Utah Tech University
Policy 601b: Online Teaching Best Practices

The faculty at Utah Tech University strive to be the best instructors possible for our students. This addendum lists several best practices that we strive to achieve for online teaching. These are meant to guide our continual improvement of teaching.

1. Course Overview and Introduction

    1.1 Course includes clear instructions on how to get started. (QM 1.1)

    1.2 Course syllabus is available through a link on the course menu and follows university policy.

    1.3 Course and institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply are clearly stated within the course, or a link to current policies is provided.

    1.4 Learners are introduced to the purpose and relevance of the course. (QM 1.2)

    1.5 The course includes a self-introduction by the instructor and contact information is prominently displayed. (QM 1.8)

    1.6 Learners are asked to introduce themselves to the class. (QM 1.9)

    1.7 Course grading policy is stated clearly at the beginning of the course, and shows alignment to all graded items and rubrics. (QM 3.2, QM 3.3)

    1.8 Expectations for discussions, email, and other forms of communication and learner interaction are clearly stated. (QM 1.3, QM 5.4)

    1.9 The instructor's plan for interacting with learners during the course is clearly stated. (QM 5.3)

    1.10 Specific information or links are provided for: the minimum technology requirements, technical support offered, accessibility policies and services, privacy policies, academic support, student services, and institutional policies with which the learner is expected to comply. (QM 1.5, QM 7.1, QM 7.2, QM 1.4, QM 7.3, QM 7.4)

2. Learning Outcomes (Competencies)

    2.1 Course Learning Outcomes are prominently displayed in the course, and aligned to Program Learning Outcomes. (QM 2.3)

2.2 Course Learning Outcomes and module-level outcomes are measurable, clearly stated, and are suited to the level of the course. (QM 2.1, QM 2.2, QM 2.3, QM 2.5)

2.3 Learning activities and materials are aligned to Course Learning Outcomes. (QM 2.4, QM 5.1)

3. Assessment and Measurement

3.1 Learning assessments are designed to measure the achievement of Course Learning Outcomes. (QM 3.1)

3.2 Assessments are sequenced throughout the course, varied, and suited to the level of the course. (QM 3.4)

3.3 Every graded item has a rubric or other specific and descriptive scoring criteria to evaluate the learners' work. (QM 3.3)

3.4 Consistent deadlines are used weekly with some assignments.

3.5 Students should be given ample time and access to complete assessments in asynchronous courses. For examples assignments and discussions should allow several days for participation and completion. Exams should allow a couple days for access. Projects should allow a week or more for access and completion.

3.6 Students are not required to visit or attend any on-campus activities including assessments (exams, presentations, projects, etc.). All assessments can be accessed and completed online from anywhere and at any time, subject to due dates.

3.7 Whenever possible, the course includes assessments that are designed to be a realistic application to what a learner might experience beyond the classroom.

3.8 Instructor provides timely and meaningful feedback on assignments, usually within a week.

4. Instructional Materials

4.1 Learners are provided with an explanation of how the instructional materials are used to complete the learning activities and achieve the stated learning outcomes. (QM 4.1, QM 4.2)

4.2 Instructional materials represent up-to-date theory and practice in the discipline. (QM 4.4)

4.3 A variety of instructional materials is used in the course, organized into manageable learning segments and modules. (QM 4.5)

    4.4 Materials and resources are digitally accessible, readable, and meet current standards for web accessibility. (QM 8.2, QM 8.3, QM 8.4, QM 8.5)

    4.5 Materials and resources are properly cited and comply with copyright permissions. (QM 4.3)

5.   Learning Activities and Learner Interaction

    5.1 The learning activities promote the achievement of the stated learning objectives or competencies.

    5.2 Course is designed for Instructors to be actively engaged with the learners throughout the class. (QM 3.5, QM 5.2)

    5.3 Course is designed for learners to actively practice and apply their learning. (QM 6.2)

    5.4 Students have opportunities throughout the course to interact with and/or receive feedback from other students.

    5.5 Instructor communicates regularly with students. For example, instructor utilizes announcements (text and/or audio/video) and emails (messages) to welcome students to a new week/unit, summarize results of previous assignments/exams, remind students of upcoming assignments, and/or discuss major or special topics and projects.

    5.6 Instructor responds to student inquiries promptly--usually within 24-48 hours, except for holidays and weekends.

    5.7 Instructor encourages and participates in discussions appropriate to the course/assignment. Instructor moderates' discussion by summarizing student comments; asking new/leading questions; calling upon students to elaborate, justify or support their answers; or teach content or concepts.

    5.8 Instructor monitors student participation and progress and intervenes as needed to support student success.

    5.9 Instructor promotes student engagement and achievement of learning outcomes by providing feedback that is specific, helpful to students, and appropriate to the discipline.

6. Course Technology

    6.1 Course navigation facilitates ease of use utilizing consistent style and format of pages. (QM 8.1)

    6.2 All resources, tools, applications, graphics, and media are relevant and functional. (QM 6.1)

6.3 Course functions appropriately on multiple platforms including mobile device, tablets, and computers.

NOTE: Online Teaching Best Practices have been adapted from various sources, including the following:

- National Standards for Quality (NSQ) (2019), *National Standards for Quality Online Teaching*.
- Online Learning Consortium (2016), *OLC Quality Scorecard Suite: Quality Course Teaching & Instructional Practice Rubric*.
- Pina, A., & Harris, B.R. (2015), *Online Instructor Observation Form*. Paper presented at AECT.
- Quality Matters (2016), *Teaching Online Certificate* program.
- Tobin, et. al. (2015), *Evaluating Online Teaching: Implementing Best Practices*.

Policy Owner: Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost

Policy Steward: Faculty Senate

History:

Approved: 04/29/22

Editorial 07/01/2022