

E.1.9.2 (Procedure) Online Learning -Professional Development

Responsible Department: Vice Chancellor for Digital Learning and Transformation

Based on Board Policy: E.1.9 – Online Learning

Approved: 1-21-14

Last Amended: 11-18-25

The School for Online Learning at Alamo Colleges District has enterprise-level responsibility for unifying the vision, strategy, and facilitation of operational activities. The School is responsible for establishing and managing district-wide standards for online learning quality, consistency, and strategic direction for digital learning initiatives across the system.

A critical component of maintaining quality distance education courses and programs is faculty preparedness to deliver high quality learning experiences supported by a robust quality assurance commitment. All faculty teaching distance education courses (fully online and/or hybrid) will follow best practices based on current research and using standards and guidelines adopted through Board policy to deliver consistent quality learning experiences to distance education students.

This procedure addresses a regional accreditation requirement that faculty who teach in distance education courses and/or in distance education programs receive appropriate training.

Initial Certification to Teach Distance Education Courses

All faculty initially seeking to teach distance education courses at any of the Alamo Colleges, and who are not previously certified, will be certified to teach hybrid and/or fully online courses through one shared, jointly developed, periodically updated training curriculum. The School for Online Learning will coordinate units responsible for faculty professional development to deliver hybrid and online certification training.

Peer Course Review

Upon completion of certification to teach distance education courses and within the first year of teaching a hybrid and/or fully online course for the first time, a peer review of the course design must be completed. The review should include, but not be limited to, academic subject matter experts and instructional designers. This review may be part of the initial certification to teach distance education courses, or a separate process coordinated by the School for Online Learning staff in partnership with college departments or academic program units.

Re-certification to Teach Distance Education Courses

All faculty teaching, or seeking to teach, distance education courses at any of the Alamo Colleges will participate in recertification training to teach hybrid and/or online courses every three years from the time of initial certification. Re-certification requirements will be aligned to the parameters of the initial certification, include codified re-certification pathways for full-time faculty and for adjunct faculty, and will be shared with faculty.

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Course Design Standards

The Quality Matters (QM™) rubric is the official course design standards for distance education courses and programs of the Alamo Colleges District. Subject Matter Experts, including but not limited to faculty, staff, and trainers, are expected to apply QM standards to their hybrid and online course designs. The academic oversight of curriculum and instruction is the responsibility of faculty at their respective College. Colleges and academic departments may require additional course design standards with QM serving as the baseline expectation for all hybrid and online course designs.

Principles of Good Practice

The School for Online Learning will support College faculty, staff, and administrators in the successful implementation of and alignment to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) approved Principles of Good Practice (PGP) for Distance Education. The PGP outlines required standards and criteria for distance education delivered by Texas public institutions. The Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses offered at a distance apply to course types in distance education as described in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter P, Rule 4.257 and Subchapter Q, Rule 4.272. The PGP is also known as the "Principles of Good Practice for Academic Degree and Certificate Programs and Credit Courses Offered at a Distance."