REGULAR SUBSTANTIVE INTERACTION

What is Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI)?
RSI is a federal requirement for online courses that ensures meaningful engagement between instructors and students and distinguishes distance (both synchronous and asynchronous) education from correspondence education. It's designed to maintain the quality of online education and is necessary for courses to be eligible for Title IV financial aid.

Definition: Regular and Substantive Interaction is *instructor-led* and *scheduled* and includes *proactive engagement* with students, which is integral to the learning process.

CRITERIA TO MEET RSI

A. INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS
1. Instructors must meet the qualifications established by the institution's accrediting agency.
2. Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants must also meet these qualifications if they are involved in instruction, grading, or facilitating breakout sessions.

B. SUBSTANTIVE INTERACTION
1. Instructors must engage students in teaching, learning, and assessment activities relevant to the course content.
2. At least *two* of the following activities must be included in each course:
   a. Direct instruction (Recorded lectures do not meet this criterion alone.)
   b. Providing feedback on student coursework (Automatic feedback does not meet this criterion.)
   c. Facilitating group discussions
   d. Conducting assessments
   e. Offering office hours or other scheduled interactions
3. Instructors must monitor each student's engagement and success, following up with students as needed.

C. REGULAR INTERACTION
1. Instructors must interact with students on a predictable and scheduled basis.
2. Interactions should be commensurate with the length and content of the course.
3. Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success.

D. IMPLEMENTING RSI IN ONLINE COURSES
1. The **online course syllabus** should clearly outline:
   a. Types of interactions students can expect
   b. Frequency of these interactions
   c. Response time expectations for student inquiries
   d. Office hours scheduled
   e. Feedback timeline for assignments
   f. Methods of communication (e.g., email, discussion board, video conference)

oscqr.suny.edu/rsi/

SAMPLE SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

Instructors may use or adapt the following sample statements in their syllabi:

- "In this course, you can expect regular and substantive interaction through weekly live sessions every Monday at 10 AM, where we will discuss course content and answer questions. Additionally, I will provide feedback on assignments within 48 hours of submission. Office hours are scheduled for Wednesdays from 2 PM to 4 PM."

- "To ensure a rich learning experience, this course includes bi-weekly discussion forums where participation is required. I will also provide detailed feedback on your projects within one week of submission. My virtual office hours are available every Friday from 1 PM to 3 PM."

- "This course will feature a combination of recorded lectures and live Q&A sessions every Thursday at 3 PM. You will receive feedback on quizzes and assignments within three days. I am available for one-on-one consultations during my office hours on Tuesdays from 11 AM to 1 PM."

- "Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in this course is achieved through various activities:
    - Weekly discussion boards (initial post by Wednesday, responses by Friday)
    - Bi-weekly synchronous sessions (Tuesdays, 8-9 PM EST)
    - Monthly one-on-one progress meetings (scheduled individually)
    - Instructor feedback on assignments (within 5 days of submission)
    - Email responses (within 48 hours) Instructor will proactively contact students who fall   behind in coursework or show signs of disengagement."

COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID

1. Relying solely on automated feedback systems
2. Inconsistent communication or long periods without interaction
3. Focusing interactions only on course logistics rather than content
4. Neglecting to update your online syllabus with interaction details for compliance purposes

---

FAQS

Q: Does grading count as substantive interaction?
- A: Simply entering a grade does not count. However, providing detailed feedback along with the grade does qualify.

Q: How often should I interact with students?
- A: This varies by course, but generally, some form of interaction should occur at least weekly in a standard-length course.

Q: Can Teaching Assistants fulfill RSI requirements?
- A: TAs can assist, but the primary instructor must also be actively involved in substantive interactions.

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR RSI IMPLEMENTATION

- Contact ITLE's Teaching and Learning Department for templates and resources.
- View Video Training sessions on **RSI best practices.**
- Utilize the IT department for technical support with LMS tools.
- Join the **Online Teaching Canvas Community** for additional guides and examples.
- Request an Online Course Review from ITLE.

ACCESSORY RESOURCES AND SOURCES

- **WCET**- Regular & Substantive Interaction – WCET (wiche.edu)
- **WCET Update**-Regular and Substantive Interaction: Reviewing & Sharing Our Best Interpretation of Current
- **OSCQR SUNY**-Guidance and Requirements – WCET (wiche.edu)
- **Regular & Substantive Interaction – OSCQR**- SUNY Online Course Quality Review Rubric
- **Regular and Substantive Interaction**: **Background, Concerns, and Guiding Principles**-ED593878.pdf
- August 5th Virtual Workshop Recording- "RSI: Ensuring Quality in Online Courses"
- August 5th Virtual Workshop Slides- "RSI: Ensuring Quality in Online Courses"