**University of Wisconsin-Madison Online Education Principles for High-Quality Online Courses and Programs – *Draft for Consideration – 11/24/18***

UW-Madison has rich history and strong reputation for high quality residential (face-to-face) education and this emphasis is expected to prevail for the foreseeable future. The university has also been a pioneer in technology-enhanced education since the early days of public radio and TV, and has a long and distinguished record in the development of high-quality post-baccalaureate online programs. We have historically fulfilled the Wisconsin Idea through a multimodal approach to education. We have achieved this through a long-standing commitment to holding online courses and programs to the same standards and processes as any other UW-Madison offering.

While online education continues to expand at UW-Madison, the current total footprint (especially during the academic year) is small and is expected to remain a relative minority of offerings for the near-term. Growth is occuring and is expected to accelerate but it is not envisioned that online offerings will replace or predominate over our current residential model in the any forseeable scenario. Growth will augment our existing residential model by expanding access for new students, facilitating enrollment growth where facilities might constrain access, and enhancing flexibility for current students. New online offerings will continue to exemplify our core academic values of rigor, integrity, and excellence.

The following online education principles, updated from the Educational Innovation Distance Principles of 2012, are intended to complement existing UW-Madison Academic Policies for courses and programs. They support the Higher Learning Commission accreditation criteria for Teaching and Learning: Quality, Resources, and Support by ensuring that “the institution’s program quality and learning goals are consistent across all modes of delivery.” These principles also commit campus to continuing what is best about residential education and supporting educational innovation, transformative learning, new pedagogies, and new audiences.

**Recommended principles to guide online education:**

**UW-Madison's goals for online education are to advance excellence in teaching and learning through the** [**Wisconsin Experience**](https://wisconsinexperience.wisc.edu/)**, increase flexibility and options for residential students, and expand access for new groups of students to study at UW-Madison**. UW-Madison is committed to maintaining its core academic values while expanding access on a global scale for lifelong education. As technology removes constraints of time and place, we strive to provide pathways for students to increase their knowledge while working and living anywhere in the world.

1. **An explicit goal of UW-Madison’s online initiative is to prepare students to thrive and advance in a digitally connected global and ever-changing economy.** Evaluating, synthesizing, and making meaning of vast amounts of data and information, and collaborating, communicating, and working in a digital environment, are critical for participants in the global information economy.
2. **UW-Madison’s focus for online development crosses all academic offerings, from the course, certificate, baccalaureate, to post-baccalaureate levels.** Technology can help overcome the barriers between the academy and the economies, industries, and professions. We are seeking to create academic offerings with the appropriate credentials for the lifelong learner. All academic curricula are strengthened by the infusion of real-time experience and the posing of real-world problems to solve in collaboration with university and industry experts. Research is strengthened by enhanced connections to industries and professions that apply our world-class research in real-world settings.
3. **With teaching and learning at the center, the design principles for online courses and programs will be evidence-based and student-centered.** Research makes clear that the most important factors in student learning are the skills of the instructor and their structuring of the learning experience, no matter the technology.  Program and course design will have clearly identified learning outcomes, student engagement, instructor development, and effective methods of assessment.
4. **UW-Madison's online courses and programs must preserve academic rigor, integrity, and excellence.** They must use technology to facilitate, broaden, and enhance the intellectual encounters among instructors and students, recognizing the difference between access to data, knowledge and experience. Our online offerings will incorporate substantive and regular interaction between students and the instructor. School/college and university curriculum committees will directly assess the rigor of such courses or programs, as they do with residential programs.
5. Online degree programs will use appropriate admissions standards. Our goal is to ensure that those enrolling in an online degree have the requisite interest, experience, and qualifications to be successful. **We will carefully monitor every program for evidence of student progress and longer-term student success as we do with students learning in residential courses and programs.**
6. **The digital learning environment will continue to change and evolve.** Our goal is to be a proponent of research and learning as new pedagogy, technologies, and tools emerge.
7. **We will develop online courses in the campus-supported learning management system and use enterprise-supported tools in compliance with UW-Madison’s web accessibility policy.** We will design them to easily adapt to any term offering or any instructor, and to align with instructional design standards.