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*College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*  
*STANDARDS and PROCESSES FOR THE EVALUATION OF ONLINE INSTRUCTION*

**Guiding Principles:**

- Curricular development and effective instructional engagement are the responsibilities of the faculty and their departments. This includes the decision on whether courses or sections of courses should be offered online. In making that decision the faculty and their departments should give primacy to the needs of students and their responsibility to provide high quality educational experiences that promote student success.
- Online classes in various modalities (synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid and blended) differ in layout and methodology; the expectation is that instruction should be equivalent to traditional formats in terms of instructional engagement time and teaching efficacy.
- Online classes require development prior to being offered. Faculty efforts towards the initial and ongoing development of online classes need to be recognized and supported.
- Like traditional formats, online instruction should engage students in active learning and include opportunities for student-instructor interaction and peer-to-peer discussion and/or exchange.
- Online classes, like traditional classes, should evaluate student performance in multiple and varied ways with timely opportunity for instructor feedback and remediation throughout the class. All assessments of student learning should be designed to achieve the highest level of academic integrity.
- Faculty performance in online classes should be regularly evaluated at the department level through peer review and student feedback using criteria unique to their didactic format and commensurate with that used in traditional classes. Instructors are expected to master and utilize the best practices specific to face-to-face or online class delivery.

**Standards and Processes:**

1. **Standards:** To ensure instructional and learning efficacy and compliance with accreditation standards, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences uses the following minimum criteria for online class design and instruction:
  - a) Faculty instructional engagement time and student learning efficacy should be equivalent to that of face to face formats.
  - b) Class design should reflect the pedagogical characteristics of distance learning with class material, research assignments, and learning assessments specifically designed for the online delivery environment.
  - c) Instructors should facilitate active and engaged learning with continual opportunity for student-teacher interaction and peer-to-peer discussion and/or exchange. Assignments should be structured as such to allow for timely instructor feedback and student remediation/improvement throughout the class.
  - d) Student learning assessments should be varied in format; they should be appropriate for the class's learning objectives; and they should be designed to achieve the highest level of academic integrity.
  - e) The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will create a set of guidelines and recommendations that explicate these standards and that reflect the findings of best-practice research as appropriate for different disciplinary and curricular contexts.

2. **Processes and Training:** The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences uses the following process to ensure that new courses and sections adhere to the minimum online instructional standards prior to implementation and that current online courses and sections are regularly reviewed and brought into compliance if necessary:
  - a) Review to ensure that new 100% online courses meet the College's standards will be handled through the existing faculty governance process. Curriculum proposals for 100% online courses should clearly address the College's standards.
  - b) Review of courses that have some online sections will be the responsibility of the department. As part of their review process, departments will meet annually to share best practices for online instruction that best support student learning and use this information to inform teaching practices with the goal of continuing enhancement of their classes.
  - c) The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences recommends, and departments may require, that faculty offering online instruction participate in appropriate professional development prior to teaching online, and that faculty teaching online classes maintain their engagement by participating in at least one professional development opportunity specific to methodologies and technologies used in online education each calendar year. Professional development options could include Quality Matters certification, UNC System online teaching workshops, workshops or webinars offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning, or other applicable training, including, possibly, opportunities developed by the college.
  - d) Where faculty instruction is supported by graduate assistants, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to ensure that GTAs are appropriately prepared to be successful in an online learning environment. In departments where graduate students are extensively involved in online instruction, those skills should be addressed in the department's graduate student training program.
3. **Evaluation:** That CLAS requires online instruction to be evaluated equitably to that of face-to-face class formats:
  - a) Departments should implement procedures by which online instruction is regularly evaluated akin to peer classroom visitations in traditional delivery formats. This includes ensuring that faculty who teach both online and in person should have peer reviews in both types of classes. Because of the different context of online classes, departments should use a peer-evaluation protocol appropriate for the methodology; these will be developed by the college and shared with departments.
  - b) Departmental evaluation standards should utilize the best practices as recommended by the Center for Teaching and Learning.
  - c) The college-controlled questions in the web-based (student) course evaluation system will be reviewed and adapted as needed to include questions specific to the online learning environment.
4. **Academic Integrity:** In collaboration with other stakeholders (e.g., CTL, OneIT, Student Affairs, and other colleges), the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will develop and support faculty in adopting strategies to deter student academic dishonesty characteristic to the online learning environment:
  - a) Provide training for faculty to develop assignments and assessments that require original application of class content.
  - b) Provide training and support faculty in the use of tools to verify the academic integrity of assignments, quizzes, and examinations.
5. **Reporting:** The Departments will include a discussion of their processes in implementing these standards and any relevant findings in their annual report.