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Rubric for RSI Assessment

As of July 2021, the federal government has issued guidelines about what defines Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in an online or “distance education” course. As per these guidelines, instructors are expected to interact with students in predictable and meaningful ways and to provide individualized feedback on the course subject matter throughout the semester.

These requirements align with best practices for high quality online course design and delivery. RSI speaks to *instructor presence*, meaning that the professor is proactively monitoring and frequently engaging their students in an academic context. This is vastly different from so-called plug and play, automated, or self-paced courses where students feel they are in the course alone. Instructors should provide feedback to each student by using the asynchronous tools in Brightspace. RSI does not mean professors can require students to attend synchronous meetings to benefit from feedback or grades.

A course that does not meet the RSI criteria is considered a “correspondence course.” Correspondence courses are not eligible for federal funds. The U.S. Department of Education Office of Inspector General (OIG) has audited institutions regarding RSI and those identified as being out of compliance must pay back federal funds. Therefore, it is important for administrators and teaching faculty to be proactive about ensuring RSI is demonstrated in all distance education courses at SUNY Suffolk.

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