

# Recommended Guidelines for UH Online and Hybrid Courses

Prepared by FDIS -- Faculty and  
Departmental Instructional  
Support Team

## RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR UH ONLINE AND HYBRID COURSES

Online and hybrid courses taught at the University of Houston are strongly encouraged to follow the quality standard guidelines provided through Faculty and Departmental Instructional Support (FDIS) and Online and Special Programs (OSP).

SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) policy statement regarding distance education provides the underlying concepts for the implementation of quality delivery of all University of Houston programs and courses. The best practices statement can be found on the SACS website at the following URL: <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/08/commadap.pdf>

This document describes guidelines and recommendations needed to implement quality online courses.

### DEFINITION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION:

The University of Houston defines distance education classes as follows:

**Online** classes have no physical location requirements, and class materials are delivered online in an approved learning management system.

**Hybrid** classes at the University of Houston combine traditional classroom instruction with online class instruction. Hybrid courses have required meetings, and meet less than half of the time in a traditional face-to-face classroom environment, with the remainder of the course delivered online.

### QUALITY CONTENT CREATION AND DELIVERY GUIDELINES:

FDIS staff members ([fdis@uh.edu](mailto:fdis@uh.edu)) are available to provide feedback to every instructor teaching a hybrid or online course. This feedback can help the instructor develop their course to meet the minimum recommendations of quality.

Each Hybrid or Online course should include the following information hosted in a shell of a Learning Management System (e.g., Blackboard Learn, Canvas, etc):

- \_\_\_\_\_ A syllabus that includes all information required by the University. (Appendix C)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Learning outcomes and objectives.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Instructions to help students navigate the course.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Communication tools to facilitate faculty/student and student/student interaction, when appropriate for the course.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Class communication policies and procedures between faculty and students, and students with students.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A schedule for assignments and assessments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clearly defined expectations and grading policies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Expectations for feedback on assignments.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Etiquette expectations for group communication.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet Regular and Substantive Interaction rules.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Information regarding support services available for students in online courses, including the library, tutoring, and technology support.

Hybrid and online courses adhere to the following assumptions:

1. Hybrid and online courses meet the same requirements and rigor as those delivered face to face at the university.
2. Instructors of hybrid and online courses are the subject matter experts, and can work with Instructional Designers (Appendix A) who can assist with the navigation, design, and logistics of their course.

## APPENDIX A: CONTACT INFORMATION

### FACULTY AND DEPARTMENTAL INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT (FDIS)

- <http://uh.edu/fdis>
- [fdis@uh.edu](mailto:fdis@uh.edu)
- 832 842-2147
- Contact:
  - Dr. Teresa Acosta, Director 832-842-2142 [tyacosta@uh.edu](mailto:tyacosta@uh.edu)
  - Dr. Jackie Jing Fong Hsu 832-842-2143 [jjhsu@uh.edu](mailto:jjhsu@uh.edu)
  - Dr. Marsha P. Heard 832-842-2144 [mpheard@uh.edu](mailto:mpheard@uh.edu)
  - Anjana Singhal 713-743-3730 [asignhal@uh.edu](mailto:asignhal@uh.edu)
  - Brian Gharala 713-743-3553 [bsgharal@uh.edu](mailto:bsgharal@uh.edu)

### INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS SUPPORT BY COLLEGE:

<https://uh.edu/fdis/resources/instructional-designer-teams/>

### BLACKBOARD FACULTY SUPPORT:

[blackboard@uh.edu](mailto:blackboard@uh.edu)

### FACULTY HELP WEBSITE:

<http://www.uh.edu/blackboard/faculty/>

<http://www.instruction.uh.edu> (tutorials and blog)

### FACULTY BLACKBOARD ONLINE SUPPORT SERVICES 24/7:

<http://uh.edusupportcenter.com>

## BLACKBOARD STUDENT SUPPORT

### UH Support for Students:

- **Online Support Form** - [https://uh.edu/wtsc\\_apps/infotech/tickets/case-management/](https://uh.edu/wtsc_apps/infotech/tickets/case-management/)
- **Email** - [uitsupport@uh.edu](mailto:uitsupport@uh.edu)
- **Phone - 713-743-1411**  
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday through Saturday (except University holidays)
- **In person at Main Campus**  
  
**Tech Commons** located at the back entrance of the MD Anderson Library, across from the Student Center  
Everyday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (except University holidays)
- **Live chat:** <http://www.uh.edu/infotech/livechat>  
Monday – Friday 7 am – 8 pm (except during University holidays) Saturday-  
Sunday Closed
- **STUDENT HELP WEBSITE** <http://www.uh.edu/blackboard/help/>
- For more Blackboard resources, see, <http://www.uh.edu/blackboard/help/>

Faculty are encouraged make sure students are aware of the Blackboard support website and the Phone support number in the course syllabus. It is important for students to know the expectation of getting technical help from the help desk, and not the course instructor.

## **APPENDIX B: OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES**

### **CASA TESTING LAB SUPPORT**

<http://www.casa.uh.edu/casa/>

### **JUSTIN DART, Jr. STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY CENTER**

<http://www.uh.edu/accessibility>

### **ONLINE AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS**

<http://www.uh.edu/online/>

## APPENDIX C: Syllabus Requirements

As part of maintaining SACS accreditation and to comply with HB2504, faculty members are required to provide a class syllabus to their students and to post it in electronic form.

To post on the UH website, log into <https://accessuh.uh.edu/login.php> using their PeopleSoft account number and password. After logging into the PeopleSoft account, navigate to “Self Service” then to “Faculty Center.” The syllabus upload link is located on the right-hand column of the teaching schedule. This is required only for undergraduate courses and these syllabi must include:

1. Course and instructor identifiers.
2. Major assignments/exams: *Minimally, you must list all major course assignments and their weight in the final grade for any assignments worth 10% or more.*
3. Required readings: *List the Title, Author, and Year of all required readings for the course.*
4. Recommended readings and list of discussion/lecture topics: *List the Title, Author, and Year of all recommended readings for the course.*
5. List of discussion/lecture topics: *Include here all main lecture topics for the semester (dates optional).*

**The following items should be included on your syllabus.**

1. Semester and year of course.
2. Course number, title, and location.
3. Instructor’s Information: Contact information, office hours and location, and TA information if applicable.
4. Course Description and prerequisite information.
5. Learning Objectives with aligned outcomes.
6. Required and recommended materials:
  - a. Textbook information: title, author, edition, ISBN, and available electronic version.
  - b. Additional materials included with-textbook (i.e. web site access codes).
  - c. Other reading or software materials that are accessible online or through the Interlibrary Loan.
7. Schedule of Assignments, Exams and Deadlines.
8. Examples and consequences concerning student ethics and code of conduct (especially plagiarism).

9. Course grading system including final grading scale information.
10. Attendance/tardiness policies/conduct policies.
11. Participation expectations and policies that are consistent with the University of Houston definition.
12. Description of all assignments: including grading and late work acceptance policies.
13. Test and quiz procedure/grading/attendance/late arrival/makeup policies.
14. Final Exam information.
15. UH policy information such as accommodations for students with disabilities, religious holidays, and absence due to UH sponsored activities and academichonesty.
16. Provide information regarding Counseling and Psychological Services (UH CAPS). Include the following URLs:  
  
UH Main Campus: [http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets\\_talk.html](http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html)  
UH Sugar Land: <http://www.uh.edu/dsaes/uhsugarland>
17. A statement that you reserve the right to adjust schedule as needed.
18. Student expectations and etiquette how students should conduct themselves in the course.

### **How can you ensure that students are reading the syllabus?**

To ensure that students have read the syllabus, consider giving them a graded Syllabus Quiz. The purpose of a Syllabus Quiz is to familiarize the student with the content of the syllabus, class calendar, rules, and so on. By requiring a Syllabus Quiz, students are responsible for their own learning. They know where they can find the answers to questions about the course and are aware of the rules relating to the class.