

Minimum Standards for RSI – Physical Sciences

1. **Assurance of Regularity** The general goal should be that in online classes, as in onsite classes, instructors and students will be in a (virtual) classroom every week and instruction and interactions will occur.

The Physical Sciences chooses Plan A:

All courses will have weekly online instruction and at least one RSI activity per week. This requirement may be waived for up to two weeks in a 16 week course or one week in an 8 week course (e.g., during midterm or final exam week).

The time spent on RSI activities should correspond to the course units. For example, an instructor is expected to spend an average of 3 hours a week in RSI related activities for a 3-credit course.

Definition: “Substantive interaction” includes comments from faculty to students that address course content and help students achieve the learning outcomes/objectives. Comments such as “Great work!” and “Remember the paper is due this Monday,” are helpful to students, but are not considered “substantive” or academic in nature.

2. **Core RSI activities.** Describe the core weekly RSI activity or mix of activities that best suits instruction in this discipline or disciplines.

The following qualify as RSI-related activities for the Physical Sciences:

Discussions – Every online course will contain a minimum of 8 graded Discussion Forums. RSI related activities include instructor participation in the forum by posting comments and replies that are academic in nature.

Individual feedback – RSI related activities include grading/feedback notes to students offered via Speedgrader comments for assignments and/or quizzes/exams. It is expected that some of the feedback may be identical for different students, however excessive used of canned or copied responses should be minimized.

Rubrics – RSI related activities include the creation and use of customized Rubrics that are clear, written in everyday language, and contain sufficient feedback so a student understands what he/she did well and what he/she could do next time to improve.

Announcements – Instructors may provide substantive interaction via Announcements, giving general feedback to the class on overall performance and achievement and/or identifying what the class as a whole seems to have learned well and noting what could be improved. Automated Announcements can be used, but the majority of the posted Announcements should be current, and not pre-loaded from previous semesters.

Closure statements – RSI related activities include closure statements to the entire class to summarize/clarify lessons and offer general feedback after particular assignments. This may come in the form of Discussion post, Announcement, College email, or Canvas Inbox.

Individual assistance – Instructors may provide substantive interaction by offering individual feedback to students who need help with certain academic aspects of the course. This may come in the form of Speedgrader comments, College email, the Canvas inbox, or replies to questions posted on an “Ask the Professor” Discussion Forum. If the primary form of communication is email, the instructor should save RSI related emails for possible review at a future date.

3. **Volume of RSI Contact:** The general rule should be that ALL students in a virtual classroom will experience interactions with the instructor on a regular basis. In some cases this may be the instructor interacting with the entire class (such as posting on a discussion forum) or providing individualized interactions to each student, for instance through substantive feedback in the Canvas Speedgrader.

Faculty within the Physical Sciences will ensure that substantial online instruction is offered on a weekly basis. In addition, each course will offer weekly substantive interaction between the instructor and students in the form of discussions and/or individual feedback to students. Instructors may deliver additional RSI through the other vehicles listed above.

At a minimum, each student can expect to receive direct substantive interaction with the instructor once a week in an 8-week course and once every 1-2 weeks in a 16-week course.

The time spent on RSI activities should correspond to the course units. For example, an instructor is expected to spend an average of 3 hours a week in RSI related activities for a 3-credit course.

When possible, instructors will initiate interaction as they continuously monitor student performance, look for weaknesses and learning opportunities, and reach out to help individual students with advice, feedback, and assistance.

All discussions, assignments, and tests should be graded no later than one week after their due dates. Occasional delays of an extra week or two may occur due to unforeseen circumstances, but these delays should be rare.