WALKER COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
Standards for Online Instruction

Recommended for adoption by the Online Course Task Force, 11/25/2019
Approved by Executive Committee, 12/5/2019

The purpose of this document is to establish standards and best practices for all Walker College of Business courses with significant online content. These include online courses (90-100% of content is delivered online), hybrid courses (50-89% of content is delivered online) and courses with major exams administered online.[1] Online courses include those taught to main campus students and those taught to off-campus students through App State Online.

Any decision to offer an online degree or move a course from primarily face-to-face instruction to online delivery should further the Walker College of Business mission to "deliver transformational educational experiences" enabled by faculty "dedicated to instructional excellence" while maintaining "quality in our programs" and to "cultivate meaningful relationships among students, faculty, and staff".

I. Approving the Development of Online and Hybrid Courses

Keeping the Walker College of Business mission and values in mind, the two primary reasons for putting a course or degree program online are: 1) to improve educational effectiveness and 2) to provide more students with access to high-quality educational experiences.

Since new online degree offerings will go through departmental and college curriculum committees and potentially the University's Academic Policy and Procedures, this document is primarily focused on the processes and standards for individual courses offered online in the WCOB.

The Approval Process for Individual Courses

- The faculty member proposes developing an online or hybrid course to his or her department chair.
- The chair evaluates the appropriateness for online delivery. In particular, the chair verifies that the proposed course meets one or both of the primary reasons stated above.

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[1] The definitions for online and web-based courses are found in the ASU Policy Manual:
https://policy.appstate.edu/Policy_on_Internet/Web-Based_Courses

To help guide the approval process, faculty members and chairs may consider the following examples.

1) To improve the educational effectiveness of a course
   ● Course objectives require skilled use of web-based tools and/or software packages.
   ● The course is improved by having interaction with students not geographically located in Boone NC.
   ● Course ratings and feedback indicate student demand for taking a particular course online.

2) To provide more students with access to high-quality educational experiences
   ● Face-to-face courses are full and classroom space is not available; use as overload to ensure students stay on track to graduate on time.
   ● Students are off-campus for the summer but still need access to courses to ensure students stay on track to graduate on time.
   ● Provide access to off-campus students for in-demand ASU online degree programs.
   ● Increase diversity of the student body in line with ASU goals (e.g., more international students).
   ● Provide access to courses for degree completion for former on-campus students.

II.   Content Development

As with all courses, individual faculty and their respective department committees are responsible for developing course content and its delivery. Courses with significant online content, however, do have unique challenges. Academic integrity problems can be more prevalent with online assessment activities because of the increased anonymity relative to face-to-face instruction and the availability of online resources. In addition, online instructional technologies and methods change rapidly and their mastery often requires expertise beyond a faculty's field of study.

For these reasons, faculty involved in online instruction are highly encouraged to work with the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) to help develop and deliver course content. In particular, faculty are encouraged to familiarize themselves with Quality Matters (QM) – a research-based national benchmark aimed at improving student learning experiences in online programs and courses. The QM program (1) introduces faculty to best practices in instructional design, (2) provides rubrics for assessing online course design and (3) outlines a peer-review process for continuous improvement of online and hybrid courses. The CAE offers faculty the opportunity to become certified in online instruction from QM, as well as having their individual courses sent for external review. A complete list of CAE Resources for professional development of online teaching can be found here:
https://cae.appstate.edu/learning-technologies/professional-development-online-teaching

While not exhaustive, the following is a list of guidelines and best practice for online course development.

1. Course Design and Organization
   - Instructions introduce the student to the purpose of the course and explain all of the components and requirements.
   - Prerequisite knowledge, minimum preparation, and minimum technical skills are clearly stated.
   - Etiquette expectations for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication are clearly stated.
   - The course is well organized, functional, easy to navigate, and uses a variety of media resources.
   - Clear standards are set for instructor responsiveness and availability (turn-around time for email, grade posting, etc.).

2. Instructional Design and Delivery
   - The course offers multiple activities to foster interaction and communication among students and between the students and instructor.
   - Learning objectives and instructions to students on how to meet the learning objectives are clearly stated.
   - Requirements for student interaction are clearly stated.

3. Assessment and Evaluation
   - The types of assessments selected measure the stated learning objectives and are consistent with course activities and resources.
   - Methods to minimize cheating are employed (proctored exams, multiple quiz versions, use of secured technology, etc.) and reviewed by the department chair.
   - The grading policy is clearly stated.
   - Criteria for evaluation of student work and participation are clearly stated.
   - The methods of assessment should be consistent with similar course taught in other formats.

4. Resources and Materials
   - The instructional materials have sufficient breadth, depth, and rigor for the students to learn the subject.
   - All resources and materials used in the course are appropriately cited.

5. Course Technology
   - The tools and media are appropriate to deliver the content of the course.
   - Instructions on how to access resources at a distance are sufficient and easy to understand.
   - The course uses a variety of available tools and media to optimize student learning.
   - Course instructions articulate or link to a description of the technical support offered.

6. Accessibility
   - The course incorporates ADA standards and reflects conformance with institutional policy regarding accessibility in online courses.
   - Course instructions articulate or link to a description of support offered to students with disabilities.

7. Continuous Improvement
   - Faculty with experience teaching online courses are encouraged to attend the QM workshop on "Improving Your Online Course" offered through the CAE: https://cae.appstate.edu/learning-technologies/professional-development-online-teaching/improving-your-online-course-qm

III. Review

The first semester (or summer term) a new online or hybrid course is administered, it is required to be both peer reviewed (following the department's peer review process) and open for student evaluations. The peer review process should include an evaluation of assessment methods employed to maintain academic integrity. Note that peer reviews and student evaluations conducted for the first time the course is offered are for course development purposes, and need not be part of a faculty member's annual review (even if the course is evaluated in the Fall term). The faculty member, in consultation with the department chair, should identify a peer reviewer that is familiar with the learning objectives of the newly designed course (e.g., a faculty member teaching a different section of the same course). After the initial review, student evaluations will be administered for online courses in accordance with current ASU guidelines.

Faculty teaching online or hybrid courses are also encouraged to utilize the Quality Matters peer-review process offered by the Center for Academic Excellence for online instruction. https://cae.appstate.edu/learning-technologies/professional-development-online-teaching/quality-matters-peer-reviewer-program

IV. Proctoring for Online Exams

Faculty teaching online or hybrid courses, or administering exams online in their face-to-face courses should be aware of potential academic integrity problems and best practices available to maintain academic standards. The level of academic rigor in a course is, at least in part, a function of how well academic integrity is maintained. The following is a list of recommended practices and proctoring information.

1. Proctored exams are strongly recommended. Authentication of student identity by the proctors is also strongly recommended.[2]
2. If a faculty member chooses not to have proctored exams, they should make an effort to make sure academic standards are maintained. Examples include: random shuffling of questions, time limits, questions with randomly drawn parameter values, multiple versions of exams, requiring students to sign an honor pledge or complete an academic honesty quiz.
3. Exams of a more qualitative nature, not appropriate for proctoring, should use an online plagiarism checker (e.g., Turnitin®) or similar tools to promote academic integrity.
4. In instances in which faculty encourage groups to work together on online assignments, this should be made explicit in the syllabus.
5. The proctoring requirements (or other provisions to ensure academic integrity) will be clearly communicated in the course syllabi.
6. For courses using proctoring services through the UNC Online Proctoring Network, the syllabus should make clear that students are responsible for scheduling a proctoring session by visiting the following website:
   http://online.northcarolina.edu/exams/overview.htm
7. It is the student's responsibility to schedule these sessions in advance to meet the exam deadlines established by the instructor. The student is also responsible for any costs associated with proctoring appointments. Some UNC Proctors charge a fee. **Note that any proctoring fees incurred by the student must be included as a note on the course registration.**
8. Faculty requiring UNC Online Proctoring are responsible for enabling the course through the UNC system and posting the exams at the proctoring sites. More information about the UNC General Administration system is found at UNC Online Academic Services Exam Proctoring System. The service provides for the use of Face-to-Face proctoring and the online (video camera required) proctoring service **Examity** via a system-wide contract.

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[2] UNC Online recommends "close and constant" supervision.

V.   Checklist for Department Chairs

The following checklist is designed to help chairs and instructors make sure that online course offerings (1) are consistent with the WCOB mission, (2) help ensure courses meet accessibility and usability requirements, (3) make provisions to maintain academic integrity and (4) ensure new online courses are peer reviewed and open for student evaluations.

The checklist should be completed by the instructor, and signed and dated by the instructor and department chair. The completed form should be recorded and kept in the chair's office.

Primary Reason(s) for Delivering an Online Course (select one or more)

_____   Online format could improve the educational effectiveness of the course.

_____   Online format enhances course access.

_____   The course is part of an AppState Online degree (or could be included in future offerings).

Support and Accessibility

_____   Technical support options and contact information are provided and explained to the students.

_____   The course meets accessibility and usability requirements following the standards detailed in the Quality Matters rubric.

_____   The course has been shared with the WCOB's Instructional Technology Consultant to help verify it meets ASU's recommended accessibility and usability requirements.

Academic Integrity

Methods to minimize cheating on major exams are used. Please select the method(s) used and enter any others in the space provided below:

_____ Proctored exams

_____ Multiple versions of exams (e.g., random draws from questions banks, random draw of question parameters)

_____ Random shuffling of questions

_____ Other methods _____

Peer Review and Student Evaluations

_____   The instructor is prepared to have the course peer reviewed and set up for course evaluations.

Course Number   Term Offered

Instructor   Date

Department Chair   Date