RSI Guidance

Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) is the federal and institutional standard that distinguishes distance education from *correspondence* courses or *self-study*. It requires that instruction is initiated and led by the instructor on a regular basis, occurs on a predictable and regular basis, and is "substantive," meaning it focuses on the academic subject matter through direct instruction, assessment, or coaching. To ensure a thorough J1B/C evaluation, the evaluator and instructor should collaborate closely during the pre-evaluation meeting to identify where this evidence lives.

Because much of the most impactful RSI such as personalized, guiding feedback in SpeedGrader, specific instructional guidance in the Canvas Inbox, or tailored student interventions, occurs in areas of the course unavailable to the evaluator, the instructor should take the lead in demonstrating these specific artifacts to the reviewer during the pre-evaluation meeting. The *Communication Plan* should guide this conversation, with the instructor demonstrating when, where, and how each of the communication plan elements are present in the class.

When, Where & How Communication Happens

The instructor should clearly articulate in writing to the students when, where and how they will communicate about course content. This can be called a "communication plan" but does not have to be specifically named this. It should be present in the course syllabus or orientation and be easy for students and the evaluator to find. The goal of a communication plan is to provide clarity and set expectations for regular and substantive interaction in your class. The specifics of your communication plan may vary based on your subject and personal teaching style. The following elements are suggested:

- **Asynchronous Contact:** Specify your preferred methods, such as the Canvas Inbox or institutional email.
- **Response Latency:** Define a clear window for replies. The J1 specifies that this should at minimum be "within two school days".
- **Synchronous Support:** Detail your "Drop-in Support Hours" (Office Hours), including the platform (Zoom/Teams) or physical location and the specific times.
- **Announcements:** State the frequency of your broadcast communications (e.g., "A weekly overview every Monday morning").

- **Content Delivery:** Explain when and how new modules or lecture materials will be released to ensure a predictable rhythm.
- **Progress monitoring**: Explain how you plan to proactively engage students on their course progress and provide support for those who are not progressing to the course standard.
- **Feedback Timelines:** Describe how you will provide substantive feedback in a timely manner so students have sufficient time to adjust to the feedback and improve their future work. Note that feedback timelines may vary based on the type of assignment

Rubric

Meets Expectations	Needs Development	Unsatisfactory
The instructor is a visible, active leader in the course. Regular, proactive announcements and content updates guide students through the learning process. Most of the feedback is individualized and provides a clear path for student improvement where possible. The feedback should be appropriately substantive for formative learning. Student work is assessed on a predictable schedule, and feedback arrives in a timely manner for students to apply to future work. The instructor successfully demonstrates where the communication plan is realized within the course (e.g., specific announcements, discussion replies, or Speed Grader comments).	The instructor is present but primarily reactive. Interaction occurs mainly when students ask questions rather than as a scheduled part of the teaching design. Feedback on student work that needs improvement lacks a clear path for student improvement (e.g., "Needs work" instead of providing individualized, guiding feedback). It may arrive too late for the student to apply to future work. The communication plan exists, but there is inconsistent evidence of its execution within the actual course environment.	The instructor is not visible in the class. There are no/few proactive announcements with guiding content. Little qualitative feedback is provided. Grading is automated or lacks instructional commentary to support student growth. There is no evidence of a plan being followed, and substantive interaction is sporadic or non-existent in the reviewed materials.