University of Arkansas – Pulaski Technical College
Distance Education Handbook

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University of Arkansas – Pulaski Technical College Distance Education Handbook

Distance Education Mission

Introduction

Distance Education at UA – Pulaski Technical College promotes and supports the innovative use of technology in teaching, advising, and mentoring students while emphasizing academic excellence within a supportive environment. UA – PTC demonstrates its commitment to student success with distance learning, tutoring, technology support, and experienced, caring faculty and staff.

The Distance Education Handbook serves as a set of guiding standards for faculty teaching:

A. **Hybrid** courses – courses in which a portion of instruction is delivered on site with face-to-face interaction, and a portion is delivered in a structured alternative delivery format including, but not limited to, the Internet using the institution's chosen learning management system (LMS) and/or other off-campus formats. UA - Pulaski Tech identifies hybrid courses with a "Hybrid" location notation in the course schedule.

B. **Online** courses – courses in which instruction is delivered entirely online through the LMS that uses the Internet for delivery and interaction. Online courses may be asynchronous without a formal meeting time or synchronous (webinar) with formal meeting times utilizing a digital meeting software, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. UA - PTC identifies online courses with an "Online" or "Webinar" in the location notation in the course schedule.

C. **Face-to-face** – courses that are delivered fully on site with face-to-face interaction but use technology to supplement learning may also find the information in this handbook helpful to ensure those web-enhanced or technological components are consistent across modalities.

This handbook should be used by any UA – PTC faculty member to inform, develop, and maintain high-quality course shells regardless of modality. If you have questions about the policies and procedures for Distance Education, please contact the provost's office for more clarification or information.

Mission

The mission of Distance Education at UA - Pulaski Tech is to provide access to high-quality education by creating and delivering Distance Education courses to meet the continuous and changing educational needs of students served by the College.

Goal

The goal of Distance Education is to offer learning opportunities in a way such that the technology, flexibility, and opportunity allow all students to excel. In addition, Distance Education offerings at UA – PTC meet the same learning outcomes and standards delivered in other modalities.

Overview and Welcome

Distance Education (DE) focuses on utilizing technology and teaching methods to provide an effective teaching and learning experience to students outside the regular classroom and thereby increase flexibility and scheduling options. Distance Education courses require that students have a computer and Internet access that meet at least minimum technical requirements as defined under [Recommended Technology for Blackboard (uaptc.edu)](). Additionally, Distance Education courses require computer literacy, reading comprehension skills, self-discipline, and motivation. Faculty teaching DE courses are expected to assist in communicating these expectations to students enrolling in these courses.

Please take some time to familiarize yourself with this information. This is the standard for designing, delivering and facilitating Distance Education classes at UA-PTC and should be frequently referenced. Online instruction is hard work that requires a lot of time, but it can be very rewarding for both the faculty members and students if done well. Hopefully, this handbook will be a great help with achieving that rewarding experience.

This is to be viewed as a dynamic document that will be updated as Distance Education grows and technology changes. Please check the [Online Learning website]() each semester to ensure that you have the latest version. Should you have any questions or concerns, contact the provost's office.

Federal Requirements

The University of Arkansas – Pulaski Technical College complies with federal and state [definitions]() of a credit hour and federal and state definitions of instruction for Distance Education courses taken for academic credit.

The handbook meets the federal expectation by ensuring that instructors teaching online courses for academic credit understand and abide by expectations of federal requirements for those courses. These requirements apply uniformly in all academic semesters.

The regulations associated with Part 600 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended ([34 CFR 600.2](#)), require that online courses provide regular and substantive interaction between the instructor and the students enrolled in the course. These interactions must be initiated by the instructor, be regular and consistent, and be focused on the content in the course.

Substantive Interactions are those that engage students in teaching, learning, and assessment consistent with the content under discussion and also includes at least two of the following:

1. Providing direct instruction.

Class (formerly Blackboard Collaborate), Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or the like.

2. Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework.

An automated grading system that provides feedback based on a programmed response, interactions with artificial intelligence, adaptive learning systems or other forms of interactive computer-assisted instructional tools do NOT meet the definition of substantive interaction per federal guidelines. However, instructors providing customized feedback on assignments would be considered substantive interaction.

3. Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency, in a scheduled interaction to align with the regular interaction requirement. This could be exemplified by an instructor-initiated online review sessions, ask the instructor discussion boards, etc.

4. Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency, in a scheduled interaction to align with the regular interaction requirement.

5. Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.

The college's accrediting agency, the Higher Learning Commission, has not approved any additional instructional activities under this definition. A department chair or dean must notify the provost's office of the addition of an instructional activity by a program's accrediting agency.

Regular interactions are interactions that provide the opportunity for substantive interactions between the instructor and the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time of the course, the amount of content in the course, and the academic level of the course (freshman or sophomore-level undergraduate courses). Interactions initiated by students cannot be counted towards meeting the regular interaction requirement.

The instructor must, as part of this regular interaction requirement, monitor the student's academic engagement and success. The instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interactions with students when needed based on monitoring their academic success or upon request by the student. The instructor must share with students the course's expectations and norms for how the instructor will monitor their academic engagement and success as well as how they will promptly and proactively engage in substantive learning

interactions with each other. A clearly outlined communication plan and course schedule in the course syllabus and course shell would highlight these expectations and norms.

The exact number of regular and substantive interactions with students is at the discretion of the instructor and/or academic unit commensurate with the length of time, amount of content, and the academic level of the course. The methods by which an instructor elects to meet the federal regular and substantive requirements must be recognized by faculty members in the instructor's discipline at peer institutions as sufficient for meeting the expectations for federal requirements at those institutions. Academic unit practices and [UA BP 405.1 Appointments, Promotion, Tenure, Non-Reappointment, and Dismissal of Faculty](#) affords faculty academic freedom in determining how to develop and deliver online courses in a way that complies with this handbook and the federal requirements it implements.

Students enrolled in Distance Education courses earn academic credit where instruction is regular and substantive, and the student has the opportunity to demonstrate evidence of achievement of intended learning outcomes that is equivalent to the amount of instruction and student work in campus/face-to-face courses.

This equivalent instruction should approximate no less than 50 minutes per credit hour of synchronous direct instruction or an equivalent amount of time of asynchronous learning activities that the student has the opportunity to engage in each week over a fifteen-week semester. This engagement need not be monitored for each individual student in a course but instructors must regularly monitor the student's academic engagement and success either through tools provided in the Learning Management System (LMS), or through the student's academic performance and progress in the course and promptly and proactively engage in substantive interactions with students when needed on the basis of such monitoring.

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) expects that each institution of higher education facilitates scheduled and predictable opportunities for substantive interaction between students and instructors in online courses and creates expectations for instructors to monitor each student's engagement and substantively engage with students on the basis of that monitoring.

National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements

A voluntary process of state oversight of Distance Education has been created to redress these problems. The National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (NC-SARA) has developed a voluntary agreement for member states and U.S. territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance education courses and programs. This agreement is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state.

Key Points of SARA

SARA is voluntary for states and institutions.

- SARA is administered by the four regional education compacts that accept applications from states in their regions. Once states are approved, they can begin to enroll eligible institutions. The Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) manages the approvals for institutions in the state of Arkansas.
- Membership is open to degree-granting postsecondary institutions from all sectors (public colleges and universities; independent institutions, both non-profit and for-profit) accredited by an agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

State Authorization

Some states require that out-of-state institutions be authorized within the state before delivering Distance Education courses or programs. UA - Pulaski Tech is a member of NC-SARA, and the institution's state authorization status is available online via the UA – PTC Professional Licensure Disclosure webpage: Professional Licensure Disclosure (uaptc.edu).

UA - Pulaski Technical College compliance with state authorization requirements is managed by the provost's office in conjunction with the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE).

Distance Education Complaint Process for Out of State Students

UA - Pulaski Technical College desires to resolve student grievances, complaints and concerns in an expeditious, fair and amicable manner. University of Arkansas - Pulaski Technical College takes very seriously complaints and concerns regarding the institution. Most complaints or concerns of a specific nature should be initiated and resolved at the campus level through normal college processes whenever possible. UA - Pulaski Tech receives and resolves complaints using a variety of methods. Students having complaints about specific instructors, grade disputes, or other academically related issues may utilize the academic due process appeal procedure. Students having complaints about existing account balances, administrative grade errors, parking citations, or satisfactory academic progress may utilize the various student services appeals processes.

When college processes do not offer an outlet for complaint resolution, an attempt should be made to resolve the issue with the employee(s) or department(s) involved. If the complaint is not resolved after an initial meeting with the employee(s) and/or department manager, the complainant should discuss the matter with the divisional supervisor. If, following a meeting with the divisional supervisor, a resolution is not possible; the complainant should file a formal complaint.

Informal complaints can be submitted by completing our online form: Report a Compliment/Concern or Complaint (uaptc.edu). Formal complaints may be filed according to the appropriate type of complaint. The UA-PTC Student Handbook outlines the typical steps to resolve student complaints.

Complaints associated with the institution's compliance with academic program quality and accrediting standards may be directed to the Higher Learning Commission (HLC), following their complaint process.

SARA/Online Students Complaint System

After you have exhausted UA - Pulaski Tech's complaint procedures, if your complaint has not been resolved, you may file a complaint with the Arkansas Division of Higher Education (ADHE) by using the SARA complaint form or by calling the toll-free number at 1 (844) 672-0620.

Physical Presence

The most frequently used factor in determining whether or not state authorization is required is a physical presence. The definition of a physical presence varies by state but typically includes attributes such as the institution's possession of a local address, local clinical or practicum requirements, local advertising, and local employees.

UA - Pulaski Technical College has four locations and additional off-campus partner locations, all of which are in Arkansas. However, it may be possible that clinical or practicum affiliations for programs offered primarily via distance education, such as the Health Information Technology and Hospitality Management programs, are available outside of Arkansas by approved arrangement.

UA - Pulaski Tech does periodically hire part-time Distance Education faculty who live outside of Arkansas. UA - Pulaski Tech's process for the hiring of part-time faculty is available online via the UA-PTC website.

Anyone with a Master's Degree and 18 graduate semester hours in a general education instructional discipline or otherwise appropriately credentialed and licensed in career and technical professions offered at UA - Pulaski Technical College may apply to teach in that discipline. Upon receipt of all application materials, the information is sent to the appropriate academic department for evaluation. When part-time positions become available, the appropriate dean or department chair selects the instructor. Upon selecting an instructor who lives outside of Arkansas, the department chair should contact the provost's office to verify whether hiring the individual will impact the College's State Authorization status for the state in which the instructor lives.

Academic Engagement

UA – Pulaski Technical College expects students to attend all class sessions and remain actively engaged in learning. Instructors establish their own attendance policies to include in their course syllabi, but the college does have expectations for recording attendance for federal financial aid compliance and engagement tracking. According to 34 CFR 600.2 Definitions, **academic engagement** is active participation by a student in an instructional activity related to the student's course of study, and examples of active engagement include, but are not limited to:

- Attending a synchronous class, lecture, recitation, or field or laboratory activity, physically or online, where there is an opportunity for interaction between the instructor and students;

- Submitting an academic assignment or the course agreement;
- Taking an assessment or an exam;
- Participating in an interactive tutorial, webinar, or other interactive computer-assisted instruction;
- Participating in a study group, group project, or an online discussion that is assigned by the institution; or
- Interacting with an instructor about academic matters; and

Does NOT include, for example—

- Living in institutional housing;
- Participating in the institution's meal plan;
- Logging into an online class or tutorial without any further participation; or
- Participating in academic counseling or advisement.

Faculty teaching DE courses may use the Learning Management System's activity log to assist in identifying academic engagement activities for purposes of tracking attendance. The log distinguishes course access from engagement activities such as assignment submissions.

Student Authentication

The Federal Government requires institutions that offer Distance Education courses or programs to have processes in place to authenticate that the student who registers in such a course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and who receives the academic credit.

Secure Login

To verify the identity of students accessing online resources, UA - Pulaski Tech assigns students a unique identification number referred to as a student ID number as well as a unique username. The username is the login ID for a variety of online services offered through the College, including the following:

- The Student E-mail system where students receive announcements, notifications from the LMS, etc.
- The Learning Management System (currently Blackboard), where enrolled students can access course materials and course grades

Additionally, the college employs an additional security verification known as multi-factor authentication (MFA) to ensure the person accessing those systems is credentialed to do so.

Proctoring

To receive credit for Distance Education courses, students may be required to take proctored or non-proctored examinations. If requiring proctored exams in an online course, instructors need to include a statement in the syllabus and the course content or announcements in the LMS indicating that proctoring will be required.

Due to the varying needs within each discipline, each department is responsible for establishing their own specific proctoring policies.

Non-Proctored Examinations

Non-proctored or take-home exams are permitted at the discretion of the instructor. Non-proctored exams enable students to take the exam at a location and time of their choosing within the bounds of a specific date range or other specified timeframe. Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the academic honesty policy described in the College's Student Handbook and the instructor's syllabus. Students should plan to take exams during the timeframe specified by the instructor. This timeframe must be specified in the course materials. The exam must be completed and submitted per instructor's instructions.

Non-proctored exams offered in a given location may not be appropriate for fully online courses because it may not be feasible for students to travel if they are not located within the area or have other transportation and travel limitations. Unless communicated prior to students enrolling, non-proctored examinations at a location is not recommended for fully online courses. It is recommended that all assignments and assessments for fully online courses be conducted within the distance learning environment.

Proctored Examinations

A proctored exam is a supervised exam. Proctoring is a highly effective method for promoting academic integrity, authenticating students, and is an acceptable testing requirement for both hybrid and online courses. Recommended proctoring solutions include:

- Traditional proctoring at UA - Pulaski Tech's Testing Center
- Proctoring at a location that is preapproved by the instructor
- Electronic surveillance using recording technology such as ExamSoft or Respondus Monitor

Faculty teaching DE courses should consider using a solution conducive to the distance learning environment, such as an electronic software. Unless communicated with students prior to enrollment by clearly outlining the expectations in the course section details and course syllabus, all learning and assessment activities should take place via distance delivery. Electronic surveillance technology, such as Respondus Lockdown and Respondus Monitor, will be made available for faculty to use for all students.

Respondus Lockdown and Respondus Monitor are available in the LMS for download and use during assessments. Respondus Lockdown is a service that prevents toggling between browsers or tabs of browsers to ensure references are not accessible while the students are completing an assessment. The faculty can require the use of this tool when establishing rules and settings for each assessment. Respondus Monitor is an online proctoring service that surveils students and records their activity during the assessment. Faculty can require the use of this tool when establishing the rules and settings for each assessment. This is the preferred tool for proctoring assessments completed in the LMS.

In circumstances where a student is unable to come to campus to complete a proctored exam, it is the student's responsibility to coordinate with the course instructor to get special permission to use video or a third-party as a proctor. Relatives or friends, no matter what their position, may not serve as a proctor. Students currently enrolled in UA - Pulaski Tech courses may not proctor other UA - Pulaski Tech students.

FERPA

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE).

The five primary rights for students afforded under FERPA are:

- The right to inspect and review their own educational records
- The right to seek amendment of their own education records
- The right to limit disclosure of their own education records identified as directory information
- The right to consent to disclosure of their own education records to a third party
- The right to file a complaint with the USDOE

Compliance with FERPA requires that student information be protected and not shared with a third party, unless otherwise authorized. There are additional common mistakes that instructors make though, which violate students' information privacy.

Instructors should not share the following student information without explicit permission from the student:

- E-mail addresses
- Course work
- Social media information
- E-portfolios and resumes
- Individual or group capstone projects, reports, and written assignments
- Non-directory information (i.e. class schedule, place of birth, grade level, all or part of the student ID or other unique personal identifier, grades or grade point average)

Express written consent for information sharing is not required if:

- Students are given prior notice of course posting requirements then post their own work
- Students are not identified and there are no grades or evaluative comments
- Posted work is available only to members of the class

- Before using any information outside of the LMS, get explicit permission from the student
- Avoid posting (or requiring) students' directory information in a course
- You may not release non-directory or personally identifiable information about a student to a third party (parents included) without the student's written authorization or consent to release to a specific individual or organization. The registrar's office maintains these forms and permissions.
- Avoid emailing student specific information (grades, assignment critiques, or other non-directory information) to an email address not issued by the College
- Use the LMS Grade Center and Course Messages

Academic Integrity

Take appropriate measures at the course level but whatever those are, make sure that they are fostering a culture of academic integrity.

Best Practices for Promoting Academic Integrity

- Provide an academic integrity policy within the Distance Education environment and discuss it early in the course then require the students to sign it and turn it in. Use the UA-PTC Code of Student Conduct as a reference.
- Require student engagement with the academic integrity policy. For example:
  - Ask students for their input on how to create a community of integrity at the start of the course. This establishes the students as stakeholders in the community and the process of its formation.
  - Develop and ask students to commit to a class honor code.
  - Require students to read and sign an agreement to adhere to the campus Code of Student Conduct.
  - Write a letter to students about integrity and post it in the course.
  - Ask students to restate the academic integrity policy (this can also be used as a writing sample to use when grading and reviewing student work).
  - Ask students to reflect on the academic integrity policy in the discussion board.
  - Include a lesson on avoiding plagiarism. The Library can assist by providing a module or resource available in the resource repository, Libguides.
- Have assignments and activities in which appropriate sharing and collaboration is essential to successful completion. Foster a community of integrity by choosing authentic learning tasks that require group cohesiveness and effort. For example, focus assignments on distinctive, individual, and non-duplicative tasks or on what individual students self-identify as their personal learning needs.

- o Provide students with a course or course lesson on research and/or study skills. Work with library staff to design assignments and prepare materials on plagiarism and research techniques.
- o Include an ethical decision-making case study within the course.

Alternative Assessments

The use of a multi-faceted assessment strategy is a research-based best practice for promoting both academic integrity and student authentication. Frequent assessments including interactive discussions, writing assignments, quizzes, capstone projects, group work, and online exams serve to familiarize instructors with students' comprehension and writing styles thus enabling them to better authenticate the work of their online students. Options for alternative assessments include:

- Asking follow-up questions to assignments such as, "expand upon this statement you made," "tell me why you chose this phrase, description or reference," and "expand upon the ideas behind this reference"
- Selecting one or two difficult concepts from a submitted assignment and ask students to restate/rewrite the information
- Requiring students to share key learning by doing a self-reflection on an assignment, such as a reflection journal
- Student-prepared presentations, videos, portfolios, and case studies in which the submission requires a level of personal reflection and touch

Accessibility

Section 508 of Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, as amended, states in part, "Electronic information and data must be equally accessible to individuals with and without disabilities." In building online course materials it is important to bear in mind that as a public college receiving federal funding, UA - Pulaski Tech is required to meet Section 508 standards for Distance Education and information. Conforming to these standards requires that materials that could potentially pose problems for students with disabilities need to be altered to accommodate full access. Instructors teaching online courses are responsible for ensuring their courses comply with this federal law.

Examples of materials that need to be altered in order to be accessible include:

- Videos that have audio need captioning and/or text transcripts
- Audio files need text transcripts
- Images must have alternate text or descriptions set for them to convey meaning
- Color alone cannot be used to communicate information
- HTML tables should use the tags to designate column and row headers
- Content that flickers or flashes should not be used
- Required applets, plug-ins, etc. should include links

- Unless specifically necessary to the course instruction, content should be posted in universal formats so it can be viewed in any browser and doesn't require opening a specific desktop application
- Electronic forms and worksheets should include detailed text directions
- Students should be given advance notice of timed tests so they can contact Disability Services if needed

To assist with your compliance with federal requirements, please review the [Web Accessibility Services](#) webpage for the UA-PTC LMS Accessibility procedures ([202 UA-PTC Policy: Learning Management System (LMS) Accessibility Procedures](#)), user tools, a Blackboard Ally Training Manual, closed captioning resources, resources for equations, and other helpful links.

Providing Extended Time for Online Quizzes and Exams

Instructors may receive notification from Disability Services that a student requires extended time on in-class and online tests. The LMS includes functionality that allows an instructor to provide extended time for an individual or group so only one test needs to be created.

Copyright

Copyright is of special concern in education because faculty members continually deal with the creation and communication of ideas and information embodied in copyrighted works. As both creators and users of copyrighted materials, it is vital that faculty, students, and staff understand copyright law and the rights and responsibilities afforded them under it. This is especially true as we expand our use of technologies and digital resources, which challenge the long-standing educational exemptions and interpretations.

Copyright compliance in a course is ultimately the responsibility of the instructor delivering that course. The following information is intended to aid with compliance to [UA-PTC Policy 490.6 Copyright](#), [UA BP 210.1 Patent and Copyright Policy](#), and [UA BP 210.1 Copyright and Distance Learning](#). For information on the ownership rights of UA – PTC faculty, staff, and students with regard to the creation of materials developed from research or teaching, please refer to those policies. Those policies also address the use of Technology Enhanced Course Materials (TECM) in Distance Education courses.

The Fair Use Doctrine

The Fair Use Exemption found at Section 107 of the Copyright Law allows for limited reproduction of someone else's copyright-protected work for purposes of criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship and research without permission of the copyright holder. However, nonprofit educational use does not automatically fall under fair use. If the reproduction is for one of the above purposes, a determination as to whether the reproduction is fair use must be made based upon four factors:

- The purpose and character of the use (principally, whether it is for commercial use or for nonprofit educational purposes) - In evaluating the purpose and character of the use, courts favor non-profit educational uses over

commercial ones. However, there are instances in which commercial uses would qualify as fair use and other instances where educational uses would not meet the criteria.

- The nature of the copyright-protected work - This factor focuses on the work itself. The legislative history states that there is a definite difference between reproducing a short news note and reproducing a full musical score because of the nature of the work. Moreover, some works, such as standardized tests and workbooks, will never qualify for fair use because by their nature they are meant to be consumed. Uses of factual works such as scientific articles are more likely to fall within fair use.
- The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyright-protected work as a whole - This factor considers how much of the copyrighted work was used in comparison to the original work as a whole. Generally, the larger the amount used, the less likely a court will find the use to be a fair use. Amount and substantiality is also a qualitative test; that is, even though one takes only a small portion of a work, it still may be too much if what is taken is the "heart of the work."
- The effect of the use being evaluated upon the potential market for or value of the copyright-protected work - Courts use this factor to determine whether the use of a work is likely to result in an economic loss that the copyright holder is otherwise entitled to receive. It looks at whether the nature of the use competes with or diminishes the potential market for the use that the owner is already exploiting or can reasonably be expected soon to exploit. Even if the immediate loss is not substantial, courts have found that, should the loss become great if the practice were to become widespread, then this factor favors the copyright holder.

While these four factors are helpful guides, they do not clearly identify uses that are or are not fair use. Fair use is not a straightforward concept; therefore, any fair use analysis must be conducted on a case-by-case basis considering all four factors and the circumstances of the situation at hand.

Examples of fair use:

- Quotation of short passages in a scholarly or technical work for illustration or clarification of the author's observations
- Spontaneous and unexpected reproduction of material for classroom use–for example, where an article in the morning's paper is directly relevant to that day's class topic
- A parody that includes short portions of a work
- A summary of an address or article, which may include quotations of short passages of the copyright-protected work

Copyright Obligations of Faculty, Staff, and Students

College faculty and staff wishing to use copyrighted materials are responsible for ensuring compliance with copyright law. This includes making a good faith determination as to whether use of a work falls under the aforementioned guidelines of the fair use exemption. The University of Arkansas - Pulaski Technical College does not assume legal responsibility for any independent applications of copyright principles made by its faculty, staff or students that are not made in good faith. All good faith determinations which identify that the use exceeds fair use or for which there are other limitations applied by the copyright owners must result in obtaining permissions to use the individual works.

Students are expected individually, within the context of applicable College regulations, to act responsibly and ethically by applying fair use principles to the completion of their activities and projects. The College does not assume legal responsibility for violations of applicable copyright law by students who are not employees of the College. Students who are employees of the College, with the exception of those holding work-study positions, and who are acting in their capacity as employees are subject to all provisions of this document relating to faculty and staff. Copyright infringement is a violation of federal law with legal ramifications of infringement which can include fines that range from $200 to $150,000 per infringement and/or prison.

Employees who willfully disregard this policy do so at their own risk and assume all liability including the possibility of dismissal for persistent copyright infringements. If the Provost is aware of copyright infringements by an employee, he/she shall counsel the infringer. If the employee continues to infringe copyright laws, the Provost shall inform the Chancellor of the continuing infringements. The Chancellor shall take appropriate steps to stop the illegal actions. If the infringer refuses to stop the infringements, the Chancellor shall take appropriate steps to terminate the employment of the persistent infringer. For help in making a good faith determination of the applicability of fair use, you may contact the Provost, if a member of Faculty, or the Chancellor if a Staff member.

Using library course reserves or creating legal course packs through the bookstore can be the best way to minimize the risk of copyright infringement.

Online Learning Platforms

Instructional Delivery Platforms

All UA - Pulaski Tech instructors have access to a variety of technologies to aid in the delivery of online instruction. The following guidelines pertain to the use and administration of these systems.

The UA - Pulaski Technical College 330 Technology Use Policy subsumes these policies. Furthermore, pursuant to the UA-PTC Code of Computing Practices and the Electronic and Communications Privacy Act of 1989, Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2510 and following, notice is hereby given that there are no facilities provided by the College that guarantee the

confidentiality of files. The Chief Information Officer (CIO), and his or her designates, may have the ability to view all messages and files of any user. However, it is not the routine policy of the CIO to view others' files, and the intention is to keep files private, even though such privacy cannot be guaranteed.

Information Technology Services (ITS) administers and supports the technology platforms that are used to deliver Distance Education course materials.

Learning Management System

Blackboard is the official Learning Management System (LMS) used for the delivery of instruction from UA - Pulaski Technical College and should be used as the primary delivery location for all DE courses. Blackboard is a Web-based platform that provides faculty and students with features including:

- Course content for posting articles, assignments, and resources
- Calendar for posting due dates for assignments and tests
- Folders for organizing content
- Assessments for administering quizzes and exams online
- Assignments for posting assignment areas for student submissions and online grading
- Grade Center for posting grades on the LMS for students to view

Login Credentials/Access

The UA-PTC email address is created during onboarding by ITS. This email address is assigned as the username in Blackboard. The login credentials for UA-PTC users are as follows:

Username - example: ttester0123@students.uaptc.edu (for students), ttester@uaptc.edu (for employees)

Initial Password – set by IT Services: reset upon initial login

All passwords are confidential information and should not be shared for any reason.

For non-credit courses or consortium courses offered via Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the LMS Administrator may add users to the LMS with a non-UA-PTC email address. The student role is the highest role available to access the LMS by non-UA-PTC users.

Upgrades

Technology upgrades that require significant downtime are generally conducted between academic terms with a minimum of one week's notice. Information Technology Services (ITS) should provide appropriate notification if and when an upgrade will impact normal operations or cause significant downtime.

Technical Requirements

To access the LMS, users should adhere to the following technical recommendations: Recommended Technology for Blackboard (uaptc.edu).

Cross-platform

To make the most of their Distance Education experience, students are provided with several technical requirements. A list of these requirements is provided on UA-PTC's Recommended Technology Webpage. In order to ensure that students can access course material, faculty need to make sure that the resources they select can be accessed according to the technical requirements that are provided to the students. Instructors must work with the LMS Administrator to ensure the third-party material meets standard requirements for integrating with the LMS.

Course Section Creation and Enrollment Management

The LMS Administrator is responsible for the distribution of Blackboard course shells each semester. He or she will release a number of development course shells to all faculty for regular maintenance and preparation of course materials. The LMS Administrator will release assigned semester course shells at least 30 days in advance of the beginning of a semester for faculty to prepare their live course content. Course section creation and instructor assignments for each semester are managed in the Student Information System (SIS) with the collaboration of the registrar's office and the academic units.

- **Course Section Development:** Deans, chairs, and program directors are responsible for communicating course schedule needs including instructor assignments to the registrar's office. The registrar's office sends proposed schedules (a copy of the previous year) to the schools six weeks in advance of the scheduled published date on the academic calendar, with the expectation that the schools return changes/additions/deletions within four weeks. The date the schedule is published online is typically two weeks prior to registration opening for the upcoming year.
  - **Course Shell Design:** The LMS Administrator is responsible for releasing development shells for faculty for regular maintenance and preparation of course materials in a sandbox environment. Faculty are provided live semester courses that have been assigned in the SIS at least 30 days in advance of the start of a semester to design and organize their active courses. It is strongly recommended that the course information is copied from a development shell into the live course for the semester. This ensures consistency if the development shell is used by faculty across a specific course, and it minimizes the risk of copying old, inaccessible content that cannot be removed into a new course and lowering the compliance rating or Ally score.
  - **Course Section Shell Preparation and Maintenance:** The instructor of record is responsible for preparing and maintaining the active course shell for courses approved to be delivered in an online format. The instructor may work with a course lead to prepare and/or update

course information at the beginning and throughout the semester. This ensures the course section remains in alignment with and learning is consistent across all sections of the course.

- **Student Enrollment:** Student enrollment data for Blackboard courses is imported in a sync from the SIS along with the course section information. Enrollment information is then updated every four hours through the add/drop/swap period at which time enrollment updates are run on a limited basis.
  - o **Census/Roster Certifications:** Students purged from courses for failure to meet attendance requirements are removed from their Blackboard courses.
  - o **Dropped Students:** Students may drop a course until the end of the add/drop/swap period for the semester. After a student drops a course, access to their Blackboard courses is removed.
  - o **Withdrawn Students:** Students may withdraw from a course from census through the last day to withdraw as identified by the College. Students who withdraw from a course are assigned a W grade and access to the course is removed.

Course Management

- **Course Merge:** In order to prevent violations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), UA-PTC will only merge together online course shells in which students regularly meet simultaneously and in the same location (consortium courses via MOU, some concurrent credit and Career Institute (CI) courses, etc.).
- **Course Availability:** All courses are automatically set to the "unpublished" status when they are created. All courses should be "published" to students on the first day of the semester for which they are offered. Instructors have the ability to select the courses they wish to display on their course lists in Blackboard so they can have easy access to courses even if the course in unavailable.

Tracking and Usage

All instructional delivery platforms used by the College have tracking capabilities and can generate usage reports to show logins and access. ITS staff may check usage statistics for any course and user at the College. Data will only be shared with authorized personnel.

Faculty members have access to the activity data for any Blackboard course and any user enrolled in a Blackboard course for which the faculty member has instructor permissions. Faculty members may not check activity data for users enrolled in courses for which they have no instructor permissions.

Activity data will also be collected on faculty members teaching DE courses. This is to ensure regular and substantive interaction but is not intended to be punitive. Data will only be shared with authorized personnel, such as a department chair or dean.

Quality Matters Assurance in Courses

The technologies available to UA - Pulaski Tech faculty are aimed at improving teaching and learning. In order to ensure that these technologies are being appropriately integrated into the curriculum to achieve the desired outcomes, the College developed a quality assurance process for Distance Education courses. All DE courses must show evidence of sound and varied use of technology and will be subjected to an informal self-evaluation and an internal evaluation completed by a UA-PTC peer review team.

QM Rubric for Course Review

In order to assure that all DE courses meet specific quality standards, UA - Pulaski Technical College has adopted the Quality Matters Higher Education Rubric, 7th edition (Appendix A), for its Internal Course Review Process (Appendix B). Courses will be scheduled for internal review on a cyclical process based on the amount of annual DE offerings. Courses with the highest volume or impact are prioritized in the initial review schedule. A team of two peer reviewers will evaluate the course and provide feedback to the course representative. By the end of each spring semester, the schedule for course reviews for the upcoming academic year will be provided to the campus.

Courses meeting all 22 essential QM standards may be considered for the progressive internal badge level assignment. Courses may also be submitted for formal QM review upon receipt of a recommendation by the QM Coordinator and CETL Director.

Accessibility and Section 508 Compliance

The purpose of the UA-PTC 202 UA-PTC Policy: Learning Management System (LMS) Accessibility Procedures is to assure the College's Web-based course materials are available to all who attempt to access them, in full compliance with the legal and ethical responsibility to do so. Section 508, an amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, requires that electronic information and technology resources are accessible to people with disabilities, including employees and members of the public. This means that UA - Pulaski Technical College faculty and staff are required to ensure that all materials students need to access for a course be made accessible, including lectures, PowerPoints, images, documents, etc. Faculty members posting any instructional materials online should plan to assure accessibility. Accessibility is evaluated as part of the course review process.

Faculty Information

Policies & Procedures

Delivering a New DE Course

The appropriateness and viability of Distance Education courses and programs must be carefully considered in the planning process. Distance Education should be aligned with the College's strategic goals and mission. In order to accomplish this, Distance Education courses and programs must be vetted through an internal review process.

Approval

Faculty members must obtain approval before developing a new online or hybrid course. To obtain approval, a written request with justification must be submitted to the department chair and dean. In addition, a course plan must be included before it is approved and offered. also obtain approval from the CETL Director before delivering a new online or hybrid course. To get approval from the CETL Director, an instructor must submit a design plan with curriculum map to ensure learning in the course offered online is equivalent to learning across all modalities. The instructor must also complete an approved Distance Education training in order to receive a DE course assignment.

Distance Education Training

The purpose of the Distance Education training is to prepare faculty to effectively integrate instructional technologies into their teaching practices for both online and traditional courses. Given that research indicates today's students are more responsive to courses that utilize integrated technologies, all instructors are encouraged to seek Distance Education (DE) Training using Quality Matters and ACUE (Association of College and University Educators) materials. Completion of Distance Education training is required for all faculty teaching a Distance Education course. The CETL Director may recommend internal training or one of the following: the QM Designing Your Online Course, the QM Improving Your Online Course with Self-Review, Applying the Quality Matters Rubric course, or the ACUE Online Teaching microcredential.

The courses are asynchronous, and completers earn a certificate upon completion.

Administrative Policies

Much of the information in the Distance Education Handbook is intended to help faculty in the development and maintenance of new and existing Distance Education courses and to provide an overview of the procedures for managing Distance Education at UA - Pulaski Tech. This information does not supersede official College policy and procedure statements.

Faculty Evaluations

Faculty Evaluation Plans (FEPs) are conducted for full-time faculty annually in accordance with ADHE and UA-PTC policy. The FEP includes a self-evaluation, chair/program director/peer evaluation, and a classroom observation. Evaluation, both summative and formative, is an integral part of the instructional process at UA - Pulaski Tech, affecting both personnel and

students. Students have the opportunity to complete course evaluations and provide feedback on the course and the instruction for all courses, regardless of modality, although additional questions are asked of DE courses. The course evaluations are deployed in the LMS.

Faculty Load

Faculty may teach Distance Education as part of their regular load or as overloads. A standard load for full-time faculty is 30 hours per academic year (15 hours each fall and spring), although this can vary based on demand, discipline, program, and position type. The full-time load does include all modalities, including DE courses. More information on faculty load is available in the UA-PTC Faculty Handbook. Summer assignments are offered at the discretion of the chair and dean, with consideration for those needing to make up load deficits from the fall and spring as well as seniority/completion of required training. More information on summer courses is available in the Faculty Handbook as well.

Campus Presence/Office Hours

The Faculty Handbook outlines the expectation that full-time faculty work 40 hours per week on average during the regular academic year when engaged in the professional duties of an instructor. The UA-PTC 623 UA-PTC Policy: Campus Presence by Full-Time Faculty Policy specifies that ten (10) of those hours should be student availability and engagement hours, with at least five (5) of those being consistent in time and location across multiple days with information communicated in the course syllabus, in the Blackboard course shell, and clearly posted on the office door. Modalities of access may vary with the modalities in which the instructors teach.

Copyright Compliance

University of Arkansas - Pulaski Technical College is an institution that values integrity in intellectual discourse. As such, the College is committed to adhering to applicable laws regarding intellectual property and copyright including the United States Copyright Act, 17 U.S.C. 101 et seq. See UA-PTC Policy 490.6 for more information regarding the Copyright Policy.

Intellectual Property

Per the Faculty Handbook: the creativity of human beings is manifested in fields as diverse as science and technology, literature and the humanities, and the fine and applied arts. Creators of intellectual property utilize legal vehicles that make possible the ownership and control of some of the fruits of this creativity, providing an incentive to be creative and to make such fruits public. As a result of the increased cooperation in research and development between universities and businesses, the volume of intellectual property being created in universities has increased significantly. This increase has made apparent the complexity of the issues related to the ownership, control and use of such property. See UA-PTC 690 Intellectual Property for more information.

DE Course Management

As distance education has flourished and accreditation standards focus on validating equity in rigor and learning across all modalities, with a focused lens on DE, faculty acknowledge that one of the most daunting parts of teaching online is managing the course. The challenge is particularly serious because without regular and substantive interaction, keeping students motivated and actively engaged in learning is virtually impossible.

Requirements for All Blackboard Course Shells

All course shells, including shells for in-person, hybrid, and online, at minimum, **must** include the following items:

- Course Syllabus – using the correct syllabus template available on the provost's office webpage
- Instructor Information – current contact information, communication preferences and expected response timelines, and campus presence information including office hours must be available
- Calendar – The calendar in Blackboard allows students to see deadlines for all courses in one location if all courses populate this information using the calendar feature
- All grading items – Regardless of delivery method, all grades for all assignments should be entered into Blackboard. Students should have a reasonable expectation to see their grades for all graded assignments and exams within the Blackboard course within one week of the submission deadline.

The Blackboard Course Checklist (Appendix B) should reflect these requirements.

Effective Engagement and Communication

Designing for regular and substantive interaction and communication is a vital factor when developing a DE course. It is important to consider the methods and frequency of communication as well as the message and tone. Good communication is a key factor in student retention and success because students who feel engaged in a course are more likely to complete the course and report a positive distance education experience.

Interaction may occur via telephone, email, electronic chats, on-site meetings, video teleconferencing, or other methods. Appropriate interaction for a course depends upon the course delivery mode and the technologies used by the faculty member.

One of the most important things to consider when designing effective engagement and communication strategies is to ensure students are prepared for the online course. Early in the course, instructors should direct students to the available training and support resources in the Blackboard Libguides or on the College's website. The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) uses Blackboard to enroll current students into an online tutoring resource each semester. Instructors should remind students of all available resources embedded within Blackboard.

Technology

The Interactivity Matrix in Appendix C was developed to assist faculty with identifying technologies and methodologies to meet their course interaction and communication goals. It identifies various options available to instructors based on the nature of an interaction (instructor to student, student to instructor, student to student) as well as the type of interaction (i.e. asynchronous versus synchronous).

Techniques

Faculty are responsible for instructing students and managing their online courses with appropriate and innovative teaching techniques to engage students in active learning in order to achieve desired learning outcomes. The Blackboard Support [Libguides Page](#) and the [Web Accessibility Services Webpage](#) include great instructional resources for course development as well as tools for managing course content and adhering to accessibility standards. Appendix D also includes helpful instructional materials for the transition from Blackboard Learn Original to Ultra.

Moderating Discussions

Asynchronous discussion forums are a mechanism for communication, collaboration and interaction in an online environment. They allow learners to have learning experiences beyond the course content by providing the learner with interactions that are vital for building 'virtual-relationships' among the learners.

By moderating course discussion forums, a DE instructor can help ensure that a respectful social community is established and maintained for a DE course. For example, instructors can moderate a synchronous chat session by specifying a specific date and time that the session will be held. The instructors can moderate and facilitate the session, guide and direct the discussion, offer feedback, pose questions, etc. An instructor can make this part of the overall participation grade a student receives for the course.

The following list includes tips and techniques for moderating discussion forums within an online course environment so that it yields greater student participation and highly engaging interactions.

- Clarify the objectives and the time frames for contributing and responding to messages in the forum
- Create engaging activities that encourage and motivate students to use the discussion forum
- Insist on the use of proper grammar and spelling when students participate in the discussion forum
- Divide large classes into smaller discussion groups
- Establish guidelines for communication that include respect and constructive feedback while making it clear that sarcasm and negativity will not be tolerated

- Indicate what your response time will be and stick with it so that students don't feel like you are not involved
- Because moderating discussions can be quite an onerous task, teach students moderating skills as and rotate the moderator schedule
- Instead of replying to each discussion posting, reply to a prominent posting from each student
- Students whose postings do not receive much response from other users may feel discouraged. Thus, the instructor needs to identify these and provide tips to increase discussion among a thread such as asking users to reply to other users' responses to the original thread, to post specific content, to use quotes from previous postings in a response, and to use examples and references in postings

Engaging Students with Interactivity and Variety

Incorporate variety into online instruction to keep interest and motivation high. Use relevant visuals or sounds to illustrate points, and if possible, bring in external references that reinforce key concepts such as a website, podcast or YouTube presentation of an expert in a specific area. Other ideas to promote interaction are to have students do some research and find some reference information which illustrates a course concept then share that information in the course discussion area.

Provide information on an opposing viewpoint or perspective which might represent another way to think about a subject, pose questions which will students are required to look at issues from a multitude of perspectives, or provide feedback on student or group projects. These are just a few examples of ways instructors can engage students.

Establish a Social Community with Student-Centered Activities

In addition to designing interactions for students, a DE instructor must create and foster an environment, atmosphere, or context in which those interactions can take place. This type of atmosphere is one which encourages social interaction among students and provides a respectful online environment for students to feel comfortable interacting with one another and where they can feel part of a community.

For example, having students post a personal introduction to the course's discussion board can help students learn about each other and promote a sense of community. Community is also fostered when students collaborate on group projects, participate in social networking, interview one another, or interact in a cyber cafe. The instructor can incorporate this into the class by posting topics for discussions and so on and giving participation points to students who post and respond to relevant course topics.

Meaningful Feedback

Providing feedback in an online environment can be challenging and time consuming but is absolutely necessary because while students in face-to-face classes have many opportunities for informal feedback, this is not the case within an online environment.

Recommended Feedback Guidelines

For feedback to be effective, including grading of assignments and exams, it should be provided to students in a timely manner (within five business days of the due date of the assignment). Feedback at the beginning of the course is usually focused on simple items such as expectations and getting to know the online environment. More specific and meaningful feedback can be provided as students undertake the formative and summative assessment tasks during the course. Below is a list of tips for improving online feedback.

- Be descriptive with your feedback
- Be specific with your feedback and be mindful of the impact both positive and negative feedback has on the student
- If negative feedback is required, don't provide it in an online environment that other students access (for example, send a course message to an individual student rather than use a discussion post)
- Provide constructive feedback which always provides alternative strategies for success
- Provide feedback on a timeline that allows the student to apply it to the next assignment, when possible
- Where possible, link the feedback to the course learning outcomes
- By providing regular informal feedback, your students should not be surprised by the results of formal assessment feedback

Final Examinations

Specific times for final examinations in traditional courses are published on the College's website. Because hybrid courses do have a face-to-face element, faculty teaching hybrid sections should adhere to the same final examination schedule provided for traditional courses. Because online courses do not have a face-to-face element, faculty teaching online sections do not have a specific time for their final exams on the final exam schedule but should make exams available during the final exam period published on the academic calendar.

Academic Integrity and Assessment Verification

Faculty are responsible for defining the standards to measure student success in their courses in accordance with College, school, and department policies. Delivery of these assessments, however, must be aligned with the College's policies for being HEOA compliant. The Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA), passed into law in 2008, included a requirement that schools take adequate measures to ensure that the student enrolled in an online class is the student doing the coursework.

Instructors of online courses from UA - Pulaski Tech may require that students complete proctored exams. Approved proctoring methods include:

- Technology-enabled remote proctoring
- Instructor-approved third-party proctor
- UA - Pulaski Tech testing center

Plagiarism-Detection Services

SafeAssign is a plagiarism prevention service built into Blackboard. This service helps faculty prevent plagiarism by detecting unoriginal content in student papers. In addition to acting as a plagiarism deterrent, it also has features designed to aid in educating students about plagiarism and the importance of proper citation of any borrowed content.

Support

The [Blackboard Libguides](#) page is an available resource that includes tools and tutorials for faculty and students navigating the LMS. Additionally, faculty and students may submit a [support ticket](#) for specific issues preventing access to the LMS or information with the LMS. You can also email Blackboard@uaptc.edu or call the LMS Administrator at (501) 812-2358.

References

Bevill State Community College Distance Education Policies and Procedures Manual: https://bscc.edu/Content/Uploads/bscc.edu/files/Distance%20Ed%20Policy%20and%20Procedures%20Manual%202018%20(12.24.2018).pdf

University of Arkansas Academic Policies: Distance Education Online Standards for Courses taken for Academic Credit | Search Policies and Handbooks | University of Arkansas (uark.edu)

University of Arkansas Fort Smith Faculty Instructional Support Resources: Instructional Support Faculty Resources (uafs.edu)

Appendices

Appendix A – QM Higher Education Rubric 7ᵗʰ

HE — Specific Review Standards from the QM Higher Education Rubric, Seventh Edition

General Standards	Specific Review Standards	Points
Course Overview and Introduction	1.1: Instructions make clear how to get started and where to find various course components.	3
	1.2: Learners are introduced to the purpose and structure of the course.	3
	1.3: Communication guidelines for the course are clearly stated.	2
	1.4: Course and institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated within the course, or a link to current policies is provided.	2
	1.5: Minimum technology requirements for the course are clearly stated, and information on how to obtain the technologies is provided.	2
	1.6: Technical skills and digital information literacy skills expected of the learner are clearly stated.	1
	1.7: Required prior knowledge in the discipline and/or any specific competencies are clearly stated in the course site.	1
	1.8: The self-introduction by the instructor is welcoming and is available in the course site.	1
	1.9: Learners have the opportunity to introduce themselves.	1
Learning Objectives (Competencies)	2.1: The course-level learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable.	3
	2.2: The module/unit-level learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable and consistent with the course-level objectives.	3
	2.3: Learning objectives are clearly stated, are learner-centered, and are prominently located in the course.	3
	2.4: The relationship between learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments is made clear.	3
	2.5: The learning objectives are suited to and reflect the level of the course.	3
Assessment and Measurement	3.1: The assessments measure the achievement of the stated learning objectives.	3
	3.2: The course grading policy is stated clearly, available at the beginning of the course, and consistent throughout the course site.	3
	3.3: Specific and descriptive criteria are provided for the evaluation of learners' work, and their connection to the course grading policy is clearly explained.	3
	3.4: The course includes multiple types of assessments that are sequenced and suited to the level of the course.	2
	3.5: The types and timing of assessments provide learners with multiple opportunities to track their learning progress with timely feedback.	2
	3.6: The assessments provide guidance to the learner about how to uphold academic integrity.	1
Instructional Materials	4.1: The instructional materials contribute to the achievement of the stated learning objectives.	3
	4.2: The relationship between the use of instructional materials in the course and completion of learning activities and assessments is clearly explained.	3
	4.3: The course models the academic integrity expected of learners by providing both source references and permissions for use of instructional materials.	2
	4.4: The instructional materials represent up-to-date theory and practice in the discipline.	2
	4.5: A variety of instructional materials is used in the course.	2
Learning Activities and Learner Interaction	5.1: The learning activities help learners achieve the stated objectives.	3
	5.2: Learning activities provide opportunities for interactions that support active learning.	3
	5.3: The instructor's plan for regular interaction with learners in substantive ways during the course is clearly stated.	3
	5.4: The requirements for learner interaction are clearly stated.	2
Course Technology	6.1: The tools used in the course support the learning objectives.	3
	6.2: Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.	2
	6.3: A variety of technology is used in the course.	1
	6.4: The course provides learners with information on protecting their data and privacy.	1
Learner Support	7.1: The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to obtain it.	3
	7.2: Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's accessibility policies and accommodation services.	3
	7.3: Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's academic support services and resources that can help learners succeed in the course.	3
	7.4: Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's student services and resources that can help learners succeed.	1
Accessibility and Usability	8.1: Course navigation facilitates ease of use.	3
	8.2: The course design facilitates readability.	3
	8.3: Text in the course is accessible.	3
	8.4: Images in the course are accessible.	2
	8.5: Video and audio content in the course is accessible.	2
	8.6: Multimedia in the course is easy to use.	2
	8.7: Vendor accessibility statements are provided for the technologies used in the course.	1

Appendix B – Internal Course Review Process

Quality Matters Internal Course Review Process

Internal Course Review Process at UA-PTC

An internal course review is conducted via the QM Course Review Management System and involves at least two individuals who will review the course. Both individuals must have successfully completed the *Applying the Quality Matters Rubric* (APPQMR) workshop, and one individual must be a **Certified Peer Reviewer** or a **Master Reviewer**.

- Certified Peer Reviewer – must have completed APPQMR workshop and QM Peer Reviewer Course (both of which must have been associated with the past two editions of the Higher Education Rubric) and must have experience with teaching or designing online or hybrid courses within the last 18 months.
- Master Reviewer – must have completed APPQMR workshop, QM Peer Reviewer Course, and Higher Ed Master Reviewer Certification (HE MRC), all of which must have been associated with the past two editions of the Higher Education Rubric, must have completed two official higher ed reviews, and must have experience with teaching or designing online or hybrid courses within the last 18 months. Annual Master Reviewer recertification is required to retain the role.

Selection Criteria for Internal Reviewers

Internal Reviewers are UA-PTC faculty who have completed the required trainings and meet the following criteria:

- Faculty member has, maintains, and utilizes a course shell for all online course offerings of their sections of courses taught.
- Faculty member is an advocate for QM and ensures his/her courses meet the UA-PTC required standards.
- Faculty member has taught at least three online classes in the past 18 months.

Additional capabilities needed to be an internal course reviewer include:

- Meeting deadlines
- Ability to provide effective feedback
- Familiar and confident in the Blackboard LMS functions and capabilities and utilizes them effectively in their teaching.

The individuals reviewing the course will follow the procedures in place during an external course review process which includes meeting all essential standards. For UA-PTC, each course reviewed internally could be considered for a bronze, silver, or gold badge, depending on the number of standards met.

Reviewers will be assigned by the QM Manager and the Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). The reviewers for a given course will not be selected from the same department in which the course resides.

Courses will be assigned a month in which the review will occur according to the master review schedule. If the course representative is unable to meet the scheduled timeframe for review, please refer to the Exemptions and Exceptions policy.

Internal Course Review Badges

A **Bronze-Level** badge indicates a course has met the 22 QM Essential Standards. A **Silver-Level** badge indicates a course has successfully met the 35 essential and very important standards. A **Gold-Level** badge indicates a course has successfully met all 44 QM Standards. If a course successfully meets one of the levels, an internal badge will be placed on the course and documented on the UA-PTC website.

Participants can expect the internal review process to take up to two weeks to complete per course. This includes the review time by the reviewers, time needed by the course representative for any recommended revisions, a re-review by the reviewers (if needed), and time for the review team and Director of the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) to issue the internal course review badge.

The Review Process

The specific requirements and processes required by both the faculty member and by the review team are described below.

Faculty Process and Procedures

The following is the process and procedures faculty must follow when initiating and proceeding through the QM Essentials Internal Course Review Process. The faculty member submitting a course for review is considered a **course representative**. Please note that this is a course review and not considered a part of the faculty evaluation plan (FEP).

- The course representative must have taught the course in question at least once online or hybrid. This could be in an asynchronous or synchronous format.
- The course representative must have developed and/or designed the course from start to finish (i.e. the course is not a copy of a master course, unless they developed the master course).
- For departments issuing a master development course shell, the course lead for the course (the person responsible for maintaining the course shell) may have their course reviewed for certification. For departments in which instructors copy from a master shell but modify their individual courses significantly, those instructors may also submit their courses for review.
- The course representative must have reviewed and understand the current edition of the QM Higher Education rubric. This can be done by having successfully completed one of the following workshops:
  Introduction to Quality Matters (INTRO2QM)
  Applying the Quality Matters Rubric (APPQMR)
  Designing Your Online Course (DYOC)
  Improving Your Online Course (IYOC)
  Designing Your Hybrid Course (DYHC)

- The course representative must complete the **Course Review Worksheet Form** and submit it to the CETL Director and QM Manager in advance of the month in which the review is scheduled, no later than the first day of the assigned month.
- On the Course Review Worksheet Form, the course representative must indicate Course and Module/Unit/Week level objectives. If these are not measurable, the course review process cannot take place.

Review Process and Procedures for Review Team

Following are the guidelines for the review team members:

- The internal review team consists of two individuals who have completed the APPQMR workshop. One of the two individuals must be a QM peer reviewer or a master reviewer.
- The individuals reviewing the course will follow the same or similar procedures in place during an external QM review process which includes the course in review meeting, at minimum, all essential standards. The key elements of any course review include the course to be reviewed, the QM rubric, the QM Course Review Management System (CRMS), the qualified reviewers, and a final report.
- If the course meets the standards of the rubric on the first review, the course is then issued the appropriate level badge by the review team and CETL Director.
- The reviewers have two weeks to complete the review for the Bronze-level tier and provide any necessary recommended revisions to the course representative. For the Silver-level, reviewers have 2-4 weeks and 3-5 weeks for the Gold-level tier.
- If recommended revisions are suggested, the course representative has one month to make the recommended revisions (if those revisions are required to meet the rubric).
- After the revisions are made, the review team re-reviews the course and determines if the course has met or not met the rubric.
    - If not met, the review team may decide to provide another opportunity with extended feedback and comments to the course representative on how to meet the rubric.
    - If met, the course is then issued an appropriate badge by the review team and CETL Director.
- Upon completion of the process, the QM Manager and CETL Director notify the Chair, Dean and Provost that this work is completed. The CETL Director will update the website if a badge is issued for the course.

Disclaimer and Notes

It is important to note that meeting the standards of the internal review process does not mean the course is Quality Matters-Certified. That process is known as an official external review process which involves coordination from QM and other individuals at other institutions to serve as reviewers. It is important to note that the internal review is not part of a faculty member's annual evaluation or the evaluation for promotion and rank but a standardized process to ensure quality design in an online or hybrid course. Academic freedom is not lost as there are many ways to meet each QM standard.

This review is essential and required to ensure the quality of UAPTC distance education courses consistent with requirements for accreditation and the Department of Education.

Request for an Extension from Completion of Development Shell and/or Quality Matters Annual Expectations

All Online and Hybrid Courses offered at UAPTC are expected to comply with the requirements for Quality Matters and Course Shells as proposed in the timeline and plan for implementation and management of these courses. In some cases, a faculty member or academic department may face a challenge in completing the target deadlines for completion of the Quality Matters requirements for their courses and/or for completing/developing/maintaining course development shells. Acceptable reasons for a request for an extension include:

- Faculty member has more than two preps/term
- Faculty member is responsible for course design for more than five courses per year
- A specialty accreditation visit report is being written by the faculty member in question during the semester the work is required for completion
- Faculty member is out on FMLA or other approved prolonged absence
- Other TBD

Extensions will be granted by the Provost upon request of the faculty member and approval of the School Dean. The extension should be sent to the Provost by October 15 of the academic year in which the course is scheduled for completion or review. The request will include the following:

- Name of Faculty Member
- Department
- Courses to Be completed during the time period (course numbers and names)
- Courses for which an extension is requested (course numbers and names)
- Reason for extension request
- Proposed plan/date/dates/timeline for completion of the work for each item.
- Impact of the request on future scheduled work for QM and Course Development Shells scheduled to be completed by this faculty member
- Signature of Department Chair
- Signature of School Dean

The Provost and School Dean will review the request together within 30 days with either approval of the request, denial of it, and/or modification of plans.

Request for an Exemption from Completion of Development Shell and/or Quality Matters Annual Expectations

All Online and Hybrid Courses offered at UAPTC are expected to comply with the requirements for Quality Matters and Course Shells as proposed in the timeline and plan for implementation and management of these courses. In some cases, a faculty member or academic department may face a challenge in completing the target deadlines for completion of the Quality Matters requirements for their courses and/or for completing/developing/maintaining course development shells. Acceptable reasons for a request for an exemption for building a department course shell include:

- Course is taught by only one faculty member
- Course is only offered once a year
- Responsible faculty member is out on FMLA or other approved prolonged absence
- Other TBD

Acceptable reasons for a request for an exemption for meeting Quality Matters requirements for a course include:

- The only courses exempt from meeting Quality Matters requirements are courses taught on ground (in-person).
- Any course that is designated as an online or hybrid course must meet QM standards.

Exemptions will be reviewed by the Provost upon request of the faculty member and approval of the School Dean. The exemption should be sent to the Provost by October 15 of the academic year in which the course is scheduled for completion. The request will include the following:

- Name of Faculty Member
- Department
- Courses for which an exemption is requested (course numbers and names)
- Last date course was offered
- Future date for course offering if planned or scheduled
- Reason for exemption request
- Impact of the request on future program
- Signature of Department Chair
- Signature of School Dean

The Provost and School Dean will review the request together within 30 days with either approval of the request, denial of it, and/or modification of plans.

Appendix C – Internal Course Review Badge Levels

UA-PTC Internal Course Review Badge Levels

Bronze-Level: All 22 QM Essential Standards Met

Silver-Level: All 35 QM Essential Standards and Very Important Standards Met

Gold-Level: All 44 QM Standards Met

Bronze	Silver	Gold
Must meet all 22 Standards:	**Must meet all 35 Standards:**	**Must meet all 44 Standards:**
1.1 Getting Started	1.1 Getting Started	1.1 Getting Started
1.2 Purpose and Structure	1.2 Purpose and Structure	1.2 Purpose and Structure
2.1 Measurable CLOs	1.3 Communication Guidelines	1.3 Communication Guidelines
2.2 MLOs Consistent with CLOs	1.4 Current Policies	1.4 Current Policies
2.3 LOs Clearly Stated/Located	1.5 Minimum Technology Requirements	1.5 Minimum Technology Requirements
2.4 LOs, Activities, and Assessments are Connected	2.1 Measurable CLOs	1.6 Technical and Digital Information Literacy Skills
2.5 LOs and Level of Course	2.2 MLOs Consistent with CLOs	1.7 Prior Knowledge or Competencies
3.1 Assessments Measure Achievement of LOs	2.3 LOs Clearly Stated/Located	1.8 Faculty Introduction
3.2 Clear, Consistent Grading Policy	2.4 LOs, Activities, and Assessments are Connected	1.9 Learner Introductions
3.3 Clear Assessment Evaluation Criteria	2.5 LOs and Level of Course	2.1 Measurable CLOs
4.1 Instructional Materials	3.1 Assessments Measure Achievement of LOs	2.2 MLOs Consistent with CLOs
4.2 Course Materials, Activities, and Assessments	3.2 Clear, Consistent Grading Policy	2.3 LOs Clearly Stated/Located
5.1 Learning Activities	3.3 Clear Assessment Evaluation Criteria	2.4 LOs, Activities, and Assessments are Connected
5.2 Interactions Support Active Learning	3.4 Multiple Assessment Types	2.5 LOs and Level of Course
5.3 Regular and Substantive Interaction	3.5 Learning Progress and Feedback	3.1 Assessments Measure Achievement of LOs
6.1 Course Tools	4.1 Instructional Materials	3.2 Clear, Consistent Grading Policy
7.1 Technical Support	4.2 Course Materials, Activities, and Assessments	3.3 Clear Assessment Evaluation Criteria
7.2 Accessibility Policies and Accommodations	4.3 Academic Integrity	3.4 Multiple Assessment Types
7.3 Academic Support Services	4.4 Up-to-Date Theory and Practice	3.5 Learning Progress and Feedback
8.1 Ease of Navigation	4.5 Variety of Materials Used	3.6 Assessments and Academic Integrity
8.2 Readability	5.1 Learning Activities	4.1 Instructional Materials
8.3 Accessible Text	5.2 Interactions Support Active Learning	4.2 Course Materials, Activities, and Assessments
	5.3 Regular and Substantive Interaction	4.3 Academic Integrity and References
	5.4 Learner Interaction	4.4 Up-to-Date Theory and Practice
	6.1 Course Tools	4.5 Variety of Materials Used
	6.2 Course Tools and Engagement	5.1 Learning Activities
	7.1 Technical Support	5.2 Interactions Support Active Learning
	7.2 Accessibility Policies and Accommodations	5.3 Regular and Substantive Interaction
	7.3 Academic Support Services	5.4 Learner Interaction
	8.1 Ease of Navigation	6.1 Course Tools and LOs
	8.2 Readability	6.2 Course Tools and Engagement
	8.3 Accessible Text	6.3 Variety of Technology
	8.4 Images	6.4 Protecting Data and Privacy
	8.5 Audio and Video Content	7.1 Technical Support
	8.6 Multimedia	7.2 Accessibility Policies and Accommodations
		7.3 Academic Support Services
		7.4 Student Services and Resources
		8.1 Ease of Navigation
		8.2 Readability
		8.3 Accessible Text
		8.4 Images
		8.5 Audio and Video Content
		8.6 Multimedia
		8.7 Vendor Accessibility

Appendix D – Blackboard Course Checklist

Blackboard® UAPTC

Instructor Resources and Verification Form

Approved April, 2021

Blackboard Course Checklist

Faculty Requirements	Description	✓ Complete
Blackboard Shell Clean	The content, announcements, gradebooks, and all other materials are current (no information remaining from past semesters).	☐
Start Here page	Upload your syllabus in **Word** Format	☐
	Syllabus is in compliance with UA-PTC standard syllabus template	☐
	Update required material section	☐
Faculty Information page (QM 1.8)	Add faculty information	☐
	Contact information (email, phone, etc.)	☐
	Email reply policy 2 business days.	☐
	Contact policies / Preferred method	☐
	Office hours/location	☐
	Qualifications	☐
	Background information	☐
	Personal introduction	☐
Announcements (QM 1.1)	Personalize the standard announcement with the course information, your name, and preferred contact information. **Instructions in the first announcement should direct students on how to get started in the course and where to find various components.** Recommended weekly postings.	☐

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Course Schedule	Upload a copy of your complete course schedule in the Start Here menu and under the Course Schedule menu link in addition to the schedule included in the syllabus. Recommended adding specific dates and weeks to the course schedule.	☐
Attendance Artifact and Grading Verification	Use UA-PTC Course Agreement or create a gradable attendance artifact (i.e. syllabus quiz, course agreement form) for students to complete within the first week of class prior to withdrawal date.	☐
	Verify **attendance artifact is graded** in gradebook.	☐
	Verify **grading policy of 1 week under the "Needs Grading"** section.	☐
Course Content (QM 8.3 - accessibility)	Use the "Build Content" and "Assessments" menus to add content. When adding documents or links to a course, select the option *open in new window (_blank)* to ensure students using screen readers can access the information. With this option, all attachments open in a new tab. Students screen readers will not automatically go to the new tab so be sure that you explain that links will open this way. All items added need to be in word document. Under Course Content modules or weekly content is identified. Assignments are clearly identified.	☐
Create a discussion thread in the discussion board (online faculty) (QM 1.9)	During the first week of class in an online course, **instructors must include a public discussion thread which requires peer-to-peer interaction and 100% instructor interaction with each, individual student in thread or gradebook comments**. Every discussion after that should show instructor presence.	☐

Colors, graphics, fonts (QM 8.4)	To assist with readability, limit font styles to 1 or 2 selected from the Standardized Digital Course Style guide; do not rely on color to convey meaning. Assure that font size and style are selected to maximize legibility. Select graphics that are appropriate for college-level students.	☐
Supplemental Content	**Course content should be supplemented** with items beyond lecture notes that could include any of the following: an attention getter or hook to maintain the attention of the students; ADA compliant videos or other visual content; elements that include storytelling (this is one excellent way to connect with others and share information); adding quizzes via games, songs, or other low stakes methods; or keep the course warm (conversation, activities, and academic actions flowing between students and all parties in the course).	☐
Transcripts or closed captioning (QM 8.3)	**Transcripts or closed captioning** should be included for all video and audio materials added to your course. Note: YouTube videos often contain closed captioning.	☐
Feedback Policies	All instructors have one week to provide feedback on assignments unless otherwise noted differently according to the Dean.	☐

*Templates for these items are available in the Instructor Resources menu link under Templates.

*If you need help, please view the instructional materials in Instructor Resources.

References

Baker College Instructor Course Readiness Checklist

Quality Matters™ Rubric Workbook for Higher Education (5th ed.). (2014). Annapolis, MD: MarylandOnline, Inc.

Updated: January 2021

Blackboard Learn with the Ultra Experience Tutorials - Instructors - YouTube

Blackboard Learn Original and Ultra Terminology

Appendix F – Glossary

Academic Engagement is active participation by a student in an instructional activity related to the student's course of study. See the handbook for examples of active engagement.

Accessibility – Section 508 of Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 states in part, "Electronic information and data must be equally accessible to individuals with and without disabilities." In building online course materials, it is important to bear in mind that as a public college receiving federal funding, UA-PTC is required to adhere to these guidelines by ensuring all students and employees have appropriate access to all materials required for teaching and learning.

Assessments (Gradable Tool) - The formative or summative evaluation of student learning administered within a course that is used to measure what students have learned in relation to an expected learning outcome

Blackboard – Blackboard is the Learning Management System (LMS) used for the delivery of instruction from UA - Pulaski Technical College. Blackboard is a Web-based platform that provides faculty and students with features necessary to support delivery of online instruction.

Credit Hour – A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than: 1) One hour of classroom or direct instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or 2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in 1 of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practical, studio work, and other academic work leading toward the award of credit hours. 34 CFR 600.2 (11/1/2010)

Course-Level Learning Outcomes – statements of specific and measurable changes, improvement, or growth in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students are expected to learn in a course

Developmental Course Shell – Frequently referred to as "DEV Shells;" are places provided for the construction of a course. It contains the required elements for building a course allowing for space for syllabus, assignments, discussions, gradebook, etc.) to be built.

Direct Instruction – structured presentation of academic content (lecture, demonstration, etc.) by an instructor directly to students that is generally delivered synchronously, whether face-to-face or via distance delivery using a video conferencing platform.

Distance Education - focuses on utilizing technology and teaching methods to provide an effective teaching and learning experience to students outside the regular classroom and thereby increase flexibility and scheduling options. Distance Education courses require that

students have a computer and Internet access that meet at least minimum technical requirements. Students enrolled in Distance Education courses earn academic credit where instruction is regular and substantive, and the student has the opportunity to demonstrate evidence of achievement of intended learning outcomes that is equivalent to the amount of instruction and student work in campus/face-to-face courses.

Face-to-Face Courses – courses that are delivered fully on site with face-to-face interaction but use technology to supplement learning may also find the information in this handbook helpful for ensuring those web-enhanced or technological components are consistent across modalities.

Fair Use Doctrine – The Fair Use Exemption found at Section 107 of the Copyright Law allows for limited reproduction of someone else's copyright-protected work for purposes of criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship and research without permission of the copyright holder. See details on this doctrine for more information regarding compliance.

FERPA - The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE).

Hybrid Courses – courses in which a portion of instruction is delivered on site with face-to-face interaction, and a portion is delivered in a structured alternative delivery format including, but not limited to, the Internet using the institution's chosen learning management system (LMS) and/or other off-campus formats. UA - Pulaski Tech identifies hybrid courses with a "Hybrid" location notation in the course schedule.

Learning Management System (LMS) - Learning Management System (LMS) provides for the delivery of instruction as a Web-based platform that provides faculty and students with features necessary to provide an effective learning experience online.

Live Course Shell – Published instructional space for teaching and learning in a given semester. This course shell is the live course in which all instructional materials, including publisher content and links to publisher sites, resources, and all related content is presented to the student, and engagement, teaching and learning occur for an assigned course section.

Lockdown Browser – a platform or software used to promote academic integrity by securing a testing environment within the Learning Management System (LMS). UA-PTC utilizes Respondus Lockdown and ExamSoft (programmatic) for secure testing in online, hybrid, or web-enhanced courses.

Module/Unit-Level Learning Outcomes – statements of specific and measurable changes, improvement, or growth in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students are expected to learn in a specific module or unit of a course

NC – SARA - National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement is a voluntary agreement for member states and U.S. territories that establishes comparable national standards for interstate offering of postsecondary distance-education courses and programs. This agreement is intended to make it easier for students to take online courses offered by postsecondary institutions based in another state.

Online Courses – courses in which instruction is delivered entirely online through the LMS that uses the Internet for delivery and interaction. Online courses may be asynchronous without a formal meeting time or synchronous (webinar) with formal meeting times utilizing a digital meeting software, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom. UA - Pulaski Tech identifies online courses with an "Online" or "Webinar" in the location notation in the course schedule.

Plagiarism – The use of another's words, work, or ideas without citing the source of the work.

Proctored Exam - A proctored exam is a supervised exam aimed at promoting academic integrity, authenticating students, and is an acceptable testing requirement for both hybrid and online courses.

Program or Department Course Shell – A program or department course shell is a course structure for a course with multiple sections that contains the essential requirements for the course per the decision of the department, including learning outcomes to be achieved, course materials, syllabus, standard assignments and grading criteria for the course.

Publisher Site – a third-party site provided by the publisher of a textbook that is accessed by instructors to use to deliver or supplement instruction. The publisher site information is linked in live course shells, and students access and complete assignments or use reference material within the publisher site (i.e., McGraw for science, MyMathLabs by Pearson, etc.).

Quality Matters – A non-profit, faculty-driven organization dedicated to advancing quality assurance in online and innovative digital teaching and learning environments. It provides a system to assure the quality of online learning through rigorous review, continuous improvement, and certification organized around a research-based rubric of QM standards.

Quality Matters (QM) Course Review Process - All online and hybrid courses must be reviewed based on this framework. This review is both initial (prior to being delivered initially) and continuous. The initial review will be conducted as a self-review using the Quality Matters Rubric with approval by the department chair. Continuous QM Course Review is required of all online and hybrid courses in order to be offered in order to ensure a positive student experience and student success in the online environment.

Quality Matters Standards – Research-supported and based on published best practices, QM Standards are a set of eight General Standards and 44 Specific Review Standards used to evaluate the design of online and hybrid courses. Included Annotations explain the application

of and inter-relationship of each Standard. The review standards are assigned weighted points based on the level of importance within a course.

Regular Student Interactions are interactions that provide the opportunity for substantive interactions between the instructor and the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time of the course, the amount of content in the course, and the academic level of the course (freshman or sophomore-level undergraduate courses). Interactions initiated by students cannot be counted towards meeting the regular interaction requirement.

SafeAssign - SafeAssign is a plagiarism prevention service built into Blackboard. This service helps faculty prevent plagiarism by detecting unoriginal content in student papers. In addition to acting as a plagiarism deterrent, it also has features designed to aid in educating students about plagiarism and the importance of proper citation of any borrowed content.

Student Authentication – Processes in place to authenticate that the student who registers in a DE course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and who receives the academic credit.

Student Learning Assessment - the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational courses and programs undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development. This is exemplified by having clear, measurable learning outcomes, sufficient opportunities for students to achieve the expected outcomes, a data collection process to gather evidence of learning, and an evaluation and application of information to improve teaching and learning.

Substantive Student Interactions are those that engage students in teaching, learning, and assessment consistent with the content under discussion and also includes 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, in a scheduled interaction to align with the regular interaction requirement, Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency, in a scheduled interaction to align with the regular interaction requirement., and/or Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.

Web-enhanced – instruction is delivered fully on-site with face-to-face interaction; however, students are expected to regularly supplement their learning through the use of technology. Course materials, assessments, grades, and resources are incorporated into the LMS.