Recommended Policies and Procedures for Online Courses

Policy	*Sample*/Suggestions
Participation in Orientation or Readiness Tests	*Sample: Completing the Orientation to Online Learning (a free, short, online course) is highly recommend for new online students or students who have been unsuccessful in completing online courses in the past.* *Please complete the first six Modules at the Online Learner Readiness site. You will be using your experience in a discussion assignment.*
Participation Guidelines	*Sample: You are expected to spend at least the same amount of time on this course as you would any traditional college course. That means that for a course that meets 3 hours per week and has six hours of homework, you would be spending 9 hours per week on the course. Since class time and homework are combined in an online course, expect to spend **at least 9 hours total** on your online course per week.* *Discussion Forum participation is mandatory to pass this course. See Discussion Board Rubrics and Etiquette for specific requirements.*
Integrity/Cheating/ Plagiarism	Policies dealing with integrity usually include links to college policies about student conduct and you can link to those, however, really considering what is important to you, as the teacher, about student honesty, is a good way to start developing your own policy. Most integrity policies focus on the consequences. Excellent policies also explain the difference between cheating and plagiarism, give students information about how to avoid plagiarizing, and cover why it is important for students to maintain their own integrity and how that reflects on their college, programs, and your course. Suggestion: Hold a discussion forum with your students explaining and talking about what being honest means in your course. A good discussion question might be, "Think of a time when you acted with the highest level of honesty. What were the considerations you had as you were operating at that level? Why is it important to maintain your integrity as a student? " The replies may be focused on, "Find another student with whom you share the same ideals, and let them know or give some supportive feedback on the posts of at least two other students." If students are accountable in a public forum for discussing their ideas about being honest, they may think twice before engaging in cheating behavior. For a little more in-depth discussion of this topic visit Pat's blog
Acceptable Use Policies	Suggestion: Usually the college has this generated as part of student conduct policies or it may be developed through your technology division. Make sure you have a link for this in your course.

Technical Issues	Suggestions: 1. Include the specific technical requirements for your course, or a link to them, in your welcome information. Be sure students understand that there are two types of technical difficulties, student based tech problems and college related problems. Give them link information to your help desk. 2. Be sure to have a policy and procedure for student based technical difficulties not related to testing. *Sample: If you have problems with your home technology that are affecting your work in the course, please notify me via phone or email message as soon as possible.* 3. Be sure to have a policy and procedure for college based technology problems. You will need two procedures, one for adjusting due dates for tests and assignments and one for meeting students in another online location for emergencies or disasters lasting longer than just a few hours. Facebook or any other free social networking place will work well for this purpose. Setting this up in advance will save the student many anxious moments and keep you from having to deal with individual panic calls and /or emails from students AND helps with avoiding loss of instructional time. It also helps the college with switchboard traffic, if students have an alternate location where they can get news of what is going on with their class. *Sample: If the college system is unavailable for any time period lasting longer than six hours, I will adjust any affected due dates accordingly. I will also post information at [figure out a place]. You will receive instructions about how to access that site during the first week of class. Please download the instructions and keep them handy for use in the event of an emergency.* 4. Decide how often you will reset a test, if the student has tech problems while taking an online (course management system) test. *Sample: You will be given two Mulligans during the semester, that is two "no questions asked" reset/retake opportunities. If you use up the two Mulligans, you should be sure that you are in a technically sound place to take your tests and quizzes (i.e. the college learning center or library)*
Syllabus Quiz	Suggestion: Have students test out the course management testing system by giving them a syllabus quiz. When they have read the syllabus, they can take the quiz. Make the quiz able to be retaken as often as needed to get 100% and make this count for nominal points in the course.
Proctored Test Information	Suggestion: If you require proctored testing, let students know as soon as possible. Some colleges put test proctoring notification in the schedule notes for your course. However, it should also be in your syllabus. Students don't like to be surprised in an online class, mid semester, finding out that they have to find a place to get a test proctored. Also, explain how to choose a proctoring site. The OEI has negotiated pricing for Proctorio, digital proctoring. Check to see what your college has available.
Due dates and late	Suggestion: Make sure you have a clear policy for late work. In creating this policy, consider making

work policies	things as flexible as possible by providing several day windows for testing and other due dates, which will allow for accommodating a variety of different student schedules. It is wise to make due dates for assignments, projects, papers, etc., fall on days and times that the college is open for business and that you are usually online. This helps students who might have submission difficulties reach the help desk or you. For example, instead of having everything due on Sunday at midnight, you could make things due on Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.
Email and Grading turn- around times	Suggestion: In the syllabus, let students know how long it is likely to take you to return emails and how long they can expect to wait for a grade from you. If your email turn-around is set at within 48 hours, for example, you can say that you attend to the Q&A discussion forum much more quickly, driving students to the discussion rather than email. They also won't bug you about responding to their email so quickly.
Email Usage	Suggestion: To decrease your email traffic, let students know that email should be used only for private conversations with you about problems in class or about grade issues. Everything else should be done through the Q&A discussion forum where you can reach the whole class with one answer to a popular question. If you check your Q&A forum at least once a day, students will use it over the longer email process. If you find yourself providing the same answer over and over again to different students, it might be an indication that you have to adjust lessons in the course. You can address those in an announcement, if need be.
Email Naming Conventions	Suggestion: Have students, when they do email you, include their class section number in the subject line and then the topic of their email. This allows you to sort your email and triage your answers. *Example Subject: Mul 110-4567: Where's my grade?*
Online Office Hours	Suggestion: Be sure to post these in your announcement area and change the times up to meet the variety of student schedules that are prevalent in asynchronous online classes.
Synchronous Activities	Suggestion: If your course is fully online and you haven't put meeting dates in the college class schedule, don't make synchronous activities mandatory. Make them available and then record and archive them when appropriate.
Grade Information and Rubrics for Assignment	Suggestion: Make sure you have clearly posted your grading policies and that you have rubrics for all of your assignments (these become part of your course SLOs, by the way). Have assignment samples posted whenever possible. Also post a schedule of when all assignments are due and instructions for how to turn them in.
Timeline for Discussion Posting	Suggestion: Due dates for initial responses to discussion questions should be set for a day that falls early enough for replies from other students to be posted within a reasonable follow up time.
Student Responsibilities	Suggestion: Post a student responsibilities list and include: • The student shall maintain a stable technology environment to work from that includes consistent connectivity and hardware and software specifications for the course. • The student is expected to purchase required text for the course.

	• The student will be responsible for saving all work at their local computer and not depend upon the instructor to produce lost work. This includes all discussion postings, assignments, projects and any other required submissions. • Some reference to your due dates.
Opening Day "Must Haves"	A welcome letter or announcement A description, video, or flow chart about how to navigate the course Your contact information and alternative disaster site information Your syllabus and policy information Directions on what to do first.