

DISTANCE LEARNING STANDARDS

I. Policy Section

7.0 Instruction

II. Policy Subsection

7.20 Distance Learning Standards

III. Policy Statement

All online and hybrid courses will adhere to the GRCC Distance Learning Standards.

- A. *Overall design* of the course is made clear to the student at the beginning of the course.
1. Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components, as well as how, when and where to submit assignments.
 2. Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.
 3. Etiquette expectations (sometimes called “netiquette”) for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are clearly stated.
 4. Course and/or institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated, or a link to current policies is provided.
 5. Minimum technology requirements are clearly stated and instructions for use provided.
 6. Prerequisite knowledge in the discipline and/or any required competencies are clearly stated.
 7. Minimum technical skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.
 8. The self-introduction by the instructor is appropriate and is available online.
 9. Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class.
- B. *Learning outcomes* are measurable and are clearly stated.
1. The course learning outcomes are measurable.
 2. The module/unit/weekly learning objectives are measurable and consistent with the course-level outcomes.
 3. All learning outcomes are stated clearly and written from the learner’s perspective.

4. The relationship between learning outcomes and course activities is clearly stated.
 5. The learning outcomes are suited to the level of the course.
- C. *Assessment strategies* are designed to evaluate student progress by reference to stated learning outcomes; to measure the effectiveness of student learning; and to be integral to the learning process.
1. The assessments measure the stated learning outcome(s).
 2. The course grading policy is stated clearly.
 3. Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners' work and are tied to the course grading policy.
 4. The assessment instruments selected are sequenced, varied, and suited to the learner work being assessed.
 5. The course provides learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress.
- D. *Instructional strategies and course materials* are sufficiently comprehensive to achieve course outcomes.
1. The instructional strategies and course materials contribute to the achievement of the stated course outcomes and module/unit/weekly learning objectives.
 2. Both the purpose of instructional materials and how the materials are to be used for learning activities are clearly explained.
 3. All instructional materials used in the course are appropriately cited.
 4. The instructional materials are current.
 5. A variety of instructional materials and activities are used in the course.
 6. The distinction between required and optional materials is clearly explained.
 7. The course is consistent with the content, outcomes, expected components, mandatory assessments, and other characteristics stated in the official course document.
- E. *Forms of interaction* incorporated in the course motivate students and promote learning.
1. Learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning outcomes.
 2. Learning activities provide opportunities for interaction that support active learning.
 3. The instructor's plan for classroom response time and feedback on assignments is clearly stated.
 4. The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.

- F. *Course navigation and technology* support student engagement and ensure access to course components.
 - 1. The tools used in the course support the learning outcomes.
 - 2. Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.
 - 3. Technologies required in the course are readily obtainable.
 - 4. The course technologies are current.
 - 5. Links provided to privacy policies for all external tools required.
 - 6. Course links are checked each semester.

- G. *Course facilitates student access* to institutional support services essential to student success.
 - 1. The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it.
 - 2. Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's accessibility policies and services.
 - 3. Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's academic support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them.
 - 4. Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student services and resources can help learners succeed and how learners can obtain them.

- H. *Commitment to accessibility* for all students is demonstrated in the course.
 - 1. Course navigation facilitates ease of use.
 - 2. Information is provided about the accessibility of all technologies required in the course.
 - 3. The course provides alternative means of access to course materials in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.
 - 4. The course design facilitates readability.
 - 5. Course multimedia facilitate ease of use

IV. Reason for the Policy

This policy was necessitated by HLC requirements and recommendations, GRCC's 2014 AQIP Quality Check-up, and the need for institutional Distance Learning Standards.

V. Entities Affected by this Policy

Faculty, Staff, and Students

VI. Who Should Read this Policy

Faculty, Staff, and Students

VII. Related Documents

Currently approved Distance Learning Standards located at [URL] and outlined below.

VIII. Contacts

Policy Owner: Office of the Provost
Distance Learning Faculty Advisory Board

IX. Definitions

- A. *Distance Learning* – Any online or hybrid course
- B. *Online* – A course delivered via the web using the College’s designated course management system.*
- C. *Hybrid* – An online course that includes scheduled classroom instruction (scheduled classroom instruction shall not exceed fifty percent of the contact hours for the course.)*

*source: Faculty Association Contract, Article 6.H. (pg 20)

X. Procedures

The approved Distance Learning Standards will be utilized:

1. in GRCC’s Online and Hybrid Certification Course (OHCC) course.
2. in the existing Online Course Development and Review process.
3. in the development and assessment of Master Courses.
4. by faculty as a tool for self-assessment of distance learning courses.

Procedures for the implementation of these standards will be outlined in each of the above processes.

XI. Forms

N/A

XII. Effective Date

Fall 2015

XIII. Policy History

Approved by AGC April 2015

XIV. Next Review/Revision Date
Academic Year 2018-2019