**Policy: Regular and Substantive Interaction**

**Date Adopted: 4/6/23**

**Revision Date: n/a**

**Responsible Office(s): UMOnline**

**References:** [34 CFR 600.02](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600), [University of Montana Procedure 201.70: Principles of Quality Online Courses](https://www.umt.edu/faculty-senate/procedures/ascrc-procedures-201/procedure-online-201.70.pdf), [Montana University System Principles of Quality Online Course Design](https://mus.edu/online/quality-principles.html),[Northwest Commission on College and Universities Distance Education Policies](https://nwccu.app.box.com/s/mafhwd08hcz4jrtj9nrz9dglr2f8vgqa)

Policy:

The University of Montana (UM) recognizes the need for faculty members who are teaching distance[[1]](#footnote-1) education courses to be made aware of the definitions, core principles, and curricular standards regarding *regular and substantive interaction[[2]](#footnote-2)* as specified in 34 CFR 600.02 and in the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) Distance Education Policies.

This policy ensures that:

1) UM faculty members are informed of the definitions, core principles, and requirements regarding regular and substantive interaction. (i.e. Informed Consent)

2) UM faculty members are provided with resources/ strategies to ensure the core principles and requirements of substantive and regular interaction are integrated into distance courses (i.e. Resources)

Recognizing that distance education is a rapidly evolving sector within higher education, this policy will remain foundational for the effective operations of credit-bearing distance education courses and programs. The procedures accompanying this policy will be updated on a regular basis to reflect the evolution of best practices with regard to distance education.

Procedure:

1. Informed Consent: UM utilizes the following mechanisms to inform faculty members teaching distance education courses of the definitions, core principles, and curricular standards regarding regular and substantive interaction:

a. Instructional Design Onboarding: Faculty members teaching distance education courses are encouraged to meet with an Instructional Designer (ID) prior to the onset of instruction to review the Montana University Systems (MUS) Principles of Quality Online Course Standards and other best practices in instructional design including an overview of substantive and regular interaction.

b. Direct Messaging: Prior to the beginning of each term all instructors (regardless of modality) receive an e-mail message from the Provost’s office regarding best practices in instructional design that includes a definition and overview of regular and substantive interaction.

2. Resources: The following self-paced, self-enrollable online tutorials and other resources are provided to instructors to help them implement regular and substantive interaction:

1. [**Best Practices for Online Instruction**](https://moodle.umt.edu/course/view.php?id=53166): This tutorial presents the core principles of quality online instruction and includes specific tips and Moodle tools for how to implement best practices in an online course.
2. [**Engaging Teaching Practices**](https://moodle.umt.edu/course/view.php?id=26971): An introduction to how students learn, accessibility requirements, principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and strategies for engaging students.
3. [**UMOnline Course Development Tutorial**](https://moodle.umt.edu/course/view.php?id=36455): This is a good place to start in preparing to teach online and covers considerations in design and development of a course.
4. [**UMOnline Short Courses**](https://moodle.umt.edu/course/view.php?id=48250): This is a collection of recorded workshops that the UMOnline team present each semester. Workshops include assessment and instructor feedback best practices among others that promote engagement and interaction.
5. [**Getting Started with Panapto**](https://moodle.umt.edu/course/view.php?id=32102)**:** This tutorial explores ways to enrich online courses using Panopto, UM’s video capturing and editing platform. Panopto provides features such as bookmarking, integrated quizzes and discussion opportunities.
6. [**Moodle Basics for Faculty**](https://moodle.umt.edu/course/view.php?id=28752): Covers everything from basics to advanced features in Moodle. This is a comprehensive Moodle resource.
7. [**Regular and Substantive Interaction Website**](https://www.umt.edu/umonline/umonline-faculty-support/rsiupdate_2023.php): Provides a definition of regular and substantive interaction standards and strategies for faculty on how to incorporate those standards into their distance education curriculum.

 Links to these online tutorials are available on the [**Moodle home page**](https://moodle.umt.edu/) under Tools for Success, Faculty Resources tab.

1. Definition of distance education: Education that uses one or more types of technology to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor synchronously or asynchronously. The following types of technology may be used for distance instruction: Internet; satellite or wireless communication; and audio and video conferencing. Source: IPEDS Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System. (n.d.). Distance Education in IPEDS. Retrieved February 2, 2023 from <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/use-the-data/distance-education-in-ipeds> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Definition of substantive and regular interaction: 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 : (i) Providing direct instruction; (ii) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework; (iii) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency; (iv) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or (v) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.

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: (i) 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 (ii) 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. Source: National Archives Code of Federal Regulations. (n.d.). Retrieved February 8, 2023 from <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)