - f. Other important dates.
 - g. Color coding entries is useful if the LMS permits it.

E. Assessments

1. Extensive learning effectiveness research has demonstrated that multiple assessment modes and methods allow instructors to form a more complete “tapestry” of student understanding, as opposed to a “snapshot” that emerges with any single assessment device (test, quiz, paper, project, assignment, etc.).
2. All of the following devices are recommended for faculty consideration. Use of each tool should always fall within the faculty member’s and academic department’s discretion, aligning with stated course learning objectives.
 - a. Assignment Tool (or organizer/single pages of assignments).
 - b. Online quizzes.
 - c. Self tests.
 - d. Surveys.
 - e. Student Presentations.

- f. Student Homepages.
- g. External Links (i.e., to publisher-site quizzes or assignments).

3. Assessment Guidelines.

- a. Content modules should contain frequent opportunities for self-assessment.
- b. All assessment should be closely tied to learning objectives.
- c. Procedures for submitting assignments and tests must be clearly explained.
- d. The types of assessment tools used within a course are determined by the faculty member as appropriate to the discipline.
- e. Reasonable precautions should be taken to assure student identity and testing integrity.

F. Resources

- 1. Many courses provide a wide variety of supplementary tools that assist students in their online learning. Publisher resources may also be available. When appropriate, the Resources organization should include a direct link to the CCSN Library Home Page.
- 2. Additional suggestions for helpful tools (if provided by the LMS) include:
 - a. Compile Tool.
 - b. Search Tool.
 - c. My Grades Tool (if not included elsewhere).
 - d. My Progress Tool (if not included elsewhere).
 - e. Glossary Tool.
 - f. Student Tips Utility.
 - g. CD Rom Utility.
 - h. Links to outside, or publisher, resources.

III. Faculty Support

- A.** Instructional designers are available, by request, to assist faculty in course development and in the creation of effective course design and content presentation.
- B.** Training sessions are available through CAPE to assist faculty in development and delivery of online courses.

This document was prepared by the CCSN ad hoc Distance Education Standards and Guidelines Committee:

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