PSME ONLINE COURSE STANDARDS

# BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At the PSME Division Meeting on January 15, 2016, the PSME Division decided that each department would have its own online course standards document. The documents for each department follow.

* CHEMISTRY, PHYSICS, ENGINEERING, NANOTECHNOLOGY, ASTRONOMY and PHYSICAL SCIENCE (PSE) DEPARTMENTS:

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| *The standards developed for online courses described below are not guidelines for instructor evaluation. These standards may be found in the negotiated Faculty Agreement under Appendix J-1*[*http://fa.fhda.edu/agreement\_2013-2016/Appendix/APPENDIX%20J1.pdf*](http://fa.fhda.edu/agreement_2013-2016/Appendix/APPENDIX%20J1.pdf) *“Administrative and Peer Evaluation Form-Faculty” and the “Guidelines for Administrator and Peer Review of Online Courses” (*[*http://www.foothill.edu/staff/tenure/Guidelines-J1.pdf*](http://www.foothill.edu/staff/tenure/Guidelines-J1.pdf)*).*The following are recommended minimal standards for online courses taught by Chemistry, Physics, Engineering, Nanotechnology, Astronomy and Physical Science departments at Foothill College. It is recognized that for some courses, these standards will be exceeded. All standards expected for a given PSME course will be specified on Distance Addenda.Course Delivery* Log in at least once a day, five days a week.
* Respond to student questions (public or private) within 24 -48 hours of posting, Monday through Friday.
* Evaluate submitted work within one week of due date or actual submission, whichever is later.
* Post and enforce the policy that faculty will monitor weekly student engagement up at least through week 7 or the W deadline. Those students who do not participate for more than two consecutive weeks or otherwise show signs that they are not participating in good faith in the course are subject to being dropped.
* Create and nurture a culture of academic integrity, support student efforts to work with integrity, and when necessary, report cheating and plagiarism incidents to the dean of students.
* Teach most, if not all, of your course within the CMS, not email, in order to maintain a coherent and easily accessible record of all course activities and ensure that all students can observe class interactions as much as possible.
* Online instructors are reminded that they are subject to the same attendance policies as face-to-face instructors. In particular, online instructors must notify the dean and request a substitute if an unforeseen occurrence (e.g. illness) prevents them from carrying out their duties.
* These guidelines should be posted in the course syllabus so that students know what is expected of them and what they should expect from the instructor.

Course Organization* Content should reflect a substantial amount of instructor-authored content and be largely posted in the Modules section of the CMS. Publisher provided resources must not represent the majority of the content. Instructor presence must be evident in most of the content posted online and in any clarification of content provided to students.
* The amount of content *that the instructor authors* should be such that it requires the average student to spend about four hours per week reading/examining/studying that "module" material. This is based on four lecture-hour courses. It can be adjusted for smaller or larger numbers of lecture-hours based on the course outline-of-record.
* In addition to time spent with instructor authored content, online courses must be sufficiently rigorous as to require at least twice as many hours per week as there are units in the course (i.e. 8 hours for a 4 unit course), as required of in-person courses.
* Weekly (or regular) assignments should be posted in the Assignment/Tests section of the CMS. There must be ongoing assignments posted throughout the quarter. Assignment posting and due-dates should be appropriately paced and follow a weekly schedule that is provided to students at start of quarter (ideally on syllabus).
* The instructor must provide students with the correct answers to exams, so that students may correct their mistakes. This may be done either through direct discussion with students or through prepared keys.

Course Preparation and Design* Online education courses, resources and materials must be designed and delivered in such a way that the level of communication and course-taking experience is the same for students with or without disabilities.
* On the first day of the term, the course must be 1/3 loaded with content. Instructor must continue this substantial lead over student use throughout the quarter (i.e. content must be 2/3 loaded by week four and fully loaded by week eight).
* Final grades must be based on completed assignments and exams with associated documentation. Student assessments must be designed and delivered in such a way as to prevent fraud and to protect the integrity of the course.
* Course must be designed in such a way as to encourage and motivate participation in Discussion forums.
* Course grades must be based on a balance of exams and assignments. Graded assignments prevent the online course from operating inadvertently as an avenue for credit-by-exam.Proctored exams ensure academic integrity and are required of many PSME online courses.
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* MATH DEPARTMENT

**Foothill College Department of Mathematics**

**Policy Statement for Online Mathematics Courses**

The mathematics faculty recognize that online teaching allows students significant freedoms in the pursuit of their academic goals, and allows instructors significant freedoms in helping students realize their goals. We also recognize that online teaching offers unique educational opportunities and is subject to unique potential pitfalls. We have adopted this policy to increase the chances that online mathematics courses take advantage of the opportunities and avoid the pitfalls.

Among the pitfalls is the potential for fraud. While not unique to online teaching, nor to mathematics, we recognize that this issue is especially germane to our field. We strongly believe that the integrity of our courses and programs, online as well as traditional, would be irreparably compromised, to the great detriment of our students, if we fail to take steps to address the potential for educational fraud in online mathematics courses.

We recognize that some of our recommendations could be construed as limits on our academic freedom, but we accept these limits as necessary to take advantage of the other freedoms that online teaching affords while preserving the integrity of our courses and programs.

These suggested guidelines are developed by the math department to assist faculty in teaching online.  They are not guidelines for evaluation.  For evaluation documents, please see Appendix J-1 (<http://fa.fhda.edu/agreement_2013-2016/Appendix/APPENDIX%20J1.pdf>), "Administrative and Peer Evaluation Form - Faculty", and the Guidelines for Administrator and Peer Review of Online Courses (<http://www.foothill.edu/staff/tenure/Guidelines-J1.pdf>) for faculty evaluation.

**Suggested Guidelines for Online Mathematics Courses**

The mathematics faculty recommend that any instructor teaching a mathematics course online incorporate these guidelines into course policies and communicate them to students.

1. Content and Communication
	1. Instructors are reminded that the course outline of record governs course content.
	2. Asynchronous online communication between students and instructor should occur five days per week.
	3. The combination of online content and communication should be sufficient to replace the traditional face-to-face interaction between students and instructor.
	4. Guidelines regarding regular & effective contact, attendance documentation, and accessibility compliance can be viewed at <http://www.foothill.edu/fga/faculty_responsibilities.php>
2. Course Integrity
	1. The instructor should schedule proctored assessments.
	2. For purposes of this policy, *proctored assessment* means an in-person assessment where the instructor or a representative verifies the identity of each student taking the assessment.
	3. Acceptable forms of identification for proctored assessments are a passport, U.S. driver's license, or government issued photo identification.
	4. Each instructor's course design and grading policies should be put into place with an eye toward ensuring, to the best of their ability, that any student receiving credit for an online course is the student who completed the required work and took the required exams. For example, some online math instructors require each student to pass each proctored exam in order to pass the course, while others require a passing average on proctored exams.  It is highly recommended that a student average at least 60% on proctored assessments in order to earn a C or better in the course.
3. Final Exam
	1. A final exam should be given during the scheduled final exam week.
	2. The final exam should be proctored and require students to establish their identity according to the policy for all proctored assessments.
	3. The time and location of the final exam should be one of the scheduled times for online classes and be announced on the first day of the term.
	4. The instructor should make accommodations for any student not able to attend the scheduled final exam due to conflict with another Foothill class, provided the student gives the instructor reasonable notice of the conflict.

*Revised January, 2016*

# COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

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| The instructor of a fully online CS course at Foothill will be expected to engage in the following activities to ensure student success.Course Delivery* Log in at least three times per day (at reasonably distributed times), five days a week.
* Respond to student questions (public or private) within 18 hours of posting, Monday through Friday.
* Evaluate submitted work within one week of due date or actual submission, whichever is later.
* Post and enforce the policy that students who do not participate for more than two consecutive weeks or otherwise show signs that they are not participating in good faith in the course are subject to being dropped.
* Monitor for cheating, copying or plagiarism and take disciplinary action when evidence warrants it.
* Teach most, if not all, of your course within the CMS, not email, in order to maintain a coherent and easily accessible record of all course activities and ensure that all students can observe class interactions as much as possible.
* Online instructors are reminded that they are subject to the same attendance policies as face-to-face instructors. In particular, online instructors must notify the dean and request a substitute if an unforeseen occurrence (e.g. illness) prevents them from carrying out their duties.
* These guidelines should be posted in the course syllabus so that students know what is expected of them and what they should expect from the instructor.

Course Organization* Content should reflect a substantial amount of instructor-authored content and be largely posted in the Modules section of the CMS. For example, one page of assigned textbook reading is not instructor-authored content nor is textbook supplemental material authored by a publisher.
* The amount of content *that the instructor authors* should be such that it requires the average student to spend about four hours per week reading/examining/studying that "module" material. This is based on four lecture-hour course. It can be adjusted for smaller or larger numbers of lecture-hours based on the course outline-of-record.
* Weekly (or regular) assignments should be posted in the Assignment/Tests section of the CMS. Upon the due date for one assignment, another assignment must be available for the student to start work on. The week of the midterm and the week of the final exam are the only possible exceptions.
* The instructor must have a model solution available for all required assignments.

Course Preparation and Design* On the first day of the term, the course must be 1/3 loaded with content if this is the first time the course is offered on-line by this instructor, and 100% loaded if the course has been previously offered on-line by the instructor.
* Final grades must be based at least 50% on complete assignments and associated documentation.
* Course must be designed in such a way as to encourage and motivate participation in Discussion forums.
* Exams and quizzes must not account for more than 30% of the grade.
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