

## Proposed changes for the spring 2015 approval criteria

At the close of each approval review cycle, the OSPI's Digital Learning Department (DLD) gathers feedback about its processes and criteria from applicants and reviewers. Feedback, questions, comments, and suggested changes were vetted by DLD staff to generate this draft of proposed changes for the spring 2015 approval review cycle.

Drafted changes include:

- insertions corresponding to proposed revisions to [WAC 392-502](#),
- insertions for the sake of clarity or to simplify criterion intent,
- designation of criteria as "demo reliant," and
- omission of statements that appear redundant or impertinent to the intention of the criterion.

Comments and suggestions will be accepted through November 1, 2014 and may be submitted to the DLD by email to [Leslie.St.Pierre@k12.wa.us](mailto:Leslie.St.Pierre@k12.wa.us).

## Assurances

### ~~WASHINGTON STATE CERTIFICATED TEACHER REQUIREMENTS~~

All instruction delivered to Washington State students is delivered by Washington state certificated teachers who (A) are assigned to instruct courses in a manner which meets the "Highly Qualified" definition under the No Child Left Behind Act and in a manner which meets the requirements set forth in [WAC 181-82, and \(B\) are evaluated annually using the revised evaluative criteria and four-level rating system established in RCW 28A.405.100.](#) The applicant acknowledges that OSPI approval covers only courses delivered to Washington state students and delivered by Washington state certificated teachers.

### HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT

All of the applicant's high school courses advertised as being worth high school credit are eligible for high school credit per WAC 180.51.050. (Final decisions regarding the awarding of high school credit shall be governed by RCW 28A.[250.050 \(2\).](#))

### CURRICULUM ADOPTION

Instructional materials used by online school programs in online courses or course work must be approved pursuant to school board policies adopted in accordance with [RCW 28A.320.230.](#)

### RESPONSIBILITY

The online provider retains responsibility for the quality of courses, web systems, and content offered, regardless of any third-party contractual arrangements, partnerships or consortia, contributing to the content or delivery of the online courses or programs.

### ALTERNATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The online school program agrees that all programs delivered as alternative learning experiences comply with the requirements of WAC 392-121-182. The online course provider agrees to disclose to OSPI the manner in which it supports the requirements of WAC 392-121-182 for online courses delivered outside of an online school program.

## ASSESSMENT

The [applicant online school program](#) agrees to comply with the state assessment requirements, including, but not limited to, the requirements of [RCW 28A.655](#) and [WAC 392-121-182](#), as applicable.

## Criteria

**A6. Readability of course content and materials:** Readability levels, written language assignments, and mathematical requirements are appropriate for the course content.

Evidence shows that in the course design process, all course content – including instructional content and explanations – is written at appropriate readability levels for the grade level of the student audience, and readability formulas are used to identify the readability level. For math courses, the evidence shows that mathematical language is written at the appropriate level for the intended audience. [District programs should disclose the manner by which their district curriculum adoption process addressed the determination of readability of any curriculum or course content outsourced from another provider.](#)

**A8. Consistent work flow:** Course work, including assignments, reading, assessments, and activities are structured to promote consistent effort throughout the term.

[Evidence may include documentation which describes an estimate of the expected amount of time spent by the student, per unit or activity, within each course.](#)

**A9. Unbiased content and instruction:** The course content is accurate and free of any bias.

Evidence shows that in the course design process, a procedure is used to eliminate bias. [District programs should disclose the manner by which their district curriculum adoption process addressed the determination of bias in any curriculum or course content outsourced from another provider.](#)

**A10.\* Variety of instructional methods:** A variety of instructional methods are used within the class structure and course content to promote a student-centered learning environment that addresses different learning styles.

[Evidence shows how the course offers multiple and varied kinds of learning experiences for acquiring knowledge or skill.](#)

**C1.\* Grading policies:** Grading policies and practices are explicitly stated and presented to the student.

The policies include a grading scale that defines letter grades and/or weights, if applicable. As part of the grading policy, student participation – if required – is clearly defined. Any penalties that may be assessed to grades and/or extra credit opportunities are also identified within the policy. If regular contact with the teacher is required as part of the course, clear expectations for meeting this requirement are posted within the course.

**C4. Acceptable Use Policy:** A clearly stated technology Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) is posted on the course provider's website, ~~and/or~~ in the learning management system, [or in the student handbook](#).

**C5. Discipline policies:** A clearly defined discipline policy and procedure is posted on the course provider's website, ~~and/or~~ in the learning management system, [or in the student handbook](#) to identify and deal with inappropriate student behavior and issues of discipline.

**D1. Course development quality assurance:** The provider uses an internal review process verifying course reliability, completeness, and effectiveness.

Courses are developed and assessed by a standardized quality assurance protocol which addresses aspects such as course reliability, completeness, and effectiveness, prior to student participation; ongoing review and revision are managed by staff who [manage-process](#) feedback about courses. [For any curriculum or course content outsourced from another provider, district programs should disclose the manner by which their district curriculum adoption process addressed the provider's quality assurance procedures.](#)

**D2. Course maintenance:** Planned, scheduled course maintenance (updates, revisions, etc) is conducted to ensure course content timeliness and accuracy, as well as functionality.

[For any curriculum or course content outsourced from another provider, district programs should disclose the manner by which their district curriculum adoption process addressed the provider's practice of ongoing maintenance.](#)

**D3. Feedback gathering and implementation:** Feedback is solicited from a variety of sources about various aspects of the program, including the quality of the course design, content, instruction, support systems, and/or infrastructure; findings are used as basis for improvement.

The provider exhibits regularly conducted course evaluations which gather input from students and other various constituents who may include teachers, staff, content experts, instructional designers, and outside reviewers. ~~Feedback collected may pertain to the quality of the course design, content, instruction, support systems, and infrastructure.~~ [District programs should disclose how local procedures provide for ongoing evaluation of the general program.](#)

**D4. Provider transparency:** Results of regularly conducted evaluations of courses are posted or otherwise noted as available upon request.

~~District programs outsourcing curriculum or course content should may refer to their provider's disclosure of the results of regularly conducted evaluations and/or also to their own program evaluations.~~

**E1. Technology skills:** Expected technology skills are disclosed prior to enrollment in a course.

~~Technology skill requirements are identified in the course description or during the registration process and are made available to students before they begin.~~ Technology skills include any skills necessary to

be successful in any online course (keyboarding, web navigation, etc.) and any skills (coding, photo editing, etc.) necessary for the specific class.

**E2. Student-facing course demonstrations:** The provider offers demonstrations of its courses and programs that are designed to give prospective students an understanding of the student experience and participation expectations.

**E3. Online student orientations:** Required training and online support is provided to students to aid them in navigating the online environment.

Evidence should include demo access to the online student orientation. The orientation leaves students with an understanding of how to efficiently use the courseware system and complete all the technical aspects of participating in the online course/program (i.e., communicating with the online teacher, submitting assignments and assessments, participating in group work and/or discussions, etc). Student participation requirements may be exhibited by a policy that does not allow the student to progress into the academic portion of the course, by omission of points from the student's overall course grade, etc.

**G2. System technology requirements:** Disclosure of program- and course-specific hardware, web browser, and software requirements is made prior to enrollment.

~~All hardware, web browser, and software requirements are identified in the course/program description or information disclosed during the student registration process and made available to students before they begin.~~

**G4. Technical issue resolution:** The provider uses monitoring protocols and mechanisms which assure quality ~~the user is contacted within 24 hours to resolve~~ technical problems are resolved in a timely manner ~~resolutions are provided within one school day.~~

**I6. Enrollment-Financial procedures:** The provider uses established protocols for handling enrollment fees and payments.

District providers should show evidence of proper procedures for handling enrollments, fees, and payments. This may include the claiming of state funding, ALE, and choice transfers. Non-district providers should show evidence of procedures and mechanisms by which fees are gathered for students enrolling in online courses.