

Design Standards for Online Courses

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| Fully online courses should be self-contained. The course should contain or provide access to everything that students need to meet the course objectives. |
| The course should result in learning appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree or certificate awarded. |
| Provide information on required course texts and where to purchase those texts. |
| The course should be well-organized and easy to navigate where students can clearly understand all components and structure of the course. |
| Effectively use formatting, color, and white space to enhance readability of content. |
| Provide transcripts for any multimedia elements. The more plain text the better. |
| Provide a welcome message to students. |
| Learners should be able to easily determine where to go first when they enter the course, course expectations, policies, weekly assignments, due dates, and how the course will run from week to week. |
| Include information on how to contact you, how soon you will answer emails, and how frequently you will respond to discussion posts. |
| Online courses should display clear guidelines for cheating and plagiarism. |
| Establish clear start and end dates for the week. |
| Clearly state the time and the time zone in which assignments are due. |
| Have learners acknowledge that they have read and understand the course expectations and policies. |
| The objectives of the course most likely won't change from the on-ground modality to the online modality, but the activities would change in order to suit the online environment. |
| The course design should be objectives-oriented. Learning objectives should be used as a basis for course preparation. |
| Assignments and assessments should match the objectives. |
| Design your online course using the Blackboard exemplary course standards as a guide. |
| Break up the course into units, modules, lessons, or other meaningful architecture. Organize units in a logical, consistent sequence. This provides a clear snapshot of what will be accomplished during that unit, due dates, and how to submit anything that has to be turned in. |
| Break up larger files into several files or "manageable chunks" of information. Course material should be no more than one 8.5x11 page length of text to reduce scrolling. |

Here are some recommended links for your course menu:

1. Course syllabus (that has been revised for the online modality)
2. Orientation or course reference document that provides the sequence of procedures that learners should follow each week, policies, guidelines, expectations, how to reach you, and tips on preparing for online learning.
3. Learning units
4. Library web site
5. Announcements
6. Email
7. Discussions
8. Assignments
9. My Grades
10. Chat/Virtual Office or Office Hours

Decide whether to do adaptive release of content or whether you will post the entire course. Will you allow learners to jump ahead or post after the unit has passed?

Here are some recommended discussion forums:

1. Introductions – for the learners to introduce themselves to you and to one another.
2. Student Café – for students to converse

Organize discussion topics by unit and discussion question number.

State in the syllabus how the quality of discussion contributions will be judged and the minimum level for quantity of participation.

Provide a mix of assessment strategies. Have at least two other methods of evaluation besides online testing, such as papers, discussion participation, or projects.

Incorporate tools and activities that encourage interaction between students such as blogs, wikis, virtual classroom, chat, or discussion board.

Provide a link to the Blackboard Training Tutorials page for students
http://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_2014_04/Student

Faculty Expectations for Facilitating Online Courses

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| When it is geographically feasible, have the learners meet face-to-face one time before the online course begins to give an orientation to the course and the course management system. |
| In a fully online course, the professor is no longer the “sage on the stage,” but the “guide on the side.” You are playing more of a facilitator role. Students have more responsibility placed on them for their own learning. That’s why online learners have to be self-motivated. |
| Be familiar with and adhere to the University’s copyright policy http://www2.winthrop.edu/copyright/ . |
| For copyright purposes, provide a link to textbook publisher resources instead of posting the full content in your course. |
| Actively participate in the online interaction to provide feedback, guidance, or expertise when appropriate. |
| Use learners’ names in discussions. This personalizes the course for them. For example, “Hi Kimarie. Welcome to the course” or “Kimarie, would you mind sharing some examples of...” |
| Utilize a plagiarism detection tool such as Turnitin.com. |
| Provide students with timely feedback on assignments and grades as well as responses to questions and requests for assistance. Online students need feedback more than traditional students. |
| Have a plan for what the learners should do in the event of an outage. |
| Keep a contact list with student names and e-mail addresses on your computer should you need to contact them outside of the course management system. |
| Keep a backup of all of your files and grades. |
| When possible, convert files to PDF to avoid compatibility issues. |
| Have your course design reviewed before it is taught for the first time. |
| Provide opportunities during the course for students to give feedback. Encourage your students to report dead links, inactive pages, or other malfunctions in the course. |
| Provide an end-of-course evaluation. |
| Once the course has ended, reflect on the course and make adjustments and improvements to the course design. |
| Online courses developed shall be owned by Winthrop University. |

Resources

Blackboard Instructor's Guide

http://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_2014_04/Instructor

Blackboard Training Tutorials for Faculty

<http://www.winthrop.edu/onlinelearning/default.aspx?id=27862>

Textbook Site for:

Teaching Online: A Practical Guide, Second Edition

Susan Ko & Steve Rossen

http://college.cengage.com/education/ko_rossen/teaching_on/2e/students/resources.html

Instructional Resources for Online Instructors

<http://www.blackboard.com/community/catalyst-awards/exemplary-course-program.aspx>

Winthrop University Copyright Policy

<http://www2.winthrop.edu/dacus/copyright/>