



Access, Quality, Completion

Frequently Asked Questions

The Online Education Initiative (OEI) is a collaborative effort among California Community Colleges to **increase student success and retention** by working together to **expand online learning** with access to **quality online courses and student services**.

This document is intended for a broad audience and provides answers to questions that are commonly asked by the general public during OEI presentations throughout the state. To follow our progress, sign up for the TechEDge eNewsletter at www.CCOnlineEd.org.

Table of Contents

SECTION I: ABOUT OEI	3
WHAT IS THE PRIMARY GOAL OF THE OEI?	3
HOW WILL OEI IMPACT STUDENTS?	3
HOW WILL OEI IMPACT CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY?.....	3
HOW WILL OEI IMPACT CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES?	3
HOW WILL OEI IMPACT CALIFORNIA?	3
WHO IS LEADING THIS INITIATIVE?	4
HOW IS OEI FUNDED?.....	4
SECTION II: DEBUNKING MYTHS	4
IS THE OEI CREATING A NEW COLLEGE?	4
WILL ALL COLLEGES BE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE OEI AND THE OEI EXCHANGE?	5
THE OEI IS USING A COURSE REVIEW PROCESS TO ENSURE THE QUALITY OF COURSES THAT WILL BE OFFERED IN THE EXCHANGE. WILL COURSE REVIEW RESULTS REMAIN PRIVATE?.....	5
WILL COURSES BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE OEI?	5
WILL FACULTY BE REQUIRED TO OFFER COURSES AND MEET COURSE STANDARDS?	5
WILL COLLEGES BE REQUIRED TO USE THE COMMON COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CCMS) SELECTED BY THE OEI? .	5
SECTION III: OEI SERVICES	6
WHAT SERVICES WILL BE THE FOCUS OF OEI?	6
HOW CAN COLLEGES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TUTORING FROM OEI?.....	6

HOW CAN COLLEGES PREPARE STUDENTS FOR SUCCESS IN ONLINE COURSES?	6
WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH CANVAS, THE COMMON COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CCMS) PROVIDER?	6
WHAT SUPPORT WILL BE PROVIDED FOR COURSE DESIGN AND DELIVERY?.....	7
WHAT IS THE OEI EXCHANGE?	7
IS OEI INTENDED SOLELY FOR FULLY ONLINE COURSES?.....	7
WHAT IS THE TIMELINE FOR THE ROLLOUT OF OEI PRODUCTS AND SERVICES?.....	8
SECTION IV: HOW WILL THE OEI ACCOMPLISH ITS GOALS?	8
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE OEI STEERING COMMITTEE?.....	8
HOW ARE THE MEMBERS OF THE OEI STEERING COMMITTEE CHOSEN?	9
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE INITIAL PILOT COLLEGES?	9
HOW WERE THE INITIAL PILOT COLLEGES CHOSEN?	9
WHAT IS THE OEI CONSORTIUM?	9
HOW ARE OEI PRODUCTS AND SERVICES CHOSEN AND VETTED?.....	9
HOW ARE ONLINE COURSES IN THE OEI EXCHANGE CHOSEN?	10
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TEACHING COLLEGE AND A HOME COLLEGE IN THE OEI EXCHANGE?	10
WHAT TYPE OF CERTIFICATION LEVEL IS NECESSARY FOR INSTRUCTORS IN THE OEI?	10
HOW DOES THE EDUCATION PLANNING INITIATIVE (EPI) IMPACT THE OEI?	11
HOW DOES THE COMMON ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE (CAI) IMPACT THE OEI?.....	11

Section I: About OEI

What is the primary goal of the OEI?

The overarching goal of the OEI is to ensure that more students obtain degrees and/or transfers to four-year colleges in a timely manner. The OEI focuses on online solutions that allow our community colleges to serve more students and achieve more successful outcomes for our diversity of students.

How will OEI impact students?

Over 45% of our community college students who wish to obtain degrees and/or transfers to four-year colleges do not complete their educational goals in a timely fashion. Students frequently cite schedule conflicts or course waitlists as their primary stumbling blocks. With OEI, students will have access to a greater selection of quality online courses. In addition, OEI will increase their ability to succeed by providing access to up to 24/7 tutoring, online readiness tools, and ways to increase proficiency in basic skills areas. And this will all be available from their college in a streamlined fashion over the web to accommodate their busy schedules.

How will OEI impact California Community College faculty?

Our faculty now provides over 19,000 online courses each year, with little or no additional support for course design and development. With OEI funding, our faculty can collaborate, receive professional development, access support services, and participate in continuous innovation. In addition, faculty will have access to products and services to enhance course delivery, including an advanced course management system that strengthens the connection among students and instructors.

How will OEI impact California Community Colleges?

The OEI will give colleges a cost-effective way to stay in tune with online teaching and learning innovations that will improve student outcomes. Colleges also have the option to share quality online courses through the OEI Exchange, providing the flexibility to expand their course offerings with minimal budget impact and leverage the cost through systemwide licenses.

All our community colleges will have the opportunity to participate in the OEI; participation is a local college choice. Free or discounted products and services will be made available as soon as pilot testing is completed. Initial products and services include a common course management system (CCMS), course development assistance, online instructor professional development, and functionality to increase student success such as 24/7 tutoring and online learner readiness support. This collaboration among colleges will help ensure that our California Community Colleges continue as leaders in providing low-cost high-quality education.

How will OEI impact California?

Access to high-quality community college education is critical to California's economy. As Chancellor Brice Harris noted, "Community colleges are the primary access point to higher education in California

and the nation, and our economy is increasingly requiring college-educated workers”¹. Demand for California higher education is expected to grow by 387,000 students by 2019 with an estimated shortage of 1 million college degree holders needed to fuel California’s workforce by 2025 if we do not act quickly.²

OEI helps our community colleges meet this growing demand by providing our colleges with online solutions that allow student to complete their educational goals in a timely manner.

Who is leading this initiative?

The OEI is sponsored by the Foothill-De Anza Community College District, in partnership with the California Community Colleges Technology Center at Butte College. The OEI, together with the Educational Planning Initiative and Common Assessment Initiative, represent a comprehensive and collaborative program that leverages best practices and technology to significantly increase the opportunity for higher-education degree attainment in California.

How is OEI funded?

The OEI is initially funded through a \$56.9 million grant over five years from the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s office, a key initiative in support of Governor Jerry Brown’s focus on increasing student success. Our expectation is that this effort will become self-sustaining through grants and other sources for many years to come.

Section II: Debunking Myths

Is the OEI creating a new college?

No – OEI is a collaborative effort among California Community Colleges to increase student success and retention by working together to expand online learning with access to quality online courses and student services. Key to the success of the OEI is the strong involvement of stakeholders throughout the California Community Colleges. The OEI Steering Committee represents leaders from all facets of our system, including faculty, distance education coordinators, educational technology specialists, support staff, administrators, and students; the initial OEI pilot involves 24 colleges representing the diversity of our campuses; the OEI management team collectively has over 50 years of California Community Colleges experience.

¹ “Chancellor Brice W. Harris Statement on President Obama’s Proposal to Make Two Years of Community College Free for Students”, CCCCO Media Statement, January 9, 2015

² Source: <http://californiacommunitycolleges.cccco.edu/PolicyInAction/KeyFacts.aspx>

Will all colleges be required to participate in the OEI and the OEI Exchange?

Participation is strictly voluntary. Upon successful completion of the OEI pilot, any California Community College may choose to participate in an array of capacities that includes access to free and discounted services as well as the opportunity to engage in the Exchange. We know some colleges already have significant services in place and may be more comfortable continuing to use their current services. Other colleges may discover that, with OEI, they can now provide services that they previously could not afford. Our colleges have the opportunity to mix and match centralized services with localized services depending on the priorities of their college.

Is the OEI intending to support very large class sizes?

No – The goal of the OEI is to create an online environment that is as similar to a face-to-face classroom setting as is possible. Courses are NOT intended for a MOOC-type setting. Individual California Community Colleges will provide all courses in the Exchange; class size should reflect normal class sizes, reflecting local college guidelines and effective online teaching practices.

The OEI is using a course review process to ensure the quality of courses that will be offered in the Exchange. Will course review results remain private?

Yes – Individual course review feedback will not be shared with college leadership and is intended solely to guide instructors in their further course development. Course reviews ensure that courses that are shared among colleges are consistently aligned with common high-quality standards.

Faculty completing the review process that wish to align with the standards will receive free instructional design resources as well as the opportunity for collaboration with their peers. If their courses are to be offered within the Exchange component of the OEI, they will have to meet the adopted standards. Faculty who do not wish to use certain OEI services or participate in the Exchange are under no obligation to make changes to their courses.

Will courses become the property of the OEI?

No – All courses will continue to be provided by colleges and their faculty. Course sharing among colleges is also strictly voluntary.

Will faculty be required to offer courses and meet course standards?

No – Participation by colleges and their faculty is strictly voluntary.

Will colleges be required to use the Common Course Management System (CCMS) selected by the OEI?

No – We hope that colleges will find compelling reasons to participate but all participation is voluntary. Courses offered through the Exchange component of the OEI will only be offered within the Canvas CCMS.

Section III: OEI services

What services will be the focus of OEI?

OEI will provide students with the opportunity to access quality online course and services. The first services will include tutoring, online readiness tools, an advanced Common Course Management System (CCMS), and support for quality online course development and professional development.

How can colleges take advantage of tutoring from OEI?

After a thorough selection process and in partnership with the Foundation for California Community Colleges, the OEI selected Link-Systems International to provide on-demand academic support within an easy-to-use WorldWideWhiteboard tutoring platform. Colleges will have the flexibility to use a mix of local tutors and Link-Systems NetTutors to provide up to 24/7 tutoring for their students. Tutoring will be available in many discipline areas, including essay review. Estimated systemwide availability: Summer 2015

How can colleges prepare students for success in online courses?

To give students a better understanding of what it takes to be successful in an online course, the OEI has developed a set of Online Learner Readiness tools modules that are recommended for all students who enroll in their first online course. Studies show that these types of tools have significant impact on student success.

OEI Online Learner Readiness begins with a SmarterMeasure assessment to identify areas in which a student could benefit from additional assistance. Each student is then led through a set of highly interactive and engaging modules based on their assessment results. The Online Learner Readiness modules will be available for free under a *Creative Commons* license after initial pilot testing in 2015.

What can we expect from our partnership with Canvas, the Common Course Management System (CCMS) provider?

Canvas is the CMS that was selected for the common course management system. Our goal is that our CCMS partner will work with us to provide a robust solution that can keep pace with technology advances and our expanding needs. We anticipate that colleges will realize a significant savings in all aspects of CCMS support including licensing, deployment, maintenance, upgrades, technical support, and training. The OEI is also working diligently to ensure that Canvas fits well within the California Community College online ecosystem and to ensure that our partner can appropriately support the needs of all our colleges.

For more information regarding the CCMS, including a CCMS FAQ, please refer to www.CCCOnlineEd.org.

What support will be provided for course design and delivery?

Faculty involvement is key to the expansion of quality online courses and continuous innovation. To ensure that faculty have the resources they need for quality online course development and delivery, OEI will offer: peer collaboration and knowledge sharing, instructional design, professional development, online instructor training, and access to a repository of high-quality resources.

To begin this effort, the pilot colleges will hold a series of Creative Summits that will allow our successful college faculty to share ideas, recommend course development needs, and suggest ways to ensure the continuous improvement of quality online courses.

Content that is created for use in OEI course development activities will be *Creative Commons* licensed³ which means that anyone can adopt and offer these resources.

What is the OEI Exchange?

It is often challenging for colleges to ensure that all students have access to the courses they need at the times that fit their busy schedules. The Exchange will provide the opportunity for colleges to offer quality online courses to students across colleges so that all of our students can complete their education in a timely manner. Students enrolled at colleges in the Exchange will be able to seamlessly register for Exchange courses; this benefits participating colleges by leveling the enrollments in high-demand or difficult-to-fill courses. To ensure that course credits are recognized by a student's home college, all participating colleges will become members of the OEI Consortium. The Exchange is anticipated to launch in Winter/Spring 2016.

We refer to the "Exchange" as the component of this initiative that allows students to take online classes across a group of colleges within a Consortium ecosystem. We know that students are already finding ways to take online classes at multiple colleges even though it is often difficult for them to do so. The Exchange will provide the mechanism to make this happen in a streamlined and dependable fashion.

Colleges participating in the Exchange will commit to: aligning business processes to make registration seamless across colleges, having technology-based mechanisms in place to carry out those processes, having courses that have been designed to a set of exemplary standards, having faculty that are part of a network of teachers committed to excellence in learning and teaching strategies, providing resources that assist students in being successful online learners, and offering courses that students need to complete their educational goals. We are now working on developing business practices that focus on simplicity for students and effective data transfer for colleges. This is the task that Chancellor Harris recently called "Herculean". This will be the most complex work we do, and will take time to do correctly.

Is OEI intended solely for fully online courses?

Yes - The OEI Exchange is intended for online courses that can be offered in a remote setting. Other OEI products and services such as an online tutoring platform and the Canvas CCMS will be available to colleges for use in both online and face-to-face classroom settings.

³ For more information, go to <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

What is the purpose of course reviews?

The OEI Exchange will allow students to seamlessly take online courses from another college so they can complete their educational goals in a timely manner. To do this effectively, course design and delivery standards need to be consistent among colleges. The OEI course review process provides faculty with information to help their courses meet these common standards. The most frequent feedback from the review of the first pilot courses is that they need support in meeting accessibility requirements and providing more extensive learner support in areas such as course orientation.

The OEI provides resources to assist faculty as they update their courses. The OEI also gives faculty the opportunity to share effective practices and experiences as online instructors.

What is the timeline for the rollout of OEI products and services?

Launched in December of 2013, the first year of the OEI established its steering committee, associated work groups, management team, and the overall governance structure. Environmental scans and needs assessments informed the selection of pilot colleges, milestone development, and implementation planning that began in the summer of 2014.

Over the next two years, pilot colleges will begin to offer online courses within the selected common course management system (CCMS). All colleges will have access to online readiness modules and tutoring services after their initial pilots complete. Fees may apply for some services. All California Community Colleges, their faculty and their staff will ultimately be encouraged to participate in the OEI, with opportunities for collaboration and professional development. To follow the progress of the OEI, sign up for the Technology for Student Success News eNewsletter at www.CCCOnlineEd.org

Section IV: How Will The OEI Accomplish Its Goals?

What is the role of the OEI Steering Committee?

The OEI Steering Committee (OEI-SC) is an advisory body to the OEI management team, providing guidance and recommendations on OEI policies and procedures. The OEI-SC represents the diversity of colleges and functions within the California Community Colleges. As an example, at the beginning of the course selection effort, the OEI-SC determined that criteria should be developed to review courses for inclusion in the OEI pilot. The OEI-SC formed a Professional Development Work Group to create the course review criteria that was then approved by the OEI-SC for consideration by the OEI management team. To summarize, the OEI-SC recommendation was developed by its Work Group, returning to the OEI-SC as a proposal to be considered for implementation by the OEI management team.

The Foothill-De Anza Community College District (FHDA) has the fiduciary responsibility for administration of OEI grant funding and is therefore ultimately responsible for achieving the objectives and goals of the OEI.

How are the members of the OEI Steering Committee chosen?

In March 2014, the OEI Steering Committee was established by the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to represent the diversity of colleges and functions within the CCC system. Steering Committee members serve a two-year term and are appointed in consultation with the constituent groups that the members represent. For the current membership list and affiliations, see www.cccOnlineEd.org

What is the role of the initial pilot colleges?

The OEI team works closely with the 24 pilot colleges to create a truly compelling online education environment that will elicit a level of excitement that colleges throughout the system will recognize as effective from academic quality and student-services perspectives while also providing a significant cost savings.

How were the initial pilot colleges chosen?

With 58 colleges offering to participate in the initial pilot, our team is fortunate to have strong commitment from our colleges to the success of the OEI. While our team relishes the opportunity to include everyone in the pilots, a successful pilot requires a much smaller pool of colleges. Twenty-four colleges were selected based on criteria that included: implementation of CCCApply; online education expertise; professional development programs that address online pedagogy; a mix of course management systems; involvement in other initiatives; and a diversity of colleges. For more information and a list of the selected pilot colleges, go to www.CCCOnlineEd.org.

What is the OEI Consortium?

The founding members of the OEI Consortium are the 24 pilot colleges that have generously volunteered their time to the initial testing and implementation of the OEI. Upon successful completion of the pilot phase, all of our colleges have the option to join the OEI Consortium.

The Consortium will provide operational guidance for the Exchange component of the OEI, guiding the initiative as additional products and services are made available. Any California Community College may choose to be an OEI Consortium member and may decide to participate in a number of capacities, gaining access to free and discounted products and services or as a full member in the Exchange.

How are OEI products and services chosen and vetted?

Before the OEI begins the process of selecting a product or service provider, an initial environmental scan and needs assessment is performed. A diverse group of stakeholders from the OEI Steering Committee, OEI management team, and leaders in the subject area are assembled to identify best practices within and outside the CCC system. For major decisions such as the selection of the Common Course Management System (CCMS) or the tutoring partner, the team undertakes a thorough Request for Proposal process.

Colleges participating in the OEI pilot also have a powerful voice in the development of the initial OEI products and services. Eight colleges have stepped up to work with the OEI in each of the following

areas: online learner readiness, tutoring, and full launch of the learning environment. These colleges will be the first to “shake the bugs out” and pave the way for successful implementations at other colleges.

How are online courses in the OEI Exchange chosen?

The OEI Steering Committee and management team have developed a list of high-priority bottleneck courses that are the focus of the first phase of course offerings. The initial 24 pilot colleges have each contributed courses to be reviewed and refined based on quality metrics approved by the OEI Steering Committee and supported by the Statewide Academic Senate.

The first pilot courses are exclusively Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) courses that have C-ID approval. The grant from the Chancellor’s Office is predominantly focused on ADT programs and courses; these courses are also a priority of the governor. The grant leaves room for support for other degree-applicable courses but these courses are not the highest priority at this time.

The success of the Exchange depends on the quality of the courses. Each college in the pilot offered up to five courses from this priority list to be considered for the initial Exchange. Three of the five were selected to create a balanced group of high-need offerings for the pilot phase. Each course is reviewed at no cost by as many as three trained reviewers selected by @ONE and the Statewide Academic Senate; the course review follows the @ONE Standards for Quality Online Teaching and the OEI Course Design Rubric. The OEI will provide resources to faculty for course updates and upgrading to the Common Course Management System (CCMS).

What is the difference between a teaching college and a home college in the OEI Exchange?

The short answer is that a teaching college provides courses and issue credits. A home college is where the student completes their matriculation process and receives transfer credit or a degree; a home college encourages students to enroll in online courses through the Exchange as well as complete their local courses. A teaching college offers online courses through the Exchange and receives the FTES for those courses. A home college will receive credit for the completion of the degree or transfer goal. A college can be both a home college and teaching college. More detailed information will be available at a later date.

What type of certification level is necessary for instructors in the OEI?

All faculty members will be encouraged to participate in the OEI as their colleges become OEI Consortium members. Professional development in online delivery is an essential element of online course quality. For years, @ONE has offered an excellent certification program. The @ONE project, in collaboration with the OEI, is developing a streamlined online teaching course that will be offered to faculty members who want to become effective online teachers.

Completion of the @ONE program is not a requirement for acceptance into teaching in the exchange component. We recognize that some faculty members have already earned a certification from @ONE or other sources; additionally, a good number of colleges already have very good professional development programs for their online teaching staff. In order to recognize that experience, the instructor is asked to complete an application and submit their course and application for review, rather than be “certified” by any one method.

How does the Education Planning Initiative (EPI) impact the OEI?

The EPI is developing a Students Services Portal and selecting an Education Planning and Degree Audit System that will help students access statewide services as well as track and complete their educational goals. The OEI and EPI teams are working together on areas of overlap so that students working on their education plans will be able to take advantage of online courses offered through the Exchange. For more information on the EPI, go to www.CCCEdPlan.org.

How does the Common Assessment Initiative (CAI) impact the OEI?

The CAI will develop a Common Assessment System for student assessment and placement, including test preparation, test delivery, test administration, data collection, and course placement guidance. The OEI and CAI teams are working together on the natural overlap so that online courses in the Exchange are aligned with placement guidance from CAI. For more information on the CAI, go to www.CCCAssess.org.

For more information, go to the OEI website at www.cccOnlineEd.org and sign up for the TechEDGE eNewsletter.

Last update: March 2015