

Online Learning Requirements 2021–22

Purpose/Background

School districts have adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic with a wide range of educational program delivery models, including fully in-person, hybrid, and fully online. Some of these models of instruction meet the state definition of “online learning” and, as a result, state online learning regulations now apply. For the 2020–21 school year, OSPI provided program approval flexibility for these temporary emergency adjustments with guidance on the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction’s (OSPI) [online learning webpage](#).

This is an update for the 2021–22 school year.

Action Needed by School and District Administrators

1. Review the definitions below for online courses.
2. If you plan on returning to full-time in-person learning when available, or your courses do not meet the definition of online course below, no action is needed.
3. If your school or district is seeking to develop and continue a long-term online learning option, please connect with OSPI’s Alternative Learning Department to learn more about approval and online learning requirements.

Note: if your online program serves or plans to serve nonresident students, approval is subject to essential submission and review timelines. Please see our resource on multi-district online school programs.

Online Course Definition

An online course is a course in which:

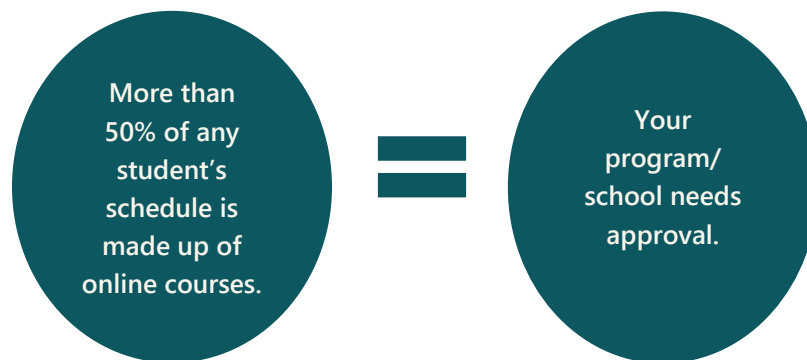
- More than half of the course content (including assignments, assessments, activities, etc.) is delivered electronically using the internet or other computer-based methods.
- More than half of the teaching is conducted from a remote location through an online course learning management system or other online or electronic tools.



Online courses have unique designations for the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) that should be reported accurately. See the [Online Learning Guide](#) for more information.

Online School Program Definition

An online school program is a school or program that offers a sequential set of online courses or grade-level coursework that may be taken in a single school term or throughout the school year in a manner that could provide a full-time basic education program if so desired by the student. Students may enroll in the online school program as a part-time or full-time student.



Online School Program Approvals

There are three types of online school programs: Single District, Affiliate, and Multi-District. The Alternative Learning Department is happy to answer questions you may have about the appropriate approval model for your program.

Single District Programs

- Allows the use of contracted online courses from approved course providers, as well as online courses using district teachers and curriculum.
- Limits non-resident student enrollment to 10% of the program's enrollment.
- OSPI accepts applications for approval year-round.

Affiliate Programs

- Uses approved online course provider courses and teachers only.
- No limit non-resident student enrollment.
- OSPI accepts applications for approval year-round.

Multi-District Programs

- Most flexible option.
- Allows the use of contracted online courses from approved online course providers, as well as online courses using district teachers and curriculum.

- No limit on non-resident student enrollment.
- OSPI accepts applications throughout the month of January for approval in the following year. For the 2021–22 school year, established programs that have an excess of 10% nonresident student enrollment should seek a Single District Program approval while preparing an application for the January 2022 deadline for approval to operate for the 2022–23 school year.

Additional Resources

For more information about online learning and/or to secure approval for your program, please contact [Nicole González](#), Online Learning Program Manager.

If the program will utilize Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) funding, then additional considerations must be addressed and other requirements must be met. Please consult with [Anissa Sharratt](#), ALE Program Manager.

- [Online Learning webpage](#)
- [Online Learning Guide](#)
- [Approved Online Course Providers](#)
- [Alternative Learning Experience webpage](#)
- [Guide to Offering Alternative Learning Experience \(ALE\)](#)

Contact

- Nicole González, Online Learning Program Manager: nicole.gonzález@k12.wa.us
- Anissa Sharratt, ALE Program Manager: anissa.sharratt@k12.wa.us