

Best Practices for Teaching Online

1. Create instructor presence. Do one or more of the following:

- Post your introduction. Include a photo, brief bio, your research interests, and what you are excited to teach in this class. If you are using the templates, you can find the instructor welcome page in the **Course Orientation** module. Or, create a **Video** introduction.
- Use **Announcements** to make students feel welcome and to list what is expected during the current week. Use **Replace Strings** to personalize announcements.
- Add a **Contact Information widget** to your homepage with your contact information and office hours.

2. Help your students be successful online learners. Do one or more of the following:

- Add your syllabus to the **Course Orientation** module.
- Provide lectures. Chunk your lectures into short segments and contact DDS to have your lectures captioned.
- Use a clear naming convention for content (e.g. Lecture 1, Fall 2019 Syllabus, Assignment 1). Avoid lengthy, non-descriptive file names.
- Use **due dates** for all graded activities. Brightspace will prompt students with upcoming due dates.
- Post your expectations for online participation, communication, and netiquette.
- Review your course to be sure that you have provided a reasonable workload with enough time to complete assignments and enough time for you to provide feedback. Clearly label any optional content.
- If you remove any learning activity, double check all assessments to ensure that you are not asking students to demonstrate knowledge without an opportunity to acquire it.

3. To comply with the UA grading policy: [3359-20-05.1 Grading system, discipline, academic probation and dismissal](#), do all of the following:

- Provide graded feedback to students on a regular basis. Post your typical grading time in the **Course Orientation**.
- The policy states that “*All tests and examinations shall be proctored except in colleges of the university with honors systems which have been approved by the faculty senate.*” Use Respondus Monitor to proctor exams. Review any flagged exams. Report all integrity violations to the [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#)

- Use **Assignments**, do not accept email submissions. This provides tracking you may need in the case of a grade appeal.
- Open every submitted file. Students can see if you open their files.
- Maintain records of grades. **Export** your Brightspace gradebook for your records.
- Match your gradebook setup to the grading criteria in your syllabus.
- Read all discussion posts. For larger classes, consider grouping discussions and rotating groups so you have fewer high quality discussions rather than numerous low quality posts.
- You must be able to explain how you know who the students are.
 - This is typically accomplished using **Respondus Monitor** for exam proctoring.
 - If there are no exams, you can meet this requirement by grading presentations via **WebEx** or a Brightspace **Video Assignment**.

4. A 100% online course must be able to be completed without coming to campus.

- If you require synchronous activities (web conferencing), notify the students as soon as possible, allow the students to choose the time (e.g. polling), and record the session for anyone who cannot attend.
- If you require group work, provide contact information for emergencies (such as a group member who stops “attending” the class).

5. Already doing all of this? Here are some additional ideas:

- Create **Checklists** and **Intelligent Agents** to help students stay on track.
- Use **Awards** to recognize excellent online behaviors such as participation, early completion, and high grades. These can be automated.
- Use **H5P** to make your lectures interactive.
- Use discussion rubrics. There is a rubric repository if needed.
- Use **Self Assessments** and **H5P interactives** for low stakes practice before a high stakes activity.
- Use **WebEx** to meet with students (office hours, guest lectures, presentations).

Help is available to accomplish any of these best practices. We have templates, tools, and strategies to make many of these tasks easier.

- You can find Design & Development Services (DDS) in Zook 230 (from the elevator turn left and it's the first door on the left).
- You can call us at 330-972-4455 to make an appointment.
- We can meet with you via video conferencing or in person.

- We offer **training, workshops, and open labs** at the start of every semester. You can register [here](#).
- Brightspace is updated every month. When the home page banner changes, Brightspace has been updated.
- We post [Faculty News and Tips](#) on your homepage when something changes. We change the background color of the widget when we post something new. Students do not see this widget.