

AC502: LMS Administrative Standards

Policy Title:	LMS Administrative Standards
Policy Number:	AC502
Owner:	Sr. Vice President Academic and Student Success
Approved by:	Senior Leadership Team
Effective Date:	September 2025
Reference:	“As of May 1, 2025, this policy meets the College Quality Assurance Audit Process (CQAAP) Standards found at: http://www.ocqas.org/resources/ ”
Links to Other Policy:	Intellectual Property Acceptable Use Policy for Technology Services Fair Dealing for Copyright-Protected Work Policy Academic Appeals Policy Recognition, Graduation and Convocation Academic Assessment Policy Learning Plan Policy

St. Lawrence College is committed to making our resources fully accessible to all persons. This document will be made available in alternative format upon request.

BACKGROUND

Definitions:

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act ([AODA website](http://www.aoda.ca) [www.aoda.ca])

“College Approved” Digital Learning Tools – these tools have been reviewed by the Information Technology Services (ITS) department and are included within the College’s digital infrastructure.

Core Course Shell – a course shell which contains learning materials (e.g., course outline, content, assessments, etc.) that have undergone review for quality assurance purposes and acts as a template for future use (i.e., course copies).

Course Shell – the digital space within the college Learning Management System (LMS) that designates a specific course. Every course section at St. Lawrence College has a corresponding course shell that hosts content and student enrollment.

Digital Presence - The active engagement of students by faculty in the online Learning Management System, characterized by consistent communication and interaction with students through the intentional use of the embedded tools. This includes creating announcements, posting learning materials, providing grades and feedback in a timely manner, and fostering a supportive and collaborative virtual classroom atmosphere through discussion board posts and replies.

Gradebook- the tool within the course shell that educators use to grade assessments, provide feedback, and calculate overall grades for students enrolled in the course. Students also use this tool to review their assessment grades and feedback.

Information Technology Services (ITS) – a department responsible for overseeing the college infrastructure for digital technologies such as the college LMS and for providing student-facing support to users troubleshooting their usage of the LMS. ITS is responsible for deploying the active course shells for all courses every term. Each course shell will include a copy of the SLC Course Template(s) in exception of those instances identified by the Associate Dean/Dean.

Instructional Modality – a term that outlines the delivery method of a learning experience (e.g., Face-to-Face, Hybrid, Hyflex, Online Synchronous, and Online Asynchronous).

Learning Management System (LMS) – the College-supported software application that is used by students and faculty to access, plan, implement, supplement, monitor, assess, and communicate about learning.

Learning Materials – the content and associated learning activities/assessments that are included within an active course shell. Learning Materials include: the course outline, learning plan, required resources (readings, websites, software, videos, the audio and/or video recordings of learning experiences, etc.), lesson content, assessments, rubrics, etc. (e.g., case studies, simulations, videos, instructor notes, slide decks, etc.). This also includes any resources that are created, purchased, or licensed for use and utilized by college employees in the performance of their duties.

Merged Course Shell – a type of course shell that includes multiple course sections merged into one course shell.

OntarioLearn (OL) – A consortium of 24 Ontario colleges that provide shared online course offerings within the college sector. St. Lawrence College hosts a series of online courses

within the OL Blackboard Learn environment which is distinct from the one that is managed by the college. Although OL courses must adhere to the LMS Administrative Standards, these courses will also include additional requirements that are consistent with external OL policies.

School of Contemporary Teaching and Learning (SCTL) – a team responsible for supporting and training faculty/staff as they integrate digital technologies within their daily practice as a domain of the Teaching Excellence framework. All college employees have access to these services which are shared via the public SCTL website (www.TeachAtSLC.ca).

SLC Course Template – The SLC course template includes the core elements that are used to fulfill the requirements of the LMS Administrative Standards policy. The standards and the associated template ensure that all students have a consistent experience when navigating their courses in Blackboard. This consistency enhances the digital learning experience for students and enables faculty to focus on student engagement. The SCTL is responsible for updating the SLC course template(s) on an annual basis using best practices in digital learning and contemporary teaching strategies. This template will be deployed in all courses during the academic year and represents the main components of the LMS Standards. Course template(s) promote consistency across courses thereby helping to improve the student learning experience. Details about the SLC course template(s) are provided by the School of Contemporary Teaching and Learning through guides (handouts), videos resources, workshops, and one-on-one support.

Teaching Excellence – a college framework that articulates our commitment to creating meaningful teaching and learning experiences across all instructional modalities. The framework features eight domains of teaching practice that integrate to empower teaching excellence. One of these domains is dedicated to the effective use of Digital Technology.

Purpose:

St. Lawrence College is committed to supporting student success by providing meaningful digital learning experiences for all students. This experience is achieved by optimizing the tools within the College Learning Management System (LMS) and leveraging other college-approved digital learning tools to promote engagement among students and faculty.

The effective implementation of the LMS Administrative Standards is a requirement of the Teaching Excellence framework and ensures students receive a consistent learning experience across courses with regards to course shell templates, content, and use of embedded tools (e.g., assessment, communication, reporting, etc.)

Scope:

This policy applies to all members of the St. Lawrence College community that are required to utilize the LMS for instructional and assessment purposes. It also applies to all credit or non-credit courses except where exempted by the Senior Vice President Academic and Student Success. The policy statements do not apply to external partners delivering St. Lawrence College credits.

POLICY STATEMENTS

1. The LMS Administrative Standards outline the digital presence that is required to create a consistent digital learning experience for students within the college LMS.

- **Use of the LMS by Students**

All learning materials associated with a course will be made available by faculty to students via the LMS. Students will use the LMS to access key documents (i.e., Course Outline and Learning Plan), review learning resources (e.g., handouts, videos, slide decks), complete learning activities (e.g., online discussions, journals, assessments etc.), explore assessment details (e.g., instructions, weighting, submission guidelines), and review grading criteria (e.g., rubrics, late penalties). The LMS will also be the primary method for students to receive ongoing course communications (i.e., announcements, replies to discussion board posts), submit assessments, and review their progress using the Gradebook (including feedback from instructors). The collective information within the LMS will be used to clarify the learning expectations for each course to supplement and extend what is outlined in the Learning Plan.

- **Use of the LMS by Faculty**

Faculty are responsible for uploading all associated learning materials to the LMS within the designated course shell for their students. The digital layout of these learning materials should follow the SLC Course Template guidelines to ensure a consistent digital learning experience for all students. Faculty will use the LMS to communicate with students, share learning materials, provide feedback on assessments, and clarify learning expectations. Adhering to the LMS Administrative Standards aligns with the larger Teaching Excellence Framework and represents the College's commitment to student success.

2. The LMS Administrative Standards and associated SLC Course Template(s) align with all accessibility requirements outlined within the *Accessibility Ontarians Disability Act* (AODA).
3. All learning materials within the LMS will comply with the Fair Dealing for Copyright-Protected Work Policy and copyright legislation.
4. All learning materials within the LMS will be provided to students in alternative formats upon request. This process will be facilitated by built-in applications within the LMS that are accessible to both students and faculty.
5. All learning materials will be hosted within the LMS using college-approved applications. Learning materials will not be shared via personal external cloud-based storage applications.
6. The Course Outline and signed Learning Plan documents must be shared with students via the LMS before the first day of class or first learning experience. All other learning materials will be distributed to students within the LMS in a timely manner (within one week of the learning experience, to ensure students can prepare for upcoming assessments or activities) and remain in the course shell thereafter.
7. The LMS is considered the system of record for student data. As a result, the College is legally required to protect the interests of students and faculty by maintaining the integrity of student data within the LMS. This requirement includes maintaining course shells for a period of two years within the system. Following the two-year period, all course shells will be deleted as part an automated process led by Information Technology Services (ITS).
8. The unauthorized removal of learning materials and student work from a course shell within the LMS is not permitted. This includes previous courses that have been taught and archived within the LMS.
9. Compliance with the LMS Administrative Standards is a requirement of the College's Teaching Excellence framework, which applies to all instructional modalities.
10. Previous and active course shells may be accessed for quality assurance purposes and to assess compliance with the LMS Administrative Standards. Violation of any policy statement by a college employee may result in additional mandatory training, performance management up to and including termination of employment.
11. Learning materials created by college employees remain the intellectual property of the College.

MONITORING

It is the responsibility of the Senior Vice President, Academic and Student Success, Deans and Associate Deans to ensure adherence to the policy.

NEXT POLICY REVISION DATE

September 2030