Curriculum Online Course Guidelines - with Resources!

DURHAM TECH

Durham Tech's Distance Learning Advisory Team created the Online Course Guidelines enumerated below, with input from faculty across curriculum departments. The guidelines are intended to summarize the essential elements of quality online instruction. The guidelines may be used in the following ways:

- *To provide guidance for instructors who are new to online teaching*
- *To help experienced online instructors identify areas for improvement and/or professional development*
- *To assist supervisors with evaluating instructor performance*
- *To guide professional development and training efforts*
- *To communicate the college's expectations internally (faculty/staff) and externally (accrediting bodies)*

Course expectations / Basic course information

1. The course syllabus explains clearly and specifically:
    - how online attendance will be tracked
    - how to contact the instructor and response time to expect
    - ground rules for online communication (netiquette)
    - expectations for participation (how often students should visit the course site, check email)
    - any special tools or materials required
    - course structure and due dates
    - student learning outcomes (as provided by the academic department)

    > Resources:
    >
    > - Sample syllabi from online courses: ACA-122 BUS-110 HIT-214 MED-121 SPA-231
    > - How to add a syllabus to your Sakai site

2. The course home page lists the course title and the instructor's name and contact information. (Optionally, the instructor can also add an image, course description, list of course outcomes, or other items to make the site welcoming and unique.)

    > Resources:
    >
    > - Examples of home pages in various courses
    > - How to add course/instructor info and image to your course home page

Course organization and content

* 3. Course content is organized in a way that is logical, clear, consistent, and easy to navigate.

* 4. The Lessons area of the course contains a subpage for each week of the class. Each weekly subpage includes clear and complete details for assignments and activities, including due dates.

    > Resources:
    >
    > - Video: How to set up weekly subpages in Lessons

5. Course content is free of grammar/spelling errors; links to web sites and materials are functional.

Engagement

∗ 6. The course includes assignments that promote active learning and utilize online tools and resources.

> Resources:
>
> - Example activity using Sakai's Blogs tool
> - Video: Shannon Hahn discusses Sakai tools she used to engage students and foster community in her award-winning online course
> - How to Setup an Assignment in Sakai: Video | Handout
> - Best Practices for Assignments (includes sample rubrics and plagiarism info)
> - How to use Lessons' Student Pages for student projects

∗ 7. The course incorporates appropriate multimedia elements (such as images, videos, links to external resources) that support learning outcomes.

> Resources:
>
> - Find images you can use in your course
> - Find videos on YouTube, Khan Academy, PBS, library databases, and other sites
> - Use Zaption to add questions IN your video
> - Use YouTube's MyWebcam (or another tool) to record a short "selfie" video to introduce a lesson or explain a concept

Communication

∗ 8. The course provides opportunities for regular student-instructor and student-student interaction. The instructor may use a variety of tools to accomplish this interaction (Announcements, Email, Forums, Chat, Blogs, Meetings, etc.)

> Resources:
>
> - How to use the Forums tool
> - Best Practices for Forums (includes sample rubrics & discussion question ideas)
> - How to create and participate in a Chat Room
> - How to create and run an online webinar with the Meetings tool

∗ 9. The instructor posts an announcement at least once a week to provide updates and reminders.

> Resources:
>
> - How to post an announcement

∗ 10. The instructor responds to student emails and requests for help in a timely way, consistent with the response time stated in the syllabus.

Assessment / Grading / Feedback

* 11. The Sakai Gradebook is set up and consistent with the grading procedures stated in the syllabus. Grades are posted regularly, allowing students to track their progress.

> Resources:
>
> - Video: Gradebook Overview
> - How to setup the Gradebook (Plus how to add gradebook items and enter grades)

* 12. The instructor provides meaningful, timely feedback to students on their work, consistent with expectations stated in the syllabus or other course documents.

> Resources:
>
> - How to Grade Students' Forum Posts: Video | Handout
> - How to Grade an Assignment in Sakai: Video | Handout
> - Blog post: How do I get students to look at my feedback?

13. Online tests and quizzes use recommended settings to minimize cheating and technical problems.

> Resources:
>
> - How to Create an Online Test or Quiz: Video | Step-by-step instructions
> - How to Publish a Test or Quiz: Video | Step-by-step instructions
> - How to Grade Online Tests and Quizzes: Video | Step-by-step instructions
> - Best Practices for Testing in Online and Hybrid courses

Legal obligations

14. The instructor makes a good faith effort to comply with copyright laws and fair use principles.

> Resources:
>
> - Copyright Information for Instructors

15. The instructor is prepared to make accommodations for students with disabilities as requested through an Accommodation Plan. To the extent possible, the instructor selects and/or creates course materials that are usable by all students.

> Resources:
>
> - How to allow extra time on a test for selected students
> - Accessibility for Online Course Content (from Portland Community College)

Launching the course

16. Prior to the start of the course, the instructor sends a welcome email explaining when and how the course will start, orientation requirements, how to log in, any special tools or materials needed, etc.

> Resources:
>
> - For students: Distance Learning at Durham Tech
> - For students: Getting Started with Sakai | Sakai Tour for Students video

17. The instructor publishes the course site on or before the first day of the term and posts a welcome announcement telling students what to do to begin.

> Resources:
>
> - How to publish your course and how to post an announcement

* 18. A course orientation (online or face-to-face) introduces students to the course purpose, structure, policies, and requirements and acquaints students with the course site and online tools to be used.

> Resources:
>
> - Schedule of Online Course Orientations and Sakai Student Videos

19. An initial activity is assigned to record the student's official entry into the course ("E" date). This is often an "ice-breaker" activity in the Forum where students introduce themselves to the class or a syllabus quiz to assess students' knowledge of course polices.

> Resources:
>
> - Encourage your students to add a photo to their Sakai profile. (Photos will display beside their Forum posts.) Instructors are encouraged to add their photos too!

20. Students are provided information on how to get technical assistance with Sakai and on learning supports available (tutoring, library, disability services, counseling).

> Resources:
>
> - Students and Instructors can contact Sakai Help

Asterisk indicates that the item relates to a question on the student evaluation of instructor/course (as of Fall 2014).

Page 4 of 4