

Draft Resolution to Adopt the Department-Centric Policy on Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in Online and Distance Learning Courses

Whereas, the United States Department of Education and various accrediting bodies have set forth guidelines that underscore Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) as a hallmark of high-quality distance education;

Whereas, Kingsborough Community College (KCC) is dedicated to offering equitable, accessible, and superior educational experiences, transcending the boundaries of traditional and digital classrooms;

Whereas, the integration of RSI into online and distance learning initiatives is pivotal for upholding the academic rigor, integrity, and effectiveness that KCC is known for, thereby supporting our mission to nurture academic excellence and success among our students;

Whereas, to maintain consistent standards and practices in all online and distance learning courses at KCC, the development and implementation of a clear, comprehensive RSI policy tailored to the unique needs and structures of individual departments is essential;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the College Council hereby supports and endorses the adoption of the "Policy on Regular and Substantive Interaction in Online and Distance Learning Courses," emphasizing a department-centric approach for its implementation;

Be It Further Resolved, that this policy shall be effectively implemented from [Effective Date], mandating all academic departments to align their online and distance learning courses with the stipulated RSI guidelines, fostering an environment where every student can meaningfully engage with their instructors and peers;

Be It Further Resolved, that academic departments, being the primary locus of the RSI policy implementation, shall autonomously develop and enforce department-specific RSI strategies, ensuring compliance while reflecting their unique disciplinary needs. Centralized entities, such as the [Designated Department/Committee], in collaboration with the Kingsborough Center for eLearning (KCeL) and the Kingsborough Center for Teaching and Learning (KCTL), shall offer the requisite support, training, and resources to facilitate this process;

Be It Further Resolved, that a mechanism for the regular review of departmental courses for RSI compliance shall be established, alongside the ongoing evaluation of the policy's impact on the quality of online and distance education at Kingsborough Community College (KCC), ensuring continuous improvement and adaptation to evolving educational landscapes. This review process will be conducted in accordance with Article 18 of the PSC-CUNY collective bargaining agreement;

Be It Finally Resolved, that this resolution and the department-centric policy on RSI underscore KCC's commitment to fostering innovative, student-focused learning environments, empowering every student to realize their academic potential through substantive engagements in online and distance learning contexts.

Adopted by the College Council at its meeting on [Adoption Date].

Kingsborough Community College
Draft Policy on Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in Online and Distance
Learning Courses

Policy Number: [Policy Number]

Effective Date: [Effective Date]

Last Revised: [Revision Date]

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all online and distance learning courses offered by Kingsborough Community College (KCC) include Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) between instructors and students, as mandated by the U.S. Department of Education and accreditation agencies. This policy aims to uphold the quality and integrity of KCC's online and distance education programs, ensuring they meet or exceed the expectations for higher education regardless of the delivery method.

2. Scope

This policy shall apply to all faculty, instructors, and any individuals involved in the design, delivery, and support of online and distance learning courses at KCC.

3. Definitions

- Regular Interaction: Interaction that is predictable, scheduled, and initiated by the instructor, ensuring consistent engagement throughout the duration of the course.
- Substantive Interaction: Interaction that involves teaching, learning, and assessment activities that are relevant to the course content. This includes, but is not limited to, direct instruction (presentation of material, explanation, and reinforcement).
- Online and Distance Learning Courses: Courses that are delivered partially or entirely through electronic means, where the instructor and student are not in the same physical location.

4. Policy

1. Instructor Responsibilities:

- Instructors shall design and deliver online and distance learning courses that include regular and planned interactions. These interactions shall be substantive, directly related to course content, and provide real value to the student's learning experience.
- Instructors are expected to initiate interaction with students, ensuring that it is not solely the responsibility of students to seek out engagement.
- Instructors shall maintain a predictable schedule of availability to students through virtual office hours, scheduled discussions, or other online platforms.

2. Course Design:

- All online and distance learning courses shall include a syllabus statement that outlines the expectations for RSI, including the type, frequency, and timing of interactions.

- Course design shall incorporate diverse methods of interaction, including synchronous and asynchronous activities, to accommodate different learning styles and schedules.

- Assessment strategies shall include opportunities for feedback and interaction, such as discussions, peer reviews, and instructor feedback on assignments.

3. Observation:

- The [Designated Department/Committee] shall regularly review online and distance learning courses to ensure compliance with this RSI policy.

- Student feedback shall be collected and considered as part of the continuous improvement process for online courses.

- Instructors shall receive support and training on best practices for engaging students in an online environment.

4. Technology and Support:

- KCC shall provide access to and training on technology platforms that facilitate RSI in online and distance learning courses.

- Students shall have access to technical support and resources to effectively participate in online learning environments.

5. Compliance

Departments maintain the autonomy to ensure that instructors meet the RSI standards in their online courses. If a faculty member's courses are found to not comply with these standards, the department may initiate a review of the instructor's certification for online teaching. This review process not only aims to uphold the quality of online education but also to inform decisions regarding the faculty member's future course assignments, which may include adjustments to or exclusions from online teaching responsibilities to align with workload and compliance expectations.

6. Exceptions

Any exceptions to this policy shall be approved by the [Designated Department/Committee], with a clear rationale provided for the deviation from established RSI requirements.

7. Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed annually and revised as necessary to reflect changes in regulatory requirements, accreditation standards, and best practices in online and distance education.