Online Teaching and Learning @ East Central College

A Resource Manual for Faculty and Staff

Prepared by the Online Teaching and Learning
Committee
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I. Preface

Welcome to online learning at East Central College. The Online Learning and Educational Technology department has designed this resource manual to help instructors prepare and teach in an online format. The College offers a variety of online coursework, which helps students fulfill their degree plans and complete their technological programs. Instead of the traditional classroom setting, ECC uses the learning management system of Canvas and online classes are required to use this platform as a host to their online course. Online learning, however, is not limited to Canvas, but can also include a multitude of software platforms and modalities.

This document was prepared by the Online Learning and Educational Technology Committee to provide faculty with guidelines and resources intended to assist in the design, function, and assessment of all online learning.

Staffing & Credentials

The OLET department consists of two staff members.
- Robert (Chad) Baldwin, Director of Online Learning & Educational Technology
  - MS-Educational Technology
- Sarah Kuehnle, Instructional Design Specialist
  - MSEd- Instructional Technology

Online Learning Committee Charge & Mission

The Online Learning & Educational Technology committee serves to propose, review and offer guidance and development regarding online learning and educational technology, pedagogy, policies, products and services.

Accreditation
- Higher Learning Commission

  ECC is currently authorized to offer online courses and degrees by the Higher Learning Commission. The department has focused meetings with HLC staff during accreditation visits focusing on online operations,

processes and assessment measures.

Memberships
- **State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement-** ECC participates in SARA (State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement). SARA helps ensure that ECC students and faculty who reside in other states can participate in ECC online coursework without complications in relation to interstate distance learning regulations (among states that participate in SARA-excludes clinical courses).

- **United States Distance Learning Association-** ECC is a member of the United States Distance Learning Association. The association provides guidance and development opportunities for faculty and staff in the distance learning field.

II. Requirements for Online Instructors

Online instructors have the same teaching requirements as those teaching courses in a traditional face-to-face format, with a few additional requirements that are specific to courses taught in the online format. There are also certain requirements that online faculty must meet for certification. This section explains the minimum standards that all online faculty should meet but is not intended to be an exhaustive list of best practices. These are designed as a set of standards that still allow room for faculty to be flexible in how they meet these standards.

Expectations of Online Instructors

1. New instructors must complete the required training modules before the course begins, or as soon as possible.
2. Once initial training is complete, all instructors are required to complete the tri-annual Online Teaching Certification process prior to or at the semester or academic year.
3. The syllabus for online courses should be posted on Canvas and the course should be opened one week in advance of the first day of classes.

4. The syllabus should clearly explain how students will be evaluated in the course and what students must do to meet the weekly attendance requirements.
5. Faculty are expected to post their communication style and response time. Faculty should respond to student emails in alignment with the timeline of their explicit communication policy described in syllabi.
6. Full-time Faculty are required to hold 7 office hours per week (Adjunct Faculty are welcome to hold office hours but not required). If the instructor only teaches online classes, these hours can be met through web-conferencing, email, or phone, as long as students are made aware of the mode of communication used. Faculty who teach both face-to-face and online courses can hold 1 online office hour per online course that they are teaching.
7. Faculty have the option to incorporate proctored exams via the Testing Center or Proctorio. Proctored exams should be limited to 1 or 2 assessments.
8. Online courses should facilitate some level of student-student and student-instructor engagement. This requirement is usually met using discussion boards and forums in Canvas.
9. There should be clear, accurate, and easily available guidelines for how assignments should be submitted, when they are due, and how they will be assessed.
10. Instructors should become familiar and check the academic calendar to ensure they comply with important dates.

III. Preparing to Teach an Online Course

Training

Before an instructor can teach an online course, they must complete the required training modules for online teaching at ECC. Instructors will then participate in further training and development on an annual or tri-annual basis. (Once an instructor has taught online for three years, they will need to recertify once every three years.) Participation in the training will help assure students they are receiving a quality education through an online modality. The initial training will introduce instructors to the best practices of online learning, setting

up a course in Canvas, and effective means of assessing learning in an online format. Deans and area supervisors will monitor the completion of the training. The training is accessed via the Faculty Resources Canvas course which encompasses many resources for new and experienced faculty.

Course Preparation

As one begins the process of developing an online class, it is important to remember that online classes are not the same as traditional face-to-face courses. There are pedagogies and methodologies that are unique to online learning which enable students to learn the material in an online setting. Attempting to provide an exact replicate of the traditional classroom will not be conducive to the online learning environment. The initial training instructors receive will guide you in how to utilize the best methods in online teaching along with meeting acceptable measurements of coursework as defined by the [Board Policy: 2.5 Definition of Credit Hour](#).

The Instructional Design Office can work with you to translate your course materials into an online format. If you have never taught this course before, but others in your department have taught, you may wish to work with your Division Chair to obtain course materials or request access to a previous Canvas course through the Instructional Design Office (with the original instructor's permission.) Once the appropriate approvals are in place and the initial training is completed, the next steps are:
- Develop an appropriate online course syllabus.
- Develop assignments and assessment methods.
- Once you have access to the course shell, add the syllabus and important course material.
- Build the assignments in Canvas and set applicable due dates.
- Check that all items are published in Canvas and ready to welcome students on the first day of the semester.
- Post a welcome announcement or email welcoming students to their online course.

IV. Instructional Best Practices

Outlined below is a detailed description of how to implement faculty requirements in an online course.

1. **Make the syllabus easily accessible online.** Much like a traditional class environment, faculty should provide students with a current, accurate, and course-specific syllabus, which follows the format and content contained in the Canvas Syllabus Tool.

   It is recommended to post the syllabus in Canvas to ensure students have access for the entirety of the course. Recommended places to put the syllabus in Canvas include: the home page, top of module list, and/or on the Syllabus tab. The syllabus should include:
   - course objectives
   - course requirements
   - course schedule
   - office hours
   - delivery method
   - textbook information and use of publisher materials
   - assessment overview including if any onsite/proctoring assessments are required
   - grading standards
   - class attendance

   Class attendance should be clearly defined, and students should understand what activities qualify as "attending" the course. Only logging in does not suffice, for example. Faculty should clearly identify what activities must be completed, and how many must be completed, to be considered "attending".

2. **Establish communication expectations.** It is beneficial for faculty to communicate their preferred contact method and expectations on response times will help manage student expectations and improve communication across the term. Good practice suggests posting a message or announcement to the class at least once a week to tell students what will be covered in the coming week and to remind them of any due dates. Instructors must decide if they want communication to stay in Canvas Inbox, email or other personal options.

3. **Develop detailed assessment strategies.** Assignments should be aligned with course objectives. There should be clear, accurate, and easily
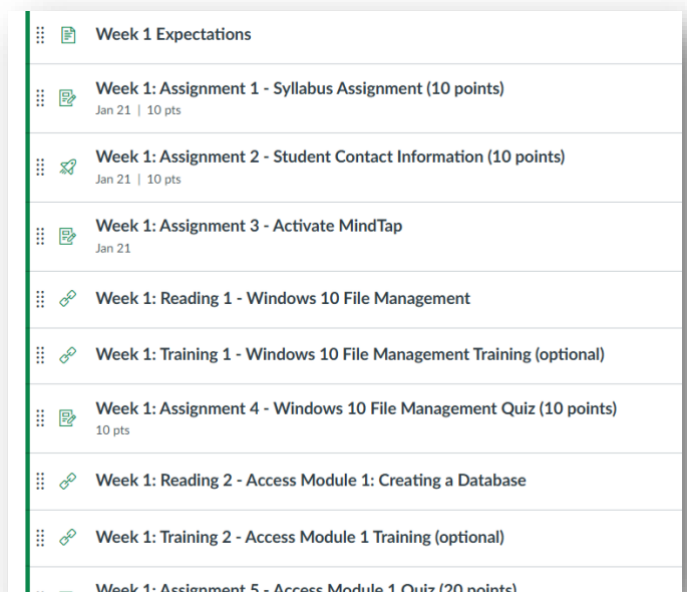
available guidelines for how assignments should be submitted, when they are due, and how they will be assessed. In each assignment within Canvas, it is recommended to add the assignment directions, point value, rubrics, due dates and availability dates. Doing so can decrease the amount of times faculty are contacted about assignments and can improve the submission quality. For quizzes, it is recommended to incorporate a quiz timer and availability date range.

Requiring an assignment due each week, with a predictable due date and time can help the faculty track whether students are completing "acceptable indications of attendance" per the federal student handbook.

4. **Create an intuitive online course environment.** Maintaining consistent organization and eliminating clutter within your online course shell in Canvas will improve the student navigation experience. Be mindful of the amount of clicks, links, and third-party tools integrated into the Course to minimize information overload. Examples of ways to improve the online course environment are: hiding unnecessary tabs in the Course Navigation bar, maintaining a consistent naming convention of assignments and files, organizing information by modules and establishing a predictable cadence to the online course.

In this example to the right, the course is organized by weekly modules with all items clearly labeled.

Before beginning lessons in the online course, such as in the first week, you may wish to provide some sort of video orientation that introduces students to the course, to Canvas, or to some other technology that the students will regularly be using.

Week 1 Expectations

Week 1: Assignment 1 - Syllabus Assignment (10 points)
Jan 21 | 10 pts

Week 1: Assignment 2 - Student Contact Information (10 points)
Jan 21 | 10 pts

Week 1: Assignment 3 - Activate MindTap
Jan 21

Week 1: Reading 1 - Windows 10 File Management

Week 1: Training 1 - Windows 10 File Management Training (optional)

Week 1: Assignment 4 - Windows 10 File Management Quiz (10 points)
10 pts

Week 1: Reading 2 - Access Module 1: Creating a Database

Week 1: Training 2 - Access Module 1 Training (optional)

Week 1: Assignment 5 - Access Module 1 Quiz (20 points)

5. **Provide prompt feedback.**
Whether in a traditional setting or an online course, students expect timely and appropriate feedback from faculty. Providing prompt feedback to students cultivates a proactive vs reactive approach to maintaining good

standing in a course. It is recommended to use the Canvas grade book to improve grading transparency.

There should be clear, accurate, and easily available guidelines for how assignments should be submitted, when they are due, and how they will be assessed. Methods used to measure items specific to online instruction should be clearly reported and available to students (i.e. how often will students need to post on the discussion board, etc.).

6. **Cultivate instructor presence.** Finding ways to connect with students can help teaching online be more enjoyable for faculty. Each online course at East Central College should facilitate some interaction among the students as well as between students and the instructor. Additional actions are necessary to cultivate connections with students in an online environment. Examples of ways to build instructor presence include: participating in discussions, posting weekly announcements, creating a video introduction welcoming students to the course, giving detailed feedback on assignments, using video responses in Speed Grader and creating lecture videos.

7. **Incorporate real-world application of content.** It is good practice to help student connect the content with their daily lives. This will help create a sense of belonging and positively impact learning retention. Examples of how to accomplish this include: incorporating reflective assignments, adding discussion prompts that include sharing lived experience, including group work where applicable and incorporating diverse experts in the course subject.

V. Online Teaching Certification

Online instructors participate in certification processes to stay current with the Learning Management System, resources, and the evolving field of online education. As mentioned prior in the manual, instructors complete an initial, required training followed by a tri-annual certification.

The initial required training modules must be completed only once, but they will always be available for review. Also, new modules will be added as they are developed or requested.

Division Deans are responsible for monitoring the progress and completion of all development and training processes and will determine what classes will be scheduled and who will teach them.

Requirements

- New instructors must complete the Canvas Orientation before the course begins, or as soon as possible.
- All instructors are required to complete the tri-annual Online Teaching Certification process prior to or at the semester or academic year.

VI. Evaluation of Online Instruction

Faculty teaching in an online environment will be evaluated and observed; such evaluation tools or observations may be different from those used in a traditional learning environment. In addition to observation by division chairs, faculty also have the opportunity to request a peer-review their course. Contact the office of instruction for the current evaluation form.

Site Visit, Evaluation and Consultation

Each section of online course offerings at East Central College will provide access for the division chair, the chief academic officer and the instructional designer for purposes of evaluation and consultation. When "in the course" for purposes of evaluation, the criteria cited previously in this document will form the basis for site and course review. Specifically, utilization of course tools, student postings and interactions, faculty presence and satisfaction of course requirements will be evaluated. Faculty teaching online sections may also be asked to present their courses or course features to faculty colleagues during faculty development opportunities.

VII. Dealing with Technology Issues

Technology Issues

Like all technology, Canvas may, on occasion, fail to operate or be operationally unavailable. While the college works diligently to limit or prevent such "down" times, faculty and students should be prepared. Faculty must provide students written guidelines, with the course syllabus, regarding "What to do if Canvas is down?" and how such down time will be managed and affect submission deadlines. Faculty should have alternative options available in the event of technical issues. For example, a copy of the gradebook, or a means to contact students through other tools provided by the college.

Faculty should also regularly monitor the currency of course links. The learning management tool allows for linking to internal, external and publisher materials. Providing this information within the course for students is helpful and promotes the use of online resources as primary locations for information. Faculty should make sure that the links are academic in nature and active while "in the course". Such information is vital to the college nature of an online offering and should be monitored closely.

Student Identification and Security

Faculty teaching online will develop identification and security features within each course in alignment with Board Policy 2.9: Verifying Student Identity in Distance Education Course. Accreditation standards require that faculty have in place a system to ensure secured access and identification capabilities that insure the identification of the student user.

It is imperative when teaching online that tools are in place to ensure the integrity of course delivery and student learning. Faculty may wish to include:
- A personal profile assignment to attain data specific to the registered student.
- A photo posted within the course such as during a welcome discussion board.
- Use of on campus testing, requiring a photo ID.

East Central College maintains a secure log-in procedure for students studying in an online format. Using this type of a secure log-in process, students may access information specific to their online participation but not see other student-specific information.

For more information on student identity and security procedures, please contact the Instructional Design staff.

VIII. FERPA Compliance

At East Central College, students enjoy the full range of privacy privileges as established under FERPA. For online teaching and learning, faculty should be sensitive to the following, in addition to the general terms of FERPA:
- Do not share individual student information in postings, discussion boards or other public portions of the course
- Do not disclose in any public portion of your course any individual student information that is FERPA protected
- Students should only have access to personal information (i.e. grades) in the password protected portion of the course

IX. Copyright Issues

As with instruction in any course section, faculty should be diligent in their efforts to avoid copyright infringement. Faculty are responsible for the oversight of all copyright issues related to materials, links, download, etc. associated with their courses.

X. Proctored Assessments and Off-Site Testing

Web online classes have the option to incorporate proctored exams. The use of proctored exams should be limited to 1-2 exams per term. Proctored assessments must use the East Central College Testing Center, an approved alternate location (such as another college or university testing center) or by connecting Proctorio to the exam in Canvas. Missouri public community college have an articulation agreement that allows students to test at any location at no charge.

Approving and vetting an alternate testing site will fall to the course instructor's discretion. It is recommended that the burden be placed on the student to communicate with the alternate site, be it another college, university or military base for students who have been deployed; the student will also be responsible for any fees that may incur from using the alternate location. The student will provide the course instructor with a name, email and phone number for the contact at the alternate testing site and it is recommended that the faculty member assess the site for authenticity. For example, one might call the main campus phone number of the institution and ask for the testing center contact or verify the identity of the contact via the institution's website.

Once the alternate site and contact have been authenticated, the course instructor will communicate directly with the testing center contact, providing the exam, instructions and any other information required. If you are using online testing, you need only provide the password for the assessment. If you are using a paper and pencil exam, encourage the testing center contact to email or fax you the test results. If there is a fee for testing, the student will be responsible for paying it. If our testing centers or an approved alternate testing environment is not possible, you can set up Proctorio in your course and connect it to the exam for all or a single student as needed.

Proctoring Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs can be shared with students or you can direct them to this link: http://www.eastcentral.edu/online-learning/faqs/

Question: Why am I required to take a proctored assessment for my online course?
Answer: Some instructors and programs require proctored testing to help verify your identity and maintain academic integrity for high-value exams and assignments.

Question: Where can I take my proctored assessments?
Answer: Proctored assessments may be required to be taken in a testing center, through an online testing service (Proctorio), or online meeting platform (such as Zoom, Teams). This is at the discretion of the instructor and/or specific department's requirements.

Question: Will I need to pay a fee for proctored testing?
Answer: Currently, there are no additional fees for proctored assessments at ECC locations or ECC exams taken through the Proctorio online proctoring system.

XI. Course Development Guidelines and Requirements

Application Process

East Central College continues to expand its repertoire of online, hybrid and web enhanced offerings. Faculty at the college may consider a variety of options in developing a new course via distance delivery. Development options are as follows:

- **Existing Course**: Modify the delivery format of an existing course. Options for modification are web online, web enhanced, web hybrid or simply the inclusion of web materials within a traditional class using Canvas. Faculty may also elect to modify a course for web hybrid or HyFlex.
- **New Course**: Faculty may elect to create a new course for distance delivery. All procedures regarding new course development and approval apply. Options regarding delivery format are the same as for an existing course.
- **Online Program**: Faculty may elect to create a program fully online. All procedures cited previously apply. In addition, certain regulatory bodies require approval for online program delivery.

Whichever option faculty are pursuing, an application form must be completed, reviewed and approved by the Division Dean and forwarded to the Office of Academic Affairs. As part of its approval process, the Office of Academic Affairs will review the application with the Instructional Design Specialist. Criteria for approval include but are not limited to offerings in the academic discipline, demand for the course, the requisite technical support and enrollment trends. As part of the application process, faculty will be asked to self-report their level of technical expertise. The Instructional Design Specialist will assist faculty in the technical development of the course.

XII. Accessibility

Designing your course with accessibility in mind enhances the learning experience of students with disabilities, as well as students with different learning styles. Simple steps like checking the accessibility of Word and PowerPoint files with the Microsoft Accessibility checker prior to uploading to your course will make for an accessible online experience for students. Other steps you can take are to use the Canvas Accessibility tool, using videos with captions, and checking that any publisher material is accessible.

Access Services at East Central College provides services for students who have documented disabilities. To qualify for services, students must self-identify to the Access office and provide documentation of their disability. Access Services, the Faculty, and the Instructional Design Specialist can partner to ensure Canvas content meets the needs of a student as needed.

Access/Disability Services Frequently Asked Questions

These FAQs can be shared with students or you can direct them to this link: https://www.eastcentral.edu/wellness-services/access-services/frequently-asked-questions/

Will my instructors automatically be informed about my disability and accommodation needs?
Answer: No, once accommodations have been approved, Access Service generates an accommodation notification form. It's the student's responsibility

to deliver that form to their instructors. The student determines which classes and instructors will receive these letters. A student's diagnosis will not be automatically shared with instructors or staff unless it is a need-to-know basis or due to an emergency.

What types of accommodations are generally offered?
Answer: East Central College provides testing accommodations including extra time, reduced distraction locations, readers, and scribes. Additional accommodations might include note-taking assistance, alternate format texts, and auxiliary aids.