

**Criteria for Approval of Multi-District Online Course Providers**  
**Digital Learning Department, OSPI**

DRAFT  
8/6/2009

<b>Course Content and Instructional Design : The course provider requires all courses and instruction to incorporate the following:</b>		<b>Source</b>	<b>Rubric or Yes-No*</b>
<b>Course goals and outcomes</b>			
<b>A1</b>	<b>Clearly stated and measurable objectives and course goals describing student's knowledge at the end of the course.</b>	NACOL - courses	<b>Rubric</b>
	Course goals and objectives are present, explicitly stated, and can be easily found by students. The student's level of mastery is measured against each goal and objective. After reading the list of goals and objectives, students will understand what they will be learning throughout the course.	Texas's National Standards of Quality for Online Courses Supplemental doc	
<b>A2</b>	<b>Content of sufficient rigor, depth, and breadth to teach the standards being addressed.</b>	NACOL - courses	<b>Rubric</b>
	Rigor is defined as a condition of the learning environment which stretches the individual learner to move beyond his/her comfort zone and grow as an independent learner. Depth refers to the degree to which the course content adheres to the standards being taught. Breadth refers to the completeness of the course.	Texas's National Standards of Quality for Online Courses Supplemental doc	
<b>A3</b>	<b>Course assignments that reflect course goals, representative of the scope of the course, and clearly stated.</b>	NACOL - courses	<b>Rubric</b>
	The scope and sequence of the course is appropriately designed for the subject area and grade level. Concepts and skills are accurately presented, built on one another logically, and connections between concepts and subjects are explicit and relevant.	Texas's National Standards of Quality for Online Courses Supplemental doc	
<b>NOTES</b>			
<b>Course materials and organization</b>			
<b>A4</b>	<b>Instructional materials, including supporting materials - such as textbooks, manuals, and videos - are made easily accessible to and usable by learners.</b>	DLC	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>A5</b>	<b>Readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements appropriate for the course content.</b>	NACOL - courses	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>A6</b>	<b>Course content is organized in standard format, ie units and lessons, which include overviews describing central objectives, activities and resources.</b>	NACOL - courses	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>A7</b>	<b>Assessment and assignment rubrics, answers and/or explanations are provided to the student.</b>	NACOL - courses	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>NOTES</b>			
<b>Student engagement</b>			
<b>A8</b>	<b>Opportunities to address the needs of diverse learners with multiple learning styles.</b>	NACOL - courses --> New	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>A9</b>	<b>Activities that engage students in active participation and exploration.</b>	NACOL - courses	
	Students are discovering, processing and applying information they learn throughout the course. Less emphasis is placed on giving information and more on discussing, listening, writing, reading, and reflecting.	Texas's National Standards of Quality for Online Courses Supplemental doc	<b>Rubric</b>
<b>A10</b>	<b>Opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in increasingly complex ways.</b>	NACOL - courses	
	Assignments, activities, and assessments provide opportunities for student to elevate their thinking beyond memorization into the realm of analyzing situations, synthesizing information, or evaluating an argument. Activities should include open-ended questions, and encourage students to categorize and classify information. Opportunities for group work, decision-making, and finding patterns should also be included in the course activities.	Texas's National Standards of Quality for Online Courses Supplemental doc	<b>Rubric</b>
<b>A11</b>	<b>Opportunities for appropriate (synchronous and asynchronous) instructor-student interaction, including timely and frequent feedback about student progress.</b>	NACOL - courses	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>A12</b>	<b>Opportunities for appropriate instructor-student and student-student interaction to foster mastery and application of the material and a plan for monitoring that interaction.</b>	NACOL - courses	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>A13</b>	<b>Assignments structured to require consistent efforts and an appropriate amount of time for online interactions, study, and homework throughout the term.</b>	Massachusetts	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>A14</b>	<b>Multicultural education and instruction, incorporated as appropriate, that is accurate, current and free of bias.</b>	NACOL - courses	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>A15</b>	<b>Aligned as appropriate to OSPI's Educational Technology Standards: <a href="http://www.k12.wa.us/EdTech/techstandards.aspx">http://www.k12.wa.us/EdTech/techstandards.aspx</a>.</b>	NACOL - courses --> New	<b>YES NO</b>
<b>NOTES</b>			

\* Rubric items are scored via exploration of provider's online courses submitted for review

**Possible sources of supporting evidence for Yes-No criteria include, but aren't limited to:**

- Curriculum development/design and evaluation standards
- Course development/design and evaluation standards
- Instructor expectations, responsibilities and procedures
- Supplemental materials selection guidelines
- Program/course review schedule and process
- Program/course assessment and performance

B (4)	Classroom Management: The provision of the following classroom management standards are enforced:	Source	Rubric or Yes-No*
B1	Academic integrity and netiquette (Internet etiquette) expectations regarding lesson activities, discussions, e-mail communications and plagiarism are clearly stated.	NACOL - courses	YES NO
B2	Grading policy and practices are explicitly stated.	NACOL - courses	YES NO
B3	Clearly stated privacy policies are disclosed and adhered to.	NACOL - courses	YES NO
B4	A system for the school and the instructor to deal with inappropriate student behavior and issues of discipline.	Massachusetts	YES NO
NOTES			

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Curriculum development/design and evaluation standards  
 Course development/design and evaluation standards  
 Instructor expectations, responsibilities and procedures  
 Supplemental materials selection guidelines  
 Program/course review schedule and process  
 Program/course assessment and performance

C (5)	Student Assessment: All courses and instructors are required to employ the following measures when assessing student performance:	Source	Rubric or Yes-No*
C1	Adequate and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content, course goals and standards.	NACOL - courses --> new	
	Multiple assessments* allow students to demonstrate their understanding in a variety of contexts. Formative and summative assessments are a part of the structure of the course. *Pre-tests, post-tests, objective and subjective questioning, self -assessments, group projects, peer review, evaluating levels and quality of participation, and portfolios are examples of different types of assessments that can be used.	Texas's National Standards of Quality for Online Courses Supplemental doc	
C2	Ongoing and frequent assessments conducted and feedback provided to verify each student's readiness for the next lesson.	NACOL - courses	YES NO
C3	Assessments selected and methods used for submitting assessments are appropriate for the online learning environment.	DLC	
	The online classroom incorporates teacher- and/or computer-graded assessments and activities that reach a broad and deep array of skill sets and learning models appropriate to the subject matter.	Texas's National Standards of Quality for Online Courses Supplemental doc	
C4	Assessment materials assess students in a variety of ways.	NACOL - courses	YES NO
C5	Grading rubrics and models of partially- to fully-completed assignments.	NACOL - courses	YES NO
NOTES			

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Possible sources of supporting evidence for Yes-No criteria include, but aren't limited to:

Curriculum development/design and evaluation standards  
 Course development/design and evaluation standards  
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 Supplemental materials selection guidelines  
 Program/course review schedule and process  
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D (4)	Course Evaluation and Management: The course provider incorporates the following standards in the evaluation and management of its courses:	Source	Rubric or Yes-No*
D1	Multiple modes of assessing course effectiveness are used including feedback solicited about the quality of the course design, content, instruction, support systems, and infrastructure from students, parents, and school administrators and findings are used as basis for improvement.	NACOL - courses & Massachusetts	YES NO
D2	Courses are updated on regular schedule to ensure content timeliness and functionality.	NACOL - courses & DLC	YES NO
D3	Results of peer review and student evaluations of courses are available.	NACOL - courses	YES NO
D4	An internal review process documenting course reliability, completeness and effectiveness.	DLC --> New	YES NO
NOTES			

\* Possible sources of supporting evidence for Yes-No criteria include, but aren't limited to:

Academic calendar  
 Course catalog with materials and costs  
 Organizational structure with roles and responsibilities  
 Completion and success data

<b>Student Support: The course provider ensures the following provisions are made to enhance student experience and success:</b>		<b>Source</b>	<b>Rubric or Yes-No*</b>
<b>E (5)</b>	<b>Information - provided to students, parents and mentors - on protocols for communicating with the instructor and course provider.</b>	NACOL - courses	YES NO
<b>E2</b>	<b>Institutionalized practices for monitoring student progress and helping students keep up with the pace of their course.</b>	DLC	YES NO
<b>E3</b>	<b>Policies and systems to address student, school and parent questions, complaints, appeals, and/or recourse if the course is not delivered as described.</b>	Massachusetts	YES NO
<b>E4</b>	<b>Disclosure of prerequisite technology skills prior to enrollment.</b>	NACOL - courses	YES NO
<b>E5</b>	<b>Training and online support to students (required) and mentors (optional) to aid them in navigating the online environment.</b>	Massachusetts	YES NO
<b>NOTES</b>			

\* Possible sources of supporting evidence for Yes-No criteria include, but aren't limited to:

- Student self-assessment, skills assessment and student application tools
- Student course/courseware orientation
- Instructor expectations, responsibilities and procedures
- Mentor handbook
- Mentor communication protocol and sample mentor communications
- Organizational structure with roles and responsibilities

<b>Mentor Support: The course provider ensures the following provisions to facilitate support of student success:</b>		<b>Source</b>	<b>Rubric or Yes-No*</b>
<b>F (2)</b>	<b>Mentors are recognized within the provider's systems and frameworks as the local adult point of contact available to the student and instructor as a reliable agent of support to the student's success.</b>	DLC	YES NO
<b>F2</b>	<b>Mentors are given the means to support student success, including: ability to view course content; technology troubleshooting information; online participation tracking and grading system; online mentor handbook and policies; frequent and unsolicited engagement with the course instructor.</b>	DLC	YES NO
<b>NOTES</b>			

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- Instructor expectations, responsibilities and procedures
- Mentor handbook
- Mentor communication protocol and sample mentor communications
- Organizational structure with roles and responsibilities

<b>Technology: The course provider enforces programmatic standards that include the following:</b>		<b>Source</b>	<b>Rubric or Yes-No*</b>
<b>Ease in navigation</b>			
<b>G1</b>	<b>Ease in navigation of the courseware platform, supporting systems and within each course.</b>	NACOL - courses	
	Navigation links within the course and supporting systems are organized into key categories in a logical order with students using minimal clicks to get from one place in the course to another.	Texas's National Standards of Quality for Online Courses Supplemental doc	
<b>NOTES</b>			
<b>Technology requirements</b>			
<b>G2</b>	<b>Disclosure of program- and course-specific hardware, Web browser and software requirements prior to enrollment.</b>	NACOL - courses	YES NO
<b>G3</b>	<b>Online textbooks and materials that meet nationally endorsed standards (NIMAS) for publishers to ensure distribution of accessible, alternative versions of textbooks and other instructional materials.</b>	NACOL - courses	YES NO
<b>G4</b>	<b>Course architecture permitting the addition of content, activities and assessments to extend learning opportunities.</b>	NACOL - courses	YES NO
<b>NOTES</b>			
<b>Tech Support</b>			
<b>G5</b>	<b>Tech support offered via various disclosed means including phone, email and/or online help pages.</b>	CHEA	YES NO
<b>G6</b>	<b>Administrative monitoring of the quality and timeliness of technical problem resolutions.</b>	DLC	YES NO
<b>NOTES</b>			

\* Rubric items are scored via exploration of provider's online courses submitted for review

Possible sources of supporting evidence for Yes-No criteria include, but aren't limited to:

- Technology support systems and protocol
- Organizational structure with roles and responsibilities
- Course development/design and evaluation standards

<b>Staff Development and Support: Provider demonstrates an institutionalized protocol to ensure online educators' ability to challenge and meet the needs of online students.</b>		<b>Source</b>	<b>Rubric or Yes-No*</b>
<b>H (5)</b>			

H1	Instructors are trained in the online course delivery system on which they are teaching and effectively use the various instructional media available.	DLC	YES NO
H2	Instructors promote high level of classroom interaction by being well versed in various modes of communication.	DLC	YES NO
H3	New instructors are paired with and supported by experienced instructors in their first year of online instruction.	DLC	YES NO
H4	Instructors are trained in the emotional and social aspects of online learning and in e-mail communications demonstrating proper tone to their students.	DLC	YES NO
H5	Instructors are evaluated on a regularly scheduled basis.	DLC	YES NO
NOTES			

\* Possible sources of supporting evidence for Yes-No criteria include, but aren't limited to:

- Instructor job descriptions and hiring protocols
- Instructor training program
- Instructor expectations, responsibilities and procedures

I (5)	Program Management: The course provider applies the following standards to ensure effective program management:	Source	Rubric or Yes-No*
I1	Administrative monitoring of and intervention in the quality and timeliness of instructors' responses to student assignments and questions.	DLC	YES NO
I2	Administrative monitoring of student records to ensure that students are progressing through their courses at an acceptable rate, to identify any problems and intervene when necessary.	DLC	YES NO
I3	System-driven execution of non-instructional tasks – enrollments, login info dissemination and course materials delivery, etc – performed via established procedures.	DLC	YES NO
I4	Established procedures for fees and payments and handled efficiently.	Massachusetts	YES NO
I5	Accommodations to multiple school calendars; e.g., block, 4X4 and traditional schedules	NACOL - courses	YES NO
NOTES			

\* Possible sources of supporting evidence for Yes-No criteria include, but aren't limited to:

- Academic calendar
- Course catalog with materials and costs
- Organizational structure with roles and responsibilities
- Completion and success data