Faculty Senate Distance Education Committee  
April 17, 2006  

DRAFT Policy on Distance Education Course Assessment and Review  

1. Individual distance courses will be reviewed on a regular, 3-5 year cycle either as part of an instructor’s on-campus teaching peer review or as a separate review process.  

2. Individual departments are responsible for distance course and instructor review.  

3. The review process will include peer assessments of instruction, course materials and course delivery technology.  

4. On-line student evaluations of teaching and survey techniques will be developed that result in response rates no lower than rates from in-class evaluation tools. Instructors will utilize these on-line evaluation tools or other means to maximize response rates.
Committee Discussion Purposes Only
Guidelines for Peer Teaching Evaluation
(edited from OSU, Department of Fisheries & Wildlife Guidelines)

Goals and Intent
• Peer teaching evaluation is intended to be a positive, constructive experience for the instructor and should be conducted fairly and with a spirit of collegiality.
• Peer teaching evaluation has a role in both formative and summative teaching evaluation (Keig and Waggoner, 1994).
  Formative: evaluation intended to improve teaching.
  Summative: evaluation that functions in decision-making relative to P&T and compensation (required in OSU guidelines for P&T)
• Goals of peer teaching evaluation:
  1. To evaluate the teaching program of individual instructors including course design (e.g., course content, objectives, syllabus, organization, methods and materials for delivering instruction), methods of assessment of student performance, relationship to overall curriculum objectives (including themes and skills appropriate to the courses), classroom presentation, and rapport with students.
  2. To provide insight into and context for results from other forms of evaluation (e.g., student evaluations).
  3. To foster interaction among faculty; faculty work collaboratively to assess teaching and assist in improvement of teaching.

Who Should Experience Peer Teaching Evaluation
• All faculty teaching regularly-scheduled courses should experience peer teaching evaluation. This includes courtesy faculty and faculty teaching distance courses/sections.
• The entire teaching program (all courses that are taught by an instructor) should be evaluated. Distance education courses and sections of on-campus courses offered at a distance should be reviewed with special consideration for their delivery technology and content as in Attachment 3: Suggested Elements for Review of Online Instruction.

Frequency of Evaluation
• The teaching program of non-tenured faculty should undergo peer evaluation every three years. Most non-tenured faculty would experience evaluation twice prior to P&T. A principal purpose of the first evaluation is to identify, well in advance of P&T, areas of teaching that need improvement.
• The teaching program of tenured faculty should undergo evaluation every 4-5 years.

Peer Evaluation Committee
• The committee should be composed of two faculty members from inside the
department and one from outside the department. Some committee members should have the expertise to evaluate course content. For instructors with distance education courses/sections a member of Extended Campus should be included in the committee and/or used as an advisor for the committee.

- The department head should work with the instructor in selecting mutually acceptable panel members. The instructor should not be evaluated by a colleague whom the instructor believes might exhibit unfair bias.

**Procedure for Conducting Peer Teaching Evaluations**
The peer evaluation consists of three parts: evaluation of instructional materials, classroom visitations, and interviews with students.

**Evaluation of Instructional Materials**
1. The instructor provides to the committee a summary of their teaching program that includes an instructor’s narrative and self evaluation consisting of the instructor’s personal teaching philosophy, perceived strengths and areas needing improvement, recent efforts in teaching development, problems encountered by the instructor that hamper effective teaching (e.g., students lack of necessary quantitative skills, lack of TA support, problems interacting with students), and comments and concerns relevant to evaluation.

2. For each course the instructor should provide the following:
   a. Syllabus and outline for lecture and lab including course descriptions and course objectives, relationship with other courses in the department (pre-requisites, subsequent courses, etc.), reading list/text(s), description of methods and approach for delivering instructional materials, and expected outcomes.
   b. A description of course content sufficient to allow detailed peer review.
   c. A sample of exams, problem sets, and other materials and means of evaluating student performance.
   d. Method of grading and grade distributions.
   e. Student evaluations. Only the summary of scores from the computerized student evaluation form can be used for teaching evaluation. It is university policy that the written comments from students on the Student Assessment of Teaching form cannot be used in evaluation of teaching and are only for feedback to the instructor. Department heads may not review the written student comments intended for instructors.
   f. If a distance section of a course is offered the instructor should include and note any materials that are different than those of the on-campus course, including DVDs, CDs, website access etc.

3. Members of the committee review the teaching summary and meet as a group to determine how the peer evaluation will be conducted, including a schedule for classroom visitations, a process for review of technology use and course delivery and how student interviews will be conducted. The conduct of the
review should be discussed with the instructor. After discussion with the
instructor, an outline of the procedures for conducting the review should be
submitted to the department head for approval.

Classroom Visitations.

Done properly, visitation by peers demands a good deal of time, even though
it can be useful in both improving and evaluating teaching. Classroom
visitation also can be helpful in resolving discrepancies between student
evaluations and perception of the peer evaluation committee. In addition, in-
class components must be part of peer evaluation within the OSU Guidelines
for Tenure and Promotion.

Guidelines for classroom visitation are given in Attachment 2. In general,
more than one classroom visitation is recommended. The instructor should be
informed prior to each visitation. The committee should meet with the
instructor prior to each visitation to discuss the objectives of the lecture and
review content and materials, and after the visitation to discuss
strengths/weaknesses, etc. Lectures can be videotaped and viewed by
committee members who were unable to attend the visitations.

Student Interviews.

A variety of methods could be used to conduct student interviews. The
committee should attempt to avoid bias in selecting students for interviews
and should solicit a cross section of student opinions on the instructor’s
teaching performance. To avoid concerns over confidentiality of the identity
of interviewed students, students should be interviewed in a group setting,
perhaps after a class visitation by the peer review team.

Course Delivery Technology Review

If the course uses any type of digital technology, whether for on-campus or
distance students the committee should set up a process for review. The
committee should review and discuss Attachment 3: Suggested Elements for
Review of Online Instruction with Extended Campus representatives before
visiting the web site or viewing digital materials. The committee should
contact Blackboard Coordinators so that they may be given guest status to
visit the course website for all courses using Blackboard.

As in Classroom Visits the committee should meet with the instructor prior to
each visitation to discuss the objectives of the lecture and review content and
materials, and after the visitation to discuss strengths/weaknesses, etc.

The committee should meet with the instructor to discuss, clarify, and expand the
materials summarizing the teaching program, and results of classroom visitations and
student interviews. Every effort should be made to keep the tone of the meeting
positive and constructive. An oral summary of the committee’s reaction to the
teaching program should be presented to the instructor. Strengths and weaknesses of the program and suggestions for teaching improvement should be discussed with the instructor.

The Review Document

- Based upon the teaching summary, discussions with the instructor, and classroom visitations, individual reports or a consensus report is submitted by the committee to the department head. *This letter will become a part of the instructor’s dossier for promotion and tenure.* A list of possible questions for consideration by the committee is attached (Attachment 1). The list of questions is suggestive of general areas to be addressed in the review and can serve to focus evaluation of instructional materials. Individual responses to each question are not necessary. *In general, the committee should:*
  - Document the process used in conducting the review
  - Summarize the teaching responsibilities and general mode and method of teaching
  - Summarize findings from classroom visitations and student interviews
  - Provide an analysis of student evaluation scores and trends in scores
  - Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching program and areas needing improvement
  - Evaluate course content and recommend improvements
  - Highlight innovative teaching methods
  - Note efforts to improve teaching
  - The committee should provide specific recommendations for improvement of teaching.

- A copy of the evaluation(s) will be provided to the instructor who may respond to it in writing. Both the peer evaluation and the instructor responses must be considered in summative evaluation.

References


Guidelines for Reviewing the Teaching Summary
(Adapted from Seldin, 1985 & University of Missouri, 1992).

Course Content
Is it up-to-date?
Is the treatment balanced and fair?
If appropriate, are conflicting views presented?
Are the breadth and depth of coverage appropriate?
Has the instructor mastered the subject matter?
Is the coverage responsive to the needs of students? Is it relevant to the discipline?

Course Objectives
Are the objectives clearly communicated to the students?
Are they consistent with overall curricular objectives?
Does the course incorporate the appropriate themes and skills?
Are in-class and out-of-class work appropriately balanced?
Does the instructor encourage students to think for themselves?

Grading and Examination
Are exams suitable to content and course objectives?
Are exams representative of course content?
Are exams clearly written?
Are exams fairly graded?
Are grading standards made clear to the students?

Course Organization
Is the syllabus current and relevant to the course objectives?
Is the course outline logical?
Are the lecture, laboratory, or other assignments integrated? Should they be?
Is the time devoted to each topic appropriate?

Assignments
Do assignments supplement lectures, discussions, labs, and field work?
Do assignments reflect and support course objectives?
Are they appropriate for the level of the student?
Is adequate time given to complete the assignments? Is it consistent with expected quality?
Are the assignments challenging to the student?

Interest in Teaching
Does the instructor discuss teaching with colleagues?
Does the instructor seek advice from others and participate in teaching-related workshops and committees?
Is the instructor sought out by others on teaching-related matters?
Is the instructor knowledgeable about current developments in teaching?

Instructor Concerns
Are the instructor’s concerns about evaluation well-founded?
Are the instructor’s needs for course improvement well-founded?
Guidelines for Reviewing Classroom Visitations
(Adapted from Seldin, 1985).

Structure and Goals
Are the instructor’s presentations well-planned and organized?
Are the various instructional elements (lecture, blackboard material, handouts) effectively integrated?
Is the class time used efficiently?
Is the material presented clearly and effectively?

Teaching Behaviors
Is the oral delivery appropriately paced?
Is the language used understandable to students?

Instructor-Student Rapport
Does the instructor demonstrate fair and equitable concern for all students?
Do the students seem receptive to the instructor’s ideas?
Is the instructor sensitive to response of the class?
Are student questions answered clearly and simply?
Does the instructor provide opportunities and encourage student questions?
Does the instructor accept student ideas and comments?
How would you describe the instructor-student classroom relationship?

Subject Matter and Instruction
Does the instructor demonstrate adequate knowledge of the subject?
Are the transitions between topics effective?
Is the course material presented in a lively and interesting style?
Are the students generally attentive?
Does the instructor demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject and for teaching?
Does the instructor include material relevant to existing student interest?
Suggested Elements for Review of Online Instruction
Alfonso Bradoch
Assistant Director of Department Services
OSU Ecampus
Suggested Elements for Review of Online Instruction

This document provides a list of elements to consider when reviewing online course instruction. The concept of this tool is that it would provide useful feedback to the faculty member delivering the course. It is not designed to be rigid or prescriptive, but rather to be informative, helpful, and constructive. A corollary experience would be that of having a manuscript peer-reviewed prior to publication in a professional journal. The procedure followed may vary by academic discipline, but the intention is to provide constructive review for the overall benefit of the profession. These suggested elements for review might be used for self-review of a course, peer review, or formal departmental review.

These “Suggested Elements for Review” are compiled from literature, research, and published “best practices” from professional organizations including the Sloan Consortium, WCET (Western Cooperative in Educational Technology), and NUTN (National University Telecommunications Network). One primary source has been the Quality Matters www.qualitymatters.org project, sponsored in part by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), U.S. Department of Education, through Maryland Online. A literature review is available upon request, describing sources for the best practices standards.

These elements for review of online instruction are divided into seven sections with suggested review standards in each section. We encourage revision and adaptation of these elements to fit the needs of the situation and the academic department. Although these elements have a solid basis, please do not view these as “set in stone,” and do feel free to adapt them to increase their usefulness to you.

As a service to the departments who provide online curriculum, Ecampus will gladly participate in review teams, as requested by the department chair, to work toward our common goal of providing quality instruction to OSU students. In this case we would recommend that this review of instruction be completed by a team made up of one or more content experts assigned by the department, an expert in online course design and instruction from Ecampus, and perhaps another successful online instructor in the same content area or in a related area. It is suggested that the team (1) have a preliminary meeting with the instructor to review the syllabus, learning outcomes, and course design, (2) use this instrument to form the basis of a thorough review of the course online, and (3) summarize the outcome in a discussion with the instructor and department chair.
### 1.0 - Learning Outcomes and Online Delivery Standards

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<tr>
<th><strong>Specific Review Standards</strong></th>
<th><strong>Comments/Observations</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 All course teaching objectives, learning outcomes, and requirements were clearly presented. If this course is BACC Core or WIC, appropriate standards were clearly articulated.</td>
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<td>1.2 Course documents described the functions of the online teaching and learning portal (i.e. Blackboard) to the student (how to post assignments, communicate with the instructor, etc.). Clear standards were set for instructor response and availability during class (turn-around time for email, grade postings, office hours, etc.).</td>
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<td>1.3 Students were given information describing course requirements at the outset of the course</td>
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<td>1.4 All student assignments and their expected due dates, as well as exams and exam dates, were posted at the beginning of the course, including any requirements for proctored exams. Instructions for completing assignments were clear.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.5 Students receive clear instructions to save and retain copies of all assignments and submissions.</td>
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**Comments and Recommendations:** The following comments and recommendations by the review team are designed to assist in improving the quality of this course by pointing out areas that could benefit from implementation of online instruction best practices.
### 2.0 – COURSE CONTENT and ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT STANDARDS

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<tr>
<td>2.1 Course content was appropriate and up-to-date relative to the discipline, level of course, and pre-defined learning outcomes.</td>
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<td>2.2 Course content was complete as presented (including online information, student learning materials, evaluation tools, etc.).</td>
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<td>2.3 The intended learning outcomes for this course were clearly stated, aligned with the course syllabus, measurable, and applied.</td>
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<td>2.4 The instructional materials contained in this course or referenced by the instructor have appropriate depth in content and are sufficiently comprehensive for the student to master course objectives.</td>
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<td>2.5 The instructor and this course implemented measures to promote academic honesty, for example, use of proctored exams, random question generation, individualized writing assignments, or projects.</td>
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<td>2.6 Standards for the assignment and grading were provided and defined.</td>
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Comments and Recommendations:
3.0 – INTERACTIONS WITH LEARNER

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<td>3.1 The instructor encouraged regular and ongoing interaction between teacher and students, among students, and between students and the learning environment.</td>
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<td>3.2 Students were offered opportunities for active learning that permitted learners to engage and participate in activities and tasks that enhanced comprehension, understanding, and knowledge.</td>
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<td>3.3 The instructor set and maintained the expectations and standards for appropriate student conduct.</td>
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Comments and Recommendations:
## 4.0 - LEARNING RESOURCES AND SUPPORTING MATERIALS –

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<td>4.1 The instructor directed students to resources and services they needed to meet learning objectives.</td>
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<td>4.2 Instructional materials, (including supporting materials such as: textbooks, readings, manuals, videos, and computer software) were made available to all learners and were clearly identified. These materials were consistent in organization and level for the specific instruction.</td>
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<td>4.3 The instructor presented or identified supplemental tutorials, websites, library services, readings, research materials or other resources for required learning activities.</td>
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**Comments and Recommendations:**
## 5.0 - ASSESSMENT AND MEASUREMENT

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<td>5.1 The instructor applied assessments methodologies and techniques that measured achievement of stated learning outcomes and were clearly derived from assigned readings and learning activities.</td>
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<td>5.2 Feedback to students concerning assignments and questions was constructive and provided in a timely manner. (Standard for email reply is within two days, evaluation results within seven days).</td>
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<td>5.3 Evaluation of student performance included a variety of assessment methods (both formative and summative) such as: evaluation and rating of student projects, student interaction, assignments and activities, performance on quizzes and tests, and other assessment techniques.</td>
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<td>5.4 Students were encouraged to ask questions and request clarification of course requirements to the instructor.</td>
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<td>5.5 Students were provided an opportunity to evaluate both the instructor and the course (e.g., OSU Student Evaluation of Teaching).</td>
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### Comments and Recommendations:
### Specific Review Standards

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<tr>
<td>6.1 Technology selected and used by the instructor appropriately facilitated the achievement of the learning outcomes.</td>
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<td>6.2 Media and technology enhanced, rather than detracted from, the learning experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3 The instructor is sufficiently skilled in the use of the OSU teaching and learning management system (Blackboard) and email to effectively present the teaching objectives and facilitate the learning outcomes.</td>
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### Comments and Recommendations:
# 7.0 - STUDENT SUPPORT STANDARDS AND LEARNER SUPPORT

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<td>7.1 The instructor provided information and/or linkages to the University's academic and student support services.</td>
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<td>7.2 The instructor provided direction to technical assistance, including the use of Blackboard, and direct access to technical support staff.</td>
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**Comments and Recommendations:**
Extended Campus Standards & Regulations

Source: http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/faculty/manual/course-standards.htm

OSU Curricular Procedures and Policies

OSU Extended Campus programs and courses follow the OSU curricular procedures and policies.

Course Quality Standards

Defining educational quality is the overarching purpose for creating and applying quality standards for distance education instruction and course development and delivery. It is the intention of OSU – Extended Campus to keep our focus on quality while working to create and improve the Internet-based teaching and learning environments, pedagogy, methodologies, and evaluation systems applied by instructors for teaching at a distance. The OSU Distance Education Quality Standards are aligned with national and state distance education standards such as those developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC), the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications (WCET), the Oregon statewide standards for distance education developed by the Oregon University System, and the OSU standards for the student assessment of teaching. These Quality Standards are meant to assist instructors who are teaching at a distance, and the DE Unit, with planning and developing distance education courses and providing an assessment framework for evaluating the quality of OSU distance education courses.

1.0 Teaching/Learning Standards

- 1.1 Distance education students are given advance information about course requirements, equipment needs and techniques for succeeding in a distance learning environment, as well as technical training and support throughout the course.
- 1.2 Students are active learners in presenting, organizing, applying and constructing information, ideas and knowledge.
- 1.3 All course objectives/outcomes and requirements are clearly presented.
- 1.4 Courses maximize the opportunities for regularized and ongoing interaction between teacher and students, among students, and between students and the learning environment.
- 1.5 The course provides mediation strategies. Mediation as a means of intervention between the student and the subject matter, as a way to guide the learning process toward particular outcomes, and connect a body of knowledge with a student’s cognitive framework (Petrie 1981).
- 1.6 The course provides opportunities for active learning that allows students to engage and participate in activities and tasks that enhance comprehension, understanding, and knowledge.
- 1.7 All student assignments and their due dates as well as tests and test dates are explained and posted at the beginning of the course.
- 1.8 Examinations are relevant to the reading assignments and to the learning material presented in the course.
• 1.9 Feedback to student assignments and questions is constructive and provided in a timely manner. Instructor commits him/herself to a turn-around-time for normal student e-mail messages within 2 working days, and communication of exam results within 7 working days unless students are informed otherwise.
• 1.10 The course documents describe the functions of the course website to the student (how to post assignments, communicate with the instructor etc.)

2.0 Media and Materials Standards

• 2.1 All external links and internal functionality of web courses will be fully operational when students begin the course.
• 2.2 The course content will be kept current term by term.
• 2.3 Prior approval for use of copyrighted materials as required by law, OUS, and OSU is obtained before the course materials are released to students on the Internet.
• 2.4 Technology is appropriate to the course pedagogy.
• 2.5 The course is facilitated through the Blackboard portal.

3.0 Accessibility Standards

• 3.1 DE courses provide accessibility with screen readers. Images and links contained in the course website must show alternate text upon cursor contact.
• 3.2 All assignment pages are provided in a printable format. Courses provide ample written instructions for every task the student has to perform: taking tests or quizzes, posting contributions to the on-line discussion, downloading files/software, finding supplementary reading, returning to the website, etc.
• 3.3 DE students have access to sufficient library resources that may include a “virtual library” accessible through the World Wide Web.
• 3.4 Academic counseling and advising is available to distance learning students at the same level as it is for students in on-campus environments.

4.0 Privacy and Protection Standards

• 4.1 To protect the integrity of the teaching/learning process in courses that do not feature a proctored test environment the student must be required to formally acknowledge and pledge adherence to OSU’s Code of Academic Honesty published in the Student Handbook.
• 4.2 To provide reasonable assurance of privacy, there must be a published course policy regarding the electronic transmission of student grades including a provision for password protection.
• 4.3 Procedures are in place to help ensure security of student work.
• 4.4 Students receive clear instruction to save and retain copies of work submitted electronically.

5.0 Evaluation Standards
5.1 An approved evaluation instrument(s) is provided with the course to insure student feedback on the functionality of the website, the organization/content of the course, and instructor performance.
5.2 Evaluation of student outcomes includes assessment of student products and exams as well as student evaluations of the course.
5.3 Data on enrollment, costs, and successful/innovative uses of technology are used to evaluate program effectiveness.
5.4 Intended learning outcomes are reviewed regularly to ensure clarity, utility, and appropriateness.
5.5 Course meets or exceeds Oregon University System’s academic standards.
5.6 Teacher evaluation is determined and conducted according to OSU policies. Teacher evaluation is based on: course content, course design, course presentation, student performance, and teacher interaction with students.
5.7 Course is evaluated on a regular basis and revisions documented. Instructional materials are reviewed periodically to ensure they continue to meet program standards. Course evaluation includes: technical design, curriculum alignment, rigor, depth, breadth, student performance, and student participation and interaction.

6.0 Degree/Certificate Program Standards

6.1 Each program of study results in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded.
6.2 An OSU/DE offered degree or certificate program is coherent and complete.
6.3 Qualified OSU faculty provides appropriate oversight of the DE program.

7.0 Institutional Support Standards

7.1 The reliability of the technology delivery system is as failsafe as possible.
7.2 A centralized system provides support for building and maintaining the distance education infrastructure.
7.3 The OSU Curriculum Council and the academic department have approved the course for credit.

8.0 Student Support Standards

8.1 Students receive information about programs, including admission requirements, tuition and fees, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and student support services.
8.2 Throughout the duration of the course/program, students have access to technical assistance, including detailed instructions regarding the electronic media used, practice sessions prior to the beginning of the course, and convenient access to technical support staff.
8.3 Questions directed to student service personnel are answered accurately and quickly, with a structured system in place to address student complaints.
8.4 Technical requirements for student access are documented.
8.5 Minimum technology competencies for students are announced and assessed.
8.6 DE courses have monitoring/proctoring policies in place.
9.0 Faculty Support Standards

- 9.1 Technical assistance in DE course development is available to faculty, who are encouraged to use it.
- 9.2 Faculty members are assisted in the transition from classroom teaching to online instruction and are assessed during the process.
- 9.3 Instructor training and assistance, including peer mentoring, continues through the progression of the online course.