

OL Instructor Handbook

Online Faculty Development
Penn State World Campus
223J Outreach Building
University Park, PA 16802
July 2016

Welcome to the community of online educators who teach OL courses for World Campus Online Faculty Development. Whether you are new to teaching OL courses or an experienced instructor for us, please read this handbook. There is new and important information here.

At the end of this Handbook you will find a link that 1) confirms your willingness to follow these guidelines, meet the expectations, and fulfill your responsibilities as an OL instructor and 2) asks for demographic information for our records.

Thank you so much for your interest in teaching for us.

Larry

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[1] Competencies and Qualifications

You are critically important to our mission to support online faculty throughout their careers. Here's why: faculty (called "students") in your OL course will be looking to see if your teaching reflects the best practices and competencies they are learning in your course. We want students to see what high quality online teaching looks like by following your example and modeling your teaching.

Do you meet the qualifications to be an OL Course Instructor? In order to be assigned as an OL Course Instructor, you have:

1. Current faculty status in a Penn State online program;
2. Experience teaching online (at least three semester-long online courses);
3. Successful completion of OL 2000, at a minimum; if you have not completed the Faculty Online Teaching Certificate, it is expected you will as you continue to teach OL courses.
4. As of July 15, you have submitted a letter (pdf or email) from your program supervisor or lead faculty recommending you to teach best practices for online teaching. That letter should be sent to Cathy Shreckengast at cas75@psu.edu.

[2] Before the Course Starts:

Here are the most important topics related to our policies, practices, and instructor expectations before an OL course starts:

- **Cancelling a course.** Courses with less than ten enrollments one week before the course start date will be cancelled. We will alert the students and ask them to sign up for another course offering. If your course section is cancelled you will not receive payment for your services; however, you will be invited to teach another course section at a future date.
- **Course dates.** Follow the established start and end dates. These dates will be emailed to you prior to the start of the course. You will receive an email confirmation of your course teaching assignment and access to the course one week before the course start date.
- **Technology requirements.** You are expected to have immediate and predictable access to the same technology that is required for the participants in your course. Refer to the [Penn State World Campus Technical Requirements](#) for students for guidance.
- **Check for problems in the course.** Read through the entire course when you get access. For questions related to course content (i.e. typographical errors, grammatical errors, broken links, assignment expectations and goals, etc.) please contact Andrew Tatusko at amt19@psu.edu.

- **Canvas email.** Use the email function in Canvas exclusively to communicate with students. This helps you keep track of conversations in the event of any misunderstandings.
- **“Welcome to the Course” email.** Send a welcome email on or preferably before the start date of the course and share pertinent information about assignment due dates, course overview, your availability, and other information to help your students get to know you.
- **Instructor evaluation.** You can expect to have one or more members of the World Campus Faculty Development team in your course for monitoring and mentoring. At some point in your teaching for us, you will participate in one or more instructor evaluation processes we are piloting. We urge you to collaborate with us on developing authentic assessment processes and instruments.
- **Apprentices and Refresher Faculty.** You may have an Apprentice or Refresher Faculty in your OL Course. If you do, you will have responsibilities and opportunities with regard to their learning. An **Apprentice** is a graduate student who has completed our Graduate Student Online Teaching Certificate Program (OL 2050) but who has not yet taught an online course. OL instructors should allow these new instructors to manage one online discussion and offer feedback on one assignment in order to put into practice skills they previously learned for their Certificate program. A rubric and guidelines are provided in Section 6 of this handbook. They detail how this program works and the responsibilities and expectations of both the OL instructor and the Apprentice. This is designed to be a mutually beneficial and helpful arrangement. The **Refresher Faculty** is an experienced online faculty seeking a refresher for online teaching skills. This may be someone who is coming back into teaching or has completed online development in teaching, but has not taught online for some time. Refreshing Faculty “shadow” the OL Instructor and may help with discussion management or with assignment feedback in order to put into practice effective online teaching skills. OL Instructors and Refresher Faculty will coordinate according to a rubric and guidelines.

[3] As The Course Begins and Continues

- **Weekly email or video to enhance your instructor presence.** Send a start-to-the week email and/or video for each week the course runs, reviewing past week’s work and previewing the upcoming week’s work and due dates. For instructions on how to create weekly video and share with course participants, contact Larry Boggess at boggess@psu.edu. “Instructor presence” indicates multiple communications, assessments as required, and other interactions at least 5 out of 7 days for each course week.
- **Your schedule.** Establish a regular schedule for when you will be logging in to the course, and communicate this to your students. Normally this is at least once per day.
- **Technical problems.** For any technical problems that you or students have, please contact the World Campus Help Desk at <http://student.worldcampus.psu.edu/technical-support/contact-us>

- **Keeping students on track.** Monitor student assignment submissions and communicate often with students to keep them on track. Be proactive with course management strategies. If you notice a student has not logged in to the course by Friday of the first week, send them a message reminding them that the course has started. Notify us if that student has decided to drop the course or stays inactive in your course by emailing Cathy Shreckengast at cas75@psu.edu.
- **If you have to be away from the course.** It is expected that if you accept an OL course assignment, you will be present for the duration of the course. In the event of unforeseen circumstances you should 1) notify Cathy Shreckengast at cas75@psu.edu immediately and notify your students, giving them an estimate of how long you will be away from the course. The Director of the Faculty Development may replace you if time away interferes with the effective instruction of the course. In this event, compensation will be pro-rated.
- **Responsiveness.** Respond to student inquiries within one business day, if not sooner.
- **Providing meaningful feedback.** Provide meaningful and specific feedback on student work using clear and concise language; be alert for the added value of a “teachable moment.” And possibly consider passing this on anonymously to the rest of your students if applicable!
- **Advanced notice.** Online learners need to self-regulate their time and learning, so communicate to students in advance when you will give feedback on assignments. Feedback on all work should be given no more than 48 hours after the work due date.

[4] As The Course Ends

- **End of course evaluation.** Remind students to complete the end-of-course evaluation that asks questions about their experience with the course content and your teaching. You will have access to the results.
- **Deadlines for coursework.** Clarify for students that the last day to submit assignments falls on the Sunday following the last week of the course. Specific dates may appear in the course syllabus.
- **Extensions for coursework.** Students needing more time to complete the course assignments should contact you by Sunday, 9:00 pm Eastern on the last day of the course to request an extension. An extension lasts one week after the final day of class. This information appears in the introduction of all cohort OL courses.
- **List of course completers.** At the conclusion of the course and extension period, send us a list of all course completers, non-completers, and students who did not log in or dropped the course. The list provides a verification of course completions for our unit and academic program records. Send the list to Cathy Shreckengast (cas75@psu.edu).

[5] Paperwork to get paid for your teaching

- **Compensation.** Compensation for teaching an OL course is \$100 per course week unless otherwise noted. If you are assigned an Apprentice, you will receive an extra \$50 for the course. This recognizes your extra effort and monitoring of the Apprentice as well as the handing off of some of your teaching duties to the Apprentice. You will be paid after the course ends and all your instructor responsibilities have been completed.
- **Paperwork.** After you have completed your end-of-course responsibilities, you will receive a supplemental pay request form depending on your employment status. Please follow the directions on that form and return to Cathy Shreckengast (cas75@psu.edu) no later than the last day of the course. See Cathy for questions.

[6] The Apprentice Teaching Program

Introduction

As an OL Instructor, you may have an Apprentice in your course. If this is the case, you will have responsibilities and opportunities with regard to Apprentice's learning, and you will receive additional compensation for your work. An **Apprentice** is a graduate student who has completed our Graduate Student Online Teaching Certificate Program (OL 2050) but who has not yet taught an online course. OL instructors should allow these new instructors to manage one online discussion and offer feedback on one assignment in order to put into practice skills they learned for their Certificate program. Instructors should notify the Apprentice of these two assignments ahead of time. A set of guidelines follows to structure your work with an Apprentice. A rubric for assessing the Apprentice's performance is found in the Appendix.

Guidelines and Process for the OL Instructor/Apprentice Collaboration

- Apprentices will be assigned to an instructor's OL course one week prior to the course start date.
- The Apprentice will contact the Instructor to introduce and articulate learning goals for the apprenticeship. A structure for that introduction is found in the **Appendix**.
- Through an email exchange (or phone call/video conference if desired), the Instructor will share the *Apprentice Assessment Rubric* with the Apprentice and discuss details, questions, or concerns. The *Apprentice Assessment Rubric* is found in the **Appendix** of this handbook.
- Throughout the course, the Instructor and Apprentice will initiate contact with each other to discuss specific details about online teaching as they arise and according to the rubric.
- The Apprentice will have all course emails sent through Canvas to his or her preferred email address and log into the course daily to observe the Instructor.
- The Instructor will designate one discussion assignment to be led by the Apprentice. This discussion should be decided before the course begins to allow the Apprentice enough

time to properly prepare for this discussion. The instructor will observe the Apprentice, support, and troubleshoot as needed.

- Toward the end of the course, the Instructor will designate one assignment to be assessed by the Apprentice. The instructor will observe the Apprentice, support, and troubleshoot as needed.
- At the end of the course, the Instructor and Apprentice individually complete a draft of the *Apprentice Assessment Rubric*. During a 20-30 minute discussion (by phone, chat, or other synchronous medium), the Apprentice and Instructor share their rubric with each other to note areas of agreement and disagreement with the goal of the instructor completing a final version of the rubric. The Instructor will then send the rubric to the World Campus Faculty Development Office, Cathy Shreckengast (cas75@psu.edu).
- Once the completed rubric is received, the Instructor/Apprentice Collaboration concludes. The Instructor receives credit for having completed OL 1200 Teaching Supervision Apprentice and receives an extra \$50 for that OL course. The Apprentice receives credit for completing OL 2400 Apprentice Online Teaching.
- Throughout the course, the Instructor is expected to follow these guidelines for Collaboration with the Apprentice:
 - Provide ongoing constructive feedback, give guidance, suggestions, advice, and support to the apprentice; be a coach.
 - Be available for questions and assistance.
 - Review all OL course materials and confirm that the apprentice understands it.
 - Allow the apprentice to lead one discussion assignment and provide constructive feedback and troubleshooting support.
 - Allow the apprentice to assess one assignment later in the course and provide constructive feedback and troubleshooting support.

[7] The Refresher Faculty Program

Introduction

As an OL Instructor, you may have a Refresher Faculty assigned to your course. If this is the case, you will have responsibilities and opportunities with regard to the Refresher Faculty's learning, and you will receive additional compensation for your work. The **Refresher Faculty** is an experienced online faculty seeking a refresher for online teaching skills. This may be someone who is an experienced online teacher, but has not taught online for some time or taught online in Canvas. Refresher Faculty "shadow" the OL Instructor and may help with discussion management or with assignment feedback in order to put into practice effective online teaching skills. OL Instructors and Refresher Faculty will coordinate according to a rubric and guidelines. This arrangement is intended to be mutually beneficial.

Guidelines and Process for the OL Instructor/Apprentice Collaboration

- Refresher Faculty (RF) will be assigned to an instructor’s OL course one week prior to the course start date.
- The RF will email the Instructor and introduce him or herself and highlight specific areas of online teaching he or she wishes to work on during your OL course.
- Through an email exchange (or phone call/video conference if desired), the Instructor will share the *Refresher Faculty Assessment Rubric* with the RF and discuss details, questions, or concerns. The *Refresher Faculty Assessment Rubric* is found in the **Appendix** of this handbook.
- Throughout the course, the Instructor and RF will contact with each other in order to discuss specific details about online teaching as they arise and according to the rubric.
- The RF will have all course emails sent through Canvas to his or her preferred email address and log into the course daily to observe the Instructor.
- The Instructor will coordinate with the RF with regard to taking over pre-arranged specific teaching duties as the RF wishes. The instructor will observe the RF, support, and troubleshoot as needed.
- At the end of the course, the Instructor and RF individually complete a draft of the *Refresher Faculty Assessment Rubric*. During a 20-30 minute discussion (by phone, chat, or other synchronous medium), the Apprentice and Instructor share their rubric with each other to note areas of agreement and/or disagreement with the goal of the instructor completing a final version of the rubric. The Instructor then sends the rubric to the World Campus Faculty Development Office, Cathy Shreckengast (cas75@psu.edu).
- Once the completed rubric is received, the Instructor/RF Collaboration concludes. The Instructor receives credit for having completed OL 1250 Teaching Supervision Refresher and receives an extra \$50 for that OL course.
- Throughout the course, the Instructor is expected to follow these guidelines for Collaboration with the Refresher Faculty:
 - Provide ongoing constructive feedback, give guidance, suggestions, advice, and support to the apprentice; in other words, be a coach.
 - Be available for questions and assistance in a timely fashion.
 - Review all OL course materials and confirm that the Apprentice understands it.
 - Allow the Apprentice to lead one discussion assignment and provide constructive feedback and troubleshooting support.
 - Allow the Apprentice to assess one assignment later in the course and provide constructive feedback and troubleshooting support.

[8] OL Instructor Professional Development

Our mission is support online faculty throughout their teaching careers, and this includes OL Instructors. We want to work with each of you individually to advise and create a professional development plan that meets your needs and growing expertise in teaching online. Taking our OL courses, earning our certificates, and participating in the Apprentice and Refresher Faculty

programs are a few ways you can grow professionally. We encourage you to contact Shawna Cassick (smm52@psu.edu) who can advise you on an online professional development plan.

[9] OL Instructor Evaluation Pilot Program

In 2017, we plan to launch a pilot OL instructor evaluation program to provide you an authentic evaluation process and specific feedback on your OL teaching. We hope you will join us in the conversation and collaboration to design this process. Details will be announced by email to our OL Course instructors and on our website in the spring of 2017.

[10] Course Names and Numbering

We have redesigned our OL curriculum and renumbered our courses to make more sense according to the category of course (and not how it was delivered, as in the past). That new numbering system can be found in the **Appendix** of this handbook. You will need to refer to this new system when you received your OL Course teaching assignments.

[11] How the Certificates Work

The **Faculty Online Teaching Certificate** is revised for 2016. It is a 4-course online experience that helps faculty develop essential competence in online teaching. As the online instructor gains experience, a variety of courses, credentials, and opportunities are available to support her or his professional development throughout the career. For more information and professional advising, contact Shawna Cassick (smm52@psu.edu).

We also offer Penn State graduate students the **Graduate Online Teaching Certificate** (OL 2050) consisting of a five-week course and other programming and the Apprentice Teaching program for graduate students who have completed the certificate and seek online teaching experience in our OL courses.

In the near future, we will offer several new online teaching credentials comprised of OL courses and applied teaching experiences.

[12] The OL Faculty Community

This community of instructors teaches OL courses as well as academic courses in their disciplines. They collaborate with the World Campus Online Faculty Development unit in projects such as curriculum and program development, teaching in our certificate programs, and conducting research on online teaching and learning. If interested, please contact Larry Boggess (boggess@psu.edu).

[13] Agreement Verification and Demographic Information

All OL instructors, current and new, are asked to read this handbook, Sections 1-14, and indicate your agreement with the guidelines and expectations by clicking the link and completing the online survey. Doing so is your indication of acceptance. Thank you!! [Click Here to Agree.](#)

[14] Appendix

Apprentice Assessment Rubric

Element of Teaching	Self-Assessment	Rationale	Instructor Feedback
Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did students demonstrate that they were engaged? ● What do I believe contributed to this engagement? ● Did I maintain sufficient engagement and presence in my assigned areas? 	Describe your observations here. What happened?	Cite evidence of how or why for your answers to the questions. Tie your self-assessment to this evidence.	Your OL instructor will offer their feedback and observations here.
Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Was my feedback timely? ● How did my feedback help participants to 			

<p>achieve their learning goals for the course?</p>			
<p>Instructional Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What parts of my instruction had the most positive impact on learning? • What can I further adapt or modify in my practice to further support students? 			
<p>Reflecting on Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In teaching this lesson today, what did I learn about this group of students or individual students that I will now use to facilitate student learning? If I would teach this lesson again to the same students, how would I change this lesson? 			

Refresher Faculty Assessment Rubric

Element of Teaching	Self-Assessment	Rationale	Instructor Feedback
Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did participants demonstrate that they were engaged? ● What do I believe contributed to this engagement? ● Did I maintain sufficient engagement and presence in my assigned areas? 	Describe your observations here. What happened?	Cite evidence of how or why for your answers to the questions. Tie your self-assessment to this evidence.	Your OL instructor will offer their feedback and observations here.
Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Was my feedback timely? ● How did my feedback help participants to achieve learning goals for the course? 			
Instructional Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What parts of my instruction had the most positive impact on learning? ● What can I further adapt or modify in my practice to further support students? 			
Reflecting on Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In teaching this lesson today, what did I learn about this group of students or individual students that I will now use to facilitate student learning? If I would teach this lesson again to the same 			

students, how would I change this lesson?			
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Apprentice Introduction Format

When the Apprentice first emails the Instructor for an introduction, the Apprentice should share the following information:

- academic area/subject;
- online and face-to-face teaching experience;
- learning goals for the apprenticeship; and
- specific competencies to improve.

OL Course Numbering System

Course Number	Previous Course Number	Course Title	Previous Course Title	Curriculum Category	Instructional Mode	Required for Certificate	Course Length
OL 1000		Introduction to the World Campus		Professional Practice	Self-Directed	Yes	3-4 hours
OL 1100*		Conducting Research with your Online Students		Professional Practice	Cohort	No	4 weeks
OL 2000		Essentials of Online Teaching	Effective Online Teaching	Instructional Practice	Cohort	Yes	5 weeks**
OL 2050	OL 4500	Essentials of Online Teaching for Graduate Students	The Graduate Student Online Teaching Certificate	Instructional Practice	Cohort	No	5 weeks
OL 2100	OL 1900	Introduction to Canvas	ProveIt!	Instructional Practice	Self-Directed	Yes	3-4 hours

OL 2150*		Canvas Hands On		Instructional Practice	Cohort	No	TBD
OL 2200	OL 2900	Assessment of Online Teaching and Learning	Assessment of Online Learners	Instructional Practice	Cohort	No	4 weeks
OL 2300	OL 2800	Teamwork in Online Teaching and Learning		Instructional Practice	Cohort	No	4 weeks
OL 3000	OL 1800	Supporting Accessibility for Online Learners	Accessibility	The Learner and Learning	Self-Directed	Yes	3-4 hours
OL 3100	OL 1600	Teaching the Adult Learner		The Learner and Learning	Self-Directed	No	3-4 hours
OL 3200	OL 1700	Serving the Military and Veteran Student	Serving Those Who Serve	The Learner and Learning	Self-Directed	No	3-4 hours
OL 3300*		Teaching the International Student		The Learner and Learning	Cohort	No	4 weeks
OL 3400	OL 4000	Online Course Design		The Learner and Learning	Cohort	No	4 weeks
OL 3500*		Gamification in Online Teaching and Learning		The Learner and Learning	Cohort	No	4 weeks

*new course

**length of course change