

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE: Online and Blended Course Design**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 11, 2007

**RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION:** Vice-President Academics and Research, Academic Departments, Instructional Designer, Instructors

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### **CROSS REFERENCE**

Course Outline Policy, Program Review Policy, Partnership and Collaboration Policy, eCampusAlberta Quality Assurance Standards, Distance Education Policy

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Grande Prairie Regional College is committed to ensuring that courses offered by online and blended delivery methods meet or exceed evolving design standards for these delivery modes. We recognize that students in such courses have a critical reliance on the information and instructional resources that are posted in online course spaces. We further recognize that the external reputation of Grande Prairie Regional College relies, in part, on the caliber of our online instruction.

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### **DEFINITIONS**

In the context of this policy the following definitions are used:

1. “Blended Learning” – Course design that incorporates core and substantive elements of both synchronous (face-to-face, videoconference, audiographic conference, or teleconference) and online asynchronous delivery. In general, a course will not be considered “blended” unless some portion of the regular synchronous time commitment is replaced with online learning activities.
  2. “Online Learning” – Course design that is fundamentally asynchronous and online with little or no expectation of synchronous interaction. Online courseware may be designed for either cohort or student-paced delivery.
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### **PROCEDURES/RULES STATEMENT**

1. All online and blended instruction, offered by or through Grande Prairie Regional College will be subject to quality assurance standards and review.

- 1.1 Quality Assurance standards for Online and Blended Delivery courses will conform to the Quality Assurance standards set by eCampusAlberta which may be supplemented from time to time at the direction of the Vice President Academic
  - 1.1.1 Current standards will be posted on the official Grande Prairie Regional College Web site.
  - 1.1.2 Standards will encompass, at minimum, all of the following:
    - 1.1.2.1. Course and technical information
    - 1.1.2.2. Course evaluation and pilot testing
    - 1.1.2.3. Course objectives
    - 1.1.2.4. Instructional content, activities, and interactivity
    - 1.1.2.5. Assessment activities
    - 1.1.2.6. FOIP and Intellectual Property considerations
    - 1.1.2.7. Student and faculty support
    - 1.1.2.8. Review and update requirements
2. Grande Prairie Regional College will assist course developers with training and instructional design services. Instructors and developers preparing materials for online and blended delivery are strongly encouraged to make use of training and consultation services.
3. Online courseware will be subject to a review process before it can be used for delivery to students.
  - 3.1 Academic departments will ensure that a peer review process is followed for online course content.
  - 3.2 Where possible, online courseware will be pilot tested with a cohort of students from whom content and usability evaluations will be gathered. Where such pilot testing is not feasible, online courseware will be tested by college staff not directly involved in its development.
  - 3.3 The Instructional Designer will review online and blended courses for compliance with the overall Quality Assurance Standards before such courses are released for regular enrolment.
4. Online courseware will be reviewed before every iteration of any course with major updates of course content scheduled at intervals not exceeding three years.
  - 4.1 Prior to each iteration of any online course, it will be the responsibility of the instructor to ensure that routine updates are made to course outlines,

support information, course-related dates and similar resources and that the elements of the course are fully functional.

- 4.2 In addition to the standard college procedures for instructor evaluation, all online courseware will incorporate student evaluations of support and usability.
  - 4.3 Major reviews of course content and design will be carried out at three year intervals and more frequently where the nature of the course is inherently time-sensitive. Such reviews will encompass the following:
    - 4.3.1 Course design
    - 4.3.2 Instructional materials
    - 4.3.3 Learning and assessment activities
    - 4.3.4 Communication strategies and interactivity
    - 4.3.5 FOIP and Intellectual Property considerations
  5. Where online or blended courseware is a part of a program delivered in collaboration with other institutions, and where course transferability is not already covered by the Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfers, GPRC will ensure that courses from other institutions within the program are subject to Quality Assurance standards of similar character to our own.
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