

EvCC4050: Online Education Standards Policy

Original Date: July 30, 2024

Policy Contact: Vice President of Instruction

BACKGROUND

This policy defines minimal standards for course design and delivery at Everett Community College (EvCC) with respect to online education.

REGULAR AND SUBSTANTIVE INTERACTION

The Department of Education requires that with respect to all online courses for which students may use federal financial aid, institutions must “ensure that there is regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors.” (34 CFR § 600.2). The Department of Education has the authority to review distance learning offerings at colleges and universities that receive federal funds.

Federal regulations further stipulate that an institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student’s completion of a course or competency -

- Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and
- Monitoring the student’s academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed, on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

As such, EvCC will ensure the above listed practices occur as part of regular course and instructor evaluation processes.

Substantive interaction is defined, in federal regulations, as engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and must include at least two of the following -

- Providing direct instruction;
- Assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework;
- Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
- Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or,
- Other instructional activities approved by the institution’s or program’s accreditation Agency.

As such, instructors teaching online courses will engage in at least two of the above listed practices throughout the course.

ACCESSIBILITY

Consistent with [Article 18.20](#) of the CBA, in all classes, instructors are expected to provide learners with accessible learning materials. This includes digital materials, including third-party instructional software and add-on technology tools. Consistent with federal regulations, digital content should meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards. Consistent with federal Department of Justice regulations, digital content must meet WCAG 2.1 AA standards not later than April 24, 2026.

EFFECTIVE DATE & IMPLEMENTATION

This policy shall become effective upon approval of the Board of Trustees and satisfaction of the College’s bargaining obligations, if any.

RELEVANT LAWS AND OTHER RELATED INFORMATION

[28 CFR Part 35](#)

[34 CFR § 600.2](#)

REVISION HISTORY

Original Date: July 30, 2024

APPROVED BY

Board of Trustees