Developing and Offering Online Programs at URI
Regulations and Best Practices

- All new online programs must go through both the university and state approval process.
  - The Department should discuss their plans for a fully online program with the Joint Committee on Academic Planning by developing a pre-proposal and meeting with the committee http://web.uri.edu/facsen/curricular-matters/program-procedures/
  - All new courses and courses which are newly online as well as the program itself must go through the full curricular process - Department, College, Curriculum Affairs Committee (and/or Graduate Council), and the Faculty Senate.
    http://web.uri.edu/facsen/curricular-matters/ or
  - New online programs must be reviewed and approved by the Commissioner of Postsecondary Education and presented to the Council on Postsecondary Education

- All new online programs must meet the standards set by NEASC and adopted by the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (C-RAC Standards):
  Standards 1-4 relate to the institutions as a whole. The following 5 standards must be met by each program. Please use the link above to see the requirements under each standard.
  - Curricula for the institution's on-line learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.
  - The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its on-line learning offerings, including the extent to which the on-line learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals.
  - Faculty responsible for delivering the on-line learning curricula and evaluating the students’ success in achieving the on-line learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.
  - The institution provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in on-line learning offerings.
  - The institution assures the integrity of its on-line learning offerings.

- All new online programs must ensure that only students from SARA or approved states enroll in the program. There is a complicated series of regulations that govern enrolling online students who do not live in RI. URI is a member of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) which currently allows us to enroll students from 40 states and DC. We also have permission from several other states. Those states are listed here:
  http://web.uri.edu/learningonline/state-authorization/
  - If your program leads to licensure or if you have internships, please contact the Office of Online Education to discuss any issues you should be aware of to be in compliance with these regulations.
  - Your program website MUST include a link to the page below with information that you cannot enroll students from states that are not listed. We prefer you to link to
4. **Fully online programs have a choice of two academic calendars.** They can run in the traditional semester based calendar OR in an accelerated calendar. The accelerated calendar was designed specifically for programs for working adults. It consists of 3 terms (Fall, Spring, and Summer) each with 2 seven-week sessions and runs all year. This allows students to take two courses a term and be eligible for financial aid, but only have to focus on one course each session. These calendars are program specific. By federal regulations, a student enrolled in one calendar may **not** take courses offered in the other calendar.

http://web.uri.edu/enrollment/academic-calendars

5. **Fully online programs may participate in a tuition revenue share and may set a “market driven” tuition with no differential for out of state students.** This must be discussed with the Office of the Provost and the Office of Budget and Financial Planning before moving forward.

http://web.uri.edu/learningonline/state-authorization/

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**How the Office of Online Education Can Help**

Please contact Diane Goldsmith, Director of the Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (**dgoldsmith@uri.edu**) or 874-4218 as you begin to develop your online program.

- We can help you understand and navigate the rules and regulations specified above. This is especially true of the State Authorization and NEASC issues.

- We can work with your faculty as you think about the issues involved in designing an online program.

- **We offer training for your faculty.** In order to meet NEASC and SARA standards your faculty must be trained in teaching online.
  - Our Online Pedagogy 1 course is a 3-week fully online course that focuses on teaching an online class.
  - Online Pedagogy 2 is a self-paced course with a focus on course design.
  - Both were created to help faculty understand and use best practices in designing and teaching online

- **We offer instructional design help.** Faculty who have completed our online training can meet with our instructional designer for individual help in creating their class. Instructional Design help can save faculty time and effort both in their course design and in how they teach the course.

- **We can provide quality assurance through our Quality Matters Peer Review Process.** Trained URI faculty can review the courses in your program using a rubric of best practices in online course design. This process highlights areas that could be improved and provides helpful suggestions as to how to do so.