

ONLINE TEACHING BEST PRACTICES POLICY COLLEGE OF SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOR SCIENCES

A. Distribution of Online SCH's

All department chairs will prepare a brief annual or biennial report for the Dean that includes the following information:

1. Total online enrollments for the period.
2. Total number of online teaching faculty for the period.
3. How the online SCH's were distributed amongst online teaching faculty.
4. Feedback from online teaching faculty regarding overrides, wait lists, and demand for online spaces by students.
5. A determination by the Chair indicating whether department online SCH's need to increase, decrease, or remain the same.

Based upon the departmental reports the Dean will work with Continuing Education to determine the required number and distribution of online SCH's by department.

To ensure workload and compensatory equity, department chairs should strive to allocate SCH's equitably among online teaching faculty.

B. Class Size

For both lower and upper division online classes, the enrollment caps should be similar to those for comparable face-to-face (FTF) courses.

Overload courses: Minimum caps should be determined by the department chair in consultation with the instructor. Maximum cap size should be no higher than the cap of a comparable FTF course.

In-Load courses: Minimum and maximum caps should be no higher or lower than those for a comparable FTF course.

C. Pedagogy

Online courses should be treated the same way pedagogically as FTF courses.

Online courses should meet the same department Learning Outcome and Course Objective requirements as FTF courses.

Online course syllabi should state Course Objectives and/or Learning Outcomes.

Online courses should contain measurable learning goals; online teaching faculty should be prepared to produce evidence of meeting those goals (artifacts).

Department chairs should ensure that no faculty member who has not completed the WSU Online Canvas Training Course should be allowed to teach an online course, whether they are the principal designer of the course or not. (Ideally, as with FTF courses, only the instructional designer of the course should teach the course.) Although faculty members do often share lecture notes and other course materials with their colleagues, those colleagues share a common level of training. The same should be true for the “sharing” of online courses and online course materials. Any faculty member who is “given” an online course or online course materials by a colleague must first complete the WSU Online Canvas Training Course before he or she is allowed to teach that course as the instructor of record.

D. Assessment/ Evaluation

1. Student Evaluations

The College will utilize the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Online Teaching Evaluation form. Modeled after the College’s face to face evaluation, the new online evaluation tool for students has been designed to be more specific to the online teaching environment.

As with face-to-face evaluations, students should be asked or reminded by their online instructor to complete their evaluations. This is especially important for professors teaching online for load, or pre-tenured faculty who may need to include these in their tenure documents.

2. Peer Evaluation

Individual Courses:

Each department shall establish a departmental Online Teaching Review Committee. Departments should determine the pedagogical criteria/ parameters based upon departmental Learning Outcomes and Course Objectives.

The composition and size of the departmental “Online Teaching Review Committee” should be determined by the departments. However, departments should consider having *at least* one member of the committee be a faculty member who teaches online. Departments should also consider having an outside committee member from WSU Online.

Each semester, online faculty should submit all of their online syllabi to the department and/ or the department “Online Teaching Review Committee.” Every 5 years, the department review committee should evaluate all online course syllabi and all online courses (by logging in to the courses as a student). The “Online Teaching Review Committee” may also compel other evidence to determine whether or not departmental Learning Outcomes are being met.

The committee will also evaluate courses based upon the Best Practices Evaluation Instrument for Online Courses for the College of SBS.

Faculty may not opt out of the departmental review or submission of materials to the department. Faculty who refuse to submit materials or refuse to be reviewed may be subject to action by the department chair and/or the Dean.

Based upon both criteria (the Best Practices Evaluation Instrument and a pedagogical review of syllabi, etc.), the committee will rate courses on the following scale:

Good - exceeds department outcomes and meets Best Practices standards

Satisfactory - meets department outcomes and meets Best Practices standards

Unsatisfactory - does not meet department outcomes and/ or does not meet Best Practices standards

The findings of the “Online Teaching Review Committee” will be reported to both the department chair and the Dean. If a course is deemed “unsatisfactory” the department chair (in consultation with the dean), may take whatever action is appropriate to the circumstances.

If a department offers 15 or more different undergraduate online courses (courses, not sections of the same course):

If a department offers 15 or more different undergraduate online courses (a number approaching a full online Minor), or offers a full online undergraduate Major or Minor, then its online course offerings should be subject to higher level of review similar to a Program Review.

Departments that meet or exceed this threshold should have their online courses reviewed by a college-level review committee. The “College Online Review Committee” should use the same ratings scale as department review committees (see above).

The college committee should consist of one member from each department in the college and an outside member from WSU Online. The review should be conducted every 5 years.

Departments should be prepared to submit reports from department review committees, syllabi, course evaluations, and other artifacts as required by the “College Online Review Committee.” The committee will report its findings and recommendations to the department chair and the Dean. The Dean, in consultation with the department chair, will determine whether any action needs to be taken.

E. Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct teaching online courses (upper or lower division) should be determined by individual departments.

All adjunct faculty who teach online must complete the WSU Online Canvas Training Course. All online courses taught by adjuncts are subject to the same review process and requirements as those taught by full-time faculty.

F. Hybrid Courses

In courses where 50% or more of the instruction is conducted online, that constitutes “substantial” online instruction. Courses that are taught solely online or are Hybrid courses meet this criteria. (Hybrid courses are accelerated courses that combine the benefits of classroom instruction with the convenience of online courses.) Courses that are merely “web-enhanced” (syllabi, discussions, etc. online) do not.

Courses that meet this 50% or higher threshold are subject to review under this Best Practices Policy. “Web-enhanced” face to face courses are not subject to review under this policy.

G. Online Course Copyrights

All online teaching faculty are expected to abide by university copyright policies as outlined in the PPM (sections 4-35, 5-41, and 5-42).