

# Virtual Learning

## An Electronic Course

Is defined as a course in which: instruction and content are delivered primarily over the Internet; a student and teacher are in different locations for a majority of the student’s instructional period; most instructional activities take place in an online environment; the online instructional activities are integral to the academic program; extensive communication between a student and a teacher and among students is emphasized; and a student is not required to be located on the physical premises of a school district or open-enrollment charter school.

### Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

The SBOE has rules in place in Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter, 74.23 that require all distance learning courses to meet 100% of the essential knowledge and skills for that course.

### Teacher Qualifications

TEC Chapter, 30A.111 Requires each teacher of an electronic course offered by a district or open-enrollment charter school to be certified under Subchapter B, Chapter 21 to teach that course and grade-level. Teachers are also required to complete the appropriate professional development for delivering online instruction.

# Evaluation of Online Course Providers

Name of Provider	
Web URL	
Login	
Password	

### Rating Scale

- 0 Absent—component is missing
- 1 Unsatisfactory—needs significant improvement
- 2 Somewhat satisfactory—needs targeted improvements
- 3 Satisfactory—discretionary improvement needed
- 4 Very satisfactory—no improvement needed

**The following rubric was adapted from the North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL)**

<b>Content</b>	<b>Score</b>
The course goals and objectives are measurable and clearly state what the participants will know or be able to do at the end of the course.	
The course content and assignments are aligned with state’s content standards or nationally accepted content standards set for Advanced Placement courses, technology, computer science, or other courses whose content is not included in state standards.	
Course tasks and assessments align with the required local, state, and national assessments that are associated with the course.	
The course content and assignments are of sufficient rigor, depth, and breadth to teach the standards being addressed.	
Information literacy and communication skills are incorporated and taught as an integral part of the curriculum.	
Sufficient learning resources and materials to increase student success are available to students before the course begins.	
A clear, complete course overview and syllabus are included in the course.	
Course requirements are consistent with course goals, representative of the scope of the course, and clearly stated.	
Information is provided to students, parents and mentors on how to communicate with the online teacher and course provider, including information on the process for these communications.	
Issues associated with the use of copyrighted materials are addressed.	

<b>Content</b>	<b>Score</b>
Academic integrity and netiquette (Internet etiquette) expectations regarding lesson activities, discussions, e-mail communications and plagiarism are clearly stated.	
Privacy policies are clearly stated.	
Instructor resources and notes are included.	
Assessment and assignment answers and explanations are included.	

<b>Student Assessment</b>	<b>Score</b>
Student evaluation strategies are consistent with course goals and objectives, representative of the scope of the course and clearly stated.	
The course structure includes adequate and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.	
Ongoing and frequent assessments are conducted to verify each student's readiness for the next lesson.	
Assessment strategies and tools make the student continuously aware of his/her progress in class and mastery of the content beyond letter grades.	
Assessment materials provide the teacher with the flexibility to assess students in a variety of ways.	
Grading rubrics and models of partially to fully completed assignments are provided to the teacher.	
Grading policy and practices are easy to understand.	

<b>Technology</b>	<b>Score</b>
The course architecture permits the online teacher to add content, activities and assessments to extend learning opportunities.	
The course accommodates multiple school calendars; e.g., block, 4X4 and traditional schedules.	
The course is easy to navigate.	
The course makes maximum use of the capabilities of the online medium and makes resources available by alternative means; e.g., video, CDs and pod casts.	
Hardware, Web browser and software requirements are specified.	
Prerequisite skills in the use of technology are identified.	
The course utilizes appropriate content-specific tools and software.	
Interoperability technical standards allow sharing content among different learning management systems.	
Interoperability technical standards ensure sharing of questions, assessments and results with others.	
The course meets universal design principles, Section 508 standards and W3C guidelines to ensure access for all students.	
Online textbooks used in a course meet nationally endorsed standards (NIMAS) for publishers to ensure distribution of accessible, alternative versions of textbooks and other instructional materials.	
The course provider offers the course teacher, school coordinator assistance with technical support and course management.	
The course provider offers orientation training.	

<b>Course Evaluation and Management</b>	<b>Score</b>
The results of peer review and student evaluations of courses are available.	
Course provider uses multiple ways of assessing course effectiveness	
The course is evaluated regularly for effectiveness, and the findings are used as a basis for improvement.	
The course is updated periodically to ensure timeliness.	
The course provider is authorized to operate in the state in which the course is offered.	
The teacher meets the professional teaching standard established by a state licensing agency or the teacher has academic credentials in the field in which he or she is teaching and has been trained to teach online and to use the course.	
Student information remains confidential, as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).	

<b>21st Century Skills</b>	<b>Score</b>
The course intentionally emphasizes 21st century skills in the course, including using 21st century skills in the core subjects, 21st century content, learning and thinking skills, ICT literacy, self-directed learning, global awareness, and includes 21st century assessments, as identified by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills.	