

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC ONLINE COURSES **(Revised 11/29/16)**

This document is for guidance purposes and not evaluation.

GBC online courses are expected to be high quality, appropriate to college-level expectations, and involve on-going instructor participation in delivering content, assessing learning, and communicating with students. Effective online instruction requires that instructors and students actively engage in the process of learning through the duration of a course. The following guidelines provide a baseline for effective online instruction at GBC.

LEARNING PLATFORM

1. All GBC online courses must originate in the current learning platform (Canvas LMS).
2. Outside platforms can be used but the current learning platform is the starting point for students.

ALIGNMENT

1. Course components align with the syllabus per department standards.
2. Learner objectives and measurements are clear to students and align with the syllabus.
3. The syllabus contains policy statements for grading and communicating with the instructor.
4. Online courses will follow the official GBC Academic Calendar for the term unless dynamically dated.

GRADES AND GRADING

1. Instructors must make available to students current grades (i.e., Canvas gradebook, Excel file, Word document, etc.).
2. The assessment of assignments/exams/etc. must occur throughout the semester with reasonable and set expectations for turnaround time stated in the syllabus.
3. Expectations for grading (i.e., rubrics, written expectations, etc.) assignments are included in WebCampus assignment descriptions and/or the syllabus.
4. Expectations for Exam proctoring, if required, are included in the syllabus. For a Respondus exam, a practice exam should be provided.
5. Expectations for exam proctoring should be coordinated through the ASC.

COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

1. Instructors introduce themselves and the course to students in the first week of class.
2. Instructors post announcements, emails, homepage messages, feedback, comments, etc. at least 4 times per semester.
3. Instructors must respond to student inquiries within at least 3 business days by email, telephone, Skype, Cranium Café, or some other means.
4. Timely, throughout the semester, instructor feedback (i.e., grades, written comments, rubrics, verbal feedback, etc.) is provided to improve student learning.

ORGANIZATION

1. Courses must contain a College Resources and Policies (i.e., student services links: library, ASC, HelpDesk, SGA; ADA statements, Netiquette & Student Conduct policies; etc.) module developed by the Distance Education Office. This module will be added to all course shells and should be visible to students the entire semester.
2. Courses are organized in such a way that students can navigate easily.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

1. Course requirements and learner objectives are commensurate with college-level expectations and appropriate to the sequence of courses (developmental, 100, 200, 300, or 400).
2. Content delivery is accomplished through a variety of methods (i.e., reading, lectures, films, sound recordings, exercises, laboratory activities, discussions, etc.). [Note: The “read the chapter-take the quiz” should be avoided in favor of more interactive approaches.]

TRAINING AND REVIEW

1. *As per faculty senate requirements specifying two WebCampus training sessions*, new faculty (tenure-track, Mentor status, or part-time) must complete WebCampus Summer Camp and/or alternative training prior to teaching an online course for the first time. Upon completion of the course and/or training, faculty will receive a “completion certificate”.

1a. Tenure/mentor committees will use a basic requirements rubric to review online courses.

2. All faculty must complete Online Training Reboot Camp and/or alternative training every three years to ensure compliance with basic requirements and to keep current on online developments. Upon completion of the course and/or training, faculty will receive a “completion certificate”.

NONCOMPLIANCE

1. Red flags (i.e., student complaints to department chairs or the distance education staff, a lack of progress addressing issues identified by a tenure/mentor committee, etc.) relating to the above guidelines may prompt a course review by the appropriate Dean who may make recommendations for changes, which may include an action plan in consultation between the Associate Vice President of Distance Education and the appropriate Dean with the goal of resolving issues within a year. Once a faculty member determines that issues have been fixed, she/he will meet with the appropriate Dean for review.