

Teaching & Learning Course Standards

*For Use of a Learning Management System
In Face-to-Face, Synchronous,
and
Asynchronous Courses*

Maine's community colleges are committed to providing all students with high-quality, relevant, and accessible education and to maintaining instructional continuity. The common course elements below will ensure that all students have access to the same minimum content and to the functionality that the learning management system provides. Consistency across courses and modalities (defined on Page 5) empowers students as engaged learners and promotes student success. This comprises a minimum level of course content expected for all courses; colleges can add specifics or items to these expectations as they see fit.

These standards serve as the procedures referenced by Policy 314 of the Maine Community College System: Academic Affairs: Learning Management System.

Standards Common across all Modalities (Face-to-Face, Synchronous Online, Asynchronous Online)		✓
1.	All courses will utilize the college Learning Management System (Brightspace) as appropriate for the course modality.	
2.	A logical and consistent layout is established within Brightspace. The course is easy to navigate (i.e. consistent layout and organization, clear instructions, self-evident titles, and descriptions, etc.) The course uses the designated features of Brightspace to differentiate between and organize content, resources, assignments, and activities.	
3.	A detailed, semester-specific syllabus that explains all course policies, expectations, schedules, due dates, assessments, learning outcomes, and faculty contact information is posted in Brightspace at the start of the course. Syllabi must align with the college template when applicable.	
4.	All courses will follow the published college course meeting schedule.	
5.	Regular attendance is recorded according to college policies. The course syllabus details the parameters for attendance.	
6.	Course learning outcomes are clearly defined, measurable, and aligned to learning activities and assessments.	
7.	Students know how all graded assignments will be evaluated. The criteria for the assessment for all graded assignments are clearly articulated (e.g. using rubrics, exemplary work, etc.) Expectations for timely and regular feedback from the instructor are clearly stated in the syllabus or course (e.g. questions, communication, assignments, etc.).	
8.	The course contains multiple and varied resources and assessments that connect to learning goals, course outcomes, and course content. Assignments will be submitted via Brightspace when possible and appropriate. The frequency of assessments allows students to measure their own understanding and progress.	
9.	The course gradebook in Brightspace includes all items contributing to the final grade and aligns with the college grading scheme. The syllabus clearly states all grading expectations, calculations, and policies (e.g. late & missing work, extensions, etc.).	
10.	Instructors post grades and provide feedback within Brightspace for all submitted student work within 7 days of due date.	
11.	All course components, activities, resources, and third-party technologies meet the required accessibility standards (WCAG 2.1 AA or higher).	
12.	All required third-party platforms or publisher systems (e.g. Pearson, Cengage, etc.) will be integrated into or accessed through the Brightspace course.	
13.	Clear directions for using technology tools (websites, software, and hardware) are provided and supported with resources. Course technologies are current and work on Windows or Mac OS computers (as required). All required technology conforms to MCCS information technology policies and accessibility requirements.	

Additional Standards for Synchronous Online Courses:		✓
14.	Course activities and assessments meet the instructional standards, rigor, and commitment of a traditional college course. Course activities and content should reflect credit hour definitions as articulated by NECHE's Policy on Credits and Degrees.	
15.	Learning content and activities cannot be solely based on publisher material or third-party resources.	
16.	The course offers access to a variety of regular and substantive activities* that facilitate communication, collaboration, content-delivery, learning-support, and student engagement (e.g. discussion forums, content-specific assignments, breakout groups, group work, etc.)	
17.	All synchronous courses will use the college-approved video conferencing system that is integrated or linked in Brightspace.	
18.	Video conference meetings should be recorded and closed captions should be enabled for all conference meetings. If a course recording contains students, it may only be posted in the course section they were recorded in.	
19.	We strongly encourage students to turn on their cameras during video conference sessions for full participation in the learning experience. Attendance may be required, but an instructor cannot require a student's camera to be on during a course meeting. Other methods of ensuring attendance should be used. Exceptions to this requirement include exam proctoring, required demonstrations of tasks, and scheduled assessments (assessments do not include class participation, lecture, or general interaction).	

*This [Primer on Regular and Substantive Interaction from Everett Community College](#) defines and demonstrates regular and substantive interaction as required by the US Department of Education Rules on Distance Education and Innovation.

Additional Standards for Asynchronous Online Courses:		✓
14.	Course activities and assessments meet the instructional standards, rigor, and commitment of a traditional college course. Course activities and content should reflect credit hour definitions as articulated by NECHE's Policy on Credits and Degrees.	
15.	Learning content and activities are not solely based on publisher material or third-party resources.	
16.	Activities and resources at the beginning of the semester create community and connection. (e.g. Welcome message from faculty, faculty introduction page, introductory forum for students, overview of course, etc.)	
17.	The course offers access to a variety of regular and substantive activities* that facilitate communication, collaboration, content-delivery, learning-support, and student engagement (e.g. discussion forums, content-specific assignments, breakout groups, group work, etc.)	
18.	Faculty establish presence in the asynchronous learning environment through regular communication with the class and individual students. This can be done through various methods of faculty participation, including but not limited to: regularly engaging in discussion boards, posting regular announcements, and giving students prompt and personal feedback.	
19.	Faculty maintain presence throughout the semester by logging in to the course and responding to student inquiries, posts, and assignments regularly (at minimum every 1-2 days during the semester).	
20.	Faculty maintain substantive presence by directing discussions and individual student feedback towards the learning objectives of the course.	

*This [Primer on Regular and Substantive Interaction from Everett Community College](#) defines and demonstrates regular and substantive interaction as required by the US Department of Education Rules on Distance Education and Innovation.

Modalities	
Face-to-Face	Involves traditional classroom or lab settings where students and instructors meet in-person at scheduled times.
Synchronous Online	Classes are conducted online in real-time. Students and instructors participate in scheduled, live sessions through video conferencing tools.
Asynchronous Online	Students move through course materials, lectures, and assignments on their own schedule but within the structure of course deadlines. Though there are no live sessions, interactions with instructors and peers typically occur through discussion boards, assignment feedback, and other Brightspace hosted tools.
Hybrid	May combine two different modalities according to a preset schedule.
HyFlex	This course type involves all modalities. This requires intentional planning, coordination, and communication.