



Policy #41008

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS USE POLICY

Effective Date: August 22, 2019, 2019

Responsible Office: Office of Distance Learning

Division: Academic Affairs

I. PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

To assist the University in maintaining compliance with applicable policy, procedures, and law, this policy addresses important considerations in the use of a Learning Management System (LMS) at Grambling State University. The Office of Distance Learning (ODL) administers the LMS to ensure optimal performance, manage user accounts, safeguards user privacy and data, and provide technical support for University faculty and students.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

Instructure Canvas is the official LMS supported by the University. This policy applies to all faculty, staff, students, and others who use Grambling State University's instance of Instructure Canvas, herein collectively referred to as "Canvas".

This policy does not cover independent use of any LMS which is not supported as the official University LMS, nor external tools not managed by the University which instructors might deploy to supplement their courses (e.g. external blogs, wikis, e-packs, etc.).

A. LMS Appropriate Use:

1. All users of the LMS must adhere to the University's Information Technology policy. <http://www.gram.edu/offices/infotech/support.php>
2. Delivery and access to copyright materials in LMS must comply with Copyright Law (Title 17 of the United States Code <http://www.copyright.gov/title17/>). In addition, copyright use must comply with University Policy. Please note that Canvas may restrict access to course materials for which authenticated users do not have the authorized use of copyright text, images, etc.
3. Grambling State University is not responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and/or legality of the content uploaded to the LMS by its students, staff, or faculty. The University is not responsible for content linked from LMS to external web sites.

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4. All users of the LMS must not use the system for purposes other than University-affiliated activities. Only sponsored agencies connected to the University including accrediting agency representatives, presenters, and course observers may be granted access to Canvas with approval from the appropriate channels including academic Chairs and Deans or other University Executive including the Provost or the President's office. Office of Distance Learning staff should be notified when course owners add any external agent has been added to the system.
5. All employees who have access to student information in the LMS are required to adhere to the safeguards included in the University's Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") Policy to prevent the unauthorized disclosure of protected student information.
6. All users of the LMS are responsible for maintaining the security of usernames, passwords and any other access credentials assigned. Access credentials may not be shared or given to anyone other than the user to whom they were assigned.
7. Access to the LMS is granted to currently enrolled students and instructors of record for published term courses. Course rosters are generated via official enrollments in Banner. Course owners and administrators should not grant course access to students not listed in the official roster using student email addresses.
8. Faculty and staff hosting a course in Canvas shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and all institutional rules, policies, and procedures.
9. Illegal content or content that is in violation of the University's policies or contractual agreements shall be removed from a course account if requested by the instructor of record or other appropriate academic administrator.

B. USER MANAGEMENT AND ACCESS

1. All users of LMS must access the system through a designated account generated from Banner in conjunction with Office of Distance Learning.
2. The instructor(s) of record (IOR) and students enrolled in a course as listed in Banner will have access to the course site in the LMS. Official student enrollments will be managed from Banner including adding new students, student withdrawals, and drops.
3. For purposes of managing program curriculum and continuous quality control, departmental chairs and designated college leaders can request course access from ODL staff and will be granted access to term courses to review and perform assessment activity including, but not limited to, viewing learning outcomes, course analytics, and usage.
4. Faculty may not use Departmental Class Shells or Term Course Shells on behalf of external users and former students and extend system access to said users for the purposes of pursuing activity unrelated to official University business. Any such accounts discovered will be removed by Distance Learning staff.

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5. Access to the LMS may be disabled or suspended for users who display inappropriate behavior per the University's Acceptable Use Policy and other guiding policies that define appropriate conduct for University employees and students. Students who misuse the LMS will be referred to the appropriate University judicial body.

C. USER RESPONSABILITIES

All users are responsible for conformance to University policies and procedures, as well as meeting technical requirements to access course content.

1. Users must have reliable access to internet.
2. Users must regularly upgrade their personal browsers to meet minimum requirements for accessing LMS content. The current LMS is designed to operate efficiently in the latest two versions of the chosen browser. ODL recommends that users use the latest version of Chrome or Firefox for best results. Other acceptable browsers include Safari and Internet Explorer.
3. Faculty should notify the Office of Distance Learning of their intent to integrate third-party software, external applications, and e-packs which may require additional support and/or result in additional integration costs for the University and or student.
4. Faculty should ensure that all content meets ADA requirements for accessibility. Faculty who need assistance with meeting ADA requirements should contact Office of Distance Learning staff for assistance with tools and support to develop compliant content.
5. All users must maintain an air of decorum when creating personal profiles. This includes profile pictures and display names. Users may not create profiles containing demeaning or derogatory language nor images deemed as vulgar or otherwise offensive. Users may report offensive profiles to the ODL staff. Any profiles reported or discovered will be investigated and removed accordingly.

D. DISTANCE EDUCATION STUDENT ACCESS

All students receiving instruction through distance learning will be provided equivalent access to student support services offered to face-to-face students.

E. FACULTY CERTIFICATION

All faculty assigned to teach online and blended courses will be required to enroll and complete the faculty online certification program.

F. ONLINE AND BLENDED COURSES

The academic content and requirements for online and blended courses are equivalent to the same academic content and requirements taught in face-to-face courses.

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G. COURSE DESIGN

Courses delivered via distance learning shall meet the requirements set forth by the academic department and must go through the usual curriculum approval processes as defined by the appropriate academic units.

H. PROCTORING

Some midterm and all final exams will be proctored for all online courses and select blended courses when the instructors administer the midterm and final exam online. The proctor ensures the security and integrity of the exam process. Authentic assessments do not require proctoring. Students taking proctored exams should consider themselves to be in class. If they are not comfortable taking a test in their room, they should select a location (such as a library) where they can work and show their environment. It is as much part of their responsibility as having computer and internet access that meets the institutional standards. Students do not have a right to privacy in taking tests in traditional classroom; in fact they are closely supervised. The same holds true for the proctored environment.

I. USER AUTHENTICATION

SmarterID is a cutting edge user authentication system that uses facial recognition to validate identity and document attendance. Due to federal regulations, it is critical that schools are actively verifying student's identity which is difficult to do with students doing coursework remotely outside the classroom. This state of the art system requires no change in delivery method or modifications of course design. After a brief initial setup that includes taking a picture of a valid ID and uploading it, a student is "registered" in the system and ready to go.

J. LIBRARY SERVICES

The A.C. Lewis Memorial Library will provide equivalent support for distance education courses and programs. Distance education students will be provided adequate access to campus library resources via on-line services as well as the LOUISiana Library System.

K. VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

All faculty teaching online courses will be required to provide accommodating virtual office hours. Students take online courses and night course to make it easier to juggle their heavy load. Virtual office hours would work best if online faculty were available after 7pm.

L. FACULTY RESPONSE TIME

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Faculty should respond to students' questions within a reasonable amount of time. In an ideal situation within 36 hours. Faculty will have a grade turnaround time no later than 7 days, and if there is a delay faculty must post in Canvas, explaining the delay and when students can view their grade.

M. ASSESSMENT

The effectiveness of distance education courses (including assessments of student-based learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction), will be assessed with the same intent and rigor as the face-to-face courses.

N. PLAGIARISM SOFTWARE

Turnitin provides instructors with the tools to prevent plagiarism, engage students in the writing process, and provide personalized feedback.

O. STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND COURSE ACCESS

1. Online students are subject to the same attendance policy and procedures as traditional students.
2. Student attendance in online courses is defined as active participation in the course as described in the individual course syllabus. Online courses will, at a minimum, have weekly mechanisms for student participation, which can be documented by any or all of the following methods:
 - Discussion board postings
 - Assignments/Exams/Quizzes
 - Virtual classroom activities
 - Blogs
 - Chats
 - Guest lecturers
 - Collaborations
 - Conferencing
3. Example, a three-credit course could document attendance by holding an online class for 1 hour during the week and addition assignments on two separate days during that same week. Another example would be, a virtual class could be held for 1 ½ hours during the week and an additional assignment on another day during that same week. These models would satisfy the requirements for three contact hours in a course for a three credit hour course. Academic advisement, individual consultations and telephone interviews cannot be documented as class participation.
4. Students are expected to attend class each week. In order for the student to receive credit for the week, they must log in and complete the required virtual class and subsequent assignment(s). Documented attendance would include active participation of at least two instructional methods assigned for the week.

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5. If a student fails to complete the required assignments during the week, they will be given an absence for that week. Students are allowed three unexcused absences per course. If possible, a student may contact the instructor in advance and make arrangements to complete the required assignments. Acceptance of late work is at the discretion of the instructor. If the student fails to meet the attendance requirements, the instructor will give them a warning. Note: Students will be required to meet the attendance requirements beginning the second week of the course.
6. Any University-related activity necessitating an absence from class will not count as an unexcused absence when determining whether a student has attended the required class meetings.
7. Meeting the attendance requirements may not necessarily fulfill all course requirements. The student bears the responsibility for the effect, which absences may have upon class participation, announced and unannounced examinations, written assignments, reports, papers, and other means of evaluating performance in a course. At the same time, if a student's required participation in a University-sponsored activity causes a student to be absent from class, and if the student seeks to make arrangements prior to the absence to complete scheduled assignments, the professor is expected to work with the student to allow for the completion of class work and assignments.
8. Students are usually allowed to make up class work and/or tests missed because of serious illness, accident, or death in the family. Any request by the professor to verify the nature of an absence should be made to the student upon his or her return.
9. The online activity determines whether a student attended distance education classes for the week. A simple log on to Canvas is not sufficient support for the attendance requirements.
10. The University's online attendance is documented through Canvas. Online attendance is configured by the start date of class through the end date of class. The Canvas attendance feature allows the professor to choose Present, Absent (Excused), Absent (Unexcused), or Tardy for each of the students in the class.
***The official attendance and grades are documented in Banner.**

P. DENYING ACCESS

Students will be denied access for the following reasons:

1. For Non-Attendance: Students who have not fulfilled attendance requirements.
2. For Non-Payment: Students who have not paid (or made arrangements to pay) tuition by the published due date will be dropped from courses. This includes purged students.
3. Lacking Prerequisites: If it is determined that a student is lacking the required prerequisites for a course, the student will be dropped following regular GSU procedures.

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- Withdrawals: The withdrawal process follows the same guidelines as outlined in the GSU catalog.
- Academic Appeal for Distance Education Courses: Students follow the same guidelines as outlined in the GSU catalog.

Q. COURSE ARCHIVE

At the end of a semester, courses will remain available in the system for faculty access and for students with “Incompletes”. After three (3) years, courses will be purged from the system. This serves to fulfill the three-year requirement for academic appeals and allows Canvas to run as quickly and as efficiently as possible.

R. PROTECTING THE PRIVACY OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ONLINE AND HYBRID COURSES

Faculty members teaching online/hybrid courses are responsible for creating and maintaining an online teaching and learning environment that provides for the privacy and security of students’ personal data and coursework. Accordingly, online/hybrid instructors will enforce the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, which is designed to protect the privacy of students’ educational records. The University’s policies and procedures are used to ensure that students’ FERPA rights are protected. The policy and procedure is outlined in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs and is applied to online, hybrid, and traditional on-campus courses alike.

To further ensure student privacy in online/hybrid courses, these procedures shall be followed:

1. Protection of student information, course data, and student participation is required by all Grambling State University faculty and staff involved in the design, development, delivery, and administration of online/hybrid courses. Grambling State University will only authorize the use of learning management systems that employ at least 128-bit encryption methods and require unique log-in names and secure passwords that meet industry standards for length and complexity.
2. Student postings to discussion boards, chat rooms, and class forums shall be accessible only to members of the class, the course instructor(s), the program coordinator and anyone specifically authorized and responsible for student learning assessment or oversight of the academic quality and integrity of the course.
3. Instructors shall use the gradebook provided by the learning management system and/or the Banner gradebook, which prohibits students from accessing other students’ grades. Posting of class-wide grade reports in any form is prohibited, as is sending a student his/her grades through an e-mail message that could be intercepted by someone other than the student.

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4. Grades for discussion board participation, online student examinations, and written assignments are confidential, and are only accessible by the individual student, the course instructor(s), Office of Distance Learning staff and anyone specifically authorized and responsible for student learning assessment or oversight of the academic quality and integrity of the course.
5. Material from online/hybrid courses provided by course instructors to be used in program assessment reports will not include the identity of individual students; Office of Distance Learning staff will be responsible to ensure that no information specific to identified students will be included in such reports.
6. Instructors shall ask students never to reveal their log-in names and passwords to anyone.
7. In all University-related business and classroom interactions conducted via e-mail, students and instructors are required to use their Grambling State University email account.
8. Students taking proctored exams should consider themselves to be in class. If they are not comfortable taking a test in their room, they should select a location (such as a library) where they can work and show their environment. It is as much part of their responsibility as having computer and internet access that meets the institutional standards. Students do not have a right to privacy in taking tests in traditional classroom; in fact they are closely supervised. The same holds true for the proctored environment.