

# **GUIDELINES FOR ACADEMIC ONLINE COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY**

**(Revised 04/02/2025)**

GBC expects online courses to be high quality with the academic rigor appropriate for college-level expectations, and to meet regular and substantive interaction (RSI) standards that include ongoing instructor participation in content delivery, learning assessment, and communication with students. Effective online instruction requires continual teaching presence and student engagement throughout the duration of a course. The following guidelines provide a baseline for effective online instruction at GBC.

## **OUR LEARNING PLATFORM**

1. All GBC online courses must originate in the current learning platform, WebCampus (Canvas LMS).
2. Supplemental platforms (e.g. Pearson, Padlet, Canva, etc.) may be used/integrated, however WebCampus/Canvas (via MyApps and the GBC Multi-Factor Authentication) is the primary portal for access to online courses and coursework. (Contact the GBC Online Education Department for questions regarding supplemental platform integrations.)

## **CURRICULAR ALIGNMENT**

As an instructor of GBC online courses, you are responsible to ensure:

1. Course curricula and components align with the course syllabus, according to your program/department's standards.
2. Student learning outcomes and assessment/grading practices are clearly communicated to students throughout the course and align with the course syllabus, according to your program/department's standards.
3. Course requirements and learner objectives are commensurate with college-level expectations and the GBC catalog course description and sequence of courses (developmental, 100, 200, 300, or 400). The amount of time required of students to complete online coursework is in line with the expectations set forth by NSHE and in the GBC course catalog, according to the number of credits awarded for course completion.
4. The course syllabus contains policy statements for grading, communicating with the instructor, and aligns with the current institutional version of the GBC Course Syllabus that includes current GBC Institutional Policies and Procedures. (If you need this added to your course, please contact the Online Education department and request that the Syllabus be imported into your course from the Faculty Best Practices Template.)

5. Content delivery is accomplished through a variety of methods (i.e., reading, lectures, films, sound recordings, exercises, lab activities, discussions, etc.)

Note: The “read the chapter-take the quiz” should be avoided in favor of more interactive approaches. (For instructional design advisement/assistance, contact the GBC Online Education department.)

6. Online courses will follow the official GBC Academic Calendar term dates. For 8 week, Wintermester, CTE or other courses that do not follow the regular semester schedule, instructors are responsible to ensure the course start and end dates (in the Course Details tab under course Settings) are correct for that specific course. (If you’re not sure how to do this, please reach out to the Online Education department for assistance.)


## **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENT AND GRADING**

As an instructor, you are the expert on what you expect students to learn and achieve in your course. Therefore, as the instructor you are responsible for:

1. Ensuring current grades are available to students on an ongoing basis through WebCampus/Canvas (i.e. Canvas Gradebook).
2. Assigning grades (for assignments, discussions, labs, quizzes etc.) regularly throughout the semester, providing clear communication for when students can expect to see their grades in the syllabus.
3. Communicating expectations for learning outcomes and grading (i.e., rubrics, written expectations, etc.) in both the assignment descriptions and the course syllabus.
4. Communicating expectations for proctored exams in both the exam description and the course syllabus. For a Lockdown Browser exam, a practice exam should be provided for students to complete prior to completing the actual exam.
5. Coordinating any needed exam proctoring with the GBC Academic Success Center.

## **COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

As the instructor, you are your students’ point of contact not only for your online course, but also for GBC. Your feedback, encouragement and engagement is the gateway to their success in learning from you, and in continuing their personal learning journey. Therefore it’s good online instructional practice to:

1. Introduce yourself and the course to students during the first week of class. (You can use the Start Here page from the WebCampus Faculty Best Practices Template for an outline. Panopto  is a tool available in the Rich Content Editor that allows you to quickly add an introductory video to your Welcome page.)

2. Post announcements, homepage messages, feedback, comments, regularly throughout the semester. This is part of providing the regular and substantive feedback that is required for all online for-credit courses.
3. Respond to student inquiries within at least 3 business days, if not sooner.
4. Provide regular, timely instructor feedback (i.e., grades, written comments, rubrics, verbal feedback, etc.) throughout the semester.
5. Ensure each course, including all activities (assignments, quizzes etc.) and materials (lecture recordings, presentations, documents etc.) meet required accessibility standards. Use the tools available to you (e.g. Readspeaker, Panorama) to review and revise your course content to make your content accessible for your students. Become familiar with the online accessibility tools available to your students (e.g. Readspeaker, Panorama).

## **COURSE ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE**

1. Courses must contain the following:
  - Computer/Technology Requirements
  - Participation and Attendance expectations
  - Course objectives/Student Learning Outcomes
  - Assignments and Late Policy
  - Grading scale
  - Institutional Policies and Procedures (i.e., student services links: library, Academic Success Center, HelpDesk, SGA; ADA statements, Netiquette & Student Conduct policies; etc.)

This should be visible to students the entire semester.

2. Courses are organized in such a way that students can navigate easily.

(If you need these added to your course, please provide your course name to the Online Education department, and request the Faculty Best Practices Template with the Syllabus.)

## **TRAINING AND REVIEW**

1. *As per faculty senate requirements specifying WebCampus training*, **all** new faculty (including part-time/adjunct) must complete the WebCampus Orientation for Faculty Canvas course prior to teaching an online course for the first time. Additional one-on-one training can be scheduled by contacting the Online Education department.

1a. Tenure/mentor committees will use a basic requirements rubric to review online courses.

2. More in-depth WebCampus/Canvas training resources, including video tutorials and step-by-step job aids, are available to all faculty through the Professional Development Series course in WebCampus.

Training modules include:

- DesignPLUS Course Design Tool tutorials and resources
- Turnitin training and resources
- Curriculum Mapping training and resources (course level)
- Panopto Video Management System recorded training sessions, tutorials and resources
- Faculty Inservice and professional development recorded sessions
- Strategic Planning and Assessment recordings
- MunchBytes training resource materials

## **ONLINE COURSE ISSUE IDENTIFICATION AND RESOLUTION**

Reported online course issues (e.g. student complaints to department chairs, Director of Accessibility Services/Title IX Coordinator or the Online Education staff; a lack of progress addressing issues identified by a tenure/mentor committee, etc.) relating to the above guidelines may prompt a course review by the appropriate Dean. It will be at the Dean's discretion to make recommendations for changes, which may include having the instructor create an action plan in consultation with the Vice President responsible for Academic Affairs and/or the Director of Accessibility Services, along with the appropriate Dean, with the goal of resolving course issues within a year. Once a faculty member determines that the identified course issues have been remediated, the instructor will meet with the appropriate Dean for review.