



MSC ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAM

POLICY GUIDELINES

Revised September 2018

PURPOSE

The purpose of the MSC Online Learning Program is to provide expanded educational opportunities for all learners, prepare students for life and work in the 21st century, promote the availability of online coursework, improve the effectiveness of online learning and assure a quality learning environment for students and teachers. The MSC Online Learning Program will:

- Support standards-aligned, fully-online courses and blended learning for Minnesota students;
- Provide professional development and collaboration tools for online educators;
- Integrate, support and improve the development of K-12 work processes that employ virtual support tools.

The purpose of these guidelines is to articulate the basic policies for districts as they provide online learning options for students. Compliance with these guidelines, and any policies or procedures adopted pursuant to these guidelines, is required in order for districts and their students to access the MSC Online Learning Program.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions will be used throughout these policies:

1. Online learning is an interactive course or program that delivers instruction to a student by computer and the Internet. For students in K-12 courses, online learning must meet or exceed State of Minnesota academic standards and may be combined with other traditional delivery methods that include frequent student assessment and actual teacher contact time.
2. Online Learning Provider / Providing district is a school district or an organization of two or more school districts operating under a joint powers agreement, located in Minnesota, which provides learning to students.
3. Student is a Minnesota resident enrolled in a school as defined in the compulsory instruction law in any grades Kindergarten through grade 12.
4. Online Learning Student refers to a student enrolled in an online learning course or program delivered by an on-line learning provider.
5. Enrolling District refers to a school district or charter school in which a student is enrolled for purposes of compulsory instruction.

6. Supplemental Online Learning Program is an online program that offers courses taken in place of a course period during the regular school day at a local district school. MSC Online is a Supplemental Online Learning Program.
7. Course Management System (CMS) refers to the hardware and software that constitute the online resources installed and maintained by the MSC Online Learning Program. These resources may include commercially-prepared online courses, program-developed courses and other resources.
8. Student Enrollment refers to the enrollment in a fully-online course where more than 50% of the teaching and learning occurs online, using the MSC Online course management system (CMS) or other electronic tools.
9. Hybrid or Web-Enhanced Student Enrollment refers to the enrollment in a classroom-based course where less than 50% of the teaching and learning occurs online, using the MSC Online course management system (CMS) or other electronic tools.

GENERAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The MSC Online Learning Program will maintain a regional CMS, including approved online courses, and will maintain procedures for secure access to the CMS resources.

Instructor Rights and Responsibilities

Online instructors:

1. Must successfully complete a course in the facilitation of online learning or its equivalent before beginning online instruction;
2. Must hold a valid Minnesota teaching license, or equivalent authorization, in the discipline area they are teaching;
3. Must have a signed Teacher / Consultant Contract on file with the MSC Online Learning Program prior to instruction;
4. Must have a signed Intellectual Property Agreement form on file with the MSC Online Learning Program prior to instruction;
5. Must have a signed Instructor Requirements and Responsibilities form on file with the MSC Online Learning Program prior to instruction;
6. Will be required to provide student and curriculum data as requested by the Program, the enrolling district and State; and
7. Will be required to participate in periodic evaluation of Program activities.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Online students (and parent/guardian, if appropriate):

See MSC Online Learning Program Student/Parent Handbook for information*

See the Minnesota Department of Education Online Learning webpage and MS124D.095 for information

NOTE: * items/links are available at www.msconline.us

ENROLLMENT

The following enrollment guidelines will apply for enrollment in the MSC Online Learning Program:

1. The enrolling district shall not prohibit an enrolled student from applying to enroll in online learning.
2. The enrolling district shall permit a student to enroll in supplemental online learning courses during a single year to a maximum of 50 percent of the student's full schedule of courses per term and up to the mid point of the district's term. To exceed these limits, students will be required to apply for enrollment in an approved full-time online learning provider, unless the district waives the requirement(s) or another agreement is in place.
3. The enrolling district shall permit an online learning student to complete coursework at a grade level that is different from the student's current grade level.
4. The enrolling district shall permit a student to enroll in, and shall grant credit for, courses beyond the maximum, full-time enrollment under a separate agreement that includes terms for payment of any tuition and fees.
5. The enrolling district may reduce an online learning student's regular classroom instructional membership in proportion to the student's membership in online learning courses.
6. In order to assure a quality academic experience, the MSC Online Learning Program will set a maximum of twenty (20) students per online class offered through the Program.
7. Within ten (10) calendar days of a student's registration for enrollment into an online course or program, the MSC Online Learning Program will notify the student of acceptance. Registration requires that parent and student sign a statement of assurance that they have reviewed the online learning course(s) and understand the expectations of online learning.
8. Within ten (10) calendar days of a student's registration into an online learning course, the MSC Online Learning Program will notify the enrolling district of the student's registration in writing. This notification will include the courses to be taken, credits to be awarded, start date of the enrollment and a confirmation, based on communication with the enrolling district, that the courses will meet the student's graduation plan.
9. All courses offered through the MSC Online Learning Program will have a ten (10) day drop. During the first ten (10) calendar days of enrollment, students may withdraw from

courses without a grade penalty. Each student's date of enrollment will be included in the notification of enrollment sent to students and their enrolling districts. All appropriate fees and tuition, as referenced in this policy, the MSC Online Learning Program Tuition Agreement, and provided through the Minnesota OLL Options Act will apply.

Students who receive a grade of "F" in a course are considered to have completed the course.

NOTE: There will be a \$25.00 registration fee charged for any student enrollment received which is withdrawn or changed after submitted and processed. This is NOT the same as the drop fee charge within ten (10) calendar days of enrollment.

By accepting enrollment in a MSC Online course, the student agrees to the following:

I acknowledge that during the first ten (10) calendar days of being enrolled into my MSC Online course, I may withdraw from the course without grade penalty. I understand for each online course there are a minimum number of assignments that must be completed each week. Failure to submit the minimum number of assignments on a weekly basis may result in my removal from the course and may result in a failing grade.

10. MSC Online will provide a grade report to the student and to the enrolling district. The student, parent or school will have fifteen (15) calendar days to check and verify the accuracy of the grade report. After fifteen (15) calendar days, the grade issued will be final.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND COURSE COMPLETION

The MSC Online Learning Program shall ensure that all online courses and programs provided as part of the regional resource are rigorous, aligned with state academic standards and contribute to grade progression in a single subject.

The Program will maintain required records that allow the online learning program to defend the validity of its courses to enrolling school districts and to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE).

The Program shall demonstrate to the MDE Commissioner that online learning courses have equivalent standards of instruction, curriculum and assessment requirements as other courses offered to enrolled students. This information will be available to students, parents, enrolling districts and the MDE, upon request.

In addition:

1. The enrolling district shall award appropriate academic credit and GPA points to students who have completed requirements of a MDE approved online learning course or program.

Secondary credits granted to an online learning student shall be counted toward the graduation and credit requirements of the school district.

2. The enrolling district shall award credit for a graduation standard or grade progression requirement to any student who completes an online learning course or program that meets or exceeds such a requirement.
3. The enrolling district shall apply the same graduation requirements to all students, including online learning students.
4. The enrolling district shall not award credit for the online learning course or program if the student does not successfully complete the course or program.
5. When a student completes an online learning course delivered by an institution that has not been pre-approved by MDE, course credit may be transferred. The enrolling district shall use the same criteria for accepting these online credits or courses as it does for accepting other courses or credits from transfer students.
6. The MSC Online Learning Program shall demonstrate expectations for actual teacher contact time or other student-to-teacher communication.
7. The MSC Online Learning Program shall provide a teacher with a Minnesota license in the appropriate grade level and subject area to assemble and deliver instruction to students in the online program.
8. To support student academic achievement and effective communication in the online courses offered, the MSC Online Learning Program provides student attendance monitoring to parents, enrolling districts and the MDE, as needed. In each course, instructors will outline weekly minimum work and participation requirements for students. If a student is not meeting the expectations for a course after the ten (10) calendar day drop has passed, the following process will be followed:

STEP 1: If the student does not submit the expected number of assignment(s) within a period of three (3) consecutive days, the student will be contacted by the instructor. During that contact, the student and teacher will work to resolve any educational issues that prevent the student from submitting an acceptable number of assignments each week. The instructor and student will develop a schedule for completion of the course that both can agree upon.

STEP 2: If the student does not continue to submit an acceptable number of assignments within the next seven (7) calendar days, the instructor will send an Academic Report to alert the enrolling district what steps are required for successful continuation in the course.

STEP 3: The enrolling district will be informed of the student's progress with Academic Reports.

STEP 4: MSC Online will submit a grade report to the student and enrolling district. There is a fifteen (15) calendar day period to check and verify the accuracy of the grade report. After the fifteen (15) days, the grade issued will be final.

COURSE EXTENSION PROCESS

The MSC Online Learning Program recognizes that students may encounter extraordinary circumstances that make it difficult to complete coursework within the timeframe of a course term. In limited circumstances, such as severe illness, medical treatment, or other extenuating circumstances, counselors may request an extension for a student not to exceed two (2) weeks. In order for an extension to be granted, 50% of the course must be completed. Extensions will not be granted during the last fourteen (14) days of a course.

Procedure

- Must meet eligibility requirements outlined above.
- Counselors must request a course extension through the Program Director.
- If requested, Counselors must provide documentation to support the extenuating circumstances.
- If an extension is granted, it is the student's responsibility to complete all coursework prior to the end date of the course extension.

PRICING FOR MSC ONLINE:

See MSC Online Learning Program Tuition Agreement for current pricing options*

See MSC Online Learning Program Student/Parent Handbook for self-pay information*

NOTE: * items available at www.msconline.us

STUDENT RECORDS AND PRIVACY PROTECTION

The MSC Online Learning Program is committed to the secure and appropriate handling of personal information. The Program will employ physical, electronic and managerial procedures to safeguard the security and integrity of personal information collected by the Program.

In addition:

1. Participating districts will comply with all provisions of all Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, and will not collect any private student data without the consent of the student's parent or guardian.

2. The MSC Online Learning Program requires the written parental consent for their online students who are age 17 or younger with the enrolling district, as necessary.

EQUITABLE ACCESS

The MSC Online Learning Program is committed to providing equitable and safe access to the Internet-based resources provided by the Program.

In addition:

1. The enrolling district shall allow an online learning student to have the same access to the computer hardware and education software available in the school district as for all other students in the school district.
2. The enrolling district will insure that all computers supplied by the enrolling district for online learning will have appropriate active Internet filtering and blocking technology. The enrolling district will periodically check all computers to insure that this filtering and blocking software is active.
3. The enrolling district shall assist an online learning student whose family qualifies for the education tax credit to acquire computer hardware and educational software for online learning purposes.
4. The enrolling district shall provide non-academic services to online learning students on the same basis as other enrolled students, including the participation in extracurricular activities.

MSC ONLINE ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

By accepting a user account on the MSC Online Learning Program site, a user is acknowledging that she or he has read and agrees to comply with the terms of this policy.

The MSC Online Learning Program is responsible for securing its learning management system and online resources in a reasonable and economically feasible manner against unauthorized access and/or abuse, while making them accessible for authorized and legitimate users. Any attempt to violate the provisions of this policy will result in disciplinary action in the form of temporary or permanent revocation of user accounts and may include referral to law enforcement or civil liability, regardless of the success or failure of the attempt.

The users of the MSC Online Learning Program are responsible for respecting and adhering to local, state, federal and international laws. Any attempt to break those laws through the use of these resources may result in litigation against the offender by the proper authorities. If such an event should occur, this organization will fully comply with the authorities to provide any information necessary for the litigation process.

GENERAL USE POLICY

Once a person receives a user account for the purpose of accessing the MSC Online Learning Program resources, that person is solely responsible for all actions taken while using that user account. Therefore:

1. Requesting a user account under false pretenses is a punishable disciplinary offense.
2. Sharing your user account with any other person is prohibited. If you do share your user account with another person, you will be solely responsible for the actions of that other person while he or she is using the account.
3. Deletion, examination, copying, or modification of files and/or data belonging to other users without their prior consent is prohibited.
4. Attempts to evade or change resource quotas are prohibited.
5. Use of MSC Online resources for commercial, political or other non-educational purposes is prohibited.
6. Any unauthorized, deliberate action that damages or disrupts these resources, alters the normal performance, or causes malfunctions is a violation regardless of system location or time duration.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Users are responsible for all electronic communications originating from their user accounts. This includes email, messaging, discussion postings, chat discussions and other electronic communication within the MSC Online resources. Therefore:

1. Forgery or attempted forgery of electronic messages is prohibited.
2. Attempts to read, delete, copy, or modify the electronic messages of other users are prohibited, unless these actions are part of a specific course assignment.
3. Attempts to send harassing, obscene and/or other threatening electronic communications to another user are prohibited.
4. Attempts to send unsolicited junk mail, "for-profit" messages or chain letters are prohibited.
5. In addition, all users will be expected to abide by accepted guidelines of Internet etiquette (Netiquette) in all electronic communications.

NETWORK AND SYSTEM SECURITY

In the normal use of MSC Online Learning Program resources, users may be allowed to access other networks and/or the computer systems attached to those networks. Therefore:

1. Use of systems and/or networks in attempts to gain unauthorized access to remote systems is prohibited.

2. Use of systems and/or networks to connect to other systems, in evasion of the physical limitations of the remote system/local, is prohibited.
3. Decryption of system or user passwords is prohibited.
4. The copying of system files is prohibited.
5. The copying, downloading or unauthorized use of copyrighted materials, such as third-party software or course content, without the express written permission of the owner or the proper license, is prohibited. This provision also applies to the use of pirated software, which is prohibited.
6. Intentional attempts to "crash" Network systems or programs are punishable disciplinary offenses.
7. Any attempts to secure a higher level of privilege on Network systems are punishable disciplinary offenses.
8. The willful introduction of computer "viruses" or other disruptive/destructive programs into the organization network or into external networks is prohibited.

DISTRICT USE OF MSC ONLINE COURSEWARE

Each year, NESC establishes pricing options in consultation with the MSC Online Advisory Council, utilizing the ADM allowance set by the Minnesota Department of Education.

MSC Online offers tuition agreement options for district participation in the Program.

See MSC Online Learning Program Tuition Agreement for current options and pricing*

NOTE: * item available at www.msconline.us