# **Procedure 903: Online Learning**

Category: Instruction

Covered Individuals: CEI Employees and Students

Approved: 12/07/2020

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**903.1 Purpose Statement**

Online learning will be consistent with and in support of College of Eastern Idaho’s (CEI) mission of providing affordable quality education that meets the needs of students, regional employers, and the community. The college recognizes that distance education and online learning must meet the same high quality standards that exist for traditional classroom-bound education.

College of Eastern Idaho and the Online Learning Department directly contribute to the community college culture of teaching and learning to students from all levels, all ages, and walks of life. The benefits include providing access to a more diverse group of learners, extending education to all areas of rural eastern Idaho, and providing a quality alternative to the traditional face-to-face higher education model for students with this particular need.

**903.2 Definitions**

The U.S. Department of Education and Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) define Distance Education as follows:

Distance Education means education that uses one or more of the technologies listed below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include—

1. The Internet;
2. One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
3. Audio conferencing; or
4. Video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3).

**CEI Definitions of Online Course, Hyflex, Hybrid Course, and Face-to-Face Course**

* **Online Course (OLI):** An asynchronous online course is taught entirely online and does not require on-site meetings or live lectures. Students can access class materials, assignments, and interact with their classmates and instructor through Canvas. Course work can be completed on the student’s own schedule, but must meet deadlines set by the instructor. Online presentations and proctored tests may be required and will be defined during the registration process. Students must have access to a computer, reliable internet, headphones/speaker, microphone, and a web camera.
* **Hybrid Course (HYB):** A hybrid class is a combination of face-to-face classroom instruction and asynchronous online instruction. A portion of the instruction is delivered on-site, scheduled, in a classroom (between 25%-75%), and the remaining instruction is provided asynchronously online. Online proctored tests may be required and will be defined during the registration process.
* **Interactive Web Course (IWC):** An interactive web-conference course is offered synchronously (live lectures) using web-conferencing software. Class sessions are scheduled and virtually attended by students at specific dates and times. Students must have access to a computer, reliable internet, headphones/speaker, microphone, and web camera. All course content will be administered digitally and can be accessed from the learning management system. Online proctored tests may be required and will be defined during the registration process.
* **Hybrid-Interactive Web Course (HYBIWC):** An Hybrid-IWC course is a combination of face-to-face and synchronous online interactive web-conferencing (IWC) class instruction. Class sessions are scheduled and attended by students at specific dates and times both in-person and virtually (between 25% and 75%) depending on the course schedule. For the web conference portions, students are required to have reliable internet, computer/device, webcam and microphone. Online proctored tests may be required and will be defined during the registration process.
* **HyFlex Course (HFL):** Students taking a HyFlex course have the option to attend each regularly scheduled class lecture in person or online synchronously. All course content will be administered digitally and can be accessed from the learning management system (Canvas).  Online proctored tests may be required and will be defined during the registration process. Students must have access to a computer, reliable internet, headphones/speaker, microphone, and a web camera.
* **Face-to-Face/Traditional Course*:*** A course that meets face-to-face at regular meeting times and in a physical classroom or lab space; may utilize the college approved LMS as an enhancement for course materials and quizzes. The college approved LMS may be used to substitute regularly scheduled meetings up to 2 class periods due to illness, inclement weather, or scheduled conferences.

**903.3 Procedures**

**Faculty Qualifications and Governance of Curriculum for Online Courses**

Faculty requesting to teach a fully online course are required to show competence in online instruction by (1) completing the introduction to online teaching course and verified by the Dean of Online Learning and department Chairs/Division Managers and Deans OR (2) providing evidence of having taught a course from another institution that follows quality assurance standards such as Quality Matters™ for course design AND (3) presenting any new fully online course to the Academic Standards Committee for approval. Other factors may include, but not be limited to, approval from department Chairs/Division Managers and Deans, Vice President of Academics & Student Affairs, Dean of Online Learning, or prior annual evaluations of teaching.

**CEI Online Learning Department** **Services**

The CEI Online Learning Department supports the faculty and helps realize the college mission by providing the following services and support:

* Professional development opportunities for developing online courses.
* Workshops, information sessions and discussions, faculty peer groups, and in-office support for developing, creating, and teaching online courses.
* Instructional and Technical support of the LMS.
* Assistance with the appropriate pedagogical online teaching methods and technologies.

**Online Learning Technology**

As part of its mission, the Online Learning Department provides a secure environment for teaching and learning. All academic online courses are hosted through the college approved Learning Management System (LMS): Canvas and all users are required to use multifactor authentication to login. The LMS is designed to provide password protected secure access to course information, course materials, assignments/quizzes, grading, and communications between faculty and students. The Online Learning Department will provide faculty training to include services such as 1) the use of the LMS course shell for all courses that wish to utilize the college approved LMS, 2) training for development and implementation of hybrid courses, and 3) an introduction to online learning course and assistance in the development and implementation of fully online courses.

**Requirements and Expectations for Online Learning Faculty**

The NWCCU Distance Education Policy specifies that**,** “courses and programs offered via distance education maintain the same academic standards as those offered on the main campus.”

Online learning courses shall comply with all of the standard practices, procedures, and criteria which have been established for traditional in-the-classroom courses including but not limited to, faculty involvement with the Academic Standards Committee and departmental chairs at the level of course development and approval, selection of qualified faculty to teach the course, pedagogical determinations about appropriate class size, and oversight of all final course offerings by the appropriate faculty committee to ensure conformity with previously established traditions of course quality and relevance to programs.

The teaching of online courses is overseen department chairs and deans. The faculty ensure the rigor of online courses and programs (whether fully online, hyflex, hybrid, or IWC) and are responsible for the quality of instruction and the curriculum. The Academic Standards Committee in conjunction with Chairs/Division Managers, instructional Deans, Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs, and the Dean of Online along with his staff will review all fully online courses/programs and ensure that they enhance the learning opportunities at the college for students and are compatible with the college’s mission.

The Online Learning Department provides training regarding course design and digital accessibility, LMS training and assistance, implementation via online course work, onsite workshops, and individual consultations.

**Training of Faculty for Online Course Delivery**

In order to develop high quality online courses, faculty must have sufficient time to develop the course and to receive training and instructional design assistance in meeting quality standards used to deliver the course.

Instructional design support for faculty includes on-going orientation and training made available by the Online Learning Department. This training consists of departmental trainings, quality course indicators checklist, workshops and, if applicable, opportunities for one-on-one assistance.

Faculty wishing to develop or make substantial changes to an online course will coordinate with their department chair, following the criteria listed below, at least one semester prior to the launch of the course.

**Requirements for the Creation and Development of New Online, Hyflex, Hybrid, or IWC Courses**

If faculty wish to create and develop a new fully online, hyflex, hybrid, or IWC course, the following process must be completed:

1. The first step is for the instructor to speak with their Chair or Division Manager.
2. If there is agreement that the college is in *need* of such a class, the Chair/Division Manager will next move the request forward to the respective Dean and Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs for approval.
3. If all parties agree, the final step is a sign-off on the Online Course Guidelines by the Chair/Division Manager, Dean, and Dean of Online Learning. These forms can be found within the Online Learning Department.
4. The faculty member will proceed with the Online Course Creation Process and work with the Online Learning Department.

**Accessibility of Course Materials**

College of Eastern Idaho is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students. When adding course materials to the LMS, faculty are responsible and should make every effort to create accessible content using universal design techniques. For questions regarding course accessibility faculty should contact Disability Services and the Online Learning Department.

**Course Load, Compensation, Ownership of Materials, and Copyright**

Distance education, specifically fully online courses, are typically part of the faculty member’s regular teaching load, with the same rate of compensation as traditional courses. If a fully online course will be developed to serve in the future as an online course master template for the department’s future use with other faculty, the faculty member will have the option to work with her/his Chair/Division Manager and Dean to take a reduction in teaching load.

Works created by faculty members within the scope of their employment or through use of CEI resources shall belong to CEI. This paragraph covers, without limitation, any material capable of protection under state or federal law, including copyrights, trademarks, service marks, patents, and trade secrets. Faculty members agree to assign all right, title, and interest in and to such works to CEI. To the extent any such works were not created within the scope of employment or with CEI resources, the creator shall retain ownership.

Faculty must keep copyright laws, trademark, and licensing in mind when developing online courses. It is up to the individual faculty member to be familiar with copyright laws and policies and acquire the appropriate permissions to utilize copyrighted materials for online courses. When in doubt about copyright ownership, it is preferable to be overly cautious. If a faculty member is unable to obtain copyright permission, faculty should substitute other resources such as resources from public domains or creative commons.

**Evaluation of Faculty Teaching Online Learning Courses**

Fully online, hyflex, hybrid and IWC courses are currently evaluated on a per semester basis in the same manner and format as traditional courses and per campus policy.

The Chairs/Division Managers and Deans of General Education, Health Sciences and CTE will have the ability to enter an online course as an observer - to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the course, the materials, content, objectives, assessments, and teaching methods.

Chairs/Division Managers and Deans may also request a full-time member of the Online Learning Department to evaluate instructional design of online courses, and ensure that CEI approved online standards are being followed.

**Office Hours, Availability and Communication with Students**

* Online Office Hours***:*** Each faculty member is expected to maintain online office hours to accommodate student consultations and questions. These hours are to be posted in the syllabus and posted to the LMS. Faculty may use tools such as Zoom, Teams, Skype, or any form of online chat or instant messaging to actively engage with students as needed.
* Response Time:Faculty teaching a fully online course shall maintain a 48-hour maximum response time during the regular working school week (excluding holidays) for returning student emails. If there are extenuating circumstances that arise that make it difficult to communicate with students for a short period of time, notify the students via email and LMS and communicate this with your department Chair/Division Manager and Dean. Any items to be graded should be returned to the students no later than 5 days after the due date.
* Student Interaction: Fully online courses at CEI are expected to provide timely and appropriate interaction between faculty and students and among students. All students are expected to engage in the course materials and participate regularly. Multiple means of instructor-student interaction and student-student interaction are expected. Examples of this may include, faculty monitoring student course participation and utilizing the LMS retention tools, scheduling times for students to work in groups, and creating discussion forums for students to share ideas, contribute to discussion topics and work as peers and active learning assignments. The use of these engagement tools will increase interaction among students and between students and promote course engagement leading to discovery.

As directed by the U.S. Department of Education and the NWCCU faculty need to actively pursue instructor-student interactions to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor. Faculty should strive to meet the diverse needs of students and ensure active learning in fully online courses by incorporating a variety of course experiences that address more than one learning style.

**Student Integrity and Authentication**

College of Eastern Idaho uses a secure login and password student identification for email, self-service, and LMS access. At the time of enrollment, students are provided a unique username and password. This username and password is used for student identification and authentication purposes for online course work. This method is an attempt to ensure that the student who registers in a fully online course is the same student who participates in and completes the course for the associated credit. The college also utilizes a multi-factor authentication tool for secure login to all CEI systems, including email and the LMS.

**Proctoring for Online Assessments and Exams**

Contact the [CEI campus testing center](https://cei.edu/testing-center/online-proctoring) with any questions regarding policies and services involving the proctoring of online assessments and exams. The office can be reached by phone at (208) 535-5438 or by email at *testing.center@cei.edu.*

**Academic Honesty**

Students in all classes, regardless of delivery format, must adhere to College of Eastern Idaho’s Academic Honesty policy as published in the Student Handbook and college catalog.

**Student Privacy**

Student privacy in all courses, regardless of delivery format, is protected as per the policies and procedures relating to the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act](https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html) (FERPA).

**Student Support of LMS & Training**

Students should first contact their online faculty when experiencing issues with LMS or when experiencing issues with timed exams and graded assignments. The Online Learning Department and the CEI Help Desk staff cannot make changes to an LMS course without first having contact with the instructor of record.

For assistance with Canvas issues or questions, the college has contracted with Canvas 24X7 Support services to assist student and faculty with Canvas issues. All Canvas users can connect with Canvas support via phone or live chat means at their convenience. Students can contact the CEI Help Desk to receive assistance regarding their LMS account or with login issues. The Online Learning Department provides, and continues to develop, informational resources for online students. Resources are located on the [CEI online learning website](https://cei.edu/online/).

**903.4 Verification of Student Identity**

In accordance with 34 CFR 602.17(g) and 602/17(h), College of Eastern Idaho maintains an effective identity verification process for students enrolled in distance education courses and programs to establish that the student enrolled in such a course or program is the same person whose achievements are evaluated and credentialed. The institution ensures the identity verification process for distance education students protects student privacy and that students are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

College of Eastern Idaho offers asynchronous online, interactive web conference, hyflex, and hybrid courses, which fall under the definition of distance education, and this document applies to all programs beginning with the application for admission and continuing through a student’s final day at the institution.

All credit-bearing courses and programs offered through distance learning methods must verify that the student who registers for a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. One or more of the following methods must be used:

a)  A secure login and pass code;

b)  Proctored examinations; and/or

c) New or other technologies and practices

As related to 34 CFR §602.17(h), all methods of verifying student identity in distance learning must protect the privacy of student information. If any fees associated with the verification of student identity will be charged to students, they must be notified of these charges in writing at the time of registration or enrollment.

**Secure Login and Password**: Each College of Eastern Idaho student is assigned a unique username and password to log into the College’s Student Information System (SIS) and learning management system (currently Canvas). Students are responsible for providing their complete and true identity information in any identification verification process.The college utilizes a multi-factor authentication tool for secure login to all CEI systems, including email and the LMS.

**Proctored Examinations:** All digital education instructors have the option of deploying an exam using an online proctoring tool (currently Honorlock). For more information regarding Online Proctoring see the [CEI Testing Center Online Proctoring webpage](https://www.cei.edu/testing-center/online-proctoring). The use of proctored online exams is an option for digital education faculty when discussed with chairs and deans and advertised to students correctly prior to course enrollment periods. Use of such a service is extremely important to consider given the increasing attention on student authentication and the possibility of cheating.

The Vice President of Academic & Student Affairs is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy and that deans, department chairs, and program coordinators are informed of any changes in the policy in a timely fashion.

**Fees:** CEI does not currently charge any fees associated with online identity verification. If that changes, CEI will update this procedure to explain how students will are informed, in writing at the time of enrollment, of current and projected charges associated with the identity verification process.

**Responsibilities:** All users of the College’s learning management system are responsible for maintaining the security of usernames, passwords, and other access credentials as required. Access credentials may not be shared or given to anyone other than the user to whom they were assigned to for any reason. Users are responsible for any and all uses of their account. Users are responsible for changing passwords periodically to maintain security. Users are held responsible for knowledge of the information contained within the most recent college catalog as well as the Student Handbook. Failure to read college guidelines, requirements and regulations will not exempt users from responsibility.

**Students**: are responsible for providing complete and true information about themselves in any identity verification process, in accordance with the Academic Integrity and Honesty rules.

College systems that facilitate user access to college functions like registration and billing, course delivery, and student email are populated directly and automatically by the student information system. Accessing these systems require a student to authenticate using their network user account.

The Student Code of Conduct under the Academic Honesty heading explicitly prohibits all forms of cheating, plagiarism, and academic dishonesty. Additionally, the [Policy 304: Academic Integrity Code](https://cei.edu/hr/policies-procedures/student-affairs?p=304) located in the student catalog establishes rules and misuse of the representations of identity resources of CEI computing systems and accounts and clearly outlines user responsibility and misuse of college computing resources and accounts for this purpose. Failure to read and comply with College guidelines, requirements, and regulations will not exempt user from responsibility.

**Faculty:** Faculty teaching courses through distance education methods hold primary responsibility for ensuring that students comply with the College’s identity verification policy. As technology and personal accountability are not absolute in determining a student’s identity, faculty members are encouraged to design courses that use assignments and evaluations that support academic integrity. Changes in student behavior such as sudden shifts in academic performance or changes in writing style or language used in discussion groups or email may indicate academic integrity problems. Instructors routinely should use a variety of assessment instruments. As best practices suggest, faculty should routinely ask students to share in appropriate ways important ideas learned from texts and references, require research projects and paper assignments to be submitted to the plagiarism checking software adopted by the college.

**Learning Management Courses:** Academic course sections and rosters are populated automatically by the student information system each semester. Information is loaded daily to account for section changes or student adds and drops. Users may not create their own courses or accounts, ensuring that only those with valid network user accounts may access the system and that users may only access sections for which they are enrolled.

**903.5 Regular And Substantive Interaction**

##### **Procedure Applicability** Per federal law, institutions must ensure that the online courses for which students use federal financial aid have “regular and substantive interaction between students and instructors.” This procedure applies to College of Eastern Idaho (CEI) faculty and employees developing, offering, and engaging in online and distance education programs, courses and activities. The College offers online courses, which fall under the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of distance education, and this policy applies to all courses that are subject to the federal requirements for distance education.

**Training and Resources**  
The Online Learning Department will provide instructional design services, training and informational documents to assist instructors with course design.

**Compliance**  
Departments and employees are expected to comply with this policy when engaging in online courses/programs. Failure to comply could result in disciplinary action of employees, suspension of online courses, and/or financial loss of courses found in violation of this policy. Federal regulations related to online learning were used to guide this policy and any violation of this policy will be taken seriously.

Institutions failing to comply with regular and substantive interaction requirements could potentially lose eligibility for Title IV funds and could be required to return financial aid disbursed for courses found in violation.

##### **DEFINITIONS Distance Education:** The United States Department of Education defines distance education as follows:

1. Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (2)(i) through (iv) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously.
2. The technologies that may be used to offer distance education include—
   1. The internet;
   2. One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;
   3. Audio conference; or
   4. Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraph (2)(i) through (iii) of this definition.
3. For purposes of this definition, an **instructor** is an individual responsible for delivering course content and who meets the qualifications for instruction established by an institution’s accrediting agency.
4. For purposes of this definition, **substantive interaction** is engaging 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;
         2. assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework;
         3. providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
         4. facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or
         5. other instructional activities approved by the institution’s or program’s accrediting agency.
5. An institution ensures **regular interaction** between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student’s completion of a course or competency—
   * + - 1. providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and
         2. monitoring the student’s academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

A **week of instructional time** is any week in which—

1. At least one day of regularly scheduled instruction or examinations occurs, or, after the last scheduled day of classes for a term or payment period, at least one day of study for final examinations occurs; or
2. In a program offered using asynchronous coursework through distance education or correspondence courses, the institution makes available the instructional materials, other resources, and instructor support necessary for academic engagement and completion of course objectives; and
3. In a program using asynchronous coursework through distance education, the institution expects enrolled students to perform educational activities demonstrating academic engagement during the week.

##### **RESPONSIBILITIES** Instructors teaching online courses are responsible for complying with this policy and its associated federal regulations. Instructors teaching online courses are responsible for ensuring their courses are designed to facilitate regular and substantive interaction between instructors and students. Instructors may consult with the Online Learning Department to ensure that their online courses meet the above regular and substantive interaction requirements.

Each department or unit is responsible for ensuring instructors who teach online courses in their department comply with this policy and its associated regulations.

The Online Learning Department is responsible for creating and maintaining informational resources and trainings, as needed, covering regular and substantive interaction for instructors.

**903.6 Geographic Licensure Obligations**

CEI provides publications and information describing educational programs which include accurate information on national and/or state legal eligibility requirements for licensure or entry into an occupation or profession for which education and training are offered. Descriptions of unique requirements for employment and advancement in the occupation or profession shall be included in such materials.

To meet its ethical and legal obligations, CEI has developed procedures to ensure all students understand their geographic licensure implications before and during their programs.

* Any stakeholder can check the Professional Licensure Disclosure page (which links to all state licensure boards) to see if an Idaho license will transfer.
* When CEI receives an out-of-state application or a current student provides an out-of-state address, CEI sends them a disclosure letter explaining the licensure implications of their current state of residence.
* When any out-of-state student enrolls or a current student moves out of state, CEI makes a best faith effort to review program curricular alignment in order to determine if our programs will meet other state's licensure requirements, and the determination is published on the Professional Licensure Disclosure page.
* To ensure that CEI knows where its students reside, each student can offer both a temporary and permanent address when they enroll. During each semester's enrollment, the student receives a pop-up reminding them to update their address.
* CEI files State Authorization Compliance Documentationannually
* The catalog also provides state licensure guidance.
* As per NC-SARA Guideline, CEI provides State Complaint Process information on its website.