

NORTHWEST TECH

NORTHWEST KANSAS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Revised November 1, 2021

Principles and Standards for Distance Learning at Northwest Tech

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Introduction

Anecdotes abound of students who perform poorly, or who are dissatisfied, with the online learning environment. Online instruction varies significantly from classroom-based instruction. Northwest Tech seeks to create the most beneficial, engaging learning experiences – whether online, face-to-face, or blended - for instructors and students.

What do regulatory agencies expect?

Regulatory agencies such as the Kansas Board of Regents, The Higher Learning Commission, the U.S. Department of Education, and various accrediting bodies associated with the technical programs offered by the institution expect that the education provided via distance learning contains the same rigor and content as our on-site delivery of instruction.

Distance learning is *not* a self-paced, self-directed form of course delivery. Distance learning requires the engagement of a qualified instructor who provides feedback and interaction with students throughout the duration of the distance learning course. This requirement is known as ***Regular and Substantive Interaction*** and is defined by the U.S. Department of Education to differentiate *distance* learning from *correspondence* learning (thus determining what is eligible for federal financial aid and what is not eligible for federal financial aid).

To qualify for federal financial aid, distance learning must include a purposeful and meaningful exchange of feedback, insights, and knowledge among the learners and the instructors. Such exchanges may be synchronous (in real-time, such as through Zoom sessions) or asynchronous (in written format, such as through email, announcements, discussion forums, or constructive feedback on assignments, etc.).

How is distance learning defined?

The Higher Learning Commission provides definitions for distance-delivered courses, distance-delivered programs, and distance education on their online glossary:

“distance-delivered courses”

“Courses in which at least 75% of the instruction and interaction occurs via electronic communication, correspondence or equivalent mechanisms, with the faculty and students physically separated from each other.”

Copied from the HLC glossary: <https://www.hlcommission.org/General/glossary.html>

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“distance-delivered programs”

“Certificate or degree programs in which 50% or more of the required courses may be taken as distance-delivered courses.”

Copied from the HLC glossary: <https://www.hlcommission.org/General/glossary.html>

“distance education”

“Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:”

1. “The internet.”
2. “One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite or wireless communications devices.”
3. “Audio conferencing.”
4. “Video cassettes, DVDs and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed above.”

Copied from the HLC glossary: <https://www.hlcommission.org/General/glossary.html>

The Kansas Board of Regents shares these definitions (see Chapter III, Section A, Item #8 “Off-campus Delivery of Academic Courses and Programs”) on the KBOR website:

https://www.kansasregents.org/about/policies-by-laws-missions/board_policy_manual_2/chapter_iii_coordination_of_institutions_2/chapter_iii_full_text#programs

Introduction

Northwest Tech Definition of Instructional Modalities

Northwest Tech has developed a continuum of modalities that range from 100% on-site, in-person instruction to 100% online instruction, as defined in the chart below:

Definitions of Instructional Delivery Modalities for Northwest Tech:

Modality	Description	Notes	Length of Term
Face-to-face (onsite only)	instruction is delivered 100% in person	on campus, in shops/labs, or in clinicals	Full 17-week semester or summer term
Flipped (blended online with onsite)	One or two days of online instruction is followed by three or four days of onsite instruction per week	Students must complete the online component that precedes the onsite learning activities in order to be prepared for the onsite activities	Full 17-week semester or summer term
Hybrid (blended online with onsite)	Instruction is delivered online with scheduled (weekly) face-to-face sessions	The face-to-face sessions are designed to meet requirements for labwork or clinical assignments as well as to provide student support and academic assistance	Part-of-term (either first half or second half) Or summer term
Online	instruction is delivered via D2L asynchronously, with optional synchronous (zoom) sessions upon request	Students may ask for zoom sessions for support or academic assistance from the instructor	Part-of-term (either first half or second half) Or summer term

What standards are used to develop and assess distance education courses and programs?

Northwest Tech explored standards of three organizations which are widely respected in the field of online learning:

- Quality Matters
- Blackboard Exemplary Course
- and the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) scorecards.

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The following crosswalk shows the alignment of the overarching standards for each organization.

Quality Matters	Blackboard Exemplary Course	OLC Scorecards	Northwest Tech
	Course Design:	Design and Layout	Principle I: Effective Course Design
Learning Objectives	goals and objectives		*course syllabus
Instructional Materials	content presentation	Content and activities	* structure of the course
Learning activities and interaction	learner engagement		* content development and accessibility
course technology	technology use	Course technology and tools	(included in course syllabus and structure of the course)
			*course approval and review
			*SME selection and training
	interaction and collaboration:	Interaction	Principle II: Effective Instruction
	communication strategies		*regular and substantive interaction
	development of a learning community		*expectations/job responsibilities
	interaction logistics		*responsiveness to students
Assessment and Measurement	assessment: expectations, assessment design, self-assessment	assessment and feedback	*assessment of student learning
			*instructor training/supervision
learner support	learner support:		Principle III: Student Experience
Course Overview and Intro	orientation to course and LMS	Course Overview and information	*online learner launch
	supportive software		(included in syllabus and Structure of the course –

			Principle I)
	instructor role/and info		(included in structure of the course Principle I)
	course/institutional policies and support		*access to resources
	technology access		*student performance
accessibility and usability	accommodations/disabilities support		(addressed in content development and accessibility in Principle I)
	feedback		*student evaluations/feedback
			*admissions, advising and enrollment

The standards from each of these models have been incorporated into Northwest Tech's three

Principle I: Effective Course Design leads to increased student success

Principle II: Effective Instruction leads to enhanced student engagement

Principle III: The Student Experience extends beyond the duration of the course itself.

principles:

The remainder for this handbook parses the three principles into component standards that guide the development and assessment of online courses/programs.

Policy Title: Verification of Student Identity Policy

Responsible Division: Academic Advancement

Board Approval Date: January 2022

Policy Statement:

The “Verification of Student Identity Policy” establishes identity verification procedures for students enrolled in distance education courses. This policy applies to all credit-bearing distance education courses or programs offered by NT, including application for admission, transfer, or withdrawal. This policy ensures NT operates in compliance with the provisions of the United States Federal Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA) concerning the verification of student identity in distance education.

All credit-bearing courses and programs offered through NT distance education methods must verify that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit.

NT has identified the following as acceptable methods of identity verification: 1. An individual secure login and password, 2. Proctored activities, and/or 3. Other technologies or practices that are effective in verifying student identification. NT does not charge additional fees for student identity verification. Students are required to authenticate each time they log into Moodle or proctored exams to minimize the possibility of academic dishonesty. In-person activities that require identity authentication are verified by NT employees personally familiar with the students. NT relies upon the high school employees to verify that students who complete the online courses are indeed the students who enroll in the classes. Faculty members are encouraged to design courses that support academic integrity. All methods of verifying student identity in distance education must protect the privacy of student information.

Any online student work, assessments or activities that are graded or contribute to a student’s grade must be submitted via a system that verifies the student’s identity as noted above.

Students are responsible for providing their complete and true identity information in any identification verification process. It is against NT policy for a user to give someone his or her password or to allow others to use his or her account.

NT uses Moodle as its learning management system (LMS). Moodle integrates with NT authentication services to ensure appropriate and secure student access to courses. NT uses Empower as its Student Information System (SIS). All users of the college’s LMS and SIS are responsible for maintaining the security of IDs and passwords, or any other access credentials as required. Attempting to discover another user’s password or attempts to gain unauthorized access to another person’s files or email is prohibited.

Principle I. Effective Course Design

Principle I. Effective course design leads to increased student success.

Effective course design starts with a qualified and trained subject matter expert (SME) who thoughtfully and purposefully structures the course. Each element of the syllabi, learning modules, instructional activities and assessment opportunities are developed with “the end in mind” using **backwards design**. Finally, the course is approved by peer review and revised on a regular schedule to ensure current and relevant content.

- I.A. SME Selection and Training
- I.B. Structure of the Course
- I.C. Course Syllabus
- I.D. Content Development and Accessibility
- I.E. Course Approval and Review

Principle I. Effective Course Design

I.A. SME Selection and Training

Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) are responsible for developing the online content of the course and/or program. The SME may or may not be the instructor for the course/program; because of this, it is imperative that the SME adhere to the standards of effective online course design detailed in this principle.

	Standards	Yes	No
I.A.1.	Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) have the appropriate experience and credentials for the course they are developing.		
I.A.2.	The “Designing an Effective Online Course” handbook and training incorporates best current practices in instructional design.		
I.A.3.	Each SME who successfully completes training is awarded a certificate of completion.		
I.A.4.	Appropriate records of SME training are maintained for accreditation purposes.		

 Principle I. Effective Course Design

I.B. Structure of the Course

End-of-course surveys reveal students' needs and desires for a structured, easy-to-navigate course in the learning management system.

	Standards	Yes	No
I.B.1.	The content is organized so that the student can easily navigate among modules in the LMS.		
I.B.2.	Each course includes a module entitled "Start Here" which includes the following contents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet Your Instructor • Textbooks and materials • Course competencies • How to Join a Zoom videoconference with your Instructor • Zoom Videoconferencing Library • How to set up notifications • How to set up and use Northwest email 		
I.B.3.	Module titles are concise and descriptive of the content		
I.B.4.	Each module begins with an advance organizer to let students know what to expect in the module. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advance organizer explicitly states the learning objectives of the lesson; • The advance organizer highlights relationships among topics; • The advance organizer provides a roadmap showing students where they have been and where they are going in the course. • The advance organizer appears in the form of a welcome blurb and/or video. • The advance organizer contains a "Read/Watch/Do" chart or list that informs the students of all learning objectives/activities included in the module 		
I.B.5.	Standard Instructional equivalencies are used to complete a Carnegie Calculator spreadsheet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Carnegie Calculator spreadsheet is retained in the Office of Distance Learning in case a student or other stakeholder questions the rigor of the course 		

Principle I. Effective Course Design

I.C. Course Syllabus

The information contained within the syllabus should be repeated throughout the course in various modules and formats; the syllabus may be accompanied by program/student handbooks that further elucidate policies and procedures that govern student progress through the program.

	Standards	Yes	No
I.C.1.	The SME customizes the standard Northwest Tech syllabus template to reflect specific course information.		
I.C.2.	Course Information Course information at the top of the syllabus includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • course identifier or number (i.e. IND104) • the complete course name (i.e. Basic Electricity) • number of credit hours (i.e. 3 credit hours) • pre-requisites (i.e. Pre-requisites: IND101, IND102) 		
I.C.3.	Course Description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course description in the syllabus matches the course description in the Northwest Tech catalog. 		
I.C.4.	Textbooks and Materials Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Textbook information includes the APA citation (authors, year of published, title of book, publisher, publisher's location, ISBN) • Textbook information is complete and accurate. • A complete listing of required materials (software, hardware, tools, etc.) is included in the syllabus. 		
I.C.5.	Student Learning Outcomes The standardized Northwest Tech student learning outcomes should be listed on each course syllabus. The student learning outcomes are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Communicate effectively B. Integrate technology C. Learn effectively D. Demonstrate cooperative teamwork skills E. Apply safety in the workplace F. Think critically and creatively 		

	G. Demonstrate responsible work ethics		
I.C.6.	<p>Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course-specific competencies (knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire) are enumerated in the syllabus. 		
I.C.7.	<p>Assessment of Student Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose and processes of assessment are explained in the syllabus. 		
I.C.8.	<p>Grading Scale</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The grading scale that determines the final course grade is present in the syllabus. A table shows the weights for each category of graded items (quizzes; discussions; written assignments; projects; etc.) for the final course grade. Grade weights are representative of the importance of the learning activity. 		
I.C.9.	<p>Attendance/Participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The syllabus defines what “attendance” looks like for an online class. Explain how lack of attendance/participation may impact the overall grade for the class (if relevant). Explain whether/how students may make up or catch up if they fall behind. 		
I.C.10.	<p>Services for Students with Disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information regarding the availability of support services is explained in the syllabus. Contact information for the office/person who provides services is contained in the syllabus 		
I.C.11.	<p>Non-discrimination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The standard statement providing information about reporting discrimination or harassment is included in the syllabus. 		

 Principle I. Effective Course Design

I.D. Content Development and Accessibility

The principle of “backward design” guides the course design process, so that all course content and assessment activities are derived from the course-specific competencies. Course content is developed with “Universal Design for Learning” principles to ensure equity and accessibility for all learners.

	Standards	Yes	No
I.D.1.	Accessibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course materials are accessible to all students and meet the standards for ADA, section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. 		
I.D.2.	Universal Design for Learning ensures that students are given an opportunity to participate and succeed regardless of abilities, preferences and disabilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The course content is designed with multiple means of engagement in mind (course modules stimulate interest and motivation for learning by providing a variety of avenues through which the learner engages with the instructor, peers, and content). The course content is designed with multiple means of representation in mind (content is presented via various media – i.e. auditory, visual, kinesthetically, etc.) The course content is designed with multiple means of expression in mind (a variety of ways in which students can demonstrate mastery of course competencies, such as by writing, speaking, demonstrating, etc.) 		
I.D.3.	Ethical use of sources/resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SMEs abide by Fair Use and the TEACH Act guidelines. 		
I.D.4.	Instructional videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional videos are included in the online course to demonstrate key elements of the course content. Links to the videos are accompanied by the title and viewing time along with a study guide or questions that students should answer while viewing the video. Videos contain closed captioning. Text transcripts of video content are available. The video player has control buttons that are accessible for screen 		

	readers.		
I.D.5.	<p>PowerPoint slide presentations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If slide presentations are provided by the textbook publisher, the copyright information is retained on the slides. • Slideshows developed by the SME are easy to read and include relevant graphics and images that complement the content. • The slide presentation complements rather than duplicates other content in the course. • The slide presentation includes an audio component (voiceover). 		
I.D.6.	<p>Images</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each image includes a short text description underneath. • Alt tags are provided for each image. • Long descriptions of images are available. • Color is not used to convey meaning (i.e. color-coding a map). • Color contrast is maximized. • Graphics that flash or strobe are large, bright, and flash more than 3 times per second. • Items that do not contribute valuable information are designated as “decorative.” 		
I.D.7.	<p>Audio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text transcripts of audio content are available. • Transcripts can contain additional information (beyond the verbatim transcript) that enhances comprehension. • Notations indicate sounds that are heard (i.e. [music] or [sneezing]). 		
I.D.8.	<p>Documents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply heading styles and paragraph formatting. • Include alt text for images, objects and tables. • On tables, there are no blank cells, rows or columns. 		
I.D.9.	<p>Assessments (formative and summative)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each module contains practice problems or exercises which elicit corrective and constructive feedback from the instructor. • Each module contains at least one graded assignment or exam that contributes to the overall grade for the course. • Each graded activity includes a grading rubric that shows students how points will be earned through this activity. 		
I.D.10.	<p>Discussion Forums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each module contains a Discussion Forum designed to generate 		

	<p>engagement/community among learners and with the instructor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Discussion Forum helps learners to formulate and share their thoughts/ideas regarding the topic of the week. • The Discussion Forum includes a grading rubric that shows students how points will be earned through this activity. 		
I.D.11.	<p>Northwest “Branding”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online courses abide by the Northwest University identity guidelines for using logos, colors, and fonts. • Handouts and documents created by and for Northwest Tech are branded appropriately. 		
I.D.12.	<p>Courses may be enhanced by the incorporation of instructional technology (such as computer programs, labs or simulations, recording devices, or materials and supplies that are required in the course content).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SME provides clear information about how to access and use any instructional technology in the course. 		

 Principle I. Effective Course Design

I.E. Course Review and Approval

Courses and programs undergo regular revision.

	Standards	Yes	No
I.E.1.	The online version of the course has been either created by or reviewed by SMEs or instructors who are qualified in the content area of the course/program.		
I.E.2.	The course content has been proofed and edited for grammar, spelling, punctuation and mechanics.		
I.E.3.	The course shell has been proofed for “flow” and ease of navigation.		

Principle II. Effective Instruction

Principle II. Effective instruction leads to enhanced student engagement.

All online courses in the Virtual College are housed in Northwest University's LMS. Each instructor is expected to teach from the designated course that has been designed and built into the LMS. Instructors may supplement the course with additional items that pertain to the content, but may not skip or omit any existing content that is already in the LMS.

- II.A. Instructor Training/Supervision
- II.B. Expectations and Job Responsibilities for Instructors
- II.C. Assessment of Student Learning
- II.D. Regular and Substantive Interaction
- II.E. Responsiveness to Students

Principle II. Effective Instruction

II.A. Instructor Training/Supervision

The Director of Distance Learning provides instructor training and ongoing supervision; the Director periodically checks the D2L class site to observe instructor and student activity.

	Standards	Yes	No
II.A.1.	Instructors have the appropriate experience and credentials for the course they are teaching.		
II.A.2.	The “Effective Online Instruction” handbook and training is reflective of best current practices in online instruction.		
II.A.3.	Each instructor who successfully completes training is awarded a certification of completion.		
II.A.4.	Appropriate records of instructor training are maintained for accreditation purposes.		
II.A.5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Director of Distance Learning observes the online courses at least three times throughout the semester, documenting and maintaining a record of these observations to share with the online instructor and/or accrediting agencies. • If deficiencies are discovered during these observations, the Director of Distance Learning immediately works with the instructor to develop new strategies for success. 		
II.A.6.	Instructor evaluation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For new instructors, the Director of Distance Learning will complete a summative instructor evaluation once per semester for the first two semesters. • For returning instructors, the Director of Distance Learning will complete a summative instructor evaluation once every three years. 		

Principle II. Effective Instruction

II.B. Expectations and Job Responsibilities for Instructors

This list is not intended to be the complete Position Description for instructors; rather it illustrates the standards by which instructors will be evaluated.

	Standards	Yes	No
II.B.1.	<p>Prior to the first day of the course, instructors have prepared themselves to teach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the first day of class, instructors have obtained the requisite textbooks and materials for the course. • Instructors have read through the course content and have prepared a general outline for weekly announcements and information to share with students throughout the semester. 		
II.B.2.	<p>Prior to the first day of class, the instructor has set up the following components in the LMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory announcement that welcomes students and provides a motivational blurb that builds enthusiasm in the student • “Meet the Instructor” page with appropriate information 		
II.B.3.	<p>Instructors use the course as it exists in the LMS, with minimal additions to the content. Additions to the course may complement or supplement, but may not replace the existing online content of the course.</p>		
II.B.4.	<p>Announcements</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The instructor publishes an announcement in the course weekly. The announcement provides at least one of the following items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Preview of topic for the upcoming module b) Aggregate feedback regarding last week’s assignment or project c) Instructions/clarification for content or assignments for the coming week d) Encouragement/support for the students e) Professional anecdotes (“tales from the field”) that pertain to the weekly topic f) Reminder of office hours, Zoom videoconferencing, and tutoring 		
II.B.5.	<p>Assignment dropbox</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor requires students to use the assignment dropboxes in the LMS to submit assignments. • If the assignment dropbox does not have the capacity to handle the size of the submission, the instructor may check with the Director for 		

	Distance Learning for a suitable alternative that will provide the documentation and storage requirements needed.		
II.B.6.	<p>Discussion forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The discussion forums are set up for single-thread responses to facilitate student interaction. • The instructor logs into the discussion forums daily (Monday-Friday) and monitors the student interaction. • The instructor provides appropriate feedback to student posts, and corrects misinformation in a constructive manner. • The instructor checks the “Ask the Instructor” forum daily (Monday-Friday). 		
II.B.7.	<p>Gradebook</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor ensures that all graded assignments have been graded and recorded in the gradebook on a daily basis. 		
II.B.8	<p>The online instructor proactively reports issues and concerns to the appropriate personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a student is experiencing difficulty with the functionality of D2L (i.e. quizzes won't open or D2L is unresponsive), the online instructor may contact the D2L support line as indicated on the course homepage. • If a link or asset in D2L becomes nonfunctional, the online instructor may contact the Director for Distance Learning. 		
II.B.9.	<p>Reporting student performance/conduct issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a student fails to log in, complete or submit assignments, or demonstrates poor performance, or has other difficulties, the online instructor will share that pattern of behavior with the Campus Navigator for the program, and the Director for Distance Learning. 		
II.B.10.	<p>Submitting final grades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The online instructor inputs the final grades into Banner at the end of the term. 		

Principle II. Effective Instruction

II.C. Assessment of Student Learning

	Standards	Yes	No
II.C.1.	Assessment of student learning consists of frequent, low-stakes formative assessment activities that notify the student of correct/incorrect understanding of content.		
II.C.2.	Assessment of student learning consists of periodic summative assessment activities that contribute to the student's overall grade for the course.		
II.C.3.	Students are informed of assessment activities through the tentative course schedule, as well as through announcements in the LMS.		
II.C.4.	Upon completing a learning assessment, students receive corrective and constructive feedback from the instructor.		
II.C.5.	The student has multiple opportunities to seek additional clarification or feedback from the instructor.		
II.C.6.			

Principle II. Effective Instruction

II.D. Regular and Substantive Interaction

	Standards	Yes	No
II.D.1.	Per U.S. Department of Education regulations, the online instructor maintains an active presence in the online classroom by initiating interaction with students through the LMS.		
II.D.2.	Instructor must initiate interaction with students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructor proactively reaches out to students; does not wait for students to reach out to instructor. 		
II.D.3.	The interaction must occur regularly and frequently <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor has developed a pattern of reaching out to students through the LMS at least twice per week (i.e. announcements, discussion forum, etc.) 		
II.D.4.	The interaction must be of academic nature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor provides substantive information that relates to either the course content and/or aggregate feedback to the group of students regarding performance on a recent formative or summative assessment 		
II.D.5.	The instructor must meet the accrediting agency's standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor of record personally completes the interaction with students (there is no teaching assistant or substitute who fulfills the standard of regular and substantive interaction) 		

Principle II. Effective Instruction

II.E. Responsiveness to Students

Online instructors are responsive to students, other faculty and staff. Responses are provided in a timely manner with professionalism.

	Standards	Yes	No
II.E.1.	Office hours <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor announces a set time for office hours each week to be available for students (must be online) • The instructor provides office hours at least once a week for 60 minutes 		
II.E.2.	Response times for emails <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor responds to emails (from students and from Northwest colleagues/administrators) within 24 hours 		
II.E.3.	Response to discussion forums <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor responds to discussion forums within 24 hours • Throughout the entire semester, the instructor equally responds to students so that each student receives approximately the same number of replies • Instructor responses to discussion posts are substantive rather than confirmative 		
II.E.4.	Response times for grading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor provides prompt feedback to students either individually or as an aggregate summary of student performance within one week of the assignment/exam • The instructor updates the gradebook on a weekly basis 		
II.E.5.	Feedback to Students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback is provided as a way to guide, praise, and correct student responses. • The online instructor provides written and/or verbal feedback to students through the discussion forum and on graded assignments in the dropbox. • Feedback clearly identifies student responses that are correct as well as responses that are incorrect • Feedback clearly states actions for improvement, either through instructional tips or suggestions for student to consult specific 		

	resources that should help clarify the misunderstood content		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feedback is worded in a supportive, encouraging manner		

Principle III. Student Experience

Principle III. The Student Experience extends beyond the duration of the course itself.

The Student Experience begins with impressions the learner has formed from the public image of the institution, and continues through the admissions, advising, financial aid and learning processes until the student leaves the institution. The online instructor is a key player in aligning the student's expectations with the institutions' expectations, so that the student successfully completes the program of choice.

- III.A. Admissions, Advising, and Enrollment
- III.B. Online Learner Launch
- III.C. Access to Resources
- III.D. Student Performance
- III.E. Student evaluations/feedback

 Principle III. Student Experience

III.A. Admissions, Advising, and Enrollment

	Standards	Yes	No
III.A.1.	The application for online classes is available online and is easy to navigate and complete.		
III.A.2.	The student receives information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Northwest email login credentials • the billing/payment process • the advising/enrollment process • the Student Readiness Survey • the orientation (Online Learner Launch) • contact information for the student’s advisor 		
III.A.3.	The prospective student is asked to complete a Student Readiness Survey during the admissions application process so that the institution can assess potential areas of difficulty and develop remedies/solutions.		
III.A.4.	The student advisor reviews the results of the Student Readiness Survey with the prospective student to present solutions/remedies.		
III.A.5.	The advisor contacts students with information/instructions regarding adding/dropping classes and enrolling in future terms.		
III.A.6.	The advisor follows up on instructor concerns with students to identify solutions/remedies pertaining to academic performance in the online course/program.		

Principle III. Student Experience

III.B. Online Learner Launch (Orientation)

The Online Learner Launch is an orientation for new online students. The Online Learner Launch will be provided synchronously via Zoom videoconference immediately prior to the first week of the online course start date.

	Standards	Yes	No
III.B.1.	The OLL provides instructions for setting up the Northwest email account		
III.B.2.	The OLL provides Instructions for checking MyNorthwest portal and bursar bill/financial information		
III.B.3.	The OLL provides Expectations for daily login into the LMS and completing work as assigned		
III.B.4.	The OLL provides Dates and deadlines for adding/dropping or withdrawing from courses; enrollment for future semesters; making payments		
III.B.5.	The OLL provides Demonstration and/or instructions for navigating through D2L		
III.B.6.	The OLL provides Practice using D2L assignment dropboxes, discussion forums, and quizzes		
III.B.7.	The OLL provides Information about Zoom videoconferencing		
III.B.8.	The OLL provides Resources for online learners (videos describing Accommodations; Tutoring; Technical Support; Advising/Career Planning)		
III.B.9.	The OLL provides Tips for Becoming a Better Student (videos describing Taking Tests Online; Time Management; Taking Notes; Reading and Note-taking)		
III.B.10.	The OLL provides Information about accessing textbooks and the materials required for the online course		

Principle III. Student Experience

III.C. Access to Resources

Online learners have access to resources that will support and enhance their ability to learn.

	Standards	Yes	No
III.C.1.	Tutoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online instructors serve as tutors for the courses they teach online. • Online instructors are available upon students request for tutoring. • Online instructors suggest that students participate in tutoring sessions when the instructor identifies poor performance. 		
III.C.2.	Videoconferencing technologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors incorporate Zoom videoconferencing to provide synchronous interaction with students 		
III.C.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institution provides student support services (i.e. the Campus Advocate and Career Navigators) • The contact information and guidelines for accessing support resources are clearly articulated to students on the course syllabus and verbally as needed. 		

 Principle III. Student Experience

III.D. Student Performance

In order to ensure successful learning and completion of the course (and abide by the Regular and Substantive Interaction policy), students are expected to proceed through the course at a pace set by the instructor.

	Standards	Yes	No
III.D.1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The institution has a policy that prohibits acceleration (working ahead or in a self-paced manner) in the online courses The online instructor monitors student performance to ensure all students keep on pace with the instructor and rest of the class. 		
III.D.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The online instructor monitors student attendance and contacts students who are absent from the online class. The institution follows a standard procedure for addressing student attendance (lack of attendance) issues 		
III.D.3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The online instructor monitors student performance and initiates contact with students who are performing poorly on graded assignments. The institution follows a standard procedure for addressing student performance in terms of providing support and determining when/whether to advise the student to drop or withdraw from the course 		
III.D.4.	Instructors are trained to identify and address various forms of academic dishonesty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If students falsify records or documents If students cheat (copy from another person, or use unsanctioned sources to assist with assignments, projects, quizzes, or exams) If students plagiarize (use the exact same words or thoughts from another person/resource without attributing proper credit to that person/resource) If students collude (assist other students in violating the standards of academic integrity) 		
III.D.5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are informed of expectations for civil behavior The institution follows a standard process for addressing breaches of the student code of conduct 		

III.D.6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are informed of the grievance procedure pertaining to course grades. • The grievance is addressed within a timely manner • There is an appeal process if the grade grievance cannot be resolved at the instructor level. 		
III.D.7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are informed of the grievance procedure pertaining to course or instructor issues • There is an appeal process for grievances if the issue cannot be resolved at the lowest relevant level. 		

Principle III. Student Experience

III.A. Student Evaluations/Feedback

Students are asked to provide feedback or evaluations regarding the instructor and the course.

	Standards	Yes	No
III.A.1.	The student may provide confidential and/or anonymous feedback/evaluations.		
III.A.2.	The student feedback/evaluation results are reviewed/addressed for the purposes of continuous quality improvement.		