

Guidance on the 30 Hours of Professional Development for Teaching Online Courses

“Beginning July 1, 2010, no person may teach an online course in a public school, including a charter school, unless he or she has completed at least 30 hours of professional development designed to prepare a teacher for online teaching.” [Wisconsin State Statute 118.19(13)]

Online courses are courses in which:

- the student and teacher are geographically remote,
- most communication between the teacher and/or the students is done through asynchronous or text-based interactions including email and discussion boards, and
- students are usually communicating with the teacher and/or other students via a computer.

Teachers of online courses will:

1. meet Wisconsin teaching standards as evidenced by a valid Wisconsin teaching license for the appropriate age level and content area (Note that Wisconsin Statute 118.40(8)(b) does not allow persons exclusively licensed for a charter school to teach in a virtual charter school), and
2. have completed thirty hours of professional development to ensure that teachers are able to transfer their mastery of the ten Wisconsin teacher standards into the online environment. The professional development should be based on the following standards¹ from the “National Standards for Quality Online Teaching” (NACOL, 2008):
 - a) The teacher has the prerequisite technology skills to teach online.
 - b) The teacher plans, designs and incorporates strategies to encourage active learning, interaction, participation and collaboration in the online environment.
 - c) The teacher provides online leadership in a manner that promotes student success through regular feedback, prompt response and clear expectations.
 - d) The teacher models, guides and encourages legal, ethical, safe and healthy behavior related to technology use.
 - e) The teacher understands and is responsive to students with special needs in the online classroom and is able to implement individualized instructional plans (IEPs) as necessary.
 - f) The teacher demonstrates competencies in creating and implementing assessments in online learning environments in ways that assure validity and reliability of instruments and procedures.

- g) The teacher develops and delivers assessments, projects, and assignments that meet standards-based learning goals and assesses learning progress by measuring student achievement of learning goals.
- h) The teacher demonstrates competencies in using data and findings from assessments and other data sources to modify instructional methods and content and to guide student learning.

Any school offering an online course should keep on file evidence that each person teaching online is properly licensed and has completed 30 hours of professional development as outlined above. This documentation should be made available to anyone requesting it.

It is recommended that providers of professional development for this requirement produce a certificate for successful participation, signed by the training provider and the participant. This certificate should be kept on file by the school or organization employing the teacher.

The following documentation should be attached to the certificate by the professional development provider:

- 1) The number of hours of professional development provided,
- 2) A description of the content including objectives, activities and the standards covered (see: a-h above),
- 3) A description of how the participant has experienced online learning from the perspective of a student, and
- 4) A description of the assessment used to determine the proficiency of the participants on each applicable standard (see: a-h above).

Teachers instructing online courses prior to July 2010 are not exempted from this statute. Online schools and programs should be able to identify and verify, either from their own records or documentation submitted by the teachers, 30 hours of professional development which would meet the guidelines for each teacher.

For more information contact Steve Sanders at stephen.sanders@dpi.wi.gov or (608) 266-3856.

Reference

North American Council for Online Learning (NACOL), *National Standards for Quality Online Teaching*,
<http://www.inacol.org/resources/nationalstandards/NACOL%20Standards%20Quality%20Online%20Teaching.pdf>, February 2008

¹ Standard G has been modified from the NACOL standards.