

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)

DMACC requires instructors to initiate regular and substantive interaction in online, virtual, and hybrid courses as required by [HLC accreditation](#) and the Department of Education. "Regular" is defined as "frequent, predictable, and scheduled" throughout the term. "Substantive" refers to academic engagement related to teaching, learning, and assessment. RSI is essential because it keeps students engaged, helps clarify uncertainties, promotes deeper understanding of the material, and allows instructors to gauge student progress and provide necessary support. DMACC's expectations for regular and substantive interaction help to distinguish our distance education offerings from correspondence education, which are not eligible for financial aid).

DMACC's [online course design expectations](#) for online (fully asynchronous) and blended courses (part face-to-face and part asynchronous) contain material for which students are not expected or required to attend any meeting time unless identified in the course schedule. Synchronous events can be offered for fully online courses, but they must be optional. Alternative opportunities should be made available for students who are unable to attend live.

Four Keys to RSI

The interaction must be:

1. Initiated by the instructor.
2. Academic in nature and relevant to the course.
3. Regular and frequent throughout the course term.
4. Completed with an instructor who meets our accrediting bodies' standards.

Initiated by the instructor

What Counts

- You post a discussion question and actively facilitate the ensuing conversation.
- You ask all students to visit you during office hours or to schedule a phone call or videoconference with you.
- You provide personalized comments for an individual student's assignment in the gradebook.

What Doesn't Count

- A student happens to drop in during your regularly scheduled open office hours.
- You add numeric grades to the course gradebook.
- A student submits a quiz that is automatically graded, including publisher material.
- You reply to an email from a student who asks a question.

Academic in nature

What Counts

- You send a message previewing concepts introduced in the next unit and listing questions for students to have in mind when reading the textbook chapters.
- You post an example from last night's baseball game in the course's discussion to illustrate the concept of coefficient of restitution.

What Doesn't Count

- You remind students of the course attendance policy
- You post an announcement about an upcoming assignment deadline
- You post to the course's 'General Topics' discussion thread lamenting the outcome of last night's baseball game.

Graded assignments without feedback

Graded assignments with feedback

Regular and frequent

What Counts

- You routinely post announcement or send messages that you have written specifically for the section.
- You regularly facilitate required online discussions.
- You hold optional and recorded online review sessions throughout the term.

What Doesn't Count

- You send a welcome message during the first week of class and a mid-term message.
- You encourage students to participate in an optional, one-time online review session before the final exam.



Additional Sources:

- <https://www.niu.edu/citl/online/standards-and-principles/regular-and-substantive-interaction.shtml>
- <https://oscqr.suny.edu/rsi/>
- <https://www.utrgv.edu/online/teaching-online/process/regular-substantive-interaction/index.htm>

Citations & Attributions:

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