Online Course Design Standards Policy

Version: 1.0   **Responsible University Official:** Provost

Effective Date: October 16, 2019

1.0   Introduction

To ensure quality, Saint Louis University commits to the standards for distance education as outlined in University Policy for Distance Education and the Saint Louis University Online Course Design Rubric. The standards are based on the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions' (C-RAC) Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education and have been developed specifically with SLU's context and mission in mind. Adherence to the Online Course Design Rubric is determined via the Online Course Design Peer Review Process. Saint Louis University faculty with experience in online instruction serve as Peer Reviewers for the Online Course Design Peer Review Process. All courses must pass the Online Course Design Peer Review Process prior to being offered to students for academic credit. Online courses are required to undergo Peer Review every five years using the current Online Course Design Standards.

2.0   Scope

This policy applies to all current and future distance education courses offered by Saint Louis University. Courses that do not adhere to this policy are not eligible to be offered online until all required criteria in the Online Course Design Rubric are met.

3.0   Definitions

This policy employs definitions used in the University Policy for Distance Education.

4.0   Policy Statement

1.   **Online Course Design Quality Requirements**
   1.1   All existing and new online courses must adhere to the Online Course Design Standards as outlined in the Online Course Design Rubric.
   1.2   Online courses existing prior to the approval of this policy must undergo the Online Course Design Peer Review Process and meet the Online Course Design Standards as outlined in the Online Course Design Rubric.
   1.3   All new online courses must undergo the Online Course Design Peer Review Process and meet the Online Course Design Standards as outlined in the Online Course Design Rubric prior to student offering. In rare, extenuating circumstances, a course may be offered without having met all required

rubric criteria, but the course will not be offered again until it has successfully passed the Online Course Design Peer Review Process.

1.4   Online courses are required to undergo the Online Course Design Peer Review Process every five years using the current Online Course Design Standards as outlined in the Online Course Design Rubric.

1.5   Previously approved courses that will be taught by a different instructor:
a. in which the course site in the LMS is duplicated and to which minor changes are made to the course site do not require re-review.
b. in which the course site in the LMS is duplicated and to which substantial changes are made to the course site require successful completion of the Online Course Design Peer Review Process to ensure alignment with the Online Course Design Standards.
c. in which the instructor creates a new course site in the LMS require successful completion of the Online Course Design Peer Review Process to ensure alignment with the Online Course Design Standards.

1.6   Online courses must be ready for the Online Course Design Peer Review Process no later than four weeks prior to the course start date.

1.7   A course may be reviewed by the Online Course Design Peer Review Process at any time at the request of the Associate Provost for Distance Education.

5.0   Procedure

The Distance Education Office oversees the Online Course Design Peer Review Process. The Process provides formative feedback to instructors regarding alignment with criteria in the Online Course Design Rubric and the Online Course Design Standards Policy.
Prior to teaching a new online course:
- The instructor contacts the Distance Education Office.
- The Distance Education Office provides information about the Online Course Design Rubric, the Online Course Design Peer Review Process, and support resources to assist with online course development.
- The instructor notifies the Distance Education Office when the course is ready for review (no later than four weeks prior to the course start date).
- The Distance Education Office assigns a Peer Reviewer.
- The Peer Reviewer reviews the course syllabus and course site in the LMS.
- No later than two weeks before the course start date, the Peer Reviewer provides feedback to the Distance Education Office.
- The Distance Education Office provides feedback to the instructor.
- The instructor makes changes to the course as necessary prior to the course start date as necessary.
- The instructor notifies the Distance Education Office when changes are completed.

These procedures were piloted in the Winter 2018-2019 and Summer 2019 Sessions, and all new online courses are already using these procedures. Eventually, all online courses offered at SLU will be expected to meet these standards and will undergo the Online Course Design Peer Review Process. (Note: During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Associate Provost for Distance Education and the Distance Education Office will work with colleges, schools, and centers to develop a timeline and process for addressing previously-offered online courses and programs to ensure alignment with University standards.)

6.0   Approvals

This policy was:

1. Approved by Distance Education Advisory Committee*: October 11, 2019*

2. Approved by CADD: *October 16, 2019*

3. Approved by Interim Provost Chet Gillis: *October 16, 2019*