

505-3-.95 ONLINE TEACHING ENDORSEMENT

(1) **Purpose.** This rule states field-specific content standards for approving endorsement programs that prepare individuals to teach classes within online and blended learning environments and supplements requirements in Rule [505-3-.01, REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR APPROVING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS](#).

(2) **Definitions.**

- (a) Accessibility: Ensuring the content, tools, and technologies used in online and blended learning are designed and developed so that learners with disabilities can use them.
- (b) Blended: Learning that combines face-to-face and online learning experiences, ideally benefitting from the strengths of each.
- (c) Content Management System (CMS): A software program used to create and modify digital content for online and blended learning environments.
- (d) Culturally responsive pedagogy: Using students' cultural knowledge, prior experiences, and frames of reference to select and convey content, enrich classroom experiences, and keep students actively engaged in learning.
- (e) Digital citizenship: Knowledge and willingness to communicate and act civilly, appropriately, and safely in online environments.
- (f) Digital learning tools: Software programs, websites, or online resources used to facilitate learning.
- (g) Digital pedagogy: The use of digital technologies when teaching and learning in online, blended, or face-to-face learning environments.
- (h) Instructional design: A systematic process for designing instruction by determining the needs of the learners, defining the end goals and objectives of instruction, and designing and planning learning activities and assessments to ensure effective learning experiences.
- (i) Learner-centered instructional strategies: An approach to learning that gives learners more agency and responsibility for their learning and puts learners' interests and needs first, in which students are actively learning and have greater input into what they learn, how they learn, and when they learn.
- (j) Learning Management System (LMS): A web-based program that contains and curates all materials and digital activities for a class or other learning experience, from content and communication to assessments.
- (k) Netiquette: Guidelines for civil and appropriate communication in the online environment.
- (l) Personalized learning: An approach to learning that values learner differences and harnesses technology to allow the educator and learner to co-plan a unique educational experience that addresses the distinct learning needs, interests, goals, and background of each individual student.
- (m) Universal Design for Learning (UDL): A framework for designing learning goals, materials, methods, and assessments that give learners multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression. UDL includes but is not limited to concerns related to accessibility, and focuses on supporting the success of ALL learners.

(3) In-Field Statement. Completers of the Online Teaching Endorsement program have strengthened and enhanced competency levels to teach online courses in the content areas and grade levels of their base certificate(s).

(4) Requirements.

- (a) A GaPSC approved educator preparation provider may seek state approval to offer this field as either a stand-alone endorsement program or as an endorsement program embedded in a GaPSC-approved initial preparation program or an advanced (degree-only) preparation program. In addition to meeting all applicable approval requirements and standards, embedded endorsement programs must meet requirements specified in paragraph (e) 3. (ix) of GaPSC Educator Preparation Rule [505-3-.01, REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS FOR APPROVING EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS](#).
- (b) To receive approval, a GaPSC-approved educator preparation provider shall offer a preparation program described in program planning forms, catalogs, and syllabi addressing the following standards adapted from the standards published in 2019 by the Virtual Learning Leadership Alliance (VLLA) and Quality Matters (QM). These standards include portions of the National Standards for Quality Online Learning initially developed by The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL).
1. Digital Proficiency. The online teacher supports learning and facilitates engagement with digital pedagogy in online and blended learning environments. The program shall prepare candidates who:
 - (i) Select and utilize a range of digital pedagogical tools for communication, productivity, collaboration, analysis, presentation, research, content delivery, interaction and assessment;
 - (ii) Select and utilize a variety of content-specific and developmentally appropriate digital learning tools and resources to meet individualized learning needs;
 - (iii) Use a variety of communication technologies (e.g., learning management systems [LMS], content management systems [CMS], email, phone, video, audio, instant messaging, social media) in a variety of contexts to enhance online learning; and
 - (iv) Apply troubleshooting skills to address basic technical issues of online learners and access additional technical support as needed.
 2. Instructional Design and Best Practices. The online teacher incorporates instructional design principles and best practices when designing and facilitating online and blended learning environments. The program shall prepare candidates who:
 - (i) Provide a syllabus with measurable objectives, grading criteria, expectations for interactions for both teacher and learners, and appropriate behavior criteria for learners;
 - (ii) Utilize principles of universal design for learning (UDL) to design instruction and present content in a variety of ways using a digital learning platform;
 - (iii) Incorporate sufficient support, directions, and guidelines to ensure navigation is logical, consistent, and efficient for online learners;
 - (iv) Differentiate instruction so all learners can be successful in online learning environments;

- (v) Design or incorporate flexible, digital, interactive and collaborative learning experiences that engage students in the learning process and promote higher order thinking and creativity;
 - (vi) Employ learner-centered instructional strategies incorporating authentic learning experiences;
 - (vii) Continually review and update all content materials and resources for relevancy, appropriateness, functionality, and alignment with course assignments, assessments, and standards-based learning goals;
 - (viii) Create and maintain a community of learners by communicating clear expectations for both teacher and learners, creating a relationship of trust, and establishing consistent and reliable classroom procedures;
 - (ix) Facilitate active learning among learners by providing opportunities for regular and frequent teacher-learner interaction, learner-learner interaction, learner-content interaction, learner-interface interaction, teacher-parent interaction, and teacher-mentor interaction;
 - (x) Lead synchronous online instructional sessions using best practices that support the learning goals and are meaningful, project-based, and inquiry-oriented; and
 - (xi) Model frequent, effective and timely communications regarding learner progress with stakeholders through various formats (e.g., emails, phone calls, video conferences, social media) and maintain records of communications with students, parents, and other school personnel.
3. Assessment and Feedback. The online teacher designs and implements a variety of assessments and provides high-quality feedback in online learning and blended learning environments. The program shall prepare candidates who:
- (i) Assess student readiness for content and method of delivery;
 - (ii) Continually measure learner proficiency through a variety of valid and reliable formative and summative assessments;
 - (iii) Design, select, and implement assignments, projects, and assessments that align with learning goals and promote research-based best practices (e.g., higher order thinking, problem-solving, authentic assessment);
 - (iv) Provide a clear description of learning goals, assessment expectations, and evaluation criteria for each assignment, assessment, and project;
 - (v) Provide timely, specific, constructive, and personalized feedback to learners about assignments, projects, tests, and questions;
 - (vi) Provide a clear explanation of the expectations of teacher response time and feedback to students;
 - (vii) Use student feedback data and assessments to inform instruction; and
 - (viii) Create opportunities for peer review and learner self-assessment.
4. Data Analysis, Reflection, and Professional Growth. The online teacher engages in data analysis and reflection to increase student learning in online and blended learning

environments and enhance professional growth. The program shall prepare candidates who:

- (i) Use assessment data to plan instruction, modify instructional methods and content, monitor learner progress, and develop intervention and enrichment plans;
- (ii) Use learner analytics or other observational data (e.g., tracking data in electronic courses, Web logs, email, student postings, discussions) to monitor learner progress, engagement, and success;
- (iii) Use assessment data to personalize learning experiences and enable a learner customized pace and/or path through instruction, aligned with learner goals, needs and interests;
- (iv) Empower learners to establish learning goals, self-assess, and reflect on learning;
- (v) Engage in regular self-reflection and evaluation of teaching to improve and strengthen teaching effectiveness (e.g., LMS analytics, student surveys, teacher evaluations, teacher peer reviews);
- (vi) Demonstrate continual growth in knowledge and skills of digital pedagogy and current and emerging technologies, and apply them to improve productivity and professional practice; and
- (vii) Develop a professional learning network and stay abreast of issues, trends, research, and best practices on teaching and learning in online and blended learning environments.

5. Digital Citizenship. The online teacher models, guides, and encourages legal, ethical, and safe behavior in online and blended learning environments. The program shall prepare candidates who:

- (i) Ensure academic integrity and the security of learner assessment data;
- (ii) Identify the risks of academic dishonesty for learners and create assessment opportunities that limit this risk;
- (iii) Model and facilitate the safe, legal, ethical, and credible uses of digital information and technologies;
- (iv) Create expectations for appropriate use of the internet and interaction among learners, including establishing netiquette requirements and enforcing the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and other similar guidelines/requirements; and
- (v) Comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and communicate privacy guidelines to protect student privacy and maintain confidentiality of student information, including in the use of technology tools.

6. Differentiation and Accessibility. The online teacher recognizes the variety of student academic needs, ensures accessibility of online learning, and incorporates appropriate accommodations in online and blended learning environments. The program shall prepare candidates who:

- (i) Address learner preference and abilities by creating multiple paths to meet learning goals and standards;

- (ii) Identify students who are struggling with various learning obstacles and apply appropriate strategies to support student learning;
- (iii) Ensure accessibility through compliance with legal mandates and other guidelines such as providing alternative text for images, synchronizing captions or including transcripts for video and audio files, formatting documents for screen readers, and choosing accessible digital tools and resources;
- (iv) Utilize culturally responsive pedagogy demonstrating respect for and responsiveness to the cultural backgrounds and differing perspectives learners bring to the online environment; and
- (v) Collaborate with appropriate school staff to make appropriate accommodations or modifications to meet the needs of all learners, to include the use of assistive technologies when appropriate.

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