

Getting Started

Table 1: Getting Started

Frequently Asked Faculty Questions	Answers
<p>How is instruction delivered to students online?</p>	<p>Instruction in an online course can be delivered through a wide variety of methods and media, including, but not limited to: podcasts; student-lead presentations; class discussions; interactive case studies and simulations; pre-recorded lectures; synchronous sessions; textbook readings; journal articles; and text-based lectures and handouts. To choose the best delivery method online start from the learning objectives and consider how you usually deliver content and activities face-to-face. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use pre-recorded podcasts/videos to present core concepts usually introduced in a lecture • Set up a synchronous session for student presentations • Use a forum/Padlet/Wiki etc. for students to share ideas and collaborate as they would in a seminar or group session
<p>What can assist with fast transition to online learning?</p>	<p>Start by considering what you normally do, the questions that you would ask and the activities that you would include in face-to-face and pose these online instead. Similarly, the activities that you ask learners to complete outside the classroom may not need to change other than providing a space in which learners can collaborate and share ideas.</p> <p>Consider what resources that you already have. For example, in a group session you might ask students a number of questions around a reading that they have completed. Online, you might ask students to share responses to those questions in a forum.</p> <p>Think about what other resources exist that you can use with students—you don't have to create everything yourself. Make use of pre-existing online textbooks and resources rather than trying to reinvent the wheel. Add your commentary, ideas, activities and questions to these resources, or perhaps encourage students to engage with them more critically.</p> <p>Adopt a backward design process in which you start by considering where you are trying to get learners to by the end of a module or course and keep this end in mind as you begin planning. It can be overwhelming to plan out the whole semester in one go, so instead plan out a week at a time and consider how this week can help your class move towards that finish line without getting too far ahead.</p>

Do expectations for online students differ from on-campus students?

All students in the online program are subject to the same academic requirements for admission as their peers in the on-campus program, and they should be held to the same standards of academic performance. Given the unique nature of the online classroom, however, methods of instruction and assessment may need to be transformed in order to ensure student engagement.

Here are several things to consider as you move your learning online:

- Flexibility: Do the learning resources and activities provided allow students to engage flexibly with their learning, i.e., at different times of the day or in smaller chunks of time, and to asynchronously catch up with their fellow learners and exchange ideas?
- Portability: Is it helpful to make some of the content downloadable? This can allow students increased flexibility in where they engage with materials. For example, if you are recording a podcast then providing a downloadable version might allow learners to absorb content whilst commuting or revisit it whilst completing household tasks.
- Clarity: Take extra time to make your written communication clear. Whether you create instructions for an activity or feedback on an assignment, it is important to re-read what you have written and remove any ambiguity. In the face-to-face environment you would be able to pick up on cues if learners didn't understand, but online you need to make sure your communication is clear from the outset.
- Organisation: When planning the week think about how you are expecting students to spend their time and share this with them, so they have guidelines for different activities and can plan their time accordingly. Similarly, think about how you will maximise the use of your own time. For example, when will you provide office hours and how will you divide your time in giving feedback to different groups of students? Keep in mind that students may be managing more than one course at a time as well as their households.
- Collaboration: Ensure there are opportunities for students to exchange ideas with one another as they would in an on-ground course and take time to draw together ideas from multiple students. One way of doing this is by providing feedback at the end of the week summarising some of the key points and asking questions that extend students' thinking.

In the current situation many countries are asking people to stay at home, and we are all adapting to changes in our daily lives, from our place of work to the demands placed upon us. We need to be considerate to students' needs and the increased pressures they may be under. They may be working from home for the first time or have children at home that they need to look after and educate. Therefore, wherever possible it is important to provide opportunities for students to engage with learning asynchronously, at a time that suits them. This does not mean that you shouldn't host synchronous sessions, but it is important to record them for students who may not be able to attend. Presenting content in "bite-sized" chunks is also helpful for learners who may get interrupted in their studies so that they can easily keep track of their progress and fit learning into the time they have available.

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<p>Should I be providing synchronous office hours or sessions?</p>	<p>Synchronous sessions are recommended as they can help to increase immediacy by personalising and distinguishing a group. For instructors accustomed to a more immediate style, tools that capture voice and expression can improve student and instructor satisfaction with online learning. The sessions are also an opportunity to pick up on any concerns that learners might have beyond the course content, and direct students to appropriate support. Optional synchronous sessions are typically recorded and made available for students who are unable to attend.</p> <p><i>In the current circumstances when many are working from home, synchronous sessions that make use of video communication can be extremely powerful in supporting you to monitor learners' responses and provide supportive feedback. Written communication can sometimes be misinterpreted, particularly when we are faced with challenging circumstances, so do offer office hours in order to follow up on any queries from students. This can help to mitigate any confusion and improve student satisfaction.</i></p>
<p>How is group work handled in online classrooms?</p>	<p>Group and team-based assignments help to vary the learning activity and promote student-to-student learning; balancing group and individual tasks is an important part of course development. It is also beneficial to provide students with a set of guidelines about how to engage in this group work online, including how to divide up work, how to contribute effectively in a group and how to provide feedback to their peers. Group work can be facilitated through a variety of third-party and LMS tools.</p>
<p>How do we support students that need additional academic support?</p>	<p>The majority of learning management systems have accommodations within them to support students with additional needs, such as adjusting duration for completing tests, screen reader compatibility etc. As additional support consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing transcripts for audio and video resources - Having the Disability Office supporting students during live sessions - Using textbook materials that have built-in accessibility support - Providing alternative assignments or experiences where appropriate - Being available to students who require accommodations for additional practice or discussion
<p>How can I find out what other people are doing?</p>	<p>Join key organisations that are sharing ideas, sources and links. There are many resources being shared through LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook as well as major organisations such as Educause, Quality Matters, and the Association for Learning Technology.</p>

Student Engagement

Table 2: Student Engagement

Frequently Asked Faculty Questions	Answers
<p>How do I know students are engaging with the content or watching my lectures?</p>	<p>In a face-to-face session you can tell if attention is flagging by watching nonverbal communication cues. When you spot this, you might take the opportunity to add in an example, a case study or an anecdote of how the concepts you are introducing are used in practice. Online it can be easy for students to get distracted or be drawn into multitasking, so we must plan how to chunk the learning in advance and include opportunities to re-engage learners throughout.</p> <p>Objectives: Start as you would on ground by introducing the learning objectives for the session and what learners should be able to do by the end of it.</p> <p>Engagement: Make learning active. If you are creating new content, consider how you are going to hold students' attention. Think about creating content that fits into 10-minute chunks with regular short activities, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a quick poll of perspectives using a voting tool that allows participants to see each other's responses - an activity that asks learners to solve a problem or make a decision by putting into practice what they've learnt so far - regular recaps on which of the objectives you are currently focused on and how this links to the next section - self-assessments for learners to note where they are in the learning process and the questions they still have. <p>Re-purposing: If you are using a pre-recorded lecture then you can take similar approaches to those outlined above but will need to provide on-screen instructions or a handout that accompanies the video, telling students when to pause the video and complete activities.</p> <p>Take a look at your favourite videos, perhaps the work of Michael Wesch, TED talks or just favourite documentary and notice how the videos chunk information and keep your attention.</p>
<p>What do I do if students aren't participating? (follow up possibly)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Drop them an email reminding them of the activity, what it involves and what they'll get out of completing it. (Gilly Salmon's Invitation is a good resource to look at for what you might include when setting up an activity). Don't just 'tell them off' for not having done a task. - Lurking is a valid form of participation so look for opportunities to draw these students into the conversation, as they may require a reason that feels authentic to them in order to participate, <i>especially in times of uncertainty</i>. - <i>Consider what else might be going on and the need for flexibility.</i>

Assessment and Feedback

Table 3: Assessment and Feedback

Frequently Asked Faculty Questions	Answers
<p>How can we deliver traditional exams online?</p>	<p>There are a variety of ways to deliver traditional quizzes and exams online. Proctoring is one option that might be available to you through your university, which involves using particular tools such as Respondus Monitor® “which builds upon the power of LockDown Browser, using a student’s webcam and industry-leading video analytics to prevent cheating during non-proctored exams.” (Alternatively, you could have everyone meet at the same time and turn on their cameras as they complete the test).</p> <p>There are sites out there that can help you such as Eduapps: https://www.eduappcenter.com/#</p> <p>Some additional options within a learning environment that can help include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Setting a time limit on a test so that students must complete it within a given duration, e.g., 30 minutes or 2 hours. - Setting the number of attempts that students are allowed—just one, or multiple attempts. - Setting a timeframe for the test to be open, e.g., a 24-hour period in which everyone must complete it. Remember that there will need to be some flexibility here as students may be in different time zones or have different demands on their time. - Deciding if you want the test to release feedback to students on how they’ve done. You can write feedback that encourages them to rethink their answer and try again or simply provide the grade. You can also decide if feedback is released immediately after the student completes the test or at set time for all students. - Utilising a question bank, present in most virtual learning environments, that can be used to create a unique test for each student by randomly selecting a number of possible questions and presenting these in a random order. <p>Alternatively, you might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider a shift to an open book timed exam which allows students to use sources to support them in writing responses, but still relies on students’ subject knowledge to be able to answer questions within the given timeframe. - Utilise well-crafted multiple-choice questions, which are extremely effective in assessing a student’s knowledge.

Frequently Asked Faculty Questions	Answers
<p>How do instructors provide feedback to students online?</p>	<p>The recommended structure is to allow for frequent opportunities for students to submit work and receive timely feedback (i.e., feedback should be received in time to inform the next piece of work, allowing the learner to make improvements). This gives the instructor a better lens to assess and evaluate individual student performance in order to shape learning outcomes. That feedback may be provided in a variety of ways, such as on assignments, in discussions, through video, and through audio.</p> <p>Feedback to students can be given on both informal and formal tasks. For example, contributions to a discussion forum might provide a great opportunity to offer feedback to a learner on the ideas they are proposing and how to develop them further, or to course correct if they are starting to head in the wrong direction.</p> <p>In the online space feedback can also be automated using quizzes and short answer tests. Feedback can be provided on correct answers or prompts, and hints can be given on incorrect answers encouraging the learner to try again.</p>
<p>How much time should I spend grading/marking?</p>	<p>Written feedback for formal assessments should follow the same structure as an on-ground course. If handing these back to students you may provide some additional verbal commentary, online you can do by recording a short piece of audio or video for students, or running a group synchronous session.</p> <p>For informal tasks taking place online the time it takes may vary based upon the goal of what you are trying to accomplish. Some things to consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does everyone need detailed feedback each week? If not then you may focus your feedback on different groups within the class, such as students who have done well, students who may be struggling, and students who have changed in their performance from week to week. In this way you can create personalised feedback without adding time to the schedule. - Another approach is to offer feedback that spans several student contributions and draws ideas together, as well as asking questions that extend their thinking rather than always focusing on individual students. A technique for this would be the bcc function in email where you 'blind copy' students in a group to a feedback email so that the feedback still feels personal.

Frequently Asked Faculty Questions	Answers
<p>What are alternatives to traditional assessment that faculty might consider?</p>	<p>You might want to consider some less formal forms of assessment, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quizzes - Student presentations or demonstrations: students can join a synchronous session to present their ideas or show how they solve a problem. Alternatively they may pre-record a video and share it with others via a forum or shared file space. - Use peer assessment for students to comment on, and assess, each other's work. It is important to provide students with an assessment rubric and a framework for providing feedback to each other (e.g., one good thing, one area to develop). You might also consider releasing a document identifying the elements of a desired response or solution. For example, in an essay about the factors leading up to the First World War, students would get a point for mentioning the assassination of Franz Ferdinand.
<p>What types of assessments work well online to assess performance?</p>	<p>Performances which are traditionally assessed live might need to be captured virtually. This might include students recording a video of them carrying out a skill or using screen capture to show you how they complete a task on their computer.</p> <p>You might also consider rethinking the assessment to involve a critique of a recorded performance, demonstrating how they can recognise the skills in action. This would not directly replace the assessment of key skills. Direct assessment of performance of key skills, such as in healthcare, may need to be carried out face-to-face before full competency is recognised.</p>
<p>How is academic honesty addressed online?</p>	<p>Online students are subject to the same codes of conduct as campus-based students. Effective assessment planning starts with learning goals. What should learners be able to do as a result of the learning experience? The recommended structure to support a learning goal is focused practice followed by frequent timely feedback. Authentic forms of assessment often require unique solutions, which address a common online concern about integrity and security.</p>

Technology

Table 4: Technology

Frequently Asked Faculty Questions	Answers
Do all students have equal technology?	<p>Not all students have the same access to technology, so here are a few things to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the technology that you have chosen work on a mobile phone? - Can you assess students verbally if they do not have the technology to access the assessments online? <p>It is also important that you talk to your department and university about extenuating circumstance procedures in the current global situation.</p>
Who do I contact if I have problems during my live class?	<p>Helpdesk access is typically available to address technical issues. Hours of availability are determined by each university partner. During standard working hours, instructional designers also are available.</p> <p><i>It is possible that some help desks may be offering a reduced service during this time so please be sure to check the current hours that the helpdesk is open.</i></p>