Boston University Metropolitan College
Online Instructor and Facilitator Responsibilities

Metropolitan College's reputation for excellent online education hinges on a high-touch, interactive class experience. Ensuring a robust, interactive, and smooth class experience keeps our programs in compliance with federal course credit hour policies, maintains our reputation for excellent education, and benefits our students' learning.

MET Online Instructor Responsibilities

Instructors are the BU faculty of record, responsible for running a course, managing facilitators, and assessing the academic performance of students. The responsibilities of the instructor of record teaching a MET online course are as follows:

1. Typically, before the beginning of a course the instructor should:
    a. Review the online course material and discuss any questions with the faculty Area/Course Coordinator at least two weeks before the beginning of the course.
    b. Provide updates to the course syllabus, including specifics for the current running of the course (instructor information, calendar, assignment submission and grading due dates, schedule of live classrooms, etc.) typically two weeks prior to the course opening.
    c. Refresh assignments and assessments as needed with at least minor adjustments to prevent plagiarism and copying of online answers. Share the new set of assignments and assessments along with solutions and grading rubrics with facilitators, typically two weeks prior to the course opening.
    d. Coordinate and lead a kick-off call with the course teaching team, consisting of facilitators and faculty and student support administrators. Explain the course procedures, calendar and due dates.
    e. Send a welcome email with a copy of the syllabus to all the students and facilitators one week prior to the course. If appropriate, suggest tutorials that improve preparatory knowledge.

2. During the running of the course:
    a. Re-send early student communications to late-enrolling students.
    b. Conduct weekly synchronous live lectures, with the agenda posted at least 24 hours in advance. Any changes or rescheduling of the live lectures need to be announced at least 24 hours in advance, unless there is an emergency.
    c. Coordinate and monitor the facilitators' weekly live meetings with their groups, and provide the topics and guidelines to the facilitators.
    d. Coordinate timing for the facilitators' weekly "days off" and ensure group coverage.
    e. Assure that all the assignments and assessments are graded and released by the provided grading deadlines.

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f. At the beginning of each week, send an email to the students with an overview of the material that will be covered that week, including any additional explanation for the assignments and project requirements and the topics to be discussed in the live classroom.
g. Conduct weekly meetings of the teaching team and monitor the progress of the class.
h. Make sure that the grading is consistent across all the groups.
i. At the beginning of each week provide to the students the overall statistics of class performance in previous weeks' assessments and assignments.
j. In case of academic conduct issues, comply with department, college, and university procedures.
k. Provide final grades within the 72 hours after the final examination.

3. After the completion of the course:
   a. Provide feedback on each facilitator to the MET Dean's Office.
   b. Provide feedback for the support and technical assistance to BU Virtual.
   c. Provide feedback to the Area/Course Coordinator about any changes made to the course for this running, course material or modules that may need to be updated, and any data or student work samples that can be used for learning outcomes assessment purposes.

MET Online Facilitator Responsibilities

Facilitators are part of the course teaching team and act as "group instructors" in online classes, responsible for managing one group of approximately 15 students. They need to be familiar with course content and the learning platform. The academic responsibilities of facilitators in MET online courses are as follows:

1. Log into the course one week prior to its opening to become familiar with the syllabus, content, assignments and assessments. Send an introductory welcome email to the students in their group.

2. Participate in the course kickoff conference call and coordinate a schedule for group live classrooms.

3. Work with the instructor, lead facilitator and BU Virtual to oversee and coordinate the course section.

4. Conduct weekly interactive sessions (live classrooms).

5. Grade assignments, quizzes, midterms, and/or essays in consultation with the instructor's requirements.

6. Engage with the students in their group frequently:
    a. Be online and visible six out of seven days per week. Facilitators should inform their section which will be their "day off". This should be consistent throughout the class period and should be a week day.
    b. Monitor and guide weekly online discussions. Ensure the content is appropriate and on-topic and engage students in the discussion.
    c. Answer course-related questions.
    d. Respond to all student inquiries as soon as possible, but within 24 hours at most.

7. Interact with the instructor and/or the BU Virtual Faculty and Student Support Administrator on behalf of students when necessary.

8. Email weekly overviews of the subjects and guidelines about the assessments and assignments. These should be different from the weekly notes distributed by the instructor.

9. Provide weekly student reports as requested to the instructor including, but not limited to:
    a. Flow of the course - Is everything running smoothly? Were there any content or assignment questions from students requiring the instructor's clarification? How was it handled?
    b. A list of any students you have not heard from that week, any who have not submitted their work, or those who have requested any form of extension. The instructor needs to be aware of these students ahead of time.

10. Review and/or grade student final projects, papers, or exams at the end of each course as requested by instructor.

11. Post grades to the online student grade books in a timely fashion.

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NOTES from the current Facilitator Contracts:

Online courses are divided into sections of approximately 15 students. Each section is overseen by a facilitator. The facilitator will carry out the professor/instructor's and academic department's vision for how the course will be delivered.

The professor/instructor and academic department will make selections of facilitators prior to the beginning of each class period. Once selected, the Dean's Office will initiate a contract and BUV will arrange for training.

Facilitators are responsible for overseeing their assigned students, answering student questions on course content, and being a visible "presence" in the class. This role entails interacting with the students in their group daily and keeping track of assignments and grades.

A BU Virtual Faculty & Student Support Administrator will be assigned to each program and will assist with any general technical issues or recurring student problems.

Important course dates (exams, assignments, etc.), discussion topics and order of discussion threads, as well as order and appearance of grade book columns are established in advance by the professor/instructor of each course. Facilitators are not responsible for, nor are they allowed to change dates or content in a course unless otherwise specified.

Unless otherwise specified by the professor/instructor, facilitators will grade individual assignments, papers, projects and exams, in keeping with the course's grading criteria, and will provide this information to the professor/instructor who will remain responsible for assigning the overall final grades in the course.

Facilitators are responsible for holding weekly interactive live classrooms with students in their group. The session usually is focused on assessments and assignments and is defined in coordination with the professor/instructor. All the times of the live classrooms are posted in advance for the entire course, so the students can plan, and the agenda is distributed at least 24 hours before the live classroom.

The facilitator is to report any potential problems or issues immediately to the professor/instructor and the “Lead Facilitator,” if one has been assigned.

Facilitators will be available to participate in weekly conference calls with the professor/instructor to discuss any general issues or problems arising in the course.

A Note about Responsiveness: Above all else, online students require and value direct and personalized feedback. As a group facilitator, you are expected to provide swift and thoughtful feedback to the students in your group regarding their discussion posts, their assignments, their grades, and their questions and concerns. Your frequent participation in discussion forums, unless otherwise specified by the instructor, is considered to be mandatory.

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