



Online Education Initiative Policy Regarding Minimum Course Management System Use By Exchange Courses

Adopted by the OEI Steering Committee January 15, 2016

Policy

It is the policy of the Online Education Initiative (OEI) that, at a minimum, the college offering a course in the OEI Exchange shall ensure that instructors (references to elements of the OEI Course Design Rubric are in parentheses):

1. Use the common course management system for user authentication.
2. Provide syllabus and/or other document(s) that provide information pertaining to:
 - a. Contacting the instructor (B.1)
 - b. Response times (B.1)
 - c. The instructor's role in the course (B.1)
 - d. Methods for collecting and returning work (B.1)
 - e. Guidelines and expectations with respect to interaction (B.3)
3. Include clear explanations of optional and/or required software, including any additional costs (D.1)
4. Provide clear information pertaining to course/institutional policies and support (D.2)

Background

In order to ensure a quality online experience for all students accessing courses by way of the OEI Exchange, all courses to be offered in the Exchange must be aligned to the OEI Course Design Rubric (<https://sites.google.com/site/coursedesignrubricoeifinal/>). As the OEI Course Design Rubric does not establish a minimum standard with respect to what course elements will be readily available in the OEI's selected Course Management System (CMS) and some faculty may opt to conduct substantial course activities outside of the CMS, the OEI Steering Committee has determined that a policy is needed regarding minimum CMS use to ensure that students are properly oriented to the online environment absent access to any materials that reside elsewhere. The following elements of the OEI Course Design Rubric inform this policy:

B.1 Communication Strategies

Characteristics of a course deemed “distinguished to exemplary” in this category include:

- Contact information for the instructor is easy to find and includes multiple forms of communication.

Access | Quality | Completion

The Online Education Initiative is a project of the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

- Expected response time for replies is included.
- The instructor's role within the course is explained.
- The instructor's methods for collecting and returning work are clearly explained.

B.3 Interaction Logistics

Characteristics of a course deemed “distinguished to exemplary” in this category include:

- Guidelines explaining required levels of participation are provided.
- Expectations regarding the quality of communications are clearly defined.
- A rubric or equivalent grading document is included to explain how participation will be evaluated.

D.1 Supplemental Software

Characteristics of a course deemed “distinguished to exemplary” in this category include:

- Clear explanations of optional and/or required software including any additional costs are provided within the course.

D.2 Course/Institutional Policies & Support

Characteristics of a course deemed “distinguished to exemplary” in this category include:

- Institutional policies, materials, and forms relevant for learner success are clearly labeled and easy to find; links (if present) allow easy navigation from the course to the information and back.
- Course/instructor policies regarding decorum, behavior, and netiquette are easy to find and written clearly to avoid confusion.
- Links to institutional services such as the library, or writing center, are clearly labeled and easy to find.

The elements of the OEI Course Design Rubric referenced above all relate to ensuring that students have a clear understanding of how the course operates and where to seek assistance, if needed. At a minimum, the CMS should be used to provide such information.

Furthermore, per D.3, “Course materials are compliant with Section 508 and WCAG 2.0 (AA) and can be effectively used with equal ease by all students.” These standards must be met by all course materials that students are required to access both within the CMS and those that students are required to access outside of the CMS.