

Policy for Online Course Scheduling and Quality Assurance

Background: Hawai'i Community College has been offering online classes since 2001. The first instructors who created and taught online courses were largely self-educated or trained using the resources they could find -- primarily through one-day WebCT workshops offered through the UH System. The College began offering more online courses, driven by a variety of factors: interest on the part of instructors, course gaps in programs and student demands for more DE options. By 2008, the College recognized the imperative to provide services to online faculty to ensure that online courses

1. were commensurate (in content and rigor) to face-to-face courses,
2. promoted student success through implementing best practices for online teaching, and
3. met national and accreditation standards for online teaching.

The Instructional Technology Support Office (ITSO) was institutionalized in Fall 2011; the staff of this office provides support to online teachers. The Online Course Development Program (OCDP) -- an in-house training beginning with a six-week intensive summer course covering online teaching and use of the College's learning management system, followed by support and evaluation of a new online course during the next semester -- was designed by and has been taught by ITSO faculty since 2012.

Maintaining Quality: The College has worked to maintain high-quality online courses that to meet national and accreditation standards as well as the College's Mission. This has been achieved through several practices, including the following:

- Departments make (and document) thoughtful decisions about what courses are most appropriately taught online.
- The College permits instructors to begin teaching online only after they have had appropriate training or provided evidence of online teaching skills.
- The College conducts regular evaluation of online courses.
- Instructors submit an Online Course Compliance Form for each online course taught, every semester.

National (and Accreditation) Standards

1. Click [HERE](#)
2. From Commission Policies:

Distance Education and Correspondence Education

Evaluation Items:

- _____ The institution has policies and procedures for defining and classifying a course as offered by distance education or correspondence education, in alignment with USDE definitions.
- _____ There is an accurate and consistent application of the policies and procedures for determining if a course is offered by distance education (with regular and substantive interaction with the instructor, initiated by the instructor, and online activities are included as part of a student's grade) or correspondence education (online activities are primarily "paperwork related," including reading posted materials, posting homework and completing examinations, and interaction with the instructor is initiated by the student as needed).
- _____ The institution has appropriate means and consistently applies those means for verifying the identity of a student who participates in a distance education or correspondence education course or program, and for ensuring that student information is protected.
- _____ The technology infrastructure is sufficient to maintain and sustain the distance education and correspondence education offerings.
- _____ The institution demonstrates compliance with the Commission *Policy on Distance Education and Correspondence Education*.

[Regulation citations: 602.16(a)(1)(iv), (vi); 602.17(g); 668.38.]

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In an effort to provide students with high quality online courses, Hawai'i Community College has adopted the following policies:

Determination of courses to be offered online:

- Departmental faculty decides which courses will be taught online given the course objectives and learning needs of students.
- Decisions are made collaboratively, based on discipline expertise.
- Departments will document their rationales for their decision-making.

Selection of instructors to teach online courses:

- Department Chairs will ensure instructors selected to teach are adequately trained, prepared and willing to teach effectively online, including demonstrating online methodology and best practices as well as how to skillfully use relevant tools in the College's learning management system. For example, new online instructors will have successfully completed the OCDP (or other College-sponsored training program), or another equally comprehensive training at another institution, as evidenced by an online course evaluation.
- Department Chairs will document their rationale for their decision-making.

Quality assurance and compliance with national and accreditation requirements for online courses by the College:

- Instructors will complete an Online Course Compliance Form for each course, each semester, documenting their adherence to expectations in the areas of **rigor, instructor-student contact, accessibility** and **authenticity**. Online instructors who do not meet these standards will work with the Instructional Technology Support Office to improve their courses. If improvements are not made, the course will not be offered again until improvements are adequately completed.
- Instructors will give access to online courses to a Department Chair or designee, as determined by the Chair.
- The first time a new instructor teaches online, the course will be evaluated by a Department Chair or designee.