

Distance Education
Best Practices 2019-20
Recommended Guidelines and NOT Contractual or Mandated Items
Adapted from the [OEL-CVC Rubric](#)

[DE Best Practices Document 2019-20](#)

Opportunities for Student-Student Interactions

- Opportunities for student-initiated interaction with other students and the instructor are clearly available and encouraged.
- Student-to-student interaction that reinforces course content and learning outcomes is required as part of the course.
- The course includes communication activities that are designed to build a sense of community among learners.
- Guidelines explaining required levels of student participation (i.e., quantity and quality of interactions) are provided.

Weekly opportunities for students to engage in more than one of the following:

- Asynchronous discussion forums
- Group assignments
- Group chat
- Student Lounge/Café (student-initiated discussion forum)
- Weekly check-ins (beginning of the week discussion with some open-ended prompts)
- Peer review
- Collaborations (tools that allows students to share and/or collaborate on documents)
- Social media or other accessible tools for interaction.
- Messaging *however instructors do not have visibility to this and cannot track.

Opportunities for Student-Instructor Interactions

- Instructor initiates contact prior to or at the beginning of course.
- The instructor provides students with his/her plan to engage in regular effective contact using CMS communication tools that includes expected time frames for responses to inquiries, discussion board posts, and feedback on assignments and assessments.
- The instructor's role for supporting course technology is explained to students, and links to technology support are provided.
- Contact information for the instructor is easy to find and includes expected response times.

Prior to the course:

- Send welcome communication
- Communicate course updates, reminders and other relevant information

Weekly use of more than one of the following:

- Email/Message using CMS tools (initiated by student or instructor)
- Virtual Office Discussion (open for the entire semester)
- Instructor Announcements
- Individual or group chat
- Virtual Conference Sessions
- Comments/Feedback on discussions, assignments, and other assessments (Comments can be text, audio, or video)

Distance Education
Best Practices 2019-20
Recommended Guidelines and NOT Contractual or Mandated Items
Adapted from the [OEI-CVC Rubric](#)

Opportunities for Student-Content Interactions

- Content is organized into visibly distinct learning units or modules based on weeks/major themes, etc.
- Demonstrable objectives are included in the individual learning units/modules.
- Unit content and activities are aligned with unit objectives.
- Page content is chunked in manageable segments using headings that facilitate online reading.
- Content is delivered through a variety of modalities that are accessible, such as text, audio with transcripts, captioned video, images and/or graphics with alternate text, are used to create student-centered learning.
- Course makes use of multiple Course Management System (CMS) tools for weekly content delivery
 - Pages, discussions, chat, collaboration, virtual conference tools, groups, etc.
- Course design includes instructions for learners to work with content in meaningful ways (e.g. instructing students to take notes during a video, explaining the purpose of an external resource).
- Individualized learning opportunities, such as remedial activities or resources for advanced learning are provided, such as self-check quizzes, resource pages, supplemental materials, reflective writing, etc.

Assessments

- Assessment activities lead to the demonstration of learning outcomes.
- Assessments relate/align with the course objectives and content.
- Multiple and regular assessments are administered throughout the course. Examples include quizzes, discussion forums, practice problems, draft writing,
- Assessments include both mix of low stakes (formative) and high stakes (summative) assessments (never more than 30% of overall grade)
- Rubrics or descriptive criteria for desired outcomes are present for all assessments.
- Instructions clearly explain to students how to successfully complete the assessments.
- The course includes a clear plan for providing meaningful, timely feedback on assessments.
- The course provides opportunities for (non-graded) student self-assessment with feedback.
- The course provides opportunities for individualized support or resources for students.

Navigating Accessibility

- [Content Pages](#) consistently use heading styles (i.e. Heading 2, Heading 3, etc.).
- [Lists](#) are created using the Bullet or Numbered List tool in the rich text editor.
- Links are [descriptive](#) and avoid redundancy; links avoid using non-descriptive phrases; and underlining is only used to denote active hyperlinks.
- [Table cells](#) designated as row and/or column headers allow screen readers to [read table cells](#) in the correct order.
- There is sufficient [color contrast](#) between foreground and background to meet [Section 508 standards](#).
- [Visual elements](#) (color, bolding, all caps) are not used as the sole way to convey importance or meaning.
- Every image (including those used in Pages, Discussions, Quizzes and Assignments) uses [descriptive alternative text](#) that includes any text visible in the image, does not contain "image of" or "picture of", and uses "" if the image is purely decorative.

Distance Education
Best Practices 2019-20
Recommended Guidelines and NOT Contractual or Mandated Items
Adapted from the [OEL-CVC Rubric](#)

- [Every slide](#) has a unique title, reading order is properly set (slides use pre-set layouts), and all images/charts include [alternative text](#). All text is visible in Outline View so that it can be read by assistive technology.
- [Microsoft Office](#) and [PDFs](#) pass the Adobe Accessibility Check ([Microsoft Office](#) and [Adobe](#)) and [Section 508 compliant](#)
- Spreadsheets include labels for the rows and columns, detailed labels for any charts, and is accompanied by a textual description of the spreadsheet, drawing attention to key cells, trends, and totals.
- [Accurate transcripts](#) are included for audio, closed captioning for video, and narrative descriptions are available when possible.
- Live broadcasts include a means for displaying synchronized [captions](#).
- Multimedia is not set to auto-play.
- Multimedia (including gifs and images) do not blink or strobe.