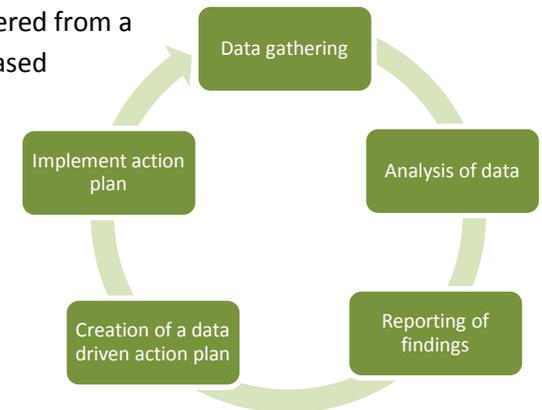


Quality Assurance for Distance Education Programming

Quality assurance for distance programming at Creighton University is a multi-faceted process involving faculty, staff, students, administrators, and external stakeholders. Data is gathered from a variety of sources for the purpose of assuring Creighton University's reputation for high quality, values-based education is reflected in its distance education programming. Additionally, the process is structured to help assure alignment with Federal and accreditation regulations including those promulgated by the Higher Learning Commission. The University employs a cyclical process of data gathering, reporting, and resultant actions to make data driven decisions for continuous examination and improvement of its online educational offerings. This document summarizes the quality assurance process for distance programming at Creighton University.



Quality Assurance Standards for Online Education Programs

The quality assurance standards for online education programs encompasses nine categories, these standards are based on nationally accepted standards of quality for online courses and programs including the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education.

Creighton University Quality Assurance Standards for Distance Education Programming

The Creighton University Quality Assurance Standards for Distance Education Programming are aligned with standards and regulations established by the US Department of Education and the regional accreditation agency (the Higher Learning Commission).

1. <u>Category: Mission and Institutional Support</u>
A. Institutional decisions to offer distance education programs are consistent with the University's mission.
B. The University has defined the strategic value of distance learning to its enterprise and to its relevant parts.
C. The University has implemented defined processes to enable effective and comprehensive decision making related to distance learning.
D. Policy for copyright ownership of course materials exists.
E. The University has measures in place to help ensure, to a reasonable degree, that its contractual partners related to the provision of online education programming behave ethically and responsibly in relation to any action taken on behalf of the institution.
F. A documented process to meet state authorization requirements is in place and is operational.
2. <u>Category: Academic Planning</u>
A. Approval of new distance education programs or courses follow the University's approval processes.
B. Transitioning face-to-face courses or programs to a distance education format follows the University's approval processes for approval of the transition.
C. Curriculum development is a core responsibility for faculty
D. Approval of distance education curricula are the same or very similar to the processes used for face-to-face courses or programs.
E. Learning goals for distance education programs are defined and publicly available.
F. Distance education programs have a published schedule of course offerings available to students.

3. <u>Category: Academic Integrity</u>
A. Policies and processes are in place and operational to authenticate that students enrolled in online courses and receiving credit are indeed those completing the course work.
B. Distance students are made aware of and held accountable for the same academic integrity standards as campus-based students.
C. Distance education courses and programs promote academic integrity by employing recognized best practice standards for academic integrity in distance education.
4. <u>Category: Technology Infrastructure</u>
A. 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.
B. A documented process for communicating to faculty, staff, and students changes in hardware, software, technical systems as well as information relative to technical support services available.
C. The course delivery related technologies (e.g., LMS, authentication, web conferencing, lecture capture, email) are considered mission critical enterprise systems and supported as such, including reporting of relevant standards (e.g., uptime), maintenance of system back-up for data availability, and service level agreements.
5. <u>Category: Instructional Design</u>
A. Standards based on best practices for online course design are used for course development, design, and delivery of online instruction.
B. Instructional materials, course syllabus, and learning outcomes are reviewed periodically to ensure they meet program standards.
C. Assessments of student learning align with the course learning objectives and are appropriate for an online learning environment.
D. Expectations for student assignment completion, grade policy, and faculty response are clearly provided in the course syllabus or the online course
E. Instructional materials are appropriate for delivery in the online environment and readily accessible to students.

6. <u>Category: Teaching and Learning</u>
A. Course design promotes both faculty and student engagement. Student-to-Student interaction and Faculty-to-Student interaction are essential characteristics and are facilitated through a variety of ways.
B. Feedback on student assignments and questions is constructive and provided in a timely manner.
C. Information literacy and digital citizenship expectations are established and students are provided the resources necessary to develop knowledge and skills necessary to meet expectations.
7. <u>Category: Faculty Support</u>
A. Instructional design assistance is provided for creation of effective pedagogy and use of technologies for teaching online for both synchronous and asynchronous class sessions during the course development process and throughout the duration of the course.
B. Instructors are provided preparation in the pedagogy of online teaching including training and materials related to Fair Use, plagiarism, and other relevant legal and ethical concepts.
C. Online teaching best practices are established, disseminated to all personnel teaching online for the University, and assessed regularly. Personnel teaching online are provided professional development resources to develop strategies for implementing the best practices.
8. <u>Category: Student Support</u>
A. <i>Before</i> starting an online program, students are advised about the program to determine if they possess the self-motivation and commitment to learn at a distance.
B. <i>Prior</i> to registering for an online course or program students have access to information about admission requirements, tuition and fees, books and supplies, technology and proctoring requirements, and student support services. The online course/program site includes a description document outlining course/program goals, student learning assessment methods, textbook information, and other related course information, making course/program requirements transparent at time of registration.
C. Students are provided a way to interact with other students in an online community as a means to build community and commitment to the University's mission.
D. The University ensures that all distance education students, regardless of where they are located, are (1) provided with access to training and information they will need to access to library/learning resources adequate to support the courses they are taking and (2) are able to access such materials.

- E. The University ensures that all distance education students, regardless of where they are located, are provided with an orientation to the University's mission and identity and have ongoing opportunities to engage in related activities/resources.
- F. Student support services are provided in a manner accessible by distance students and student support personnel are available to address student questions, problems, and complaints throughout the duration of the course/program, including access to appropriate technical assistance and technical support staff.
- G. Students with disabilities enrolled in online courses or program are provided with support services in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

9. Category: Evaluation and Assessment

- A. A variety of data (academic and administrative information) are used to regularly evaluate program effectiveness and to guide changes toward continual improvement.
- B. A process is in place for the assessment of faculty and student support services.
- C. Course evaluations collect student feedback on course design and student/faculty engagement
- D. Recruitment for online education programs are examined and reviewed.
- E. Retention for online education programs are examined and reviewed.
- F. Documented process for determining credit hour allocation exists and is operational for all online courses.
- G. A process to examine parity for courses and programs taught in both distance and face-to-face formats is defined and operational.

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