

Regular and Substantive Interaction with the Instructor

At Andrews University, “regular and substantive interaction” with the teacher is essential to differentiate between self-paced (correspondence) courses and interactive online (distance education) courses. This is necessary to comply with federal regulations for financial aid

Definitions

The Andrews University Online Quality Assurance Committee has defined “regular and substantive interaction” as teacher-led, meaningful, and beneficial interaction between the instructor and the students.

“**Regular**” refers to:

- quantity, substance, and predictability of teacher-initiated interaction equivalent to what would occur in a face-to-face course.
- monitoring the student’s academic engagement and success
- monitoring the need for and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student
- responding promptly to student requests for assistance or questions

“**Substantive**” refers to the quality of teacher interaction that results in improved learning experiences and is defined by the U.S. Department of Education as “engaging students in teaching, learning and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion:”

There are many examples of substantive interaction, including but not limited to the list below. All Andrews Online Interactive courses should ***include at least two of the following:***

- Direct instruction (real-time or recorded) - lectures, demonstrations, establishing learning objectives, modeling a process or activity
- Meaningful, beneficial and timely feedback – prompt assessment of student performance that includes a rubric and detailed explanations that help students understand where and how to improve future work
- Providing additional information to students – handouts, announcements, job aids
- Responding to course content and assignment-related questions
- Facilitating group discussion on course content or assignments
- Providing office hours and time zone information along with reasonable times that students can expect responses to their inquiries or grading

- initiating interaction with students - based on needs uncovered via monitoring activities

“Instructor” – Andrews approved faculty with qualifications to teach the course or a qualified graduate student teaching under the direction of the qualified instructor, according to Andrews policy.

Auditable Examples

Because the federal financial aid auditors may review the course in LearningHub, the following minimum interactions must occur in LearningHub. The DLiIT Instructional Design Specialist or Instructional Facilitator assigned to the course is responsible for the internal Andrews audit of the interaction in the course.

For a semester-length interactive online course:

- ✓ There must be a variety of regular and substantive interactions with students each week. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:
 1. Teacher presence in discussion forums
 2. Grading and written feedback (formative and summative)
 3. announcements or a weekly overview
 4. a notice of the date, time, and link for a scheduled Zoom conference; or the recording of the Zoom

For other length and format courses:

- ✓ For shorter courses, there must be a variety of regular and substantive interactions with students each week; for example:
 1. in an 8 week course, there should be at least four interactions per week (see interaction examples #1-4 above)
 2. in a 4 week course, there should be at least eight interactions per week (see interaction examples #1-4 above)
- ✓ Blended/online courses: There must be a variety of regular and substantive interactions with students each week that is not face-to-face.
 1. If the course is longer than 15 weeks, there should be the equivalent of minimum of two interactions per week. i.e. if 30 weeks are online, there should be one interaction per week (see interaction examples #1-4 above).
- ✓ The DLiIT Instructional Design Specialist or Instructional Facilitator assigned to the course can assist the instructor in designing the course to meet this requirement, keeping the credit-hour definition in mind.

Instructional Tips

There are multiple ways to ensure regular and substantive interaction with the instructor. Additional strategies include:

Within LearningHub

- Discussion forums – instructor commenting, summarizing, asking questions, affirming
- Messages within Learning Hub
- Posting in the news forum
- Posting a video announcement
- Statement / reminder of deadlines
- Grading, assessment, and feedback
- Poodll response
- Email (documented by the instructor)

Outside LearningHub

- Phone calls (documented by the instructor)
- Text messages (documented by the instructor)
- Video conference /Zoom meeting
- Social Media
- Office hours – making a time commitment for availability

Feedback

- 1) Creating, embedding, and using an exemplary rubric for all major assessments in LearningHub
- 2) Providing clear and detailed explanations of why the student received a specific grade so the student understands how to improve
- 3) Establishing clear expectations and timelines in the syllabus for feedback/grading from the instructor.
- 4) Ensuring feedback and grading for an assignment are completed before a similar assignment is due next in order to allow the student to prepare based on feedback. For example, these are appropriate times for a semester-length course:
 - a. Discussion (i.e. 2-7 days for feedback and grading)
 - b. Quizzes (manually graded) (i.e. 5-7 days)
 - c. Minor papers/projects (i.e. 7-10 days)
 - d. Major papers/projects (i.e. 10-14 days)
 - e. Correct answer in quizzes shown once the quiz is closed for the whole class
 - f. Exams (before the final) give specific written feedback regarding student performance

Exceptions

Courses that meet these requirements but are not auditable in LearningHub must include an explanation document each semester the course is taught. We suggest placing it hidden from the students indented underneath the syllabus. The DLiT Instructional Design Specialist or Instructional Facilitator assigned to the course may arrange with the teacher to audit the interaction occurring outside LearningHub to ensure compliance.

At the graduate level, the amount of “regular and substantive interaction” may be significantly different depending on the design of the course.