

**North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
The Higher Learning Commission (NCA-HLC)
Criteria: <http://www.ncahlc.org/Information-for-Institutions/criteria-for-accreditation.html>**

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

<p>1. The institution has a governance structure to enable effective and comprehensive decision making related to online learning.</p>	<p>1a The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.</p> <p>1d The organization's governance and administrative structures promote effective leadership and support collaborative processes that enable the organization to fulfill its mission.</p> <p>2d All levels of planning align with the organization's mission, thereby enhancing its capacity to fulfill that mission.</p>
<p>2. Policies and guidelines are in place to authenticate that students enrolled in online courses and receiving college credit are indeed those completing the course work.</p>	
<p>3. Policy for intellectual property of course materials exists. (If policy exists, 1 pt.; If policy specifically addresses online course materials, 2 pts.; If policy specifically addresses online course materials and is publically visible online, 3 pts.)</p>	<p>4d The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.</p>
<p>4. The institution has defined the strategic value of online learning to its enterprise and to its stakeholders.</p>	<p>1c Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization.</p> <p>5b The organization has the capacity and the commitment to engage with its identified constituencies and communities.</p>

TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

<p>1. A documented technology plan that includes electronic security measures (e.g., password protection, encryption, secure online or proctored exams, etc.) is in place and operational to ensure quality standards, adherence to FERPA, and the integrity and validity of information. ***</p>	
<p>2. The technology delivery systems are highly reliable and operable with measurable standards being utilized such as system downtime tracking or task benchmarking. ***</p>	<p>2b The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.</p>
<p>3. A centralized system provides support for building and maintaining the online education infrastructure. ***</p>	<p>2b The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.</p>
<p>4. The course delivery technology is considered a mission critical enterprise system and supported as such.</p>	<p>2b The organization’s resource base supports its educational programs and its plans for maintaining and strengthening their quality in the future.</p>
<p>5. The institution maintains system backup for data availability.</p>	
<p>6. Faculty, staff, and students are supported in the development and use of new technologies and skills.</p>	<p>3d The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.</p>

COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

<p>1. Guidelines regarding minimum standards are used for course development, design, and delivery of online instruction (such as course syllabus elements, course materials, assessment strategies, faculty feedback). ***</p>	
<p>2. Technology is used as a tool to achieve learning outcomes in delivering course content. ***</p>	<p>3c The organization creates effective learning environments.</p>
<p>3. Instructional materials, course syllabus, and learning outcomes are reviewed periodically to ensure they meet program standards. ***</p>	<p>3c The organization creates effective learning environments. 4c The organization assesses the usefulness of its curricula to students who will live and work in a global, diverse, and technological society. 5d Internal and external constituencies value the services the organization provides.</p>
<p>4. Courses are designed so that students develop the necessary knowledge and skills to meet learning objectives at the course and program level. These may include engagement via analysis, synthesis and evaluation. ***</p>	<p>3a The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible. 3c The organization creates effective learning environments.</p>
<p>5. Learning objectives describe outcomes that are measurable.</p>	<p>3a The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.</p>
<p>6. Selected assessments measure the course learning objectives and are appropriate for an online learning environment.</p>	<p>3a The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.</p>
<p>7. Student-centered instruction is considered during the course-</p>	<p>3c The organization creates effective learning environments.</p>

development process.	
8. There is consistency in course development for student retention and quality.	3c The organization creates effective learning environments.
9. Course design promotes both faculty and student engagement.	3d The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.
10. Current and emerging technologies are evaluated and recommended for online teaching and learning.	3b The organization values and supports effective teaching. 3c The organization creates effective learning environments.
11. Instructional design is provided for creation of effective pedagogy for both synchronous and asynchronous class sessions.	3b The organization values and supports effective teaching.
12. Curriculum development is a core responsibility for faculty (i.e., faculty should be involved in either the development or the decision making for the online curriculum choices).	3b The organization values and supports effective teaching.

COURSE STRUCTURE

1. The online course site or other web site includes a syllabus outlining course objectives, learning outcomes, evaluation methods, textbook information, and other related course information, making course requirements transparent at time of registration. ***	
2. The institution ensures that all online education students, regardless of where they	3d The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

<p>are located, have access to library/learning resources that are adequate to support the courses they are taking (SACS statement). ***</p>	
<p>3. Expectations for student assignment completion, grade policy, and faculty response are clearly provided in the course syllabus. ***</p>	
<p>4. Links or explanations of technical support are available in the course (i.e., each course provides suggested solutions to potential technical issues and/or links for technical assistance).</p>	<p>3d The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.</p>
<p>5. Instructional materials are easily accessible and easy to use for the student.</p>	
<p>6. The course adequately addresses the needs of students with disabilities via alternative instructional strategies and/or referral to special institutional resources.</p>	<p>1b In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.</p>
<p>7. Opportunities/tools are provided to encourage student-student collaboration (i.e, web conferencing, instant messaging, etc.) if appropriate.</p>	<p>3b The organization values and supports effective teaching. 3c The organization creates effective learning environments.</p>
<p>8. Documents attached to modules are in a format that is easily accessed with multiple operating systems and productivity software (PDF, for example).</p>	

TEACHING AND LEARNING

<p>1. Student-to-Student interaction and Faculty-to-Student interaction are essential characteristics and are facilitated through a variety of ways. ***</p>	<p>4b The organization demonstrates that acquisition of a breadth of knowledge and skills and the exercise of intellectual inquiry are integral to its educational programs.</p>
<p>2. Feedback on student assignments and questions is constructive and provided in a timely manner. ***</p>	<p>3b The organization values and supports effective teaching.</p>
<p>3. Students learn appropriate methods for effective research, including assessment of the validity of resources and the ability to master resources in an online environment. ***</p>	<p>3b The organization values and supports effective teaching. 3c The organization creates effective learning environments.</p>
<p>4. Students are provided access to library professionals and resources that help them to deal with the overwhelming amount of online resources.</p>	<p>3c The organization creates effective learning environments.</p>
<p>5. Instructors use specific strategies to create a presence in the course.</p>	<p>3b The organization values and supports effective teaching.</p>

SOCIAL AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

<p>1. Students should be provided a way to interact with other students in an online community.</p>	
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FACULTY SUPPORT

<p>1. Technical assistance specifically for online course development and online teaching is provided for faculty.</p>	<p>3b The organization values and supports effective teaching. 4a The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.</p>
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2. Instructors are prepared to teach online education courses and the institution ensures faculty receive training, assistance, and support at all times during the development and delivery of courses. ***	4a The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.
3. Faculty receive training and materials related to Fair Use, plagiarism, and other relevant legal and ethical concepts. ***	4a The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.
4. Faculty are provided on-going professional development related to online teaching and learning.	4a The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.
5. Clear standards are established for faculty engagement and expectations around online teaching.	2c The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.
6. Faculty workshops are provided to make them aware of emerging technologies and the selection and use of these tools.	4a The organization demonstrates, through the actions of its board, administrators, students, faculty, and staff, that it values a life of learning.

STUDENT SUPPORT

1. Before starting an online program, students are advised about the program to determine if they possess the self-motivation and commitment to learn online. ***	3d The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.
2. Before starting an online program, students are advised	3d The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching.

<p>about the program to determine if they have access to the minimal technology required by the course design. ***</p>	
<p>3. Students receive (or have access to) information about programs, including admission requirements, tuition and fees, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and student support services prior to admission and course registration. ***</p>	<p>3c The organization creates effective learning environments.</p>
<p>4. Students are provided with access to training and information they will need to secure required materials through electronic databases, interlibrary loans, government archives, new services and other sources. ***</p>	<p>3d The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching</p>
<p>5. Throughout the duration of the course/program, students have access to appropriate technical assistance and technical support staff. ***</p>	<p>3d The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching</p>
<p>6. Student support personnel are available to address student questions, problems, bug reporting, and complaints. ***</p>	<p>3d The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching</p>
<p>7. Students have access to effective academic, personal, and career counseling.</p>	<p>3d The organization’s learning resources support student learning and effective teaching</p>
<p>8. Minimum technology requirements for skills and equipment are established and made available to students.</p>	

<p>9. Student support services are provided for outside the classroom such as academic advising, financial assistance, peer support, etc.</p>	<p>3d The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching</p>
<p>10. Policy and process is in place to support ADA requirements.</p>	
<p>11. Students are provided relevant easy access to required course materials in print and/or digital format, such as ISBN numbers for textbooks, book suppliers, and delivery modes.</p>	<p>3c The organization creates effective learning environments.</p>
<p>12. Program demonstrates a student-centered focus rather than trying to fit service to the online education student in on-campus student services.</p>	<p>5a The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.</p>
<p>13. Efforts are made to engage students with the program and institution.</p>	
<p>14. Students are instructed in the appropriate ways of communicating with faculty and students.</p>	
<p>15. The institution provides guidance to both students and faculty in the use of all forms of technologies used for course delivery.</p>	<p>3d The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching</p>
<p>16. Tutoring is available as a learning resource.</p>	<p>3d The organization's learning resources support student learning and effective teaching</p>
<p>17. Students are instructed in the appropriate ways of enlisting help from the program.</p>	

QUALITY SCORECARD FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF ONLINE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

<p>1. The program is assessed through an evaluation process that applies specific established standards. ***</p>	<p>2c The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.</p> <p>3a The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.</p>
<p>2. A variety of data (academic and administrative information) are used to regularly and frequently evaluate program effectiveness and to guide changes toward continual improvement. ***</p>	<p>2c The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.</p> <p>4d The organization provides support to ensure that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.</p> <p>5c The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.</p>
<p>3. Intended learning outcomes at the course and program level are reviewed regularly to ensure clarity, utility, and appropriateness. ***</p>	<p>3a The organization’s goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.</p>
<p>4. A process is in place for the assessment of support services for faculty and students.</p>	<p>5c The organization demonstrates its responsiveness to those constituencies that depend on it for service.</p>
<p>5. Course and program retention is assessed.</p>	<p>2c The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.</p>
<p>6. Recruitment and retention are examined and reviewed.</p>	<p>2c The organization’s ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.</p>
<p>7. Program demonstrates compliance and review of accessibility standards (Section 508, etc.)</p>	

<p>8. Course evaluations are examined in relation to faculty performance evaluations.</p>	<p>3a The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.</p>
<p>9. Faculty performance is regularly assessed.</p>	<p>2c The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.</p>
<p>10. Alignment of learning outcomes from course to course exists.</p>	<p>3a The organization's goals for student learning outcomes are clearly stated for each educational program and make effective assessment possible.</p>
<p>11. Course evaluations collect student feedback on quality of content and effectiveness of instruction.</p>	<p>2c The organization's ongoing evaluation and assessment processes provide reliable evidence of institutional effectiveness that clearly informs strategies for continuous improvement.</p> <p>5a The organization learns from the constituencies it serves and analyzes its capacity to serve their needs and expectations.</p>