

The Framework for Online Instruction Program Endorsement Guidelines

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**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
www.education.pa.gov



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DEFINITION OF AN ENDORSEMENT CERTIFICATE

Following approval by the Department, baccalaureate or graduate degree granting institutions, alone, or in cooperation with other institutions, community colleges or school entities, may offer short programs (12 credits) that lead to the Program Endorsement. The Program Endorsement documents knowledge in new and emerging areas where formal certification does not exist. The Program Endorsement is intended to improve a teacher's skills in dealing with complex classroom settings. These endorsements are added to existing Level I or Level II Certificates but are not required to perform service in these areas.

INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE INSTRUCTION ENDORSEMENT GUIDELINES

This document describes the professional knowledge, skills, and competencies that candidates will learn by completing a sequence of courses and field experiences. In addition to specific requirements and competencies, these guidelines discuss the Online Instruction Endorsement Program design, candidate competencies, field experiences and any prerequisite certificates needed by the candidate.

All endorsement programs must include some component of field experiences. Field experiences are defined as a range of formal, required school and community activities participated in by candidates who are enrolled in educator preparation programs. These activities generally include supervision and mentorship of a teacher with expertise in the endorsement area. Effective field experiences provide candidates with increasing exposure to online learning situations and school settings under the guidance of program faculty and trained mentors throughout the preparation program.

Program providers must demonstrate:

- How they implement field experiences;
- The duration of a candidate's field experiences;
- How these experiences are closely integrated with coursework and assessment practices; and
- Program goals.

Prerequisite for Online Instruction Endorsement Program

To be admitted into an Online Instruction Endorsement Program, candidates must have completed a baccalaureate program and/or hold an Instructional I or Instructional II Pennsylvania certificate.

OVERVIEW OF ONLINE INSTRUCTION ENDORSEMENT

Online instruction has become an essential tool for instructors to engage students and provide electronically supported learning opportunities. According to research from the Sloan Survey, now Babson, by Allen and Seaman, “The growth of online courses and programs has increased the need for faculty to become comfortable with online teaching and gain the necessary skills to make online courses a success. The evidence: There is no single approach being taken by institutions in providing training for their teaching faculty.” (Allen & Seaman 2011).

Students, parents, and local education agencies are selecting alternate options for student learning. The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL 2013) found: “There were an estimated 1,816,400 enrollments in distance-education courses in K-12 school districts in 2009 – 2010, almost all of which were online courses. Of these enrollments, 74% were in high schools. Online courses with the highest level of enrollment fall under the categories of credit recovery (62%), dual enrollment (47%), and advanced placement (29%). This enrollment estimate does not include students attending most full-time online schools; approximately 200,000 full-time students in 2009 – 2010 and 275,000 full-time students in 2011 – 2012.” (iNACOL 2013).

The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) has established a set of eleven National Standards for Quality Online Teaching designed to provide a quality of excellence for online teaching instructors and programs. These standards are combined to guide the online teaching endorsement that facilitates an outstanding and balanced program that prepares and produces qualified, competent instructors for online teaching and learning.

The standards require that:

- “Online teachers demonstrating the knowledge of the basic foundations of current best teaching practices, researched instructional strategies, understanding current pedagogy and technology and continuing their own learning;
- Online instructors are committed to engaging students through active learning while building a relationship of trust through high expectations and regular feedback;
- The online instructor models ethical, legal, and safe behavior in relation to computer use with the understanding of a wide-range of technology;
- The online instructor must be equipped to accommodate all students and take into account the need for diversity by incorporating accommodations and monitoring all students through valid and reliable assessments;
- The assessment data drives the instruction and provides teacher reflection and student feedback;
- The online teacher forms professional relationships that build communication, collaboration, and community; and
- This endorsement helps instructors transfer their knowledge and skill set into the 21st century” (iNACOL 2013).

The Online Teaching Endorsement is designed for post-baccalaureate candidates that have an Instructional I or Instructional II Pennsylvania teaching certificate. This is a competency-based 3 sequence of courses that consists of 12 credit hours that are designed to prepare teachers in blended and online instruction.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The professional core courses, competencies, and experiences for the Online Instruction Endorsement Program should be designed to address the specific set of issues, knowledge and competencies that are relevant to teaching and learning in the online environment. The instructors must use research-based best practices in distance education and instructional technologies to assist learners in meeting instructional objectives. The program will consist of a series of courses with a culminating field experience.

The program design must describe clearly how the relevant set of knowledge, skills and competencies inform the program design. The application must also indicate how the institution will assess if candidates have acquired the required knowledge, skills and competencies.

It is recognized that online instruction is an emerging and effective mode of teaching and learning. The candidate will not only be able to perform the duties related to online instruction, but will also be developed as an instructional leader prepared to address questions related to the field and equipped to assist programs, courses, and instructors in the transformation of traditional instruction into the online environment. Programs will address the various configurations of online instruction that included fully online/cyber courses, blended/hybrid courses, and online learning modules incorporated into traditional courses.

All courses in the program should be grounded in theories of distance education related to program design and development, delivery, professional responsibilities, and assessment. The program should also enable candidates to gain the knowledge and experience to work successfully in multiple roles within distance education.

The program will be guided by the systems theory of transactional distance (Moore 1993) enabling candidates to critically implement and evaluate online interactions (student-student, student-teacher, and student-content), online structure, and learner autonomy.

The program must address the various capacities and roles in which candidates might be serving such as:

- Instructional and Course Design;
- Online Teaching and Facilitation; and
- Online Program Development and Evaluation.

Following the five-phase instructional design model consisting of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation (ADDIE), model for instructional design, the program will ensure the candidate can successfully implement online instruction. Further, candidates will become familiar or strengthen their familiarity with instructional technology tools to accomplish the curricular goals in online courses.

The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL 2011) has developed multiple standards that will guide this program and instruction. To guide the coursework and instruction, the iNACOL standards for Quality Online Courses, Quality Online Teaching, and Quality Online Programs will be used. With these standards, candidates will be able to design and evaluate online systems as well as measure their success and critically self-assess their work.

CANDIDATE COMPETENCIES

The Professional Core courses, competencies and experiences for the online instruction program endorsement should be designed to address the broad set of issues, knowledge and competencies that are relevant to teaching and learning. The program must include the four overarching core competencies for blended and online instruction that are in direct alignment with the iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching (Version 2, October, 2011). The Online Instruction Endorsement establishes that eligible individuals will demonstrate competency related to the following key domains:

- I. Design and Development;
- II. Delivery;
- III. Assessment; and
- IV. Emerging Trends and Professional Responsibilities.

Competency

I. Design and Development

Candidates will demonstrate their ability to develop and design online content reflecting the standards shared below. The candidate should demonstrate the utilization of tools and resources for course development that are varied, allowing for a differentiated instructional design using multiple resources and media forms.

- A. The online teacher knows the primary concepts and structures of effective online instruction and is able to create learning experiences to enable student success (iNACOL Standard A);
- B. The online teacher understands and is able to use a range of technologies, both existing and emerging, that effectively support student learning and engagement in the online environment (iNACOL Standard F); and

- C. The online teacher is cognizant of the diversity of student academic needs and incorporates accommodations into the online learning environment (iNACOL Standard A).

II. Delivery

Candidates will demonstrate effective online instruction as appropriate through the Teacher Effectiveness model of teacher supervision and evaluation (adopted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education).

- A. The online teacher plans, designs, and incorporates strategies to encourage active learning, application, interaction, participation, and collaboration in the online learning environment (iNACOL Standard C);
- B. The online teacher promotes student success through clear expectations, prompt responses, and regular feedback (iNACOL Standard D); and
- C. The online teacher is cognizant of the diversity of student academic needs and incorporates accommodations into the online learning environment (iNACOL Standard F).

III. Assessment

Candidates will know and understand the design and implementation of appropriate assessment of online learning that maintains and verifies academic integrity.

- A. The online teacher demonstrates competencies in creating and implementing assessments in online learning environments in ways that ensure validity and reliability of the instruments and procedures (iNACOL Standard G);
- B. The online teacher develops and delivers assessments, projects, and assignments that meet standards-based learning goals and assesses learning progress by measuring student achievement of the learning goals (iNACOL Standard H); and
- C. The online teacher demonstrates competency in using data from assessments and other data sources to modify content and to guide student learning (iNACOL Standard I).

IV. Emerging Trends and Professional Responsibilities

Candidates will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of digital citizenship, legal issues with online education, and confidentiality procedures and protocols.

- A. The online teacher models, guides, and encourages legal, ethical, and safe behavior related to technology use (iNACOL Standard E);
- B. The online teacher interacts in a professional, effective manner with colleagues, parents, and other members of the community to support students' success (iNACOL Standard J); and,
- C. The online teacher arranges media and content to help students and teachers transfer knowledge most effectively in the online environment (iNACOL Standard K).

FIELD EXPERIENCE

The program will include a capstone field experience that appropriately synthesizes and applies program instruction in a real world context. Candidates will work with program advisors to secure a K-12 school partner for this experience. The experience can be tailored and differentiated to match the candidates' professional goals related to their desired role(s) within a K-12 system. The field experience will contain adequate rigor that both demonstrates practical application of coursework as well as provide new opportunities for professional growth.

FACULTY

Endorsement certificate programs submitted for review to the Department must include a review of qualifications of faculty assigned to teach each course within the endorsement program. Faculty who teach in an online instruction program must have expertise in teaching online, expertise in education methods as well as advanced degrees in disciplines appropriate to teaching in the program. Evidence of qualification includes related academic degrees, public school certification(s), professional experience in basic (Pre K-12) and/or higher education, and professional development pertaining to the competencies assigned to a course (similar to 22 Pa. Code § 354.25 and 354.26).

CERTIFICATION APPLICATION PROCESS

The institution's certification officer will recommend the candidate for the endorsement after successful completion of the Online Instruction Endorsement Program. The candidate must complete the required PDE application for endorsement and pay the appropriate fee to add the endorsement to their instructional certificate. The application process may be found under [Certification](#) on the Department's website.

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