

First-Run Online, OLCR, & Hybrid Course Proposal Process

January 2016

I. Proposal: Submission and Review*

This process is intended to ensure that Three Rivers Community College’s online and hybrid course design continues to meet the design consistency and quality expectations of our students, faculty and staff. This process refers to courses that will be run for the first time as a hybrid or wholly online. Since a new instructor is also a potential course designer, the process applies to existing courses taught for the first time by a different instructor.

In the case of courses new to the distance learning format, the proposal is reviewed by the following individuals: Department Chair, Director of Distance Learning/Educational Technology or the director’s designee, the Curriculum Committee, and Academic Dean. In the case of existing distance learning courses taught by an instructor new to the distance learning format at Three Rivers but teaching an existing distance learning course, the proposal is reviewed by Department Chair, Director of Distance Learning/Educational Technology or the director’s designee.

The following chart is an aid to the flow path of review.

Instructor	Course	Ed. Tech. Director’s Review	Department Chair’s Review	Curriculum Committee’s Review & Approval	Dean’s Authorization for Schedule
New	New to DL Format	Required	Required	Required	Required
New	Existing DL course	Required	Required	None	Required
Existing DL or non-DL instructor	New to DL Format	Required	Required	Required	Required
Same existing DL instructor	Same existing DL course	None	None	None	None

New online or hybrid courses will not be authorized to appear on the course schedule unless a proposal has been submitted and the approval process has been followed. Some new instructors may also find access to campus portals, the learning management system

If there is a gap in offering an online course and it was offered less than three years before, and it will be offered again by the same instructor, it does not need a proposal. If the content and/or character of an existing online or hybrid course changes significantly, a proposal must be submitted. Such changes include but are not limited to changes to the methodology of teaching, significant variations in the course goals or description, and changes to the on-campus to online proportions of a hybrid course. It is the instructor’s onus to ensure that major changes are reviewed prior to being deployed in a course.

The first-run online/hybrid course proposal (see Appendix A) includes the following information:

Course Information

Part I – Prerequisites and use of the checklist

Part II – objectives, evaluation, technology, copyright, instructor experience, instructor training

Part III – online rigor, additional resources

Review and Approval Signatures

The review of the proposal is based on the Online Course Proposal Guidelines and the Effective Teaching Practices of the Connecticut Community Colleges System (See Appendix B) and the LMS Contingency Plan (Appendix C). Three Rivers Fair Use Guidelines (Appendix D) as each case may warrant.

II. Development of a Course

Just as working in the online environment should not be perceived by the student as a lonely, isolated activity, development of an online course should be a collaborative effort. At a minimum, instructors should meet or otherwise communicate with their department head prior to development of any new course.

Development Timeline

Strategic planning of distance learning courses is recommended for all academic departments. With strategic course planning, timelines can be set for development that ensure instructors have adequate training and experience and that courses have the quality expected of all Three Rivers courses. While some late changes are sometimes unavoidable due to instructor losses, development of distance learning courses should begin no later than one semester prior to the first day of classes. The lead time must be sufficient for the Curriculum Committee to review the proposal prior to their last meeting of the fall or spring semester before they are placed on the schedule. Therefore, proposals should be advanced early in the prior semester and avoid the end of the semester. **Proposals that do not allow sufficient development time will prevent the instructor and/or course from being placed on the schedule.**

Exceptions to the normal development timeline are allowed only in special circumstances and only with the academic dean's approval. Department chairs should provide to the dean the reasons the exceptions are required. Such a rationale could include a necessary late instructor substitution when students are already enrolled due to the unexpected loss of the approved DL instructor.

The instructor developing the course should meet with the director of educational technology to discuss:

- -Learning objectives for the entire class.
- -Teaching methods used to accomplish the learning objectives.
- -Assessment methods used to evaluate student learning.
- -Technology tools in the learning management system (Blackboard) used to support the teaching methods.
- -Three Rivers' copyright and fair use guidelines.
- -Timeline to complete the development process.
- -Tasks to be completed by the instructor.
- -Tasks desired to be completed by the distance learning staff or others.

III. Definitions

Distance learning course—a distance learning course is one in which the students can attend some or all of the component classes while in another physical location than the college campus. Asynchronous and synchronous online and hybrid courses are distance learning courses. A synchronous video course in which students will not be located on campus is a distance learning course.

Online course—an online course is defined as one in which all work can be completed by the student in the online course management system. Online courses do not require students to attend sessions on campus.

Online Course with Campus Requirements (OLCR)—the OLCR designation was developed by the Academic Deans Council to denote courses that were online but had minor, isolated requirements to take a final exam or an orientation on the physical campus. Other exams may be included but these should be submitted for advance approval. It is highly encouraged that students are given proctoring facility options outside the Three Rivers Community College geographic area in OLCR classes. In general, such facilities include other colleges, universities, and military campuses. Connecticut Community Colleges will proctor exams for each other.

Hybrid course—a hybrid course is defined as a one in which on-campus classroom time is replaced with work in the approved online learning management system. Such learning management system work should not be exclusively reading and should include any combination of the following: assessments, discussions, group projects, interactive learning modules, email, and chat sessions. In general hybrid courses will include content and activities that amount to approximately 50% online and 50% on campus. A class is not a hybrid if students are not required to meet on campus. A class is not a hybrid if it requires students to meet only for the final exam provided that the student can take the exam at other facility locations.

IV. Training for Effective Online Teaching

When making instructor selections for distance learning courses and programs, in addition to discipline credentials departments should choose individuals competent in online course design, online pedagogy, online classroom management, the use of the learning management system, and the use of general computer technology. The Effective Teaching Practices provides a best practices outline for the required training. Three Rivers Community College, its sister community colleges, and the Connecticut Community Colleges System offer free training on a periodic basis each semester for all instructors. Local training opportunities are emailed to all instructors. Technology training can be found at the System resources site at <http://calendar.ct.edu/>. On-campus technology training is made available through the IT and Educational Technology departments. On-campus teaching practice materials and support is available through the IDEA Center. Additionally, in-service training may help to improve technology skills. iTeach Essentials pedagogical training will be available from the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium for a fee. Individual appointments regarding pedagogy are available with the educational technology department.

** This process does not replace current Curriculum Committee procedures for approving new courses but is an addition for online and hybrid courses.*