American University *of* Kuwait
Faculty eLearning Manual

The Center for Teaching Excellence

The American University *of* Kuwait

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A. Online Instruction

- Online instruction will provide synchronous and asynchronous forms of instruction through the Moodle Platform, the University's mandated learning management system (LMS), and the embedded Zoom and/or WebEx to facilitate virtual sessions, learning and teaching.

- Moodle is to be used to access Zoom or WebEx. Course syllabus, assignments and assessments submission, feedback, learning and reading materials (Notes/Handouts/URLs of relevant websites), and grades (using Moodle Gradebook) are to be posted on Moodle. Final grades are to be calculated in Moodle and entered on Banner through self-service. Final grades are to be hidden from view on Moodle. Students will be given access to final grades through banner.

- AUK's existing grading scale will apply to the eLearning assessment.

- No online quizzes or examinations. Take home assessments can be assigned with a submission deadline of no less than 5 hours.

- AUK's attendance policy applies to eLearning, allowing tardiness for up to 15 minutes to account for technical issues.

- Video-recording of class sessions is prohibited.

There is a plethora of information on online teaching practices that you may find useful. Below please find the expected practices for online instruction at AUK:

Best practice 1: Clarifying the eLearning Course Content & Course Objectives

- As is with any courses that we teach, online teaching is no different when it comes to setting the course objectives and expectations. Syllabi are to be posted by the first day of classes so that students can orient themselves to the course. Provide students with an opportunity to become familiar with your course expectations and online teaching style on the first day. As your interaction is virtual, course objectives should be linked with each assignment or reading given to students and repeated often.

- Examples of activities (see appendix for sample questions).
    - *Syllabus review:* this review covers the most important points of the syllabus. Multiple choice or true/false questions allows for automatic and instant feedback on Moodle for students. Since it is not a quiz, students should be allowed to retake the review for unlimited times (Resource: Syllabus Quiz).

    - *Scavenger hunt:* students are asked questions about the syllabus, but must write out their answers in full rather than choosing between set answers. (Resource: Read the Syllabus).

    - *Reflection questions:* students are asked to reflect on the syllabus by responding to prompts such as "Which project are you the most excited to complete?", "Which of the graded assignments do you think you will excel in? Which one do you think you will need more support in?" (Resource: Read the Syllabus).

- Course materials such as readings, assignments, and project prompts and guidelines, pre-recorded segments of lectures are to be posted and regularly updated well in advance to provide faculty and students enough time to review and address any concerns prior to class and assist in the continuous delivery of course content.

Best practice 2: Setting the Tone, and Accessibility in a Virtual Campus Environment

- As students are not on campus, they are not able to informally engage with you or other students about their degree/courses/program daily as they have been previously used to. It is, therefore, important to set a context to your course continuously. Why does this course matter within the larger context of their degree or general education? Provide for you and the students an opportunity to discuss this during your virtual class, as well as during your virtual office hours.

- Keep regular virtual office hours and provide for students a chat forum where they can ask questions outside of the online class meetings.

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- To improve accessibility of course material, it is recommended to use reading assignments that are in Word or HTML text. Alternatively, if PDFs are the only source available, use readable PDF format where text can be selected, as opposed to picture-based PDFs. This allows students the option to use text-to-speech software, which is useful to those who may take longer to read and comprehend.

Best practice 3: Online Teaching Effectiveness

- When students complete/submit their required assignments, please let them know ahead of time when to expect feedback. Regular course standing updates such as graded material alleviates anxiety and questions later.

- Provide opportunities for questions and discussions during the course. For example, our LMS and applications enable you to post discussions and create discussion forums and run live chats.

    o The most engaging discussion prompts are linked to class material and current events. Requiring students to respond to classmates provides students with opportunities to engage in further discourse (Resource: Discussion Prompts).

    o Providing students with discussion rubrics helps them to understand how to compose their posts and what is expected in their responses to their classmates (See sample rubric in Appendix; Resource: Online Discussion Rubric).

    o Strategies to increase engagement and agency in discussion forums (General Resource: Effective Online Discussions)
        ▪ *Have students respond to prompts using roleplay.* Students can respond to a prompt from a specific perspective (social, spatial, or chronological). For example, students may respond to a topic about the importance of online influencers from the perspective of a grandparent (Resource: Use Roleplay).

        ▪ *Vary the types of student responses.* For some prompts, students are required to respond in writing. For other topics, instructors can assign different formats of responses such as audio-recording, video-recording, drawings, photos, mind-maps, PowerPoint slides, etc. (Resource: Discussion Boards).

        ▪ *Instructors summarize main points or overarching themes of student responses.* The summary can be discussed verbally during synchronous lectures or sent in an email to all students. This continues the conversation and demonstrates instructor presence. Instructors can also use this opportunity for clarification of any misunderstandings and provide further food for thought related to course material (Resource: Online Discussions).

- Avoid continuous and uninterrupted lectures, especially online. Online attention spans are limited. Therefore, change your method or activity every 20 minutes to encourage online engagement. For example, one can create virtual breakout sessions in WebEx,

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where small groups of students meet separately to brainstorm and collaborate and engage in real time. Private group sessions can also be held. Diversification of your teaching approach is essential.

- Examples of activities:
  - Formative assessments to gauge learning:
    - *Polling:* this provides immediate feedback on comprehension of content and students can use polling on WebEx or Zoom (Resource: Engaging Students in a Remote Course).

    - *Exit tickets or minute papers:* students are asked quickly (1-2 minutes) to write out what they learned, note down which topics they still struggle with, or ask further questions. Students can submit these at the end of a synchronous lecture (such as through the private chat feature on WebEx/Zoom) or before the end of the day via discussion board, shared Google Doc, email, etc. (See appendix for sample questions; Resource: Online exit tickets and Minute paper).

    - *KWL Charts:* these charts represent what students *Know, Want to Know,* and *Learned*. Prior to lecture, students write out what they "Know" (K) about the topic to be discussed and what they "Want to know" (W). After lecture, they will fill out what they "Learned" (L). This can be done via a shared Google Doc or through the discussion board (See appendix for sample chart. Resource K-W-L Charts).

  - Synchronous groupwork:
    - *Shared Documents:* in breakout sessions, students can work together on a shared document (such as a Google Doc) and they can submit it at the end of the group session. This would require students to use a computer/laptop. If enough students in the class have access to one, instructors can inform students ahead of time when they would do such an activity (Resource: Engaging Students in a Remote Course).

- WebEx and Zoom are good tools for synchronous engagement. Use WebEx as your primary tool or Zoom as an alternative when needed. The White Boards in WebEx and Zoom combined with webcam and/or handwriting tools (such as iPen, iPads) offer opportunities to provide live explanations for the course contents in many disciplines.

- For pre-recording of lectures, it is recommended to divide a lecture to smaller units/concepts. This will facilitate the uploading of lecture videos. Students will more easily be able to follow the content.

  - For advice on making pre-recorded lecture videos, see:
    - 8 Tips for More Professional Education Videos
    - Media Production for Flexible Teaching
    - 5 Ways to Make Your Videos Binge-Worthy

  - To increase engagement, instructors can incorporate stop and pause activities in posted lecture videos. Instructors create and provide students with activity sheets to be filled out during pre-recorded lectures. During the pre-recorded lecture, the instructor asks students to stop and fill out something on the sheet.

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They could be answering a question, reflecting on learning, or brainstorming ideas, depending on the lecture material (Resource: [Stop and pause](#)).

- Faculty can also use Edpuzzle which can be set to automatically pause a video when activities are to be done and students cannot finish the video till they complete the activity. This is helpful when using videos from other sources, which don't have built in questions or activities (Resource: [Edpuzzle](#)).

- PowerPoint for recording lectures: if faculty is using PowerPoint, the slide presentation can be turned into a video recording that has narration. The presentation in PowerPoint can be recorded and then shared with the students. The "Recording tab" introduced in PowerPoint 2016 gives faculty this capability and goes even further with more interactive elements.

Best practice 4: Virtual Presence

- Like physical classrooms spaces, the creation of online environments is essential to teaching and learning. Online engagement can be intimidating for many. Therefore, appropriate icebreakers are useful during the first couple of minutes of every class for the purpose of establishing rapport, and for easing students into the lesson, and providing an opportunity for those who may have technical difficulties and may be late entering the virtual space.

- Make use of inclusive language such as "we," and "us" and "together." Students will tend to take personal ownership of the class and will be more likely to contribute positively toward the discussion.

Best practice 5: Set the Rules

- Our virtual classroom conduct is bound by our University Code of Conduct. Students have been informed. However, a friendly reminder ever so often is useful when students become more comfortable with the online environment.

Best practice 6: Virtual Classroom Management

- Whether on campus or virtually, classroom management is critical in the effective delivery of instruction. Creating and clearly explaining class rules of engagement for each session provides among other things the conversational framework and limits uncomfortable silences.

- Students who naturally tend to talk less, often become obscure in virtual environments as more vocal students may have the tendency to take over conversations. As with any environment, the virtual space is more suited for some over others. Dividing classes into smaller groups, gives an opportunity for everyone to participate as smaller student groups tend to be more private and less obtrusive.

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- During synchronous sessions, students can be assigned specific responsibilities to free up the instructor to concentrate on lecturing. For example, one student can be assigned to monitor the public chat for questions and at specified times can inform the instructor. Another student could provide technology support to help students with any issues. Finally, a student could be a note-taker and share them with any students who were absent that day. To ensure fairness, these roles may rotate regularly between students (Resource: Zoom Classroom Management).

Best practice 7: Your toolkit for remote instruction

Instructional Activity	Synchronous (meet online at same time through Moodle)	Asynchronous (participate online at any time through Moodle)
Online Class meetings and Lecture Recording	**WebEx or Zoom** • Have face to face online lectures • White Board for explanation • Live messaging and discussion (audio-visual or in writing) • Students can provide feedback on the white board in writing	**Moodle** • To record presentations and share them. • PowerPoint Slide Show with/without recording
Communication and Virtual Office Hours	• Moodle • WebEx Access through Moodle • Zoom Access through Moodle	• Moodle • Email
Distribute syllabus, documents, lecture notes, slides, readings and assignments	• Moodle	• Moodle • Library Online Database
Class discussion and student engagement	• Moodle • WebEx Access through Moodle • Zoom Access through Moodle	• Moodle • WebEx Access through Moodle • Zoom Access through Moodle • Email
Collect assignments	• Moodle	• Moodle
Providing students with grades and feedback on their work in the event of an emergency	• Moodle	• Moodle

The above list is by no means comprehensive and not a definitive list of technology resources. However, these tools provide different ways by which faculty can meet the students learning outcomes remotely.

Best practice 8: When in Doubt, Reach Out

- In case you encounter difficulties, require additional training on the use of technology, or need to talk to someone, please don't hesitate to reach out. The Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) is available to provide all the support required. Deans and department chairs will assist you. Your successful online experience is important to us as well as your students. We are here to help!

The methods for evaluating student learning vary depending on the disciplines. These include oral exams, take home assignments, project submission, presentations, chats, forums, interviews, essays, lab reports or art product.

Tips on assignments in online environments[1]

- Divide assignments into smaller components such that the instructor can assess students at several points in the learning process and provide feedback.
- Provide students with clear rubrics with clear expectations.
- [Consistent and regular] use formative assessment to check student learning and to dynamically measure effectiveness of delivery.
- Look for opportunities to provide feedback to the entire class – i.e. an announcement or [communication] summarizing patterns observed in student assignments.
- Using a variety of [evaluative] techniques in an online course is recommended.
- Where applicable, vary how students can submit different response formats to assignments (written, audio or video-recorded, drawings, etc.).
- If assigning group projects, ask students to rate the level of participation of the other members. Provide peer evaluation forms before the start of the project, so group members know that their peer evaluations received will count towards their individual grade (See Appendix for sample; Resource: Group Evaluation).
- Editable documents (such as Google Docs) are useful for compiling information across students (such as KWL charts or exit tickets) so everything is in one place instead of multiple emails or discussion posts.
  - They are also useful for tracking work in collaborative assignments as some programs such as Google Docs show who wrote specific material.

Assessment of student progress throughout the course is critical in determining whether the student is meeting the learning outcomes (**formative assessment**), the efficacy of the course and faculty teaching, and determines the degree to which the student mastered the skill (**summative assessment**). Examples of formative assessments are exit tickets, minute papers, KWL charts discussion posts, journals, portfolios. Examples of summative assessments include end of term papers, and course projects. Faculty who are teaching different sections of the same course should meet regularly to discuss student progress in their online classes.

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[1] https://www.teachology.ca/knowledgebase/how-do-i-assess-student-learning-online/

D. Assessment of Learning and Teaching Effectiveness

In determining the effectiveness of the teaching of online courses, and the degree to which the students met the learning outcomes, the following assessment instruments are to be used. Chairs and Deans will provide further guidance:

- Student performance is one critical assessment instrument in each course type. Faculty is to select in individual courses (a) summative assessment(s) that measure student learning outcomes of a critical student learning outcome for the respective program.

- Adjustments to teaching philosophy and online interaction: assessment of student-content interaction; student-student interaction; or student-faculty interaction.

- Identifying the online presence of the faculty and engagement with students - through Institutional Research (IR) on LMS generated data, and IT reports that measure Moodle usage and video conferencing platforms. This provides an initial measure of student engagement in courses.

- Faculty Teaching Portfolio.

- Peer presence/mentorship in online engagement.

- Faculty self-evaluation report: component of the Annual Performance of Faculty Form that is completed at the end of the semester.

- Student evaluation of online teaching and learning - Student evaluation of teaching (SET).

- Faculty feedback/survey of on online experience.

Sample Syllabus Review/Scavenger Hunt Questions

1. To pass the class with a "C" grade or better, what percentage must you attain?

2. How are final grade points awarded and calculated?

3. When can you expect email responses from the instructor?

4. How should assignments be formatted and submitted?

5. What are the conditions for submitting late assignments?

6. What are the consequences of plagiarism?

7. What is the protocol for arriving to class late?

8. If you have missed class, what should you do to get class announcements, required assignments, or to go over course material covered that day?

(Questions from Seattle Central College and Santa Barbara City College)

Sample Discussion Rubric

	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory	Score
Quality of Post	Post reveals solid understanding of discussion prompt; post demonstrates sincere reflection and answers all aspects of the prompt; full development of concepts is evident	Post demonstrates sincere reflection and answers most of the aspects of the prompt; full development of concepts not evidenced	Post did not adequately address the discussion prompt; superficial thought and preparation	No posting or post was not on topic and unrelated to the discussion prompt	
Responses to Classmates	Appropriate comments; thoughtful, reflective, and respectful of others' postings	Appropriate comments and responds respectfully to others' postings	Posted a response to another student's post, but with minimal effort (e.g. "I agree with Sarah")	Did not post any responses to other students on the discussion board	
Language and Grammar	Communicates in friendly, courteous, and helpful manner with no or minor spelling and grammatical errors	Communicates in friendly, courteous, and helpful manner with some spelling and grammatical errors	Due to frequent spelling and grammatical errors, posting is difficult to understand	No postings for which to evaluate language and grammar	
				TOTAL	

(Sample from Central Michigan University)

Sample Exit Ticket Prompts

Name one important thing you learned in class today.

What is something that you learned that was unexpected?

What question(s) do you have about the material covered in today's class?

Is there anything that is still unclear?

Which of the readings you did for class today was most helpful in preparing you for the lesson? Why?

What examples did I use today that helped you the most? The least?

What is the main application of the material we discussed today?

(Prompts from: [Brown University](#) and [Teacher Ready](#))

Sample KWL Chart

KWL Chart

What I Know	What I Wonder	What I Learned

Sample Group Evaluation Form

Peer Work Group Evaluation Forms

Directions: In the space below, honestly evaluate the work of other students in your group by answering yes or no and by using a scale from 1 to 3, 1 being poor, 2 being average, 3 being above average.

Evaluator's Name:_____   Date:_____

Group Member 1:_____

1. Did this group member complete his/her assigned tasks for the group?   Yes   No

2. How would you rate the quality of this person's work?   1   2   3

3. How would you rate the timeliness of the completion of the work?   1   2   3

4. How would you rate the accuracy of the work?   1   2   3

5. Overall, how would you rank this group member's performance in the group?   1   2   3

6. Would you want to work with this person again?   Yes   No

    Explain why in the space below

Group Member 2:_____

1. Did this group member complete his/her assigned tasks for the group?   Yes   No

2. How would you rate the quality of this person's work?   1   2   3

3. How would you rate the timeliness of the completion of the work?   1   2   3

4. How would you rate the accuracy of the work?   1   2   3

5. Overall, how would you rank this group member's performance in the group?   1   2   3

6. Would you want to work with this person again?   Yes   No

    Explain why in the space below

Group Member 3:_____

1. Did this group member complete his/her assigned tasks for the group?   Yes   No

2. How would you rate the quality of this person's work?   1   2   3

3. How would you rate the timeliness of the completion of the work?   1   2   3

4. How would you rate the accuracy of the work?   1   2   3

5. Overall, how would you rank this group member's performance in the group?   1   2   3

6. Would you want to work with this person again?   Yes   No

    Explain why in the space below

(Evaluation form from PBS.org)