Western Michigan University E-Learning Standards

- Approved 10/25/2010 by the Western Michigan University Faculty Senate Committee on Extended University Programs
- Reviewed and Supported by the Academic and Information Technology Council on 4/20/2011.

### Quality Assurance Standards

EUP will work collaboratively with WMU academic and support units to provide leadership in quality assurance.

1. Departments will establish evaluation standards and evaluation processes for E-Learning.
2. Instructor and student satisfaction surveys to measure satisfaction with EUP’s delivery of services and support will be administered annually.
3. To ensure consistency and sound pedagogy, courses must comply with the instructional design checklists and any departmental checklists prior to the course start date.
4. WMU will provide adequate budget and financial planning for distance education programs and courses.
5. Distance education course instructor appointment will be identical to traditional course instructor appointment and is assigned by the academic departments.
6. Continuous improvement of distance education courses and programs will be accomplished through consistent communication and collaboration with Extended University Programs.
7. Extended University Programs will offer regular instructor development workshops, instructional design and technology support services that emphasize achievement of learning outcomes, assessment of learning, as well as instructional technologies to enhance teaching and learning.

### Course Management System Standards

Leadership will be provided by EUP and OIT.

1. The course management system will be compliant with and in support of:
   - federal legislation
   - national accreditation standards
2. The layout and navigational structure of course shells will be customizable to meet instructor, student, program, departmental, college, and/or institutional requirements.
3. The system must comply with Section 508 guidelines and any other federally mandated accessibility regulations.

4. The system must support the IMS content package and SCORM standard for content import and export.

5. The system must be able to integrate with the Institution’s enterprise student information system for course shell creation and course enrollment management.

6. The system will not require significant web browser configuration for end-users; additional plug-ins and codecs will be easily attainable at no additional cost.

7. The system will provide traditional and contemporary content item types, tools, and learning objects (e.g., threaded discussions, drop boxes, text-based lessons, selective release, grade book, multimedia, RSS, WYSIWYG editors, announcements, email, document sharing, chat, synchronous white board, exams, user tracking tools, notification agents, etc.).

8. The system will support the integration of third-party teaching and learning plug-ins as well as academic integrity monitoring. (e.g., synchronous communication tools, portfolios, asynchronous discussion, TurnItIn, etc.).

9. The system will be compatible with current identity verification applications to comply with student verification regulations.

10. The system will support mobile devices to view course content and interact with limited course tools (e.g., discussions and grade review).

11. The system will support single sign-on from WMU ERP systems and sub-systems.

12. The system will provide functionality to share and collaborate on learning objects.

13. The system will be kept current with the most recent security patches and updates.

Hosting Standards
Leadership and support will be provided by OIT with input from EUP for an on-site hosted solution.

1. The hosting infrastructure will provide a system uptime of 99.99%.
2. The hosting infrastructure will have no single point of failure.

3. The application server, file server, and database server will be on separate servers.

4. Servers will be clustered and load balanced to improve performance and reliability.

5. Any data stored on disk arrays will utilize RAID or an equivalent redundancy measure.

6. System backups will be performed every 24 hours or less.

7. Data retrieval and/or restoration will occur the institutionally defined recovery times.

8. Full database backups will be performed weekly; transaction logs will be generated and shipped and stored off site weekly.

9. Scheduled system downtimes will be coordinated with all stakeholders to minimize disruption to users.

10. System upgrades, bug fixes, etc. will be performed thoroughly in a test environment prior to implementation in the production environment.

Technical Support Standards
Leadership and support will be provided by OIT and EUP for an on-site hosted solution.

1. Technical support is available on the following schedule:
   Fall/Spring Hours *
   Mon-Thr: 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.
   Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
   Saturday: CLOSED
   Sunday: noon - 10 p.m.
   * Closed on holidays

   Summer I/II Hours *
   Mon-Fri: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
   Saturday: CLOSED
   Sunday: CLOSED
   * Closed

2. Technical support is available via phone, email, and a web-based trouble ticket. Voicemail is available after hours.
Before or at the beginning of each Summer I semester, EUP and OIT will jointly reevaluate help desk needs for the eLearning system to determine if any adjustments in help desk availability or support request method is warranted.

OIT and EUP will collaboratively evaluate average response times for eLearning-related support each Fall and Spring semester to ensure a timely response to all support requests.

3. A “frequently asked questions”/technical support knowledge base will be available online for users and will be updated monthly. This tool will be available prior to system authentication.

4. A phone tree system will be available to appropriately route student and instructor inquiries.

5. Technical support user satisfaction levels will be greater than 90%.

6. Monthly help desk reports will be provided to the appropriate stakeholders.

### Distance Education Course Development Standards

EUP will provide institutional leadership for distance education course design.

1. All distance education courses will be constructed using the WMU instructional design process.

2. Distance education courses will be approved through the online course proposal process prior to the commencement of the development process. Distance education courses will support the institutional mission and the selected delivery format and instructional technologies will complement or take advantage of the medium to improve teaching and learning.*

3. A distance education online course typically takes three to four months to develop and, as such, the development timeline will be established accordingly.

4. Instructors developing distance education courses will be provided with an instructional design development orientation manual when a distance education course has been approved for development. The instructional design development orientation manual will include, at a minimum:
   - information about the instructional design process,
   - expectations and responsibilities of the course development team,
   - expectations and responsibilities of an instructor developing a distance education course,
   - an instructional design primer,
   - learning object type overviews and the appropriate application of each,
   - best practices for developing an online course,
   - best practices for managing an online course,
5. Instructional strategies, outcome assessment strategies, and learning object development will be based on the appropriate inclusion and distribution of Bloom's Levels of Learning (Taxonomy).

6. Distance education courses and all integrated learning objects will be constructed to address multiple learning styles.

7. Learning objects will be designed and constructed in compliance with Section 508 and any other federally mandated accessibility regulations.

8. Student expectations will be clearly defined and available for the distance education course and each assignment.

9. Instructor expectations will be clearly defined and available for the distance education course and each assignment.

10. Distance education courses and fully online programs will be designed and constructed to support student enrollment capacities comparable to on-ground sections.

11. Distance education courses will be completely constructed prior to the course start date.

12. Distance education courses and fully online programs will have a consistent, uniform, and intuitive navigational structure.

13. Distance education courses will contain information about library resources, technical support acquisition options, academic support services, and practices for being successful in a distance education course.

14. Distance education courses will contain information on how to contact the instructor via e-mail and phone. Expected response times and office hours will also be present.

15. Special course hardware and software will be specified prior to registration and immediately upon course entry in the form of an announcement or prominent content item.

16. Distance education courses will adhere to the Institutional policies for the use of third-party copyrighted material or evidence of appropriate copyright clearance is available. **

17. Mechanisms to collect student feedback will be present in order to improve the course during the current term at the following intervals:
18. Appropriate instructional strategies will be identified during the course storyboard/design document phase and learning objects and course tools will be constructed and/or organized accordingly.

19. Opportunities for student self-evaluation will be present throughout each course.

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**Instructor Support and Training Standards**

EUP will provide institutional leadership in order to comply with federal regulations and accreditation standards.

1. Instructor training and orientation opportunities will include, at a minimum, one-on-one, group, online, and print.

2. Instructor showcases and brown bag lunch sessions will occur at least one time during:
   - the fall semester,
   - the spring semester,
   - the summer one and summer two semesters.

3. An E-Learning Resource Lab will be provided for instructors; the resource lab will provide support on the use of audio, video, multimedia and other learning object development support.

4. At a minimum, instructors will be trained on:
   - the most effective and appropriate use of instructional technologies,
   - how to utilize the course management system,
   - how to develop outcomes-based online course content,
   - how to manage online courses.

5. Instructors developing distance education courses must successfully complete the training component of the instructional design process.

6. Opportunities for instructors to explore and integrate emerging E-Learning technologies will be provided through the E-Learning Resource Lab.

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**Student Support Standards**

EUP will provide support for and work with institutional departments and stakeholders to integrate comprehensive student services support in distance education courses. OIT will provide support for web-enhanced and Kalamazoo
1. An online orientation course will be provided to all students participating in an online course that explains how to navigate the course management system, obtain technical support, contact student support services, and set expectations for taking an online course.

2. Online courses will include instructions on how to access library services.

3. Distance students will have full access to library resources.

4. Online students will have access to all on-campus support services (e.g., advising, financial aid, disabled student services, library, tutoring, online writing lab, career services, counseling, student government, university communications, student business services, etc.)

5. All instructional materials such as books and supplemental readings will be available to online students worldwide through vendors and/or the WMU library. Instructors will consider the instructional material format options when selecting a textbook and/or course pack.

6. Proctored exam support and guidance will be provided to students in all courses that utilize proctored exams.

7. Student service support will be designed to promote and maintain a collaborative virtual learning and support community for students.

8. Students will be notified in advance of any scheduled system downtime.

### Administrative Standards

EUP will provide support for distance education and regional location courses. OIT will provide support for web-enhanced and Kalamazoo courses.

| 1. To ensure consistency of training and quality, centralized E-Learning course development support will be provided to all instructors. | EUP; OFD;OIT |
| The institution will recognize instructors exemplifying outstanding quality in the areas of: | Academic Affairs Leadership |
| - learning effectiveness, | |
| - student satisfaction, | |

EUP

EUP and Library

EUP; Student Services, Enrollment Mgt.

EUP and Library

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EUP & OIT
3. An Institutional copyright policy will be developed and adhered to.

4. A course management system oversight committee will be established to provide input on scheduling downtimes, integration needs, etc.

5. Criteria exist to determine online course enrollment capacity.

6. Online and hybrid courses will follow all departmental policies and procedures.

7. The course creation process for online and hybrid courses and programs will be integrated into institutional processes.

8. Intellectual property rights for online courses and content is clearly defined.

9. The course schedule will not change after the registration period begins for hybrid courses.

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*Adapted from the Sloan Consortium Quality Framework and the Five Pillars

**Adapted from the Penn State Quality Assurance E-Learning Design Standards