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Distance Education Manual

Developing Hybrid or Online Courses

This Distance Education Manual is designed to teach faculty the steps to make the transition to online/hybrid from a face-to-face environment smoother and more problem free for you and your students. Keep in mind that both hybrid and online instruction are just delivery systems. The course material presented to students should be the same as in the classroom which uses only the traditional face-to-face delivery method. Only the way it is presented (delivered) to the student changes as a course is designed for hybrid or online delivery.

Definitions as used by Palau Community College:

- **Hybrid** - class meets face to face for some number of instructional hours. However, some portion of instructional hours is scheduled to be replaced with online hours. The instructor may or may not meet with students during online sessions. Good study and technology skills are recommended for success. Login and password is required.
- **Online** - Class content, activities and interaction are fully online except for major exams (midterm and final exams). Good study and technology skills are recommended for student success. Students **MUST** access the online course material through requiring login and password (no open access). Student use of the online materials is a required element of the course. Login and password is required.

Please note that the learning management system (LMS) used at Palau Community College is **Moodle**.

Faculty teaching online/hybrid courses are expected to check online/hybrid course sites daily for student messages and are expected to reply to all messages or emails within 24 hours. Assignments are expected to be returned with comments/grades in a timely manner, usually within a week period at the most. Faculty must inform students of their progress on a regular basis and are expected to comply with all academic policies, procedures and requirements whether in a full time or adjunct position.

Procedures for developing an online course:

This document outlines the steps for faculty in the development of online courses.

1. Discuss the idea with your department/program head. **Note:** Courses must be approved by the curriculum committee (CPC) before they can be considered for online/hybrid development.
2. Complete the Online/Hybrid Course Development proposal Form.
3. Submit the form to Distance Education Committee (DEC)
4. Take part in course training prior to developing course
5. Develop course completely from first day of instruction to final exam a month before the first offering of the course online
6. Inform DEC when course is completely developed
7. Have course approved by DEC

Basic Course Requirements:

1. Course must use Moodle platform, the approved and implemented on line course management system (CMS).
2. Course design must include **basic checklist items** but can be further developed if faculty developer wishes.
3. Courses need to be completed and approved by DEC at **least a month** before semester being offered begins.
4. Courses need to have **major assignments scheduled and proctored by instructor** in the on line computer lab (midterm and final exams at least)
5. Courses need to include at least one discussion board/forum where students post to each other's postings.
6. Courses need to have course evaluation with final exam if possible and should have this done prior to start of final exam. Course evaluation will be developed by DEC. If there is no final exam, the course evaluation needs to be done before the submission of the last assignment or activity of the course.
7. Instructor may choose to use the SALG evaluation but must have this developed into the course prior to implementation of course. (see SALG.org for more information)
8. Major assignments need to be **changed each semester** to prevent copying by students from semester to semester. This can be as minor as just changing topics for essays to changing multiple choice or true/false questions slightly to using completely new short answer questions.
9. Once a course is developed, it will be cloned for **all** sections.
10. Adjunct faculty and full time faculty new to teaching on line must undergo online teaching training **prior** to the first day of instruction.
11. Full time faculty are responsible for course content, IT faculty for technical support and DEC chair for course development. This needs to be clear to adjunct faculty so that the proper person is contacted when help is needed. Contact information should be given to adjunct faculty prior to the start of a course.
12. Student/course orientation must be offered each semester for students who wish to attend. Orientation must be done by the end of the first week of instruction.
13. Orientations must be conducted by the teaching faculty (adjunct and full time) of the course sections.

Training will be provided by the Distance Education Committee (DEC) chairperson and the technical support faculty for the Moodle course learning platform. Faculty must work with the DEC chairperson when designing the course and also agree to be orientated to teaching online.



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Hybrid or Online Course Proposal

To be completed by faculty member:

Today's date: _____

Faculty Name: _____

Contact Information:

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Program/Dept.: _____

Course title and number: _____

Is this course hybrid or fully online? _____

*Proposed Semester/Year Delivery Date: _____

Faculty signature: _____

Dean of Academic Affairs signature: _____

*Note:

1. Course must be a Committee on Programs and Curricula (CPC) approved course
2. If a new course, the CPC process for approval must be completed before designing as hybrid or online course can begin
3. Course offered in online or hybrid delivery must be consistent with face-to-face delivery in terms of content and course rigor

Course needs to be ready for review at least six weeks prior to the semester being offered and fully developed at least four weeks prior to semester being offered.

Course Building Checklist

Overview As you're developing your course in Moodle, here is a checklist to ensure that the necessary information is included in your course:

Optional

- Post a "Welcome to the Class" letter
- Post a reminder about the first assignment due
- Post tips for being a successful online student

Plagiarism Prevention

- Post Academic Dishonesty information
- Create a strategy for plagiarism avoidance (lesson, submission of parts of a paper/project, etc.)
- Include web link to MLA/APA information (optional)

Online Navigability and Organization

- Syllabus is easily located
- List of instructional material required is easily located
- Topics are clearly identified and subtopics are related to topics
- Course schedule is available for printing
- Organization and sequencing of the course content is logical and clear
- Resources are clearly labeled and related to assignments

Syllabus includes (may consist of individual pages or combined as one document)

- Instructor contact information
- Course description
- Course objectives
- Expectations of students' participation, honesty, etc.
- Clear timeline for student participation (semester course calendar)
- Expectation of availability of instructor and turnaround time for contact with instructor
- Grading evaluation
- Netiquette guidelines
- Disability Statement

Aesthetic Design

- Typeface is easy to read
- Sufficient contrast between text and background to make information easy to read

Consistency in Course

- Layout of course is visually and functionally consistent
- Navigability is clear, simple and user friendly
- Spelling and grammar are consistent and accurate
- Written material is concise
- Language of written material is friendly and supportive
- Clear directions are given for each task or assignment
- Sentences and paragraphs are brief

Instructional Design and Delivery

- Students introduce themselves (allows for student interaction and also a sample of student's writing style)
- Students are encouraged to respond to classmate introductions
- Netiquette is described and enforced
- Discussion boards/forums offer thought provoking answers (required design)
- Discussion boards/forums require students to post to each other (required design)
- Reading and writing requirements are consistent with course unit load
- Pace of delivery of course content is managed
- Course content is "chunked" for more manageable learning
- Reading assignments match learning outcomes
- Activities/assignments lead to learning desired concepts
- Instructional material may be reviewed repeatedly (no close date for resource material)
- Instructional material is available for printing
- Summary provided frequently to reinforce learning

Assessment and Evaluation of Student learning

- Pre-requisites are defined and enforced
- Acceptable methods for completing assignments are identified (group work, open book, etc.)
- Consequences of cheating or plagiarism are given and enforces
- Quantity and scope of graded assignments is reasonable
- Students' research assignments' reference list includes a variety of materials such as URLs, books and journals, videos, etc.
- Students are not assessed solely on tests/quizzes but are provided ample opportunity to demonstrate proficiency in different ways.
- Frequent and substantial feedback from the instructor is given
- Samples of assignments illustrate instructor's expectations
- Detailed instructions and tips for completing assignments are given
- Due dates for all assignments are given
- Rubrics for grading coursework are included
- Rubrics for all assignments identify assessment guidelines
- Grading scale is clear
- Self-tests are similar to final evaluation instruments

Faculty Use of Student Feedback

- Evaluation at end of course
- Instructor is willing to modify course as needed to improve or fix inadequacies
- Instructor is able to modify elements (i.e. fix bad quiz questions, extend deadlines, etc.)

*This checklist will be used during the review by the Distance Education Committee

Course Readiness

All hybrid and online courses need to be prepared for offering by the assigned faculty whether courses are newly designed or being repeatedly offered. When a hybrid or online course has already been designed and approved for offering, it is the responsibility of the faculty assigned to teach such course to prepare it for the semester being offered. Courses must be ready for committee review two weeks prior to the beginning of the first day of instruction. Major exams, quizzes, assignments, and discussion forums need to be revised and all semester dates of student activities (assignments and examinations of all types) need to be in place. In addition, if a course outline has undergone revisions, the revisions must be reflected in the online delivery of the course as well.

Course Assessment

Course assessment is a requirement of faculty whether teaching in the online delivery mode or face-to-face. Online courses will be assessed in the same format as face-to-face courses following the established course assessment schedule and the institutional assessment process, FAMED. Fall courses will be assessed in the fall and spring courses will be assessed every spring. The required FAMED format template can be found at the end of this manual.

A faculty teaching for the first time will be required to attend an orientation training for course assessment; however, training for course assessment can be requested at any time. There may also be other required training sessions that will need to be attended, such as when revisions or updates are incorporated into the assessment process.

Faculty evaluations

Student evaluations will be conducted either by using the PCC created student evaluation for online courses or by using the SALG evaluation tool. Student evaluations will be done prior to the final exam on the scheduled exam day if final exams are required by the course and the PCC created student evaluation is being used. If the SALG evaluation tool is being used, the schedule should be set for students to take during the last week of instruction.

Best Practices for online courses (Tips for successful teaching and learning)

- 1. Create a “welcome” for your students.** Students need to be introduced to both the learning style and the course right from the start of the semester. Create an introduction to the course and a summary of what the student “will know and be able to do” at the end of the course. List the course learning outcomes, give tips for online learning success and provide important information, such as the syllabus and grading rubrics in this section.

- 2. Organize your course by units or weeks to make it easy for students to follow.** Students need to see the organization of the course clearly. It should be easy for the students to navigate through the learning objectives throughout the semester and for students to clearly understand the learning outcomes of each unit or week.

- 3. Have a variety of assignment types.** Students need variable ways to learn and show they have understood the learning outcomes of the course. Online courses can have different assignment designs including matching, multiple choice, short answer and essay type assessments. Quick assessments can be gotten through the use assignments that are taken on the course site with grades generated immediately at the end of the assignments while longer writing assignments can be uploaded with time allowed for instructors to comment and grade.

- 4. Create clear expectations for students.** Students need clear expectations for how to communicate with their instructor, where to find course information, what assignments need to be done, how they need to be completed and when assignments are due. All of this information should be clearly communicated to students through the course design, assignment instructions and teacher communications.

- 5. Give clear guidelines for grading.** Students need to understand what is expected of them for writing assignments especially. Have rubrics for assignments that guide the students and clearly explain the grading of the assignments. Post rubrics on course site for students to view before beginning assignments.

- 6. Prepare discussion posts that invite questions, discussions, reflections, and responses.** Students need to interact with one another and have meaningful class discussions just as in face-to-face classroom settings. Pose questions that will lead to critical thinking and thought provoking discussions. Require students to respond to each other’s postings to encourage discussion of topics.

- 7. Keep online text to a minimal amount.** Students need to be able to have printable resources that would represent the lectures that would be given in a face-to-face class setting. Keep text information from being pages to read. Use bullets, PowerPoint presentations, and other creative ways to convey information that student can print for study

later. Many students find it hard to read from the computer screen only so make resources so that they are easily printable and encourage students to print for keeping in folders or binders.

8. Provide samples and examples whenever possible. Students learn easier by following examples, especially when writing. A sample introduction or an example of a good thesis statement will help students apply the concepts to their own writings or get a better understanding of what is expected with that particular assignment.

9. Make your presence felt. Students need to know that you care about who they are, care about their questions and concerns, and are generally "present" to assist them as needed. Students need to "feel" your presence several times a week. Respond to messages, emails and other forms of communication within 24 hours.

10. Provide effective feedback. Students need to know how well they performed and what they can do to make improvements. They need to understand what errors they made and how to correct those errors. Provide automatic feedback for assignment types that allow it and comments for written answers.

11. Keep up with grading of submitted work. Students need and expect to have their work returned in a timely manner. Turnaround time should be no later than a week if possible.

12. Change tests and assignments each semester. To ensure that students are not using work from previous semesters, make revisions to tests, quizzes and assignments each semester. These changes do not need to be replacements of established coursework; rather changes can be made to make true questions false or simply change topics for writing assignments.