**College of Arts and Sciences**

**Online Education Course Management Policy**

*Last update: June 2016*

**I. Purpose of Policy:**

The College of Arts and Sciences Online Education Course Management Policy provides course management guidelines for departments and instructors that can serve as a benchmark for the types of activities and best practices that can enhance the quality of online courses. It also provides course management guidelines for Global Campus personnel to ensure that instructors and departments are kept informed according to specific procedures and can deal with any problems arising in a course accordingly1.

**II. Funding**

All funding for online education development and delivery is funneled through the College of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Office, and must be requested according to procedure by submitting an Online Course Development/ Revision request, or by including the online courses in the department’s instructional needs request every academic year. Global Campus does not provide direct financial support to departments.

**III. Course Management Guidelines for Departments:**

***In sum, departments are responsible for:***

* *Scheduling courses & instructors in the University scheduling tool.*
* *Assigning instructors.*
* *Ensuring instructors (or a designee appointed by the department) complete the Course Verification process in a timely fashion (so that fee information is available to students 4 weeks before the course begins and the course is ready prior to the first day of class)*
* *Ensuring instructors attend online orientation and other training opportunities.*
* *Recommending that all online instructors complete the Excellence in Online Teaching Certification* [*http://online.wsu.edu/courses/certification/*](http://online.wsu.edu/courses/certification/)
* *Ensuring instructors are engaged in the delivery of their online course through the course space.*
* *Addressing student complaints and concerns escalated to the department chair.*
* *Proposing and scheduling new developments and redesigns within the CAS process. Ensuring that instructors/course developers have development agreements in place.*
* *Approving the extent of changes to online courses delivered by the department.*

1. **Online Course Coordination**: Departments delivering a degree or a significant number of online courses are encouraged to identify an **online course coordinator/ supervisor**, particularly if Teaching Assistants or adjuncts are being used for instruction. Suggested duties:
   1. Serve as the point person to interact with the CAS Associate Dean and Global Campus.
   2. Serve as ‘course verifier’ to make sure textbook and media confirmations for online courses can be completed in a timely manner.
   3. Ensure that online instructors receive the required training, are aware of specific practices related to the online teaching format, and fulfill their responsibilities as instructors.
2. **Online Course Rotation and Teaching Assignment:** Courses offered through Global Campus (including blended courses) are managed by departments in WSU-Pullman and respond to the department’s programmatic needs.
   1. Rotation of courses is decided by departments in consultation with Global Campus to ensure that online students have access to courses needed to complete programs (both majors and minors offered by the college). It is strongly suggested that departments work out a two-year rotation so that Global Campus advisors can help students design their programs of study accurately.
   2. All courses should be included in the departments’ yearly instructional plans/ instruction-related budget requests; online course teaching assignments are on load.
   3. Online course instructors are chosen and supervised by the department.
   4. Online courses and their content are managed and supervised by departments. Instructors may not institute major changes in course design, including textbook changes, without departmental permission, in collaboration with Global Campus through course verification and, in the case of instructors who did not design the course, the supervision of the Faculty course Designer (if appropriate) or another approved faculty member.
3. **Urban campuses**: Online courses offered by urban campuses through Global Campus and/or using Global Campus existing course spaces and materials need to be approved by the WSU-Pullman department chairs.
4. **Scheduling:** Courses to be offered through Global Campus must be scheduled and approved by the department in the course scheduler tool no later than 8 weeks before registration opens.
   1. Departments need to list instructors as soon as they schedule courses in ROOMS, or as soon as possible after scheduling the course so textbook and media confirmations for online courses can be completed in a timely manner. The default instructor / course verifier will be the department’s online course coordinator/ supervisor. Global Campus cannot create an LMS course space until both the course and instructor are approved in the course scheduler tool.
   2. As courses are scheduled, departments shall indicate clearly if course will be ‘blended’ and what campus (es) and section(s) they should be ‘blended’ with.
5. **Textbook ordering**: Global Campus is responsible for providing textbook information to students and the Bookie for online courses offered solely through Global Campus as well as for online blended courses offered through both Global Campus and other WSU campuses.
   1. Textbook information for online courses is collected through the course verification system.
   2. If an instructor/department sends an order to the Bookie directly, Global Campus has requested that the Bookie staff wait to order the materials until an e-mail confirmation is sent from Global Campus so as to coordinate the information and avoid duplication of requests.
6. **Procedures for Dealing with Student Complaints:** In accordance with Academic Regulation 104,the procedure to follow if students have concerns about the instruction they are receiving in an online course is:
   1. Student should address his/her concerns to the instructor (unless there is a compelling reason to skip this step – e.g., sexual harassment or similarly unethical behavior).  Students often initially address their concerns to other students in class discussion forums reviewed by Virtual Mentors, or directly by phone or e-mail to Global Campus staff.  In all such cases, Global Campus staff will direct the student to the instructor.
   2. If the instructor does not respond satisfactorily and/or if the student contacts Global Campus again, staff will direct the student to the department chair. The student should submit an explanation of the issue in writing (via e-mail).
   3. In rare instances when resolution is not achieved at the departmental level, concerns will be directed to the CAS Dean’s Liaison to Global Campus.

**IV. Guidelines for Instructors:**

***In sum, instructors are responsible for:***

* *Completing the Course Verification process in a timely manner. Students have a legal right to course fee information at least 4 weeks prior to the first day of class.*
* *Ensuring the course space is ready for students prior to the first day of class.  (Courses open to students the Friday afternoon before the semester begins). (What is required depends on whether the instructor will be adding content throughout the term, in agreement with the GC tiered design process implemented Fall 2015).*
* *Receiving approval from the department for major course changes, including a change in text.*
* *Ensuring the computer from which you are teaching meets the minimum technology requirements.*
* *For new instructors, attending an orientation session (or completing the online orientation module) prior to teaching online.*
* *Participating in other training opportunities, including completing the Excellence in Online Teaching course, as available.*
* *Teaching and managing the online course within the Global Campus structure.*
* *Refraining from posting any copyrighted materials directly in the Global Campus course space.*
* *Interacting* ***within*** *the course space as frequently as in a face-to-face course.*
* *Using the “Instructor’s Announcements” and “Questions for Instructor” discussion areas to communicate with the entire class.*
* *Ensuring instructor added content is ADA accessible (or accommodations can be addressed by the instructor as required)*
* *Providing timely feedback and grades.*

The main objective of this policyas it pertains to online course instructorsis to provide guidance that may prove useful to enhance the quality of their courses. While all guidelines may not be applicable to all courses (given each course’s unique nature), these can nonetheless serve as a benchmark for the best practices that typically make for a successful online course.

1. **Training:** Before teaching online, all instructors (and teaching assistants assigned to support them) must complete an orientation provided by Global Campus. Experienced teachers are encouraged to attend refresher sessions as technology continues to progress, as there may be new components or practices.
   1. **In addition to orientation Global Campus offers a number of trainings.** Please view the training schedule at <http://online.wsu.edu/faculty_staff/>.
   2. **It is recommended that all faculty instructing Global Campus courses complete the Excellence in Online Teaching course:** <http://online.wsu.edu/certification>
2. **Interface:** All courses are administered through the WSU LMS system..
3. **Course maintenance:** 
   1. **Technology Requirements:** Global Campus has a setof minimum technology requirements and recommends that faculty teaching online courses meet these. Please check their website for more information:

[http://Online .wsu.edu/current\_students/tech\_requirements.aspx](http://online.wsu.edu/current_students/tech_requirements.aspx)

If a campus-based faculty member has a slow connection at home, it is suggested that

he/she download assignments onto a memory stick at their WSU office.

* 1. **Course Space:**
  + Global Campus uses a “Course Verification” system which is housed within the course space being prepared for delivery. After the department has scheduled the course in scheduler tool and listed the instructor, the assigned instructor will receive an automated email from ‘Global Campus’ requesting they enter their course space and respond to the course verification tasks. It is imperative that these tasks be completed promptly in order for Global Campus to publish correct, updated information to students and have the courses ready in time for delivery2. Visit the http://online.wsu.edu/faculty\_staff/video/courseverification/ Website for online tutorials explaining the course verification system.
  + Faculty should ensure that the course space is \*ready prior to the first day of class (See Global Campus Course Design Process, APPENDIX A).  The Course Verification General Maintenance task contains a check list (APPENDIX B) for faculty to help ensure that all important aspects of the course space are reviewed.
  + The College encourages faculty to make changes to their own course spaces within reason, and within certain time frames. Global Campus provides training to help faculty get started in this endeavor. Alternatively changes can be submitted to Global Campus through the Course Verification Process.
    - Course schedule should have correct dates for the semester of offering; other dated items such as exam settings (in Assessment tool) must be updated as well.
    - Make sure the course space is in good shape, with active hyperlinks, and has all the information students need to proceed. If assignment guidelines and evaluation criteria are clear, students will be less likely to get stuck and ask questions.
    - If you make any changes to any part of the course, make sure that other parts of the course are updated accordingly, as needed. For example, changes to the syllabus usually need a corresponding change in the lessons.
    - Verify that the grade book is in good order (all graded assignments accounted for, correct point grades).
    - Try not to duplicate information across the course space, given that this creates the opportunity for confusion (e.g., assignment details, assignment due dates).
  + Once a course is developed, it may be taught by other instructors, as determined by the respective departments. New instructors should use the approved course as is, unless the revisions are approved by the department. At all times, any revisions should be completed well in advance of the beginning of the semester.
  + Once the semester begins, students should not be subjected to changes or reorganization that may impair their ability to complete work on time. For unavoidable changes, make sure all students are properly informed and allow additional time to submit work, if necessary.

1. **Time and Course Management:**
   1. Think of the time required to teach an online course as similar to the time required for face to face courses. This includes the time you would devote to class preparation, in-class time, and office hours. A successful online course provides students with the same exposure to your teaching expertise and direction as they would have in a regular classroom. *A minimum of ten hours involvement per week is expected of each instructor and, depending on enrollment and class assignments, it may be more*.
   2. Access the course space regularly (multiple times per week) to find out if students have any questions or issues they need your help with and respond promptly to concerns and questions.
   3. In your syllabus (Instructor Interaction Policy), give students an approximate idea of how many times per week you intend to access the course space so they can plan ahead. Remember that in face-to-face courses, instructors are in class approximately three hours per week and a similar amount in office hours, so allocate your course space interaction time accordingly.
   4. Inform students when you anticipate not being able to access the course space as usual. Use the Announcements tool so you can reach every student at once.
   5. If circumstances occur that will make it unlikely that you will be able to teach an assigned course during the coming semester, or continue to teach once actually engaged in teaching the course, notify the department’s Chair and/or online course supervisor at once so they can take steps to deal with the situation. Students should not be impacted in any way by the instructor’s personal issues.
   6. Use the Announcements tool and “Questions for Instructor” discussion areas to communicate with the entire class and answer questions that are not personal/ confidential in nature, and encourage students to do the same.
   7. **Global Campus** **Technical and Administrative Support:**

* Available for students and instructors at [wsuonline.support@wsu.edu](mailto:wsuonline.support@wsu.edu).
* Refer students to GLOBAL CAMPUS for any questions, concerns, and issues that are not related to course content (administrative, logistical matters, for example, as well as financial aid, textbooks, media).
  1. **Grading:** Instructors are encouraged to provide timely grades for all graded assignments submitted by students to ensure they are aware of their progress in the course. In addition, final grades must be submitted by the deadline required by the university.
     + In the case of students requesting an ‘I’ (Incomplete) grade, an [Incomplete Grade Report](https://www.ronet.wsu.edu/ROPubs/Forms/IncompleteGradeReport/IncompleteGradeReport.DOC), available online at <https://www.ronet.wsu.edu/ROPubs/Forms/IncompleteGradeReport/IncompleteGradeReport.pdf> must be filled out and signed by the ins**t**ruc**t**or. In that form, the instructor should include very specific information on what is needed to complete the course work and remove the ‘I’, a deadline by when missing assignment(s) must be submitted, and contact information of the person responsible for receiving these materials. According to regulations, students have a year to complete the coursework, but instructors may encourage students to complete the course requirements as soon as possible by negotiating a deadline with the student at the time of the request. Copies of the report must be sent to the student, Global Campus, and the Department’s Chair (or online course coordinator) for their files, and a copy retained by the instructor. Once the student has completed the required coursework, instructors should complete a Supplemental Grade Form.
     + For more information contact online.registrar@wsu.edu.
  2. **Evaluations:** It is extremely important that students fill out the evaluation forms for the course so as to ensure proper feedback to the instructor on the design and teaching effectiveness, as well as to provide another element of direct assessment for the course. Studies have shown that extra credit is not an effective tool for increasing response rate of evaluations. However, developing a close rapportwith students and reminding them often of the importance of their evaluations in enhancing the course does have an effect. Indeed, many instructors incorporate mid-semester informal evaluations as a way to anticipate any potential problems. All online evaluations are delivered via the WSU evaluation system, Blue, and links are available through the student/staff portal.

1. **Best practices for instructors:**
   1. **Use the LMS space template.**

* This approach enables Global Campus students to navigate their courses most efficiently. Most students will take a number of courses through Global Campus. The use of a ‘template’ has greatly decreased tech support calls and student anxiety because, once a student understands the course structure of one course, they can navigate all course spaces successfully. If every instructor starts customizing the navigation menu students will adapt, but it will be more confusing than having a predictable ‘template’ and is likely to generate questions.

**b. When in doubt, consult with your eLearning Consultant (eLC).**

* + - We recognize that designing and delivering online courses poses different challenges than teaching face-to-face. Although we strive to make a wide variety of resources available including trainings, tutorials, and the Excellence in Online Teaching Course [see <http://teach.wsu.edu/> ] to help instructors get familiar with distance education, it is beneficial to have a contact person with expertise in online course design and delivery based on current research, knowledge of legal requirements and nationally-recognized best practices, as well as experience from supporting hundreds of online courses offered through Global Campus each year.
    - eLCs will also assist instructors with administrative questions (e.g., do I need to submit a mid-term, what should I do if one of my students plagiarizes an assignment), and refer them to the appropriate resource.

**c. Provide the same quality instruction as campus.**

* Online courses require the same (or greater) instructor time commitment and rigor as on-campus courses.  The Global Campus eLearning Services staff will work with instructors to develop a course which maintains the quality anticipated by the department for on campus courses. It is expected that revisions to the course, over time, will not diminish this quality.
* It is up to the instructor to provide the level of student interaction required by visiting the course space regularly and providing frequent feedback and grading in a timely manner.  These criteria are essential to student success and retention in online courses.

**d. Be aware of copyright regulations and the need to be ADA compliant.**

* It cannot be assumed that the rules and regulations that apply to on-campus courses are the same in the digital environment.  In addition, ADA accessibility is more complicated.  The eLearning Services team (in collaboration with the AG’s office) provides guidance to instructors in avoiding pitfalls that might put the instructor and the University at risk.

**V. The Role of Global Campus Personnel:**

***In sum, Global Campus is responsible for:***

* *Clone (or create) course content in the LMS course space from the most recently offered version of the course after the course and instructor are approved by the department in ROOMs*
* *Make changes and updates to the course based on information communicated by the instructor via Course Verification.*
* *Order text books based on information provided by the instructor through Course Verification.*
* *Provide 24/7 technical support*
* *Provides student support for non-content related issues.*
* *Provide Instructor support and advice related to the unique aspects of online delivery.*
* *Provide instructional design expertise as needed to deliver a course modeled on The Global Campus best practices.*

1. Global Campus provides student support for non-content related issues. Student concerns regarding the instructor will follow academic rule 104 as described above.
2. Global Campus assigns an eLearning Consultant to each course/instructor to provide support related to the unique aspects of online delivery.
3. Global Campus assigns an eLearning Consultant to each course/instructor being newly or redesigned to ensure the quality of the course meets Global Campus best practice standards and to provide design advice and support to instructors new to the online environment.
4. Global Campus provides 24/7 technical support to instructors and students – see related section above.
5. Given the unique nature of online courses offered through Global Campus (including the format of these courses, the way instructor-student communication occurs, as well as the additional channel of communication between students and Global Campus personnel), in many instances perceived problems or issues that arise in courses may be reported to personnel in the Global Campus office rather than the instructor or department chair on the Pullman campus. In order to provide support to students and faculty, various Global Campus personnel have been granted access to the instructor’s course space, including eLC, technical support, computing and production personnel. If the instructor would like more information about who has access, or has a desire to restrict access, he/she may contact the eLC.

**VI. Specific information/ suggestions for “Blended” courses:**

* 1. Global Campus has created an Online orientation specifically for Pullman on-campus students which will give students actual experience in the course space:  Many online courses may also have “virtual mentors” (VMs) who help students be more proactive and self-motivated (as well as help with tech issues).  Global Campus will try to have VMs in all blended courses.
  2. Global Campus facilitates delivery of proctored exams.
* Global Campus Online Proctoring Services can proctor any online exam in an online course space.
* Paper based exams and third party proctoring can also be accommodated. Please talk with your eLearning Consultant for more information.

**Appendix A**

**Global Campus Course Design Process**

Online course development and delivery is a collaborative process between the academic department and Global Campus (GC). Global Campus eLearning Consultants and Production Coordinators support assigned faculty in incorporating best practices for online delivery, conceptualization and creation of mediated learning objects, understanding and adherence to copyright and ADA law, and building of the online course space and all required course components. We offer two design process options:

**Tier 1: Traditional course design and development**

The building of the course should be complete by no later than the first day of class.

* Content is expected to be developed throughout the semester before the start date of the course, and final submissions must be received by the GC team *a minimum of two weeks* prior to the start date of the course, to allow GC staff adequate time to incorporate all course materials into the course space.

**Tier 2: Ongoing development through the semester of delivery, by the instructor**

**Description:** The basic structure and outline of the course are in place by day one of the semester, but lesson content and/or exams are added throughout the semester. Faculty will be responsible for creating lessons, lectures, and exam materials, and uploading those materials after the first day of class. Content requiring GC assistance to upload to the course space (e.g. media) must be received by GC *at least two weeks* before it’s needed in the course, to allow GC staff adequate time to incorporate all course materials.

After the first day of class, GC staff turn their attention to development and preparation of the next semester’s courses, so faculty developers will not receive reminders about adding upcoming lessons or assessments to a current semester course.

**Requirements:** In order to provide a consistent student experience, all courses will employ the GC template with a course map. In addition, there are several items that are **required** to be in the online course space prior to the first day of class:

* Complete **syllabus** as per University policy (<http://vpue.wsu.edu/policies/>)
* **Detailed** description of all **assignments**, assessments, and course requirements, so students can assess their ability to complete the online course
* Detailed **course schedule,** including when future lesson content will be available to students, so students can map out their semester of school work
* First three weeks of lesson content posted in the course space
* All required media and resources are identified so fees can be set by REGISTRATION
* Instructor has identified and provided content and input for all learning objects created by Global Campus, so they are complete by day one, again leaving GC staff available to begin work on the next set of courses.

**Ongoing Support & Communication:**

* Best practices for online instruction will be available to faculty developers via the Global Campus eLearning website. Faculty are expected to adhere to these best practices in the development of materials.
* Throughout the semester of delivery, course changes that require assistance from GC must be submitted through course verification *no less than two weeks* before the updates are needed in the course space.
* Because online students are used to the entire course being complete on the first day of the term, it is recommended that instructors communicate with their students the extent to which the course space is complete, and the types of changes they should be watching for.

**For all online course development:**

* Faculty must ensure copyright and ADA compliance of materials they post directly in the course space.
* Global Campus staff are always available to provide suggestions, expertise, advice, etc. It is our goal to support the development and delivery of online courses in the way that best supports the instructor, students and department.
* Global Campus staff will communicate concerns regarding online course development and delivery to the Department Chair responsible for the course. For more information about the responsibilities of the faculty and GC team, please see the course development agreement.

**APPENDIX B**

**General Maintenance/ Course verification check list**

**Syllabus:**

Is the instructor and contact information correct?

Is the course work section complete, clear and accurate?

Is there a Late Work Policy, Incomplete Grade Policy, and Instructor Interaction section? Are they worded appropriately for this course?

Is the grading information/rubric complete, clear and accurate?

**Course Schedule:**

Confirm that all course dates are correct. This includes the weekly semester dates, assignment or exam due dates, and any other deadlines.

Are all assignments and assessments (graded and non‐graded) included?

**Lessons:**

Is all of the content included? Are the instructions and assignments accurate and clear?

Does the lesson content match items listed on the course schedule?

**Assignments:**

Are individual assignment drop boxes set up and correctly labeled to match the Course Schedule and Lessons?

Do you want to use open or close dates for any assignment? If so, are they set up?

**Assessments:**

Are all assessments listed?

When you preview the questions and answers, are they accurate?

Do you want to use specific open and close dates? If so, are those dates correct as set? Do they match the Course Schedule?

Are the assessment settings correct? For example, time limit, question delivery (all at once or one at a time), student feedback, and warning before time expires.

**Discussion Board:**

Are all of the forums listed and correctly labeled?

Do you use discussion forums specific to a team or group? If so, are those set up correctly?

**Gradebook:**

Is there a column for each graded item?

Are the points correct?

Are the display and calculation settings correct?

**Overall Course:**

Have you reviewed the course content for grammar and spelling?

Is all of the necessary information included in order for the student to be successful?

Do all links work and are they current?