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Requirements for Interactive Online and Self-Paced Courses

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Introduction

At Andrews University, oversight of the quality of online courses is provided by the School of Distance Education and the Online Course Quality Assurance Committee, which has faculty membership from each School at Andrews University.

Support for the online course development and teaching process is provided by Online Course Development Team in the Department of Digital Learning and Instructional Technology. The process and supports provided are explained in the Course Author Handbook available online here: https://www.andrews.edu/distance/dlit/online-course-development.html

The requirements in this document describe the teaching and course design requirements for all online courses. This document supplements the Andrews University Standards for Online Teaching found online here:
https://www.andrews.edu/distance/dlit/au_standards_for_teaching_online.pdf

Course Set Up

Work Load

1. Online courses must meet the Andrews University credit hour definition, and the syllabus must include detail to show how the course meets the credit hour definition. This detail can also help set student expectations for participation in the course.

    a. **Definition:** One semester credit hour at Andrews University is earned through academic work during a period of fifteen weeks; averaging three hours per week in undergraduate courses and four hours per week in graduate courses. Academic work contributes to established intentional learning outcomes and is verified by evidence of student achievement. Academic work includes:

        i. A minimum of 50 minutes per week of direct faculty-student contact; and

        ii. Out-of-class student work during the remaining time.

        iii. For intensives or other courses that do not meet for fifteen weeks, an equivalent amount of direct faculty-student contact and out-of-class student work is required.

        iv. An equivalent total amount of academic work is also required in activities such as laboratory, independent study, practicum, studio, distance, distributed, tours and other learning modalities. More time may be expected for co-op work, internships and similar applied learning experiences where learning may take longer to be achieved.

    b. In an online course, **direct faculty-student contact**, also known as faculty directed activities, includes activities with strong faculty involvement and formative feedback such as case studies, videoconferences, discussion boards,

group activities, lecture videos, multimedia, presentations, and faculty-directed projects.

i. What is a faculty-directed activity? This means that the instructor is directing the project and is interacting with the students throughout the project, guiding, providing feedback, monitoring, just as an in-class activity

c. Homework includes assignments, exams, peer review, papers, portfolios, practice activities, discussion boards without faculty presence, quizzes, reading assignments, writing assignments, research, self-assessment, and tutorials.

d. A Faculty-Directed Credit Hour worksheet is available online at https://www.andrews.edu/distance/dlit/online-course-development.html. The DLiT Instructional Design team can also assist you in using this worksheet.

Syllabus

2. Posting textbook information for students to easily access is required by the Student Right to Know/Higher Education Opportunity Act. In addition, by university policy, faculty must submit their textbook requests to the university's bookstore, whether or not the books are actually ordered to be on the shelves. This allows students to easily see what materials are required when they are registering for courses and provides sufficient opportunity to order books from wherever they desire.

a. When textbooks are due to the bookstore, books for online courses should be submitted as well. DLiT staff will audit online courses for textbook listings a minimum of three weeks before the course begins.

b. The university also requests faculty to upload their syllabus with textbook listings to http://vault.andrews.edu for listing in the online course schedule at least two weeks in advance.

3. All of the information for the course, including course outcomes/objectives[1], assignments, grading rubrics, instructions for assignments, quizzes/tests, assignment due dates, etc., should be posted on the LearningHub before the **FIRST** day that the course is opened to the students. This ensures that students have a complete picture of what the semester will require so that they can plan their time accordingly and for the student who is able to find time to work ahead, they are not waiting for information to be posted.

4. The syllabus must include the learning outcomes.

a. Clearly list ALL learning outcomes that are to be attained throughout this course through the activities required in the course.

b. Be sure to include descriptors of higher learning levels that go through a range of learning such as: analyze, evaluate, integrate, extrapolate, apply, etc. This is in

[1] The terminology may differ depending on the accreditation of each school or department.

contrast to descriptors of lower learning levels such as: describe, explain, compare.

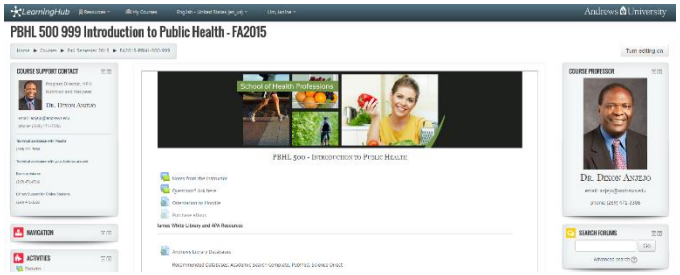
c. Identify in your course (in the syllabus schedule, in lesson pages in LearningHub, etc.) which learning objectives the reading assignments, quizzes, and tests will cover. This allows the student to take more accurate notes as they go through their readings.

d. Academic integrity. Please include the university academic integrity statement in your syllabus. You may also wish to include an honor statement in your course and/or syllabus. To learn more, visit https://www.andrews.edu/academics/academic_integrity.html

LearningHub Site

5. The course materials must be organized sequentially in LearningHub.

6. The LearningHub course sites should use the applicable online degree layout, which typically includes a standard course header, standard instructor block on the right, and standard program support resources on the left as shown. This layout ensures consistency and familiarity for students. Contact dlit@andrews.edu if you need assistance with the layout.



Interaction

Online courses have three types of interaction: interaction with the content, interaction with peers, and interaction with the instructor (Moore, 1989). Research shows that successful online courses must include at least one of these interaction types at a rich and rigorous level (Anderson, 2003; Russell, Kleiman, Carey, & Douglas, 2009). Some examples of rich interaction include:

- **Examples of Interaction with the Content:**
  - Instructor videos with opportunities throughout to react, take notes, and think about the content
  - Reflective activities
  - Self-assessments
  - Practice activities
  - Reaction papers
  - Animations
  - Simulations
  - Personal instructor voice within the content
- **Examples of Interaction with Peers Examples:**
  - Study buddy pairs
  - Collaborative writing
  - Collaborative project creation via a wiki

    - Problem based activities
    - Simulations
    - Case study discussions
    - Peer moderation
- **Examples of Interaction with the Instructor Examples:**
    - Tools include emails, phone calls, Skype or Zoom
    - Weekly emails from the instructor (regular, substantive, initiated by the instructor)
    - Live videoconferences with the instructor
    - Feedback, formative and summative
    - Teacher presence in a discussion forum or other group communication and collaboration tool

Andrews University offers four types of online courses, with differing expectations for interaction in each type. Andrews University's Instructional Designers provide support for faculty for meeting these expectations, and regularly review courses, surveys, and external reviews to ensure all courses meet these expectations.

- **Interactive online definition:** Interactive online courses use the Internet to deliver instruction to students who are separate from the instructor. Interactive online courses use the Internet to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor. This regular substantive interaction includes a significant amount of interaction initiated by the instructor. Interactive online courses may use synchronous (real-time) meetings, or an asynchronous paced format. Technologies may include: Internet, satellite or room-based videoconferencing, web-conferencing, audio-conferencing, or web-based videoconferencing. DVDs, podcasts, streaming and similar one way media may be used only if they are used in conjunction with another technology that facilitates regular and substantive interaction between students and the instructor.

    - **Interactive online courses offered mainly asynchronously must** have strong interaction with the instructor (Faculty Presence Standard) and with peers (Learning Community Standard). This is mainly achieved via discussion forums and other tools that encourage peer interaction. Strong interaction with the content is also encouraged.

    - **Interactive online courses offered mainly synchronously,** with regularly scheduled live videoconferences or phone conferences, must have strong interaction with the instructor (Faculty Presence Standard) and with peers (Learning Community Standard). Depending on the design of the live sessions, peer interaction in discussion forums may also be necessary to achieve strong peer interaction. Strong interaction with the content is also encouraged.

- **Self-paced definition:** Self-paced courses are offered where instructional materials and examinations are provided by mail or electronic transmission to students who are separated from the instructor. Self-paced courses may be delivered via paper; via electronic means such as email or a learning management system, or via DVDs, podcasts, streaming or similar one-way media transmission. Self-paced courses must have rich interaction with the content and with the instructor (Faculty Presence

Standard).

- **Self-paced open learning courses** are open for registration at any time and must be completed within 180 days of the start date and are not eligible for financial aid.

Introductions

7. Interactive Online courses require a design that provides for students and instructors to know each other (Learning Community Standard).

a. Create a method for students to introduce themselves to their classmates. For example, instructors could create an introductions discussion forum and require all students post an introductory message in the forum at the beginning of the course. The instructor should post an introduction about themselves as well. The instructor can make this assignment more personal by including their own pictures or perhaps creating a video about themselves and uploading it. Create a personal tone in the introduction by including some personal information such as your hobbies, family, passion about the profession, etc. Students tend to mirror the style of introduction that the instructor uses. The goal is to begin the process of creating a community by allowing personal information to be shared. In case of cohorts, rather than just a general intro board, help the students introduce to each other and you the specific aspects about their work that relate to your course.

b. If any course content was created by a different instructor than the one facilitating the course, a “meet the course author” page should be included as well.

8. Self-paced courses require a design that provides for the instructor to know the students.

a. An introduction assignment should provide an opportunity for students to introduce themselves to the instructor and provide any appropriate background and prior experience with the course content.

b. A “meet the instructor” page should be included in self-paced courses. If any course content was created by a different instructor than the one facilitating the course, a “meet the course author” page should be included as well.

Interaction in Assignments and Discussions

9. It is important to develop assignments that facilitate interaction between the instructor and students, as well as among the students themselves. In courses where there is little or no interaction, the students frequently complain that they feel like they did not “get anything” for their monetary investment; as such they feel like they could have just read all of this on their own and why did they need the faculty member? Examples of things that can facilitate these interactions are: Posting case studies requiring integration of the material that is being covered over that particular time period; posting discussion questions, audio-taping a Powerpoint lecture that the students listen to and then respond to in some fashion, etc.

These things are what helps our Andrews University interactive online courses be distinguished from online self-paced correspondence courses.

For these types of assignments, the students should be required to post a reply and have a percentage of their grade devoted to the both the quantity and the quality of their posts. The instructor needs to be an interactive, involved participant in these discussions and respond to the post—either responding after several posts have been made or responding appropriately to a select number of individual student posts. This shows the students that the instructor is actively involved in the course and is "listening" and critiquing what they have to say and creates a responsive atmosphere. It is important that during the duration of the course, the instructor personally responds to EVERY student at least 1-2 times.

10. Questions need to provoke critical thinking. A simple yes/no question or one that requires only a fact as an answer, is not sufficient for discussion that brings about critical thinking. A good question moves the student out of their own frame of reference to the author's frame of reference. It provokes discussion and leads to more questions.

11. Develop a grading rubric of what is expected in terms of class participation for students to receive a passing grade. As is always the case, some students will do minimal work (i.e. post one sentence) if the expectations are not clearly outlined for what the instructor considers a quality experience. Assign enough points to the discussions to "matter" if they do not put forth some effort. It is recommended to assign points to the introductions as well. A sample rubric is included in the Online Course Author Handbook, and our Instructional Design team can assist with adaptations. https://www.andrews.edu/distance/dlit/online-course-development.html

12. Discussion forums are the most common way to build learning community and create peer and instructor interaction. However, other methods of group work and collaboration such as pair videoconferences, collaborative work on a wiki, communication via Twitter are also ways to meet the Andrews University Learning Community standard for teaching online. Our Instructional Design team can assist you in selecting the tools and pedagogy best suited for your learning outcomes.

Assignment and Assessment Design

To successfully measure a student's grasp of the material, the instructor should provide several different types of outcome measures. The DLiT Instructional Design team can provide support and examples as needed. Contact sdecoursedev@andrews.edu. In addition, the following three types of activities are required for all online courses at Andrews:

13. **Library Assignment.** It is highly recommended that every course include an assignment requiring the use of the James White Library's services or print/media/electronic resources for which the students have paid. Integrate the library into the course content using a variety of methods besides research papers and peer-reviewed journals. The library assignments should give the students opportunities to understand the philosophy behind their course, get a broad picture of their subject matter, compare and cite different types of resources correctly, find career options in

their fields of interest, gain an exposure to the professional associations and journals of their subject areas, find literature to support their views in a discussion, defend their solutions to case studies, discover problems similar to what they are being asked to solve, and develop skills for life-long learning. See the off-campus website (https://www.andrews.edu/library/offcamp.html) for useful links and hints offered to you as a professor. Select the appropriate LibGuide for your course by going to this link (http://libguides.andrews.edu/content.php?pid=600205) and embed it in your Learning Hub course.

14. **Student Identity Verification.** Federal guidelines require that we must verify the identity of students in our online courses. A combination of the following measures should be used in courses AND online degrees to ensure that the student receiving the degree or transcript is the student who completed the work in the course. Every course must have either at least one proctored exam or one live videoconference where the proctor or instructor checks the photo ID of the students. No measure is bullet-proof, so multiple measures must be used. Please note that the more interaction that an instructor has with the students, the better they are at ascertaining the veracity of student's identity.

    a. **Exam proctoring** with a professional proctor or testing center is considered the gold standard of student identity verification. Exam proctoring services can be provided by the School of Distance Education Testing Office or by individual departments. Email dlit@andrews.edu for assistance on setting up exam proctoring in your syllabus and LearningHub space. This can include the SDE Testing Exam Request Form and special settings on the LearningHub exam such as randomization of questions and a password for the proctor. Contact the Testing Office at sdeexams@andrews.edu regarding the implementation of the exam proctoring.

    For any test that the instructor does not want the student to have access to notes or books, there must be a proctor. For information that is not considered critical to clinical safety or skills, it is certainly acceptable to not require a proctor. Adult learners need to have seen, handled, and integrated the material but it is not always necessary to require memorization of it. In these cases, it is recommended that the instructor set a reasonable time limit on the test (ie the test will close at the end of the time limit) so as to ensure that the student has gone through the material prior to the test.

    It is recommended that several measures be used to ensure the integrity of the exam. Randomization of questions, setting time limits, and using question banks reduces the ability of students to cheat.

    b. **Live Videoconferencing.** If you require students to attend a live videoconference session, and participate or present, check their photo ID in the class roster in vault.andrews.edu to verify that the student attending the course is the student registered for the course.

    c. **Plagiarism Checking.** Design plagiarism-reducing assignments that are difficult to copy and paste from the Internet. Realize that students could pay a company

to write the paper for them. Use TurnItIn to check for plagiarism. Work with an Instructional Designer to assist you in designing assessments that reduce cheating.

d. **LearningHub Login**. Requiring students to login to LearningHub using their Andrews University ID is the most basic way to verify student identity. This measure should be used in conjunction with other measures.

e. **On campus attendance**. Requiring some on campus attendance as part of an online degree is another component of online student identity verification. However, it should not be the only measure used within the full degree design.

15. **Synthesis.** Online graduate courses should be designed to help students apply what they learn in a significant way that serves to show their ability to synthesize course outcomes meaningfully within the context of their degree program. This could be accomplished through a student-created project or product that culminates the learning experience. For undergraduate courses this is highly recommended as well, but there may be some rare exceptions. Presentations, final projects, research papers, and written plans are all possibilities. Design or use a grading rubric to guide the students' work in the project. Rubrics very concretely allow the student to interpret what they have to do.

Communication and Feedback

It is critical that you are present in your online courses. Students should have a sense that you are fully engaged in the course (Faculty Presence Standard). The following are ways to ensure you are present and available to your online students.

16. The instructor must provide the students with at least two (2) methods of communication desired for the course; such as Andrews email, through LearningHub, Skype, phone, text, etc. The instructor should provide a phone number where the students can reach him/her if needed.

17. All communication from students (email or phone calls) must be acknowledged within 1 business day of receipt. The only exception to this is if the instructor has a planned absence which should be known to the students via the course schedule and/or a receipt of the "out of office" message from the email server. This policy needs to be listed in the syllabus.

18. If the instructor is too busy to fully answer the inquiry quickly, it is acceptable to acknowledge receipt of the communication but not answer it within 1 business day. All communications should be answered no later than 3 to 4 business days after the receipt of the communication.

19. These communication policies are critical to the continued success of online programs. The number one criticism that lowers the marketability of the program is when an instructor does not get back to the students in a timely manner.

20. We strongly urge you to use the News Forum and a help forum within LearningHub to communicate with students. Weekly announcements sent via the News Forum are received by the student in their Andrews email as well as in LearningHub. Using the News Forum negates student complaints that they didn't receive the communication. They received it in two places. In addition, using a help forum reduces the number of emails you have to answer from students. Train them to ask questions in a forum; that way you only have to answer the question once in detail in this forum. In addition, using the Forums in LearningHub ensures that all communication is time-dated and allows program directors to oversee the course and intervene if there are any difficulties.

21. Feedback is critical to the success of your students. Some feedback is automated on objective assessments such as multiple choice and true/false items. Other feedback is more thorough and detailed regarding projects, papers, and written assignments, and includes explaining to your students what the student has done well and why, what you marked wrong, why it is wrong, and how to improve for the future. One effective way to give feedback is through rubrics. Teach students to read the feedback you enter in LearningHub as well. Remind them to review it.

22. Model the behavior you expect from your students. Set aside time in your schedule for responding to students. Keep active in your online course. Ensure that all students are able to communicate with you. Call them on the phone if necessary (phone numbers are available in the students' profile in iVue in vault.andrews.edu. Keep your gradebook up to date.

Course Reviews

The instructor, a peer reviewer, and an external reviewer will review all online courses. In addition, the School of Distance Education reviews the online teaching student feedback from the first part of the course and works with the instructor to make adjustments if appropriate. Full course reviews are completed the first time an online course is taught, and every five years thereafter. The 20% surveys and course evaluations are used each time an online course is taught.

20% Surveys and Reviews

When 20% of the course has passed, several reviews will occur:

1. Self-review of the course is due.
2. The course author should select a peer reviewer. The peer review is due back in two weeks. Online faculty can only use a peer reviewer one time. For future course peer reviews, he/she should select another peer reviewer.
3. The School of Distance Education will assign an external reviewer. The external review is also due back within two weeks.
4. Students in the course will complete a short feedback form, known as the 20% Survey. This survey is added to every online course at Andrews University every semester. The results are available immediately in LearningHub to faculty, and they are also reviewed by the DLiT Instructional Design Team. The questions on the survey are as follows. These questions partially evaluate the Web Design, Faculty Presence, and Learning Community Standards.

a. The course materials are organized in a way that is easy to follow.
b. So far in the course, I have found it easy to understand what to do.
c. I am receiving sufficient feedback and comments from my instructor.
d. I feel that my instructor is "present" in the course.
e. I am starting to get to know the other students in the course.
f. How many hours per week on average are you spending on this course (include online and offline time working on the course)?
g. Any other comments? Places where you're stuck?

5. The self-review, peer review, and external review will be prompted by email reminders with instructions from the School of Distance Education. The review will be completed using the rubrics at the end of this document and an online form found at http://www.andrews.edu/distance/dlit/online-course-reviews.html. The DLiT Instructional Design team analyzes the reviews and provides feedback to the faculty member with an offer of assistance in making changes as needed.

Confidentiality

6. The results of online course reviews are confidential.

Exit Interview

7. The Instructional Designer will meet with new online faculty to debrief the experiences from teaching online the first time.

Help and Assistance

Multiple staff in support services at the university are available to assist you.

- Janine Lim, Associate Dean, Online Higher Education – *Degree design & problem solving*
  - assocdeanonline@andrews.edu | 269-471-6546
- Amy Maydole, DLiT Director – *Oversight of online course development*
  - maydole@andrews.edu | 269-471-3960
- Michael Gayle, Curriculum and Learning Design Specialist – *Learning and assessment design*
  - gaylem@andrews.edu | 269-471-3960
- Marsha Beal, Technology and Instructional Design Specialist – *LearningHub and tech tools*
  - dlit@andrews.edu | 269-471-3960
- Glynis Bradfield, Student Services – *Academic integrity, advising, registration issues, problem solving, student supports*
  - sdestudents@andrews.edu | 269-471-3432
- Steve Fox, Testing Supervisor – *Exam proctoring management*
  - sdeexams@andrews.edu | 296-471- 6566
- Silas Marques, Off-Campus Services Librarian – *Library resources and services*
  - silas@andrews.edu | 269-471-6263

Student Support Services

The following resources may be useful to include in support materials. These resources can be linked in the syllabus, in the course support block in LearningHub, or in other communication with students. This information is also listed in the SDEIP Student Services section of the bulletin.

- Orientation, advising, tutoring and counseling information is available through the School of Distance Education Student Services Department (learn more at www.andrews.edu/distance/students/).
- The current Andrews University Bulletin at www.andrews.edu/academics/bulletin communicates policies and procedures, and key contact information for all campus services.
- The Andrews Agenda at www.andrews.edu/agenda provides weekly news, announcements and updates.
- Follow Andrews University's facebook page for regular postings of life at Andrews.
- The Andrews Directory at www.andrews.edu/directory includes contact information for all current faculty, staff and students.
- Departmental updates are emailed to students registered in specific programs of study.
- Pioneer Memorial Church Sabbath worship services are streamed online, and podcasts are available.
- Videos of chapels, vespers, weeks of prayer, and other key presentations can be viewed at any time through the Andrews University Youtube Channel.
- The Andrews University Student Association Youtube Channel includes many more videos of student sporting and social events.
- Listen to Andrews University's classical radio online 24/7 at WAUS.
- Disability accommodation can be arranged through Student Success (learn more at www.andrews.edu/services/sscenter/disability/)
- An online grievance form online grievance form provides students with tools to formally register a complaint about any aspect of the educational service provided by Andrews University.

Library Access

Registered students of Andrews University have full and free access to the resources and services of the James White Library via phone, fax, e-mail or the Internet. Such services include:

- Access to the James White Library Catalog (JeWeL)
- Access to James White Library's Online Databases which include full-text articles from many thousands of periodicals
- Online Instruction, Tutorials and Research Guides
- Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery Services

- Reference and Consultation Services
- Download software, such as Endnote
- FAQs and Ask-a-Librarian—www.andrews.edu/library/RefDesk/services/ask.html

Online access to these services is available through use of the Andrews University username and password supplied during the admission process. Off-campus program students, staff and faculty may apply for Andrews University username and password through the Off-Campus Library Services Web page or via 269-471-6263.

References

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