

A&M-Texarkana Online Course Standards

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) universities and colleges to have “clear criteria for the evaluation of faculty teaching distance education courses and programs” and “appropriate training”¹ to meet instructor evaluation criteria. The Online Education Advisory Committee has developed a set of standards and recommendations to align training opportunities supporting evaluation criteria for faculty teaching online courses.

Required Standard	Recommendations	Instructor Evaluation
1. Course taught on approved online platforms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackboard • INACT (used by Alternative Teacher Certification Program) 	n/a – not necessary for student evaluation of instructor.
2. Syllabus posted electronically within platform.	Posting of syllabus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course menu* • Homepage • Course email messaging 	Was the syllabus accessible and clearly presented?
3. Syllabus specifies method of communication for use by students and faculty.	Methods of communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University email • Course email messaging • Discussion board 	Did the instructor clearly specify a method of communication for use by students and faculty?
4. If special hardware (e.g. webcam, scanner) or software (e.g. Powerpoint, Prezi, etc.) are required, specifications and use are clearly defined.	Posting of requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homepage* • Syllabus* • Course email messaging 	Did course software, tools and media support course objectives?
5. Instructor introduction accessible first day of semester.	Posting of introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homepage • Syllabus • Course email messaging • Audio • Video 	Was the instructor’s introduction accessible?
6. Course deadlines and assignment dates are clearly delineated.	Posting of deadlines and dates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackboard or INACT calendar • Syllabus • Course email messaging 	Were course deadlines and assignment dates clearly delineated?
7. Method instructor will use to verify attendance prior to census date is clearly described.	Methods of verification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Board Participation* • Respond to Instructor Email • Submission of assignment 	n/a –not necessary for student evaluation of instructor.
8. Standards for instructor responsiveness (e.g. return email within 48 hrs) and availability (e.g. post virtual office hours) are clearly posted, including: contact information, office hours, timely feedback, posting of grades.	Posting for instructor availability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homepage • Syllabus 	Did instructor clearly post standards for instructor responsiveness and availability (i.e. contact information, office hours, email turnaround, feedback)?
9. Standards for “appropriate interaction between faculty and students and among students” ² are clearly posted.	Methods for interaction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous (Threaded Discussion) • Synchronous (Live Chat) • Team Projects • Individual Email • Group Email • Audioconference • Interactive Video • Student posting of assignments for review by faculty/other students 	Did course tools and media support “appropriate interaction between faculty and students and among students” to meet course objectives?
10. Course content is organized in a manner that is clear and accessible.	Methods for course organization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Folders •Units • Modules •Chapters 	Was course content easily accessible? Was course content organized and clearly presented?

*Preferable methodology for best practices

¹See SACSCOC for The Best Practices and Protocols, “Institutional Context and Commitment”, <http://www.sacscoc.org/pdf/commadap.pdf>

²See THECB website for Coordinating Board Rules, Policy and Related Forms for Distance Education, <http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectId=B996EAAE-9356-09BD-80C46308898CBB45>