

**Distance Education Rubric**  
**Effective October 15, 2020**

Evaluators: This rubric a tool to assist you in assessing the effective practices in Distance Education (DE). Please note, not everything listed in the Effective Practices column has to be present. Use this as a guide so that you may be able to commend and/or recommend effective practices.

	<b>Effective Practices</b> Potential Examples:	<b>Areas of Concern</b> Potential Examples:
7. Uses visual, auditory and contextual modalities for student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of media, such as text, audio, video, images, graphics, etc. is used to engage the learner.</li> <li>• Media is accessible.</li> <li>• CMS tools are used to provide integrated learning materials and activities for students. Content is organized in a clear and concise manner to streamline access to materials and activities for students.</li> <li>• Instructor has clearly communicated how students are to use/interact with the various media.</li> <li>• Multimedia is used effectively throughout the course to facilitate student-centered learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A narrow range of media is used.</li> <li>• Media integrated into course materials are not clearly relevant to the course or learning objectives.</li> <li>• Instructor has not specified how students are to use the Media.</li> <li>• Inadequate use of CMS tools to reduce the labor-intensity of learning. CMS tools have not been used to streamline access to materials and activities for students.</li> <li>• Content is presented primarily using one medium</li> </ul>

	<b>Effective Practices</b> Potential Examples:	<b>Areas of Concern</b> Potential Examples:
13. Assist students during scheduled office hours; for Distance Education classes, office hours are conducted synchronously using technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor uses Announcements to alert students to the start and finish of each Office Hour.</li> <li>• Instructor conducts Office Hours synchronously using CMS conferencing technology to protect student privacy and for accountability purposes.</li> <li>• Office hours are clearly stated in Syllabus and Welcome Letter, and other locations of course.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor is regularly absent from office hours or does not conduct them synchronously.</li> <li>• Instructor does not use appropriate technology to assure student privacy during office hours.</li> <li>• Office hours are not clearly stated in Syllabus or in any other appropriate location of course.</li> </ul>
15. Course overview/syllabi/exam/other material meet required standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional/instructor policies are provided in units or activities where they are most relevant.</li> <li>• Guidelines explaining required levels of student participation (i.e., quantity and quality of interactions) to avoid loss of credit or being dropped are present and clear.</li> <li>• A rubric or equivalent grading document is included within the majority of assignments/discussions/quizzes to explain how students will be evaluated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional/instructor policies relevant for learner success (such as academic honesty, course drop/withdrawal, late work) are not included or are difficult to find.</li> <li>• Guidelines explaining required levels of student participation (i.e., quantity and quality of interactions) are not consistently used throughout the course.</li> <li>• A rubric or equivalent grading document is seldom included within assignments/discussions/quizzes to explain how students will be evaluated.</li> </ul>

	<b>Effective Practices</b> Potential Examples:	<b>Areas of Concern</b> Potential Examples:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course overview syllabus, and instructional modules are well-organized and presented clearly and navigably, and innovative methods are used.</li> <li>• The connections between content and learning unit objectives are made clear to the students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The course overview syllabus, and instructional modules are not presented clearly or navigably.</li> <li>• Content is not aligned with learning unit objectives or not sufficient to meet the learning unit objectives.</li> </ul>
19. Initiates contact before start of course and meets all requirements set forth by the Academic Senate DE Rubric.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor sends a clear Welcome Letter in Student Information Systems (SIS, e.g.. PeopleSoft) and Course Management Systems (CMS, e.g. Canvas) prior to the beginning of course, indicating how an instructor can be contacted and encouraging students to reach out.</li> <li>• Welcome Letter is sent 2 to 5 days before the course begins through Student Information Systems (SIS, e.g.. PeopleSoft) and as first Announcement upon course publication.</li> <li>• Welcome Letter contains instructor contact information and links to CMS and campus helpful resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor does not initiate contact or create an Announcement prior to or at the beginning of the course, or sends ineffective/confusing introductory communication.</li> <li>• Instructor sends a welcome letter in Student Information Systems (SIS, e.g.. PeopleSoft) and Course Management Systems (CMS, e.g. Canvas), but the letter is missing key information about the course (e.g. official start date, instructor contact information, whether course is 100% asynchronous or Hybrid, Check-In and Attendance policies, etc.).</li> </ul>

	<p align="center"><b>Effective Practices</b></p> <p align="center">Potential Examples:</p>	<p align="center"><b>Areas of Concern</b></p> <p align="center">Potential Examples:</p>
<p>20. Effectively uses an attendance verification assignment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor provides a Check-In Assignment with GCC Academic Senate’s approved due dates *hyperlink Senate document* (Thursday of first week for short session; Sunday of first week for longer session) and can encourage peer interaction among students.</li> <li>• Guidelines explaining how to complete the Check-In Assignment are effective and unambiguous.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructor has not provided a Check-In Assignment, or has not set the due date according to GCC Academic Senate’s approved due dates *hyperlink Senate document* (Thursday of first week for short session; Sunday of first week for longer session).</li> <li>• Guidelines explaining how to complete the Check-In Assignment are missing or ambiguous.</li> </ul>
<p>21. Students are informed of their required levels of participation to sustain attendance status (i.e. quantity/quality of interactions).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance policies, including the GCC Academic Senate definitions of attendance in all types of Distance Education class (100%, Hybrid, etc.) are clearly posted in the Syllabus.</li> <li>• Instructor clearly outlines the process and criteria for notifying students of attendance requirements and consequences of noncompliance.</li> <li>• No synchronous class meetings are required in a 100% Online (asynchronous) class.</li> <li>• If the course requires synchronous meetings, it has been accurately listed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance policies for Distance Ed courses are not posted in the course Syllabus or are inaccurately defined.</li> <li>• The instructor requires synchronous meetings in a 100% Online (asynchronous) class.</li> <li>• Hybrid and POC meeting times are not specified nor easily located in the syllabus.</li> </ul>

	<b>Effective Practices</b> Potential Examples:	<b>Areas of Concern</b> Potential Examples:
	<p>in the Schedule of Classes as Hybrid or POC to indicate these requirements before students enroll.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hybrid and POC meeting times are specified.</li> </ul>	
<p>22. Course materials/content are provided in a well-organized, easily navigated manner.</p>	<p>Course materials are consistently designed to reduce unnecessary cognitive load and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning units or Modules are consistently structured and sequenced (E.g. each Module comprises Overview Page, Content, Assignments, Review or other consistent structure).</li> <li>• Page content uses descriptive headings and subheadings that enhance student understanding of the material.</li> <li>• Types of assignments are due on the same day each Unit. (E.g. Quizzes on Wednesday, Initial Discussion Posts Thursday; Peer Responses on Saturday, etc.) to increase predictability for students.</li> </ul>	<p>Course materials are not consistently designed to reduce or increases unnecessary cognitive load and may not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course content is not presented in distinct learning units or modules.</li> <li>• Page content is not divided into manageable segments using heading styles, making online reading difficult.</li> <li>• Instructions on how to use course materials are unclear or no instructions exist explaining how students should move through the course or use the materials.</li> <li>• CMS course does not contain published content, such as Home Page, Syllabus, or Welcome Letter. Instructional materials are missing from published course content.</li> </ul>

	<b>Effective Practices</b> Potential Examples:	<b>Areas of Concern</b> Potential Examples:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video of “How to Navigate Our Course” is posted on Homepage.</li> </ul>	
23. Course goals and objectives within each unit contain appropriate due dates and expectations for completing assignments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit Level learning objectives are stated in the Unit Overview Page and cohere with Unit’s materials and assessments.</li> <li>• Rubrics and/or descriptive criteria for desired outcomes include models of “good work.”</li> <li>• Due dates are clearly stated on assignments with an indication of the average amount of time an assignment should take. Due dates can consistently be found in the same place on assignments and Overview Page.</li> <li>• Submission window for assignments is open for 24 hours or more.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit Level learning objectives are not stated in the Unit or cannot be met by the learning materials provided in the Unit.</li> <li>• Rubrics or descriptive criteria for desired outcomes are included in only a few assessment activities, and/or the rubrics and criteria are unclear.</li> <li>• Due dates are not clearly stated on assignments.</li> <li>• Submission window for assignments is open for less than 24 hours.</li> </ul>
24. Applies best practices for accessibility and privacy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course materials meet Section 508 standards for accessibility. <b>Please see the end of this document for a list of those standards.</b></li> <li>• Student communication and graded work takes place within GCC’s electronic information systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course materials do not meet Section 508 standards for accessibility. <b>Please see the end of this document for a list of those standards.</b></li> <li>• Student communication and graded work do not take place within GCC’s electronic information systems</li> </ul>

	<b>Effective Practices</b> Potential Examples:	<b>Areas of Concern</b> Potential Examples:
	(GCC's CMS and/or email) to protect privacy.	(GCC's CMS and/or email) to protect privacy.
25. Provides opportunities for regular and effective instructor-initiated and student-initiated contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synchronous office hours are held weekly through CMS tools or email.</li> <li>• Instructor uses Announcements to communicate regularly with the class and individual students.</li> <li>• Assignment design includes student-to-student interaction; instructor participates in Discussions.</li> <li>• Course includes Q&amp;A Discussion board.</li> <li>• Learners have at least one opportunity to give anonymous feedback to the instructor regarding course design and/or course content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synchronous office hours do not occur regularly.</li> <li>• Assignment design does not include student-to-student interaction; instructor does not participate in Discussions.</li> <li>• Course does not include a Q&amp;A Discussion board.</li> <li>• There are no assignments or other means for students to contact other students.</li> </ul>

**List of Section 508 Standards:**

For additional information about Section 508 requirements, please visit our [Self-Paced OEI Rubric Alignment Course](#) or contact our Instructional Design Office.

**Heading Styles:** heading styles are consistently used to aid navigation through the course when using assistive technology.

**Lists:** lists are created using the bullet or numbered list tool instead of being formatted manually so that lists are recognized when using a screen reader.

**Links:** links are identified with meaningful and unique text in place of displaying the URL.

**Tables:** column and/or row header cells are designated so that screen readers can read table cells in the correct order. A table caption is included for more complex tables.

**Color Contrast:** there is sufficient color contrast between the foreground text and background to avoid difficulties for students with low vision.

**Color and Meaning:** color is not used as the only means of conveying information, adding emphasis, indicating action, or otherwise distinguishing a visual element.

**Images:** all images have appropriate alternative text, either explaining instructional value or indicating the image is decorative.

**Reading Order:** reading order is correctly set so that content is presented in the proper sequence when using screen readers and other assistive technologies.

**Slides:** slides are created using built-in accessible slide layouts with each slide having a unique title.

**Spreadsheets:** spreadsheets include labels for the rows and columns, detailed labels for charts, and are accompanied by textual descriptions that draw attention to key cells, trends, and totals.

**Videos:** all videos must have accurate captions. If a video has no audio or instructionally relevant soundtrack, a note explaining that should accompany the video.

**Audio:** audio files must be accompanied by complete and accurate transcripts.

**Flashing Content:** blinking or flashing content, including gifs, should only be used if instructionally needed and not merely for decoration or emphasis.

**Live Captions:** live broadcast and synchronous video conferences must include a means for displaying synchronized captions if requested.

**Auto-play:** audio and video content should not be set to auto-play.