Virtual Course Management and Facilitation

Virtual learning presents unique challenges in course management and facilitation. The following guidelines include best practices in maintaining instructor presence and facilitating courses in an online environment. These items identify the minimum level of interaction and management in a virtual course to provide a quality learning environment.

Before the Course Begins

- Begin your course according to the university’s academic calendar or your department calendar, and be sure the course is published before the start date.
- Create a course schedule, including all due dates for activities, assignments, and assessments.
- Review your gradebook to ensure alignment with the syllabus and course schedule.
- Establish and communicate your schedule for logging into the course. Be sure to include information regarding any planned absences from the course.
- Establish and communicate your plan for responding to emails and messages (e.g., within 24 hours, within one business day, etc.). Include your preferred contact information and hours of availability.
- Establish and communicate a schedule for providing timely feedback to student submissions (e.g., within three days, within one week, etc.).
- Be sure UICapture permissions are set correctly so students can view videos.
- Establish and communicate netiquette or course ground rules.
- Ensure any links included in the course are accessible. Use UDOIT or the link validator in ICON to verify.
- Consider creating a course tour video to orient students to the course and a brief welcome video so your students can get to know you.
- If you will use groups in your course, create the groups and assign members to them.
- Send a welcome announcement or email before the course begins.

During the Course

- Conduct your course according to the established schedule.
• Communicate regularly through announcements or updates. Consider sending a weekly announcement to wrap up and introduce content and clear up any muddy points.
• Communicate any deviations from the course schedule to students in advance.
• Grade submissions promptly and provide feedback according to the schedule communicated to students. Use rubrics to establish criteria for each assessment.
• Maintain a regular presence in the course, including discussions. Provide feedback and help keep discussions on track.
• If you have synchronous class meetings, use a bit of that time to address common questions you have received from students. Record and post the synchronous sessions for students to review later.

At the End of the Course

• Provide feedback on final projects.
• Encourage students to complete their end of course survey.
• Send an announcement with a closing message.