Building Engagement in the Implementation of Online Education Compliance Goals
Objectives

Attendees will…

1. recognize major compliance areas associated with online education
2. learn to identify knowledge experts and stakeholders and consult these individuals in the policy implementation process
3. develop strategies for consolidating resources and training efforts
Communication, collaboration, and consolidation

- Communicate and Collaborate
  - Opening lines of communication to encourage questions and concerns
  - Ensuring compliance knowledge (for both us and them)
  - Discovering new areas of risk
- Consolidate efforts!
  - See what others are already doing and if efforts can be combined
  - E.g., adding accreditation standards to broader quality trainings
Who should be at the table?

Hypo:

Compliance officers recommend a universal LMS layout for all courses. This action is necessary, they argue, because a nearby institution almost lost accreditation after they received numerous students complaints about how inconsistent and “annoying” it was to navigate their online courses.
Online Education
Compliance
“Regulatory triad” (plus 1)

- State, Federal, Accreditation Agencies
- Reciprocity Agreements (e.g., SARA)
Other compliance areas and influences

- Other Influences on Compliance Efforts
  - Policies of Institution
  - Faculty Governance
  - Students/Consumers
  - Third Party Agreements
Accreditation
Not really “voluntary”

- Federal student aid requirement
- Needed for course transfer (generally)
- Employers expect online programs to be accredited
- Regional accreditation is strongest, recognized by DOE and/or CHEA
- Specialized/programmatic accreditation important in many fields, often a licensure requirement
What accreditors look for

- Mission, institutional effectiveness, integrity, compliance with federal regulations, teaching and learning quality, resources, and support
  - Looks a little different for online education
- Criterion followed by ways to evidence (discussed with C-RAC in next section)
Losing accreditation/being denied?

• YES, it can happen!

• Scottsdale Community College denied by HLC last year (seeking approval for 48 online certificate/degrees)
Reasons for denial

• A limited amount of standardization across individual courses.

• The team noted that although SCC offered a wide range of training for online instruction, such training was not required . . . SCC's contract with the faculty, was cited as the reason training could not be mandated.

• Authority for reviewing and overseeing online delivery was pushed down to the department level. This decentralization in review and oversight authority led to variability [that] made the courses more faculty- than student-centered.
Specifically...

- Multiple learning management systems
  - 8 used the Canvas; 2 used a different LMS using Canvas only as a gateway
- An inconsistent deployment of student help facilities in the courses
  - courses are all initially populated with a "Start Here" module, but faculty may choose to delete it from the course
- Inconsistencies in course navigation
  - "only seven of the ten courses had a direct link to a syllabus in the left hand navigation bar; some navigation areas had as few as two links while some had as many as eight, and; there were inconsistencies in how links were named"
Could this happen at your institution?

Denial based on:

- Decentralized oversight
- Lack of consistency (no standard procedures, multiple LMSs)
- Inadequate training
State Authorization
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authorization Requirements</th>
<th>Student Protections</th>
<th>Public Disclosures</th>
<th>Individual Disclosures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public/ accredited often exempt for 100% online programs</td>
<td>Complaint procedures</td>
<td>Authorization status (and how)</td>
<td>Licensure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States often require accreditation</td>
<td>Disclosure requirements</td>
<td>Out-of-state licensure (Gainful Employment overlap)</td>
<td>Changes to Licensure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical presence often triggers and definitions vary by state</td>
<td>Retaining tuition refund protections under home state</td>
<td>Student complaints</td>
<td>Adverse Actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All state requirements for authorization</td>
<td>Tuition Refunds</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adverse actions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
C-RAC Guidelines (also used by regional accreditors)

1. OL is appropriate to the institution’s mission and purposes.
2. Plans for developing, sustaining, and, if appropriate, expanding OL offerings are integrated into its regular processes.
3. OL incorporated into the institution’s systems of governance and academic oversight.
4. Curricula for OL is comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.
5. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its OL.
6. Faculty responsible for delivering the OL and evaluating the students’ success are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.
7. The institution provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in OL offerings.
8. The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its OL offerings.
9. The institution assures the integrity of its online offerings.
C-RAC # 6: OL faculty are appropriately qualified and effectively supported

• Evidence:
  – OL faculties are carefully selected, appropriately trained
  – The institution’s training program for OL faculty is periodic, incorporates tested good practices in OL pedagogy
  – Faculty are proficient and effectively supported in using the course management system
  – The office or persons responsible for online learning training programs are clearly identified and have the competencies to accomplish the tasks
Regular and Substantive Interaction
Title IV distance education eligibility

- An institution of higher education does not qualify as eligible to participate in the student financial aid programs if:
  - More than 50% of the school’s courses were correspondence courses, or
  - 50% or more of the students were enrolled in correspondence courses. (34 CFR 600.7)
- Individual correspondence courses will only retain course eligibility for SFA if it is part of a program leading to an actual degree (associates, bachelors, masters, etc.)
Distance education

*Distance Education* uses one or more listed distance technologies (e.g., over the internet) to deliver instruction and **support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor** *(34 CFR 600.2)*

Examples:
- Planned instructor comments on discussion posts
- Planned instructor-student emails regarding course materials/content
- Feedback from instructor (not computer) on an assessment
Correspondence education

Correspondence Education may also take place via the internet but the interaction between the instructor and student is limited, is not regular and substantive, and is primarily initiated by the student.
Lessons from WGU – “Regular”

- Regular
  - Planned student interactions with instructor “occurring with some reasonable frequency”

- Not Regular
  - Ad hoc or only student initiated
  - Communication with “student mentors” (advisor position) instead of instructor
Lessons from WGU – “Substantive”

- Substantive
  - Course design facilitates student interaction with instructor or requires student submission of performance tasks for which an instructor provides feedback

- Not Substantive
  - Computer-generated feedback on assessments
  - Recorded webinars, videos, and reading materials if the course design materials did not require the students to watch the webinars or videos and then interact with an instructor
  - Communication with “student mentors” instead of instructor
Incorporating QM

- Standard 5.3, “[t]he instructor’s plan for interacting with learners during the course is clearly stated.”

- Provides opportunity to discuss the Title IV distance education requirement as well as to introduce the St. Mary-of-the-Woods College and WGU audits as potential cautionary tales
Course Design

The online classroom presents opportunities and risks that face-to-face classrooms traditionally have not experienced. Because attendance and engagement is not obvious through a physical presence in a brick and mortar space, faculty and students can only be determined as present and active through regular, customized interactions that support the traditional content (lectures, exams, assignments, etc.). Thoughtful course design can support compliance through creating the spaces where faculty and students are drawn together for planned and sustained discussion, evolving debate and idea-sharing, and iterative individual and group feedback. Examples might include:

- Planned, regular instructor-initiated communication with individual students concerning course content through email, discussion forum, or other preferred medium
- Weekly instructor feedback tailored to a specific class’s performance on an assignment (as opposed to prepared feedback that could easily be delivered to any section of a particular course)
Accessibility
Web accessibility overview

• Section 504 and ADA

• WCAG 2.0 level AA: Endorsed by DOJ and OCR for Section 504/ADA compliance; integrated into Section 508 guidelines by U.S. Access Board.

• “Accessible”: a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally effective and equally integrated manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

1. CAST

2. Multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression

3. Re: Accessibility
   - Focus on making learning effective for ALL. Extends well beyond web accessibility.
   - Alignment on ensuring compliance is still necessary, as UDL implementation is NOT the same as ADA/Section 504/WCAG 2.0 AA compliance
Provide multiple means of **Representation**

Recognition Networks
The “WHAT” of Learning

Provide multiple means of **Action & Expression**

Strategic Networks
The “HOW” of Learning

Provide options for **Perception**
- Offer ways of customizing the display of information
- Offer alternatives for auditory information
- Offer alternatives for visual information

Provide options for **Physical Action**
- Vary the methods for response and navigation
- Optimize access to tools and assistive technologies
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at IU

Indiana University offers numerous resources for IU employees, students, and visitors with disabilities who might need additional assistance while attending, visiting, and/or working for the university. Visit the ADA at Indiana University website to learn more about these accommodations.

Creating accessible content

This site provides how-to documentation and information on training opportunities for accessible content creation. These courses teach you how to consider accessibility when creating content from MS Word documents, to PowerPoints, PDFs, video, to entire websites.

Learn more about accessible content

Assistance with accessibility at IU

Report accessibility barriers
Help us identify restrictions to access by reporting any accessibility barriers that you encounter.

Review training options
IU strives to educate faculty, staff, and students about why accessibility matters for everyone and provides accessibility resources, training, and assistance to support its mission.

Understand accessibility
Learn more about the importance of accessibility, barriers to accessibility, and the perspectives of individuals with disabilities.
Incorporating into QM

• Section 8: “Accessibility and Usability”

• QM presenters can reference specific law and cite resolution agreements and lawsuits

• Reinforce compliance goals while simultaneously promoting quality instructional practices for online educational environments.
Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT)

A Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) is a document that explains how information and communication technology (ICT) products such as software, hardware, electronic content, and support documentation meet (conform to) the Revised 508 Standards for IT accessibility. VPATs help Federal agency contracting officials and government buyers to assess ICT for accessibility when doing market research and evaluating proposals.

Government solicitations which include ICT will specify accessibility requirements, indicating which provisions are required to ensure the deliverable is accessible. A VPAT is a good way to address the accessibility requirements defined in the solicitation.

We recommend that vendors generate a VPAT for any ICT that’s intended to be marketed to the Federal government. Use the VPAT to make specific statements in simple recommended language to demonstrate how the features and functional characteristics of your product meet the Revised 508 Standards.

- Download the current VPAT template from the Information Technology Industry Council (ITI) website.
- Make it easy to find your product’s VPAT on your company’s website (e.g., link to it on the product description page).
A Look Ahead
HEA reauthorization proposals

During PROSPER effort in House:

• Eliminate federal state authorization role?

• Remove separate distance education accreditation requirements?

• Create competency based education accreditation process but remove regular and substantive interaction rule?
Federal rulemaking (ED, Sec. DeVos)

- Negotiated rulemaking sessions for
  - State authorization
  - Accreditation
  - Faith-based institutions
  - Gainful Employment
  - Borrow Defense

Check out WCET/SAN and [ED Unified Agenda](#).
Recap and Questions
Interdisciplinary compliance opportunities

• Accreditation, SARA, and C-RAC
  – Consistency, centralized oversight, faculty training in online pedagogy and LMS

• Regular and substantive interaction
  – Can’t be just the “sage on stage”
    – QM (or similar) integration options

• Accessibility
  – UDL
  – QM (or similar) integration options
Session Evaluations & Drawing

• Download and open OLC Conferences mobile app
• Navigate to specific session to evaluate
• Select “Evaluate Session” on session details screen (located under session type and track)
• Complete session evaluation*

*Each session evaluation completed (limited to one per session) = one contest entry

Five (5) $25 gift cards will be awarded to five (5) individuals
Must submit evals using the OLC Conferences mobile app or website
Questions?

Email for follow up: rlafosse@iu.edu