

Management Council

Distance Learning Course Catalog and Registration System Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Please note the answers provided in this FAQ document may change as this project progresses. Please check back for updates.

1. *What is the objective of the Distance Learning Course Catalog and Registration System?*

The objective of this project and the resulting platform is to enable educators to connect learners with courses regardless of their Ohio address. Potential participants on the platform cite the ability to offer unavailable elective courses to their students. Others have suggested teacher retention as a motivation to participate on the platform. They believe that allowing talented teachers to offer unique courses to a wider student audience will allow their school to retain these talented teachers.

2. *Is there a cost for a student to register for one of the courses?*

Yes

3. *Who is responsible for the cost of the student's registration?*

The Enrolling Entity (students home school district) is responsible for the cost of the student's registration in the course offered on the platform. The intention is for payment to be processed via the EMIS system and ODE Subsidy payments. Funding courses through the EMIS system is under evaluation to determine if it is viable, fair, and efficient.

4. *Can a student or their parent/guardian register the student for a course offered on the platform?*

No

The student's home school district is the only entity that can register a student for a course offered on the platform. However, a "public" read-only portal to review available course offerings is under consideration.

5. *If the student withdraws from the course will the course provider refund the course fee?*

No

There are multiple reasons for not making refunds if the student withdraws from the course.

The student's registration for the course reduced an available seat in the course. This prevents courses from becoming too full thereby reducing the teacher's effectiveness. It also potentially would prevent another student from registering for this same course.

The school offering the course is doing so anticipating a level of participation to justify offering the course. If the student withdraws from the course and receives a refund for the course, the school is already committed to offering the course regardless of the student's participation.

6. *Why are only synchronous courses offered through this platform?*

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There are many options for asynchronous courses including the limitations of asynchronous courses. Synchronous courses provide the benefits of a cohort participating together at the same time. While students may not be physically in the same place, they share a virtual connection through the technology. This allows for group participation and all the benefits that this participation can provide.

The schools utilizing this platform, both providers and consumers, will need to coordinate and facilitate the student's participation in the course offering. This effort will result in a student experience that approaches what the student experiences in a traditional course offered in their local school building.

7. *Is a Learning Management System (LMS) part of this platform?*

Not initially

There are several reasons that an LMS is not initially part of the platform:

- Because of the COVID-19 pandemic many schools adopted a learning management system (LMS) as part of their response to continuing remote instruction for students that could not attend in person. The selected LMS is a local district resource, integrated with other district systems. The school district invested in professional development for district educators in support of the district selected LMS. District Educators developed the courses offered on the proposed platform based on the district LMS integrated with district systems.
- District purchased text books include publisher hosted content, activities, and assessments. Where appropriate and permissible, schools have integrated access to this content within their local LMS solution.
- While a statewide LMS offering may initially simplify student access, students will quickly adapt to a different LMS environment. A statewide LMS requirement would require educators to migrate course content from the local district LMS to the statewide LMS. A statewide LMS would not have the same level of integration with other local district systems.
- For these, and other, reasons the grant proposal funding this project did not include an LMS as part of the proposed solution.
- There are regional/statewide LMS solutions focused on educator professional development. However, there does not appear to be an existing statewide LMS solution for students.

One potential outcome of a successful implementation of the proposed platform may be a project to implement either a shared LMS for providers on the platform, or a statewide LMS available to all Ohio schools.

8. *Will the platform include courses for students in grades K-8?*

Not initially

We expect course offerings for grades K-8 in the future.