

## Regular and Substantive Interaction -RSI Examples for Faculty

US Department of Education (DoE) federal guideline requires (effective July 2023) that all online learning courses ensure and assess **regular and substantive interaction (RSI)** between instructor and student. Here are 10 ways faculty can implement the RSI mandates to their online courses. At least 2-4 of these examples must be applied.

1. Welcome Announcement
2. Instructor Activities and Presence
3. Weekly Reminders
4. Expectation and Communication Policies
5. Feedback: Personalized and Specific
6. Feedback: Timely
7. Student Engagement
8. Student to Student Forums
9. Facilitating Interactions
10. Time Management Tools

### 1.1 Welcome Announcement (Regular Interaction)

A personal welcome message with 2minute video from the instructor is available when the course opens.

- Message should set a warm, welcoming tone
- Message should address course content, what students can expect, tips for being successful in the course, etc.
- Instructor may also schedule synchronous meetings with students during the 1st week of the course

### 1.2 Week 1 Instructor Activity and Presence (Regular Interaction)

Instructor was active in the LMS course during week 1 of the term.

“Activity” is defined as **recorded instructor access** in the course shell **and** responses to student inquiries via the LMS Inbox.

- To meet this requirement, the audit must reveal evidence of ALL of the following:
- Recorded instructor access in the course shell at least **three times** during week 1 (Monday-Friday)
- First instructor activity (either course access or response to student inquiries) took place **no later than Wednesday** of week 1 and thereafter

AND

Instructor demonstrates strong presence by taking an active role in the online course at least three times each week.

- Instructor posts regular announcements, adds materials, responds to questions, guides discussions, provides feedback, and so on.

- Instructor writes in first person where appropriate, establishing their voice in course materials.
- Instructor adds a 2-minute video or audio related to concepts, issues, readings, or assignments
- Students should see evidence of instructor activity at multiple points during each week.

### **1.3 Weekly Reminders (Regular Interactions)**

Course design requires student-instructor interaction at least **once per week** during the course of the term. Weekly interaction happens on a **consistent day of the week**; the schedule is communicated to students at the **beginning of the course**.

This requirement could be met by EITHER of the following:

- Weekly course announcements that address course content, expectations of students, tips for success, etc.
- At least one assignment or graded item is due each week
- Due dates are emphasized

### **1.4 Expectations and Communication Policies (Regular Interactions)**

Instructor's expectations for the nature and frequency of student participation are clearly stated.

- General statement on syllabus (or elsewhere in course)
- Specific guidelines for student participation should be included on individual discussion boards and anywhere else where students are expected to actively participate

AND

Communication Policy (listed on the syllabus and multiple other places in the course) includes ALL of the following information:

- How to contact instructor
- Policy for response time to student questions (24-48 hours M-F)
- Policy for weekend communication
- Response time and student expectations

### **1.5 Feedback: Personalized and Specific (Substantive Interaction)**

Instructor provides feedback that is both customized to the individual student and specific to the **details of their course work**.

- Feedback provides information students can use to understand where they are being successful and where they need to improve.
- Assessment instruments (e.g. grading sheets and rubrics) are sufficiently detailed to permit feedback about key elements of an individual student's work.
- Feedback can include: instructor participation in discussion boards; recorded tutorials in response to student questions; The LMS Inbox messages to groups of students offering further study guidance for topics they are struggling with; instructor comments on essays, tests, or other submitted assignments; study guides or review sheets created in response to student questions.

### **1.6 Frequent, Timely Feedback (Regular Interaction)**

Instructor provides students feedback at least once a week during the course, starting in Week 1.

- Feedback is given early enough and with sufficient frequency for students to correct misunderstandings and deepen comprehension while the course is in progress.
- Instructor consistently responds to student questions within the timeframe stated in their communication policy, or alerts students ahead of time if they will not be able to uphold their policy.
- Instructor makes a special effort to communicate with struggling students as they are likely to benefit from early intervention.

### **1.7 Student Engagement (Regular and Substantive Interaction)**

Instructor provides an active forum for students to post course-related questions.

- Forum is available to all students in the course so all may benefit from instructor responses.
- Instructor performs regular monitoring to answer student questions in a timely fashion, according to course communication policies.
- Clear guidelines for use of the public forum are posted, including policy for messages of a personal nature.

### **1.8 Student-to-Student Communication Practices (Regular and Substantive Interaction)**

Instructor clarifies and gives examples of appropriate online communication practices.

- An etiquette policy for communications is posted on the syllabus (or elsewhere in the course), along with clear expectations of how students should adhere to that policy.
- Instructor consistently communicates in a respectful manner.
- Instructor acknowledges the broad range of perspectives found in the classroom.

### **1.9 Facilitate Student Interactions (Regular and Substantive Interaction)**

Instructor fosters a safe learning environment by actively monitoring student interactions.

- If an inappropriate communication occurs, the instructor intervenes immediately.
- Instructor redirects or counsels' students in an appropriate way, including blocking students from participating in the course if necessary.

AND

Instructor fosters student-to-student interactions that deepen understanding of course materials.

- Instructor takes a strategic role in guiding, focusing, and encouraging interactions.
- Student roles in collaborative projects are clearly defined.
- Students led projects are encouraged.

### **1.10 Time Management Tools (Regular Interaction)**

Instructor provides tools and/or updates students can use to manage their time and stay on task.

- Instructor gives clear directions on where to find current due dates.

- Course calendars, checklists, or instructor reminders provide students with a way to keep track of time-sensitive tasks.
- Weekly announcements with reminders of upcoming deadlines keep students updated and on task.