

ISP 150

Online Courses

PURPOSE

Establishes the standards for online courses, aiming for best practices and effective teaching and learning. Especially important are the ideas of designing, starting, communicating within, managing, and improving the course.

SUMMARY

Online courses are equivalent to face-to-face courses in content and quality, including equivalent contact time expected for the credit hours of the course. To help students achieve the learning outcomes, online courses should be designed with student engagement, interaction and reflection in mind. Clackamas does not endorse self-paced courses that require little or no instructor and student engagement.

To best ensure quality of online courses, all instructors assigned online courses must be given adequate preparation and training. The focus should always be on effective teaching of the material. From the design of the course through its implementation and ending, instructors should strive for substantive interaction and active engagement with all students. If instructors wish to improve their online courses, Clackamas fully supports their professional development in this area. It is imperative that all CCC classes provide high quality and meaningful educational experiences.

STANDARD

1. **Assigning the course.** No faculty shall be expected to teach an online course without adequate preparation and training (see article 12.C of the full time faculty contract, article 2.Q of the part time faculty contract [2016-9]). If a department has no set training procedure, it is highly advisable that an instructor contact Instructional Support and Professional Development (ISPD) at least three months before teaching an online course for the first time.
2. **Designing the course.** Even before the course meets, instructors should design their courses with consideration for the different parameters of an online class. This includes different modes for active learning and accessibility. All online classes must comply with both copyright law and the Americans with Disabilities Act (for instance, using closed caption videos, webpages that will work well with screenreaders, and so on). Given that students' primary interface with the course will be online, instructors should be mindful of their responsibility to provide course materials that help diverse learners attain the outcomes for the class.
3. **Starting the course.** Instructors have a particular responsibility to establish course expectations in the first week of the class. They should ensure that the course is visible, its content is functional, and that the syllabus is prominently available (see ISP 160A for required syllabus content). Students should be made aware of academic and other support resources (e.g. the Disability Resource Center and the Learning Center). Instructors should also establish how (and how frequently) students are expected to interact with course content, the instructor, and each other.

4. **Communicating within the course.** Online instructors should strive for frequent, active, and meaningful communication with their students. Ideally, students should receive instructor response within 48 hours (or 2 business days) for emails or discussion board questions, and within one week for feedback on assignments.
5. **Managing the course.** Instructors should engage with their students through interactive and frequently updated course materials as well as assignments. Instructors should also monitor their students actively, communicating and adapting as the situation requires (e.g. providing notifications to non-participants, intervening to redirect inappropriate behavior, and referring students to resources that might benefit them). Students should be given meaningful opportunities to ask questions and to provide feedback to the instructor about their learning experience.
6. **Improving the course.** Any instructors who wish to improve their online teaching abilities – at any point before, during, or after teaching a course – can contact the Instructional Support and Professional Development department. ISPD is open to questions about accessibility, copyright law, technology options, and pedagogical strategies, among other topics. Additionally, ISPD houses a document entitled Online Teaching Best Practices that offers strategies for many of the points discussed above.

REVIEW HISTORY

ISP Committee	Adopted	[Date]
College Council	Reviewed	[Date]