Guide to Distance Learning

Shawnee State University

Prepared by:
Distance Learning Committee (DLC)

The University Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws along with the SSU-SEA Collective Bargaining Agreement supersede this document in the event there are contradictions.

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Guide to Distance Learning

Distance Learning Course Approval Process

1. This workflow only applies to courses that are developed for online delivery outside of the E-campus / Wiley process. Courses developed through that process do not need to go through DLC.
2. Any faculty member developing a new hyflex, blended/hybrid or 100% online course that is developed outside of the E-campus / Wiley process must submit the following electronic documents through Curriculog on the "*1. Course*" form:
   a. A course syllabus utilizing the *DLC Syllabus Template* as a guide.
   b. An outline of a course module utilizing the *DLC Module Template*.
   c. Additionally, the DLC members will be added as guests to their Blackboard course page, or they may present their course at the DLC meeting via sharing their screen, or they may record a video of them going through the course. At least one functioning course module must be available on Blackboard for review by DLC.
   d. It is the responsibility of the proposal originator to select the correct committees that need to see the proposal in Curriculog. Consult with the chairs / directors of these committees or the University Faculty Senate President if there are any questions.
      i. Graduate Council – For proposals related to graduate level courses that haven't previously been approved or if there are changes to the course other than delivery mode.
      ii. Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee – For proposals related to undergraduate level courses that haven't previously been approved or if there are changes to the course other than delivery mode.
      iii. General Education Advisory Committee – For proposals related to General Education Program (GEP) courses that haven't previously been approved or if there are changes to the course other than delivery mode.
      iv. Distance Learning Committee – For proposals related to change in delivery format for existing courses to a blended/hybrid or 100% online course, or for new courses that will be taught as a blended/hybrid or 100% online course.
3. The proposal is initially reviewed by the courses' home department / school via their bylaws and subsequently approved or disapproved. It is strongly recommended that the courses' home department / school use their DLC

Representative and [Blackboard Rubric](#) to help evaluate the proposal as this is what the DLC will use to evaluate the proposal.

4. Upon approval by the department / school, the proposal is advanced to the respective Dean. Upon review by the Dean the proposal is advanced to the first Shared Governance Committee, which is dependent on selecting the correct committees in the initial proposal form.
   a. As appropriate the proposal will be reviewed by the Graduate Council, and / or Educational Policies and Curriculum Committee, and / or General Education Advisory Committee in accordance with the University Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws.
5. Following review by the Dean and any applicable Shared Governance Committees DLC will follow the University Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws for meeting announcements and open hearings.
6. At the meeting, DLC will do a full review of the proposal utilizing the [Blackboard Rubric](#). The proposer or knowledgeable representative is strongly encouraged to be present at the DLC meeting to demonstrate the functioning online module and answer any questions posed by the committee.
   a. DLC will use a passing score of ≥85% on the rubric to advance a proposal. If the proposal does not receive ≥85% the proposal will be disapproved. In either case, DLC will make recommendations to the proposal originator for recommended edits to improve the course.
      i. If the proposal is disapproved it will be sent back to the originator to edit it in accordance with the University Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws.
7. If the proposal is approved without any recommended edits, it will be advanced to the University Faculty Senate and be subsequently considered in accordance to the University Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws.
8. If the proposal is approved with minor edits (≥85% on the rubric) the proposal originator will consult with the DLC Director to consider making the edits, the proposal will be advanced to the University Faculty Senate and be subsequently considered in accordance to the University Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws.

Note: In cases of new programs/degrees/majors where one or more faculty may need to be hired to teach a new hyflex, blended/hybrid or 100% online course(s), the initiator of the new program/degree/major may request from the DLC an expedited review of a course(s). The expedited review may waive the requirement calling for a demonstration of a functioning online module. Such a request shall not be unduly denied.

Note: Upon consultation with and approval of the DLC Director an existing in-person course may be piloted one (1) time as a hyflex, blended/hybrid or 100% online course, after the initial offering the course must be submitted through Shared Governance for additional online offerings.

Distance Learning Course Design and Development Advice

The faculty member or instructor revising or developing a course to be offered as a blended/hybrid or 100% online course should use the attached *DLC Syllabus Template* as their guide for constructing their syllabus. There is information relevant to a distance learning delivery mode that is critical for students to know that support their success in the course. Particularly in a blended/hybrid or 100% online course, this document speaks for you as the instructor. Consider tone, word choice, etc.

The faculty member or instructor should submit the *DLC Module Template* for each module in their course when seeking departmental approval for their courses. Although not required, this will help the course developer to organize the course and help the department to see the "sweep" of the entire course. However, at least one course module needs to be available for review by the DLC.

Recommendations:

1. Course Information – what consideration is given to providing essential information to the students about the purpose of the course, prerequisite skills/knowledge (academic and technical), understanding where to click to begin the course and who their professor/instructor is as well as their peers?
2. Be explicit about the purpose of the course as well as prerequisites that should have been completed prior to enrolling. Detail specifically what technical skills they need to have mastered to be successful.
3. Introductions in any setting are important. Provide a venue for this to occur. Perhaps an informal Blackboard discussion forum could be created to establish a level of acquaintance.
   a. Resources and Materials—What materials (e.g. textbooks, software and hardware) will the students be need to be afforded access to as they work toward those outcomes?
4. Resources should, of course, include a list of texts, but should also consider what other materials students might need to complete each module. For instance, in addition to buying Van Allsburg's book, students will also need to download AdobeFlash in order to watch the video of Van Allsburg's Caldecott acceptance speech.
   a. Check with a university librarian for the best method of linking our databases to your course. Students should not have to pay for downloading or reading articles
5. Course Technology - has consideration of selected course technology tools as well as design and navigation been considered from the learners' perspective?
   a. Selected tools should be engaging however, they should support the objectives of the course.

    b. Navigation in the course should be consistent, seamless, logical, and efficient. Designing from the perspective of the end-used, our students, should be forefront in the layout of your course.

6. Learner Support
    a. What modes of instruction will the instructor use to facilitate learning, including the use of materials not covered by the resources (e.g. on-line articles, podcasts, Echo360 lectures)?
    b. What university supports, technical as well as academic, are available for technical problems, for issues related to Blackboard, the SSU's Writing Center, etc.?

7. Course Objectives
    a. What are students expected to get out of the course as a whole and each specific learning module?
        i. Objectives must be *measurable* if they are to assist the committee with evaluation.
    b. What will the students do to demonstrate their abilities to meet those objectives?
        i. Outcomes must *align* with objectives. The outcomes must indicate to what extent students will be required to meet those objectives.

8. Topic Outline
    a. Rather than simply listing the activities and delivery methods, faculty members should also consider the sequence of those activities and methods and indicate how these activities and methods work in the service of the objectives and outcomes.
    b. Learner Engagement – what parameters have been included to promote learner engagement?
        i. Students understand connection between activities and course outcomes, activities engage a variety of learning styles and students are apprised of deadlines as well as the manner in which and timeline for receiving instructor feedback

9. Assessment and Measurement—how will the instructor determine if the students are demonstrably reaching the standards set by the objectives and measure the abilities mandated by the outcomes (e.g. tests, quizzes, collaborative activities, written assignments, compiled portfolios or other projects)?
    a. Like outcomes, assessments must also *align* with objectives, so that each student's abilities are demonstrated through some assessment practice that has bearing upon the grade assigned in the course. If there are assessments that do not speak directly to the objectives and outcomes, or if there are objectives and outcomes that are not assessed, the faculty member may be asked to revise his or her Course Plan.

10. Course Policies -- Does this course meet the ADA standards and other required language reflect conformance with institutional policy?
    a. Include a link that directs students to the SSU Office of Disability Services
    b. Be aware of and understand the tools and components of our Learning Management System, Blackboard, that are supportive of ADA compliance.

Note: Information that pertains to course enrollment, remuneration for blended/hybrid and 100% online course development may be found in the current CBA

Instructor Training

Faculty, full-time instructors and adjuncts are required to participate in some form of distance learning training in order to teach online courses at SSU.

- Completion of an appropriate [self-paced course offered through Wiley](#):
  - Foundations of Online Course Design
    - Recommended for those developing an online course.
  - Foundations of Online Course Delivery
    - Recommended for those teaching an online course.
  - There are also numerous other options available thorough Wiley to consider to help expand your capabilities.
- Completion of a Quality Matters online course. SSU is a member of Quality Matters and therefore employees can take course at a reduced rate. Contact the DLC Director or Teaching and Learning Center Director for more information.

Other Faculty and Instructor Resources

- [Designing Online Courses (SSU)](#)
- [Instructional Material (Wiley)](#)