Guidelines for Hybrid and Online Course Delivery

The following guidelines are intended to guide instructors in the design, development and online delivery of courses. The more detailed checklist in the table below can be used by faculty as a self-assessment tool to identify needs for instructional design support (for example, in the redesign of learning activities and assignments for remote delivery) and for additional support and resources in relation to IT services, the library, student accommodations and English Language Learners and writing support.

The guidelines integrate widely recognized and evidence-based best practices for hybrid and online teaching and learning in the postsecondary sector, and they are informed by OCAD University's Hybrid and Online Framework that seeks to enhance access to postsecondary education and promote inclusive teaching practices by addressing structural barriers to education and introducing flexibility into curriculum and course delivery.

To enable this approach and the creation of accessible, inclusive and equitable learning environments for all students, OCAD U is committed to realizing the following in the development of hybrid and online learning:

1. Activate hybrid and online learning as a critical pedagogical space that supports OCAD U's commitment to decolonizing and Indigenous learning by engaging with and making space for Indigenous and wholistic ways of knowing and communicating and through the inclusion of diverse voices, histories, literatures and making practices.
2. Provide ways to engage learners meaningfully in asynchronous and low-bandwidth activities and, where possible, enable them to complete courses through entirely asynchronous means such that our learning environments do not amplify barriers to participation in learning or privilege those already privileged with better access to learning.
3. Use technologies, tools and platforms in ways that are attentive to the situational differences of students related to geography, language, social or economic status, and ability such that our hybrid and online learning environments do not reproduce or create systemic barriers to learning; review and address new needs and barriers as they arise.
4. In accordance with principles of inclusive teaching and Universal Design for Learning, provide diverse ways for students to engage in and express or communicate their learning, including flexible options for participation, projects, assignments and tests.
5. Use language in course content (web pages, handouts, slides) that is clear and accessible (e.g., uses common and frequently used vocabulary for activity instructions and assignment descriptions), signal and define disciplinary and complex theoretical terms, and make space for multilingual diversity in communication practices in online learning environments.
6. Ensure students can undertake studio-based processes, practices and work with tools and materials remotely in ways that are safe, sustainable and at a comparable cost as when undertaken on campus; where possible, develop curriculum that takes up the possibilities enabled by the diversity and distributed nature of online learning spaces.
7. Provide flexible windows for the submission of projects and assignments, where possible, and avoid the use of late penalties.
8. Use the Canvas learning management system as the primary means for organizing and communicating course content, learning activities and assessments, ensuring all projects and assignments are submitted to and graded on Canvas.

9. Make course readings accessible online through the library and linked in Canvas where possible, and ensure all course materials are AODA, FIPPA and copyright compliant, where necessary, citing them (e.g., video clips, images in web content, visual content in slides).

These guidelines have been developed in consultation with OCAD U's Academic Emergency Response Committee (AERC), recognizing that students, as a result of the pandemic crisis and the need for self-isolation, may not have consistent or reliable access to the internet or technologies, may be in different time zones, may be dealing with personal situations involving childcare, loss of income, their own health or the health of their families, may have limited space or capacity to undertake some studio project work, and will have limited ability to purchase learning materials and access production facilities.

While not all of the checklist criteria will apply to all courses, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with their support team, Chairs and Graduate Program Directors in addressing the criteria to ensure they are meeting the guidelines above.

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How is your course organized and structured?

☐ When students begin the course, there are directions that explain how they should participate in and engage with the remote learning environment.

☐ Students will be oriented to the use of tools and technologies for learning.

☐ The course is organized to provide routine and structure through weekly learning activities (readings, quizzes, discussions), and in ways that scaffold learning from week to week.

☐ The course is organized using Modules in Canvas.

☐ Course content such as lecture material, workshop instruction and peer feedback has been broken down into smaller units of learning.

☐ Information is represented through diverse media (readings, slides, video clips, visual images).

☐ If the course includes group work, groups are organized in advance and will interact using a licensed platform supported by the university such as Canvas Collaborations or Microsoft Teams.

☐ There are opportunities for asynchronous discussion and critique (i.e., not live in real time).

☐ All projects and assignments are set up in Canvas and will they be graded using SpeedGrader.

Has the course been designed with diverse learners in mind?

☐ The written language in course content (web pages, handouts, slides) is clear and accessible (e.g. uses common and frequently used vocabulary for activity instructions and assignment descriptions).

☐ Disciplinary language and complex terms and concepts are signalled (e.g., bolded) and defined in clear, simple language.

☐ The purpose and focus of different learning activities are clearly explained and expectations are explicit.

☐ Students can demonstrate their knowledge or express their ideas using diverse media where appropriate (e.g., written reflections, asynchronous discussions, photographs, video recordings).

☐ Course materials (such as handouts, audio and visual materials and video recordings) are accessible and AODA compliant.

☐ Video content will be captioned, including recordings of synchronous activities made available for asynchronous access.

How will students participate in the course?

☐ Participation in synchronous activities is voluntary, is clearly communicated as such and is no-stakes (i.e., not graded).

☐ There are asynchronous equivalents for synchronous course components and they are equally engaging and meaningful.

☐ If synchronous activities are being recorded for later access, this has been indicated on the course outline and will it be communicated to students at the beginning of the activity such that they can opt out.

☐ All graded components of a course can be completed asynchronously without penalty or bias.

☐ In the case of synchronous critique, it will be blended with asynchronous components (e.g., follow-up responses) and will there be a fully asynchronous equivalent that is equally engaging and meaningful.

Are the expectations for assignments and tests transparent, flexible and fair?

☐ There are flexible options for the completion of projects and assignments.

☐ Students will regularly receive feedback to inform their work and it will be provided in diverse ways (e.g., peer feedback).

☐ Students will document and reflect on their process in the preparation of assignments and projects and submission of process work is required (also helping to deter academic misconduct).

☐ There are flexible submission dates, where possible, for projects and assignments, with minimal or no late penalties.

☐ Tests and quizzes will be delivered through Canvas.

☐ Tests and quizzes will be open book and not time-limited.

How accessible are course materials?

☐ Course readings are accessible online through the library and linked in Canvas.

☐ Fabrication processes can be completed safely at home or, where there are safety concerns, students will have access to safety tutorials or guidelines.

☐ Course materials are copyright compliant and, where necessary, cited (e.g., video clips, images in web content, visual content in slides).

How will you engage with students?

☐ Clear instruction and guidance about how to communicate respectfully with peers (student-to-student) and faculty (email, synchronous office hours and meetings, etc.) is provided.

☐ Canvas Discussions will be used to answer student questions about concepts, processes and ideas.

☐ There will be virtual office hours.

☐ Guidelines and parameters will be set for email and other individual interactions.