Definitions

Web enhanced course: a face to face course that utilizes Blackboard for certain activities, i.e. to post syllabi, lecture notes, study materials, or for periodic assessments, etc.

Hybrid/Blended course: a course where a portion of the weekly contact hours are delivered via the Internet and a majority of the weekly contact hours are delivered face to face.

Online course: a course that is delivered 100% via the Internet.

Instructional technologist: highly trained staff member who specializes in the planning and technical design of online courses.

Online Coordinator: highly trained staff member who assists in the online training of students and faculty and is responsible for monitoring quality assurance processes.

Developers or Instructors: faculty members with subject matter expertise.

Overview

The Office of Faculty Development is committed to enhancing and improving online education at FSU by providing high quality training and support to faculty members developing and teaching online, hybrid and web enhanced courses. Our mission is to ensure integrity and quality in all courses utilizing the online environment at FSU.

The development of online courses should be limited to courses already approved through the process set forth by UNC General Administration in the face to face format. All faculty who seek to teach online courses and were not certified during the Summer 2010 Online Training workshops are asked to complete the FSU certification training process PRIOR to teaching in the online environment(s).

Instructors and OFD technology personnel should collaborate closely throughout the process to ensure high quality and integrity in online courses. The end result will be courses that offer the same rigor, standards and student satisfaction as face to face courses.

Rationale

In order to comply with SACS standards for distance education and to meet the increasing demand for online courses, it is critical that FSU train and support its faculty in developing and teaching high quality online courses. This training and support will enable faculty members to effectively integrate and implement new technologies into their courses to enhance their online course management and teaching skills. It will also support FSU’s priorities of increasing student enrollment, retention and satisfaction in online courses. Finally, high quality online courses support FSU’s mission by providing educational access and opportunities to students in North Carolina, the nation and the world.
Online Instructor Certification

Overview and Scope
Instructors who were not certified after the Summer 2010 Online Training Workshop and who wish to teach fully online courses are encouraged to complete the FSU certification process outlined below. ***Please note: certification is not required. Department chairs determine who teaches in the online environment.

The purpose of the certification courses is fourfold:
1. to teach instructors how to use FSU’s learning management software (currently Blackboard 9.1);
2. for instructors to experience an abbreviated online course from a student’s perspective;
3. to prepare instructors to teach in the online environments using evidence based practices for quality, effectiveness and efficiency;
4. to familiarize instructors with Quality Matters standards and legal issues in the development/design of high quality online courses.

Online Instructor Certification Training involves two steps: 1) training and 2) course development and review.

The training includes the following Blackboard modules:

1. Blackboard 101 “Blackboard Basics” focuses on learning the common functions of Blackboard from the instructor’s perspective.

2. Blackboard 102: “Online Pedagogy” focuses on the best practices for developing and teaching high quality online courses. Instructors will gain experience from the students’ perspective in this course.

To become certified, instructors must:
   a. complete all assignments, tasks and assessments in BB 101 and BB 102 and;
   b. pass the competency exams for BB 101 and BB 102 with scores of 80% or higher, or;
   c. opt/test out of the coursework and successfully pass a competency exam with a score of 80% or higher (see the opting out section below for more information); and
   d. develop an online course and complete the course review process.

Other things to keep in mind:

3. The certification courses are offered continuously throughout the year and are self paced. Instructors have a total of four weeks from the time they enroll in the courses to complete both BB 101 and BB 102.

4. Instructors should register for the courses by calling or emailing the Office of Faculty Development and completing the registration process.

5. An instructor is expected to pass the competency exam at the end of each course (Blackboard 101 and 102) with a minimum score of 80%. Instructors may take the exam(s) two times during each course enrollment period.
Opting out of the Certification Courses

1. Instructors who indicate that they have sufficient online teaching competencies may document these competencies by “opting out” of the certification training coursework, passing the competency exam(s) with a minimum score of 80% and completing the course development and review process.

2. If an instructor does not pass each competency exam (BB 101 and BB 102) with a minimum score of 80%, the instructor should re-enroll and complete the course(s) not passed prior to teaching online or hybrid courses.

Online Instructor Recertification

1. Technology is rapidly changing. Therefore, to ensure that all instructors stay abreast of the latest and best design and teaching technology, instructors who teach online courses are encouraged to complete the Online Re-Certification Course (Blackboard 103) every three years.

2. This course is an abbreviated, self-paced course that covers more advanced or new Blackboard practices for online teaching and learning, followed by a competency exam at the end.

Online Course Development Procedures

Course development is the second step in the certification process. Once the training is completed, instructors should begin the course development process. Once the certification process of training and development process is completed, instructors will not have to repeat it for future course designs.

Our intention is to certify instructors, not individual courses.

Instructors who choose not to become certified are asked to follow the development procedures outlined below for each new course they wish to develop.

1. The instructor should complete the New Online Course Development Application Form and acquire the required signatures from the department chair and dean.
2. The instructor should contact the Blackboard Administrator in ITTS to request a development shell.

Pre-Conference

3. Instructors should schedule a meeting with the online coordinator and collaboratively construct a plan for the development and implementation of the new course.
4. The instructor should thoroughly review and implement the standards from the Quality Matters rubric during the development process.

Mid-term Review

1. The instructor may initiate the “mid-term review” by contacting the Online Coordinator to let him/her know a portion of the course has been developed and is ready for review. The Online Coordinator will assist and ensure that the Quality Matters standards are being implemented adequately.

Post-Conference
1. Once the course is fully developed, the instructor should contact the Online Coordinator to request one more review of the course before the online course review with departmental colleagues. All modules, assignments, discussions, assessments and the course syllabus should be completed and ready for review. The course should be so complete that it could be taught immediately after the review.

2. After the Online Coordinator completes the final review, he/she will coordinate a review day and time with the Interim Director of OFD.

3. The instructor should coordinate and invite the Department Chair, and two colleagues to serve as subject matter experts at the review.

**Online Course Review and Decision**

1. The reviewers will utilize the Quality Matters rubric to evaluate the quality of the online course. (Annotations of the standards on the rubric are available on the OFD Blackboard site in the *Teaching Tools* folder.)

2. If the instructor does not receive unanimous approval during the online course review, the instructor should satisfy all of the recommendations within 7 calendar days. If the recommendations are not implemented within that time frame, the course should not be listed in Banner.

3. Once the review process is successfully complete, instructors seeking certification will receive certificates of certification for their records.

**Quality Assurance Procedures**

1. The Office of Faculty Development can evaluate the quality of existing online courses at the request of department chairs, deans or individual faculty and share the results.

2. The OFD can also assist departments in conducting the evaluations using a Course Quality Rubric provided with permission by the Illinois Online Network.