

Online Teaching Handbook

School of Management
The University of Texas at Dallas

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Introduction

Welcome to online learning in the School of Management. Distance education is becoming commonplace in colleges and universities throughout the world. It is the goal of this manual to facilitate a smooth entrance into online teaching by outlining processes and procedures for creating and facilitating your course. Topics covered include: Organizational Information, Philosophy, Course Development, Technology, Faculty, Staff, Students, and Legal Issues.

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Organizational Information

Programs. The fully online degree programs in the School of Management (SOM) are the extension of the part-time campus MBA program, referred to as the Global MBA Online (GMBA) begun in 1999, and the MS in Accounting and Information Management (AIM) begun as a full online degree program option in 2004. Non-credit courses have been offered through Executive Education since 2006 and the MS in Healthcare Management began in 2007.

Administration. The programs are managed by the Program Directors.

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Philosophy

Definition of Distance Education. Distance education is defined as planned learning that normally occurs in a different place from teaching and as a result requires special techniques of course design, special instructional techniques, special methods of communication by electronic and other technology, as well as special organizational and administrative arrangements (Moore & Kearsley, 1996).

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Effectiveness of Online Instruction. Many have questioned if distance education is as effective as traditional education. A compilation of research findings entitled *The No Significant Difference Phenomenon* (NSDP) explores the effective use of technology, chiefly distance learning, compared to alternative methods or techniques of teaching. The annotated studies are arranged chronologically by year beginning in 1928 and ending in 1998. There are 355 research reports, summaries, and papers cited in which no significance difference was reported between the variables compared (Russell, 1999).

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Mission of Online Learning Programs. The mission of online programs at the School of Management is to provide high quality educational opportunities to students who may be at a geographic disadvantage, have employer travel and other conflicts which prevent on-campus class attendance, have course conflicts, or have personal circumstances that require scheduling flexibility.

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Online Course Standards. The School of Management’s standards for distance education courses are as follows.

Distance education courses will:

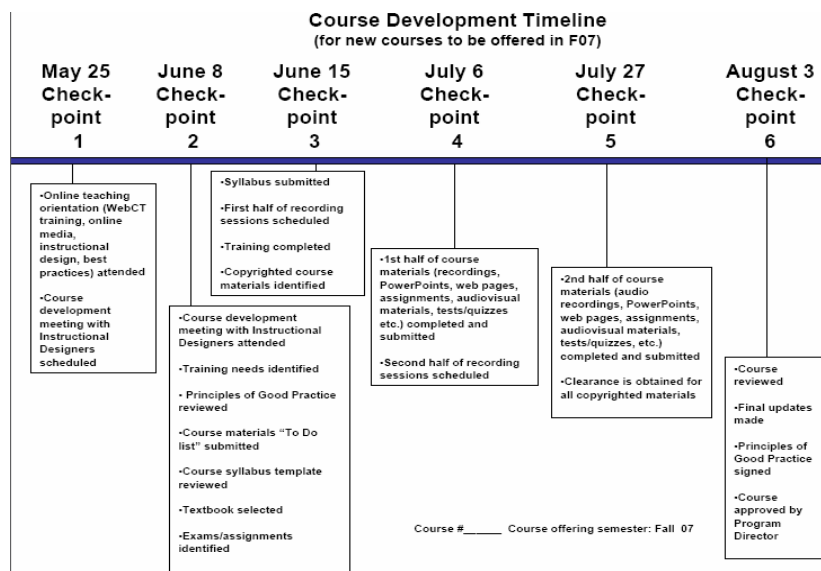
1. adhere to the same rigorous standards as traditional courses
2. result in learning outcomes appropriate to the credit awarded
3. comply with the “Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Distance Education Advisory Committee Guide for Incorporating The Principles of Good Practice into Electronically-Based Courses”
4. utilize the best available technology and pedagogy to create and provide a high quality educational experience to students
5. be taught by the same faculty as traditional courses
6. include regular communication and feedback to students
7. be maintained as current and responsive to student feedback

Courses follow the same academic calendar as the rest of the university. The faculty member responsible for conducting each course is required to develop its content and a corresponding syllabus including assignments, texts, due dates, grading rubrics, and other relevant information. The syllabus, textbook and all course materials are reviewed by the program director.

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Course Development

The time commitment to developing a course may seem daunting. A course development timeline has been created to assist in the planning and development of course materials. Typically courses will be developed over the course of an 11 week cycle. As each instructional designer is responsible for managing up to 14 courses per semester, it is essential that instructors strictly follow the timeline. This is an example of an 11 week timeline:



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Procedures. The following procedures should be followed for the preparation of course materials. The instructor will:

- follow the Course Development Timeline
- make arrangements with instructional designers to receive training on the technology needed to produce course materials at least 2 days prior to when the training is needed
- schedule studio time at least 2 days prior to the recording session

-have reviewed all aspects of the course two weeks prior to each offering
The development of course materials is time consuming. Sufficient time must be allocated to this process to ensure the course is complete prior to the start of the semester. Examples of course materials used in distance education courses at the School of Management include text-based lectures, multimedia presentations, interactive web-based exercises, case studies, and instructor videos. The instructional design staff is committed to supporting faculty, but course materials creation and content is ultimately the responsibility of the instructor. 150 hours is a good estimate of how much (combined) time personnel (Instructor, Instructional Designers, Teaching Assistants) will spend preparing a course.

Syllabus. The syllabus is the roadmap to the course. This document should be created very early in the course development process (see the example course development timeline). This document will contain all of the information students will need for your course including textbook information, due dates, chat sessions, special instructions, etc. A Syllabus Template can be found on the [training site](#).

Learning Objectives. Much like courses taught in the traditional classroom, distance education courses should be built on solid course objectives. The instructor should develop a list of objectives for the course as a whole, as well as for each section (or module)*. Here is an example of Course/Module objectives for a Strategic Management course:

Course Objectives:

- After completing Strategic Management, the student will explain core concepts and provide examples of their relevance and use by actual companies.
- After completing Strategic Management, the student will present explanations of analytical tools used in the managerial process of crafting and executing strategy.

Module Objectives:

- After completing Module 1, the student will list the components of the five-forces model of competition.
- After completing module 1, the student will define key success factors (KSF's).

*Instructional designers are available should the instructor need assistance writing objectives.

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Textbook Selection. The instructor should select textbooks/case studies and communicate this information to the bookstore at least four weeks prior to the start of each semester to provide ample time for ordering and shipment. If interested in creating a custom textbook or using supplemental publisher material in a class, please contact an instructional designer for assistance.

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Course Activities/Assessment. Activities for assessing students in an online course can be as dynamic as traditional face-to-face classes. Instructors have the options of incorporating graded activities such as communication (threaded discussion, chat, teleconference), group presentations, papers, and online or proctored exams.

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Communication.

1. Threaded discussion
 - Questions or discussion topics are posted on the discussion board. The amount and quality of student interaction can be graded.
2. Chat
 - Sessions are held to clarify assignments, discuss relevant current events, or deliver material. Attendance and level of participation can be graded and chat sessions can be archived for future reference or grading purposes.
3. Web conference
 - Web conferences can be used in the same way as chat sessions. Some professors may feel more comfortable speaking than typing.

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Group Presentations.

1. WebCT Student Presentations tool
 - In the Presentations area in WebCT, students are given a private venue to post discussions and files (such as Word Documents, PowerPoint Presentations and Excel Spreadsheets). The instructor has the option to make these files available when the work is complete. The work can be graded by the instructor and critiqued by students.
2. Chat
 - Students can present a text based lecture using the Chat tool in which the content of the presentation can be graded.
3. Group presentations via web conference

-Student presenters can upload PowerPoints (or any other type of document) and conduct a web-based presentation with audio. Content, delivery, and attendance can be graded.

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Papers. A paper may be submitted electronically via the WebCT Assignment drop-box, WebCT Mail, or it may be posted on the discussion board. Notes can be made on the paper and returned electronically if desired. As in the traditional classroom, plagiarism is a concern. [Turn-it-in](#) is a software program that can scan a student's paper and compare it to millions of previously submitted papers and literary works in a database. A report is then displayed that flags potentially plagiarized sections.

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Online Tests. A test can be created within WebCT that can be automatically scored and entered into the gradebook. At the instructor's discretion, results can be made available to the student. It is recommended that the instructor writes questions that test higher levels of learning as opposed to rote knowledge.

To address the issue of test security, the instructor should set up the test as follows:

1. Randomize questions from the test bank to ensure that students do not receive identical tests.
2. Randomize the answers so that if students do receive the same question, the answer order will not coincide between tests. *do not do this with questions that have answer options such as "all of the above, none of the above, etc." as when answers are randomized it will cause confusion.
3. Adjust settings so one question appears at a time in order to discourage students from printing test questions.
4. Set a time limit on the test in order to minimize the ability for students to look up answers in the textbook.

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Proctored Exams. If a proctored exam is appropriate, it is recommended that it be the course final exam. The use of a secure proctored test site allows the professor reasonable confidence that the student taking the test is, in fact, the student enrolled in the class. Approved testing sites require a valid ID, and provide a proctor who supervises the person taking the exam from beginning to end. The proctor ensures all exam instructions (i.e. closed book, time limit, etc.) are followed. Upon completion of the test, the proctor immediately seals the test and sends it back to UTD for grading. Students may be charged a fee by the proctored exam administrator and are responsible for all shipping costs.

Proctored exam guidelines state:

-the professor will submit an electronic copy (MS Word or PDF) to the GMBA office in accordance with the Course Development Timeline

-the professor's instructions are clearly written on the coversheet of each test

-only pre-approved testing facilities (colleges, commercial testing services, company training center, etc.) will be used

-students read and comply with all instructions on the [Proctored Exam Information Page](#)

-students must submit a [Proctored Exam Request Form](#) to the GMBA Office by the predetermined deadline to be eligible to take a proctored exam. Requests not received by the deadline will not be accepted

-the student completes the first part of the exam form

-the student sends/faxes the exam form to the proctor

-part two of the exam form is completed by the proctor and faxed to the GMBA office

-the exam (with instructions) is emailed to proctor via secure proctored exam database

-the exam is mailed back (at student expense) and returned to instructor for grading

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Uploading Course Materials. Once the course materials are created, all electronic materials must be uploaded to WebCT prior to the course being released. The instructor and an instructional designer should develop an intuitive organizational file structure to ensure ease of navigation for the student.

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Course Review. The professor is responsible for reviewing all aspects of the course for accuracy. Once the course meets the instructor's approval the professor must sign off on the Texas Education Coordinating Board Distance Education Advisory Committee's Guide for Incorporating The Principles of Good Practice into Electronically Based Courses. Finally, the course is to be approved by the program director.

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Technology

Getting Started. To ensure access and proper functioning of course materials, the following steps should be taken:

1. Install latest version of Microsoft Office. Contact the School of Management Technical Support Services at 972-883-4483 to install this at no charge.
2. [Obtain/Reset Net ID](#) The Net ID must be reset once per year. If problems are encountered with this step, contact the UTD Help Desk at assist@utdallas.edu or 972-883-2911.
3. [Tune-Up](#) your browser.
4. Download plug-ins*:
 - [Java](#)
 - [Windows Media Player](#)
 - [RealPlayer](#)
 - [Quicktime](#)
 - [Shockwave](#)
 - [Flash](#)
 - [Adobe Reader](#)
5. [Login](#) to your WebCT account.
 - Note: If you have problems logging in, see a wrong course listed, or do not see a course listed, contact the UTD Help Desk at assist@utdallas.edu or 972-883-2911.
6. -To customize your WebCT course, Contact Global MBA Support at gmbasupport@utdallas.edu

***This should be done each semester to insure the most current software versions are installed. Outdated versions have been known to cause technical problems.**

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Course Development Tools. In Internet-based learning the teacher and learner can be in different places at different times. Just as in the traditional classroom, communication is essential for a course to be successful. The instructor and students may maintain constant contact via discussion boards, teleconferences, chat rooms, and email. By using a combination of asynchronous and synchronous tools, the barriers of space and time are eliminated. In addition to the communication tools mentioned, information may be conveyed to students in several ways such as through synchronized slide presentations with audio (similar to PowerPoint), simulations (educational video games), streaming media (movies and audio), and text (PDF/Word documents and websites). Listed below are brief descriptions and hyperlinked examples to introduce the technologies used in distance education programs at the School of Management.

-[WebCT](#) (now owned by Blackboard): A course management tool (or container) where all materials/communication tools, gradebook, etc. reside.

-Streaming video: Allows students to access video clips via the Internet without any files being downloaded to their computers. [Streaming video example](#)

-PowerPoint: A component of Microsoft Office that facilitates computer-based slide presentations.

-[Flash](#): Allows the creation of multimedia presentations for viewing via computer. Translates PowerPoint Files into to streaming multimedia presentations. [Flash Example](#)

-[Respondus](#): Enhances the functionality and usability of WebCT's quiz, survey, and self-test tools. This tool saves considerable time developing tests by allowing the creation of all questions in a single text file and importing them directly into the WebCT testbank (as opposed to manually typing each question and answer into WebCT). This can be downloaded for free at: <http://www.utdallas.edu/ir/local/respondus/>
Contact Darren Crone at darren.crone@utdallas.edu for the password.

-[Adobe Acrobat](#): A cross-platform (any computer can open it) program that can convert Word Documents, Excel Spreadsheets, and PowerPoint Presentations into a file that is very difficult to alter. PDF files tend to be much smaller, therefore taking less time to download. PDF files are read using the free Adobe Acrobat Reader. Acrobat can be purchased at the bookstore. [Example PDF file](#)

-Microsoft Word: A program for generating text documents.

-Microsoft Excel: A program used to generate spreadsheets.

-Tablet PC: Allows graphic illustration of any application on a computer desktop. [Example Tablet PC file](#)

-[Library for Distance Students](#): Distance students may access UTD Library resources including a chat-based reference service, a document delivery service (books, articles, and media are sent via mail), and connection to the UTD Catalog.

-Teleconferencing: A forum for synchronous class meetings and small group discussions.

-Web conferencing: A forum for synchronous class meetings and small group discussions. Capabilities include real-time file sharing, video, and interactive features.

-Recording studio: This facility may be scheduled to record and edit audio/video material. The material can then be streamed for students to access.

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Tech Support: In order to get help as quickly as possible, please direct your question to the proper contact.

General Computer Problems: X4483

Logging in/Password issues, too many/not enough courses appearing in WebCT: assist@utdallas.edu or 972-883-2911.

Assistance developing/uploading materials, creating tests, general WebCT questions: gmbasupport@utdallas.edu

Faculty

Once the course is complete, the instructor is responsible for managing it throughout the semester. This management includes checking discussion boards, answering emails, adding course announcements, grading assignments, managing the gradebook, scheduling/conducting teleconferences, etc. A breakdown of the responsibilities and knowledge/skills/attitudes of faculty, staff, and teaching assistants follows.

Responsibilities. The instructor is ultimately responsible for all aspects of the course.

<p>Prior to Course Offering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -attending a course development workshop -requesting training as needed -scheduling studio recording time -obtaining the services of a student assistant -ensuring course is available in WebCT -ensuring all course materials are in compliance with accessibility standards -preparing course materials (syllabus, lectures, quizzes, etc.) in accordance to the course development timeline -providing instructional designers with proctored exams in accordance to the course development timeline -communicating textbook/case studies to be used with bookstore in accordance with the course development timeline -keeping course materials up-to-date -refreshing all due-dates for quizzes, tests, assignments -clearing old discussion postings, emails, and groups from previous semesters -clearance of copyrighted materials -reviewing course in its entirety two weeks prior to course offering -identification of needed corrections -communication of needed corrections to instructional designers one week prior to course offering -ensuring the course is complete prior to the start of the semester
<p>During Course Offering</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -responding to student questions within 72 hours -regular communication with students (discussion board, email, chat, teleconference, etc.) -scheduling and communicating times for synchronous communication (teleconference/chat) with students -maintaining online course throughout the semester (discussions, group formations, gradebook, assignment submissions, calendar, course material uploads after course release)

After Course Offering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -reviewing course evaluations -reflecting on experiences in the course -determining necessary changes for the next offering -communicating these changes with instructional designers
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Knowledge/Attitudes/Skills.

Faculty will have:

- the time to be actively involved in an online course
- intermediate computer skills
- the ability to interact with instructional designers regularly
- the desire to incorporate new technologies into classes
- the means to access WebCT on a regular basis
- the means to regularly update their course

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Staff

Instructional Designers. Instructional designers will assist faculty with all aspects of course preparation.

Instructional designers will:

- prepare a course development timeline
- assist with instructional design and development
- upload the course each semester
- evaluate and offer suggestions for course revisions
- conduct faculty workshops
- train teaching assistants
- assist with media selection, design and development
- provide guidance on copyright clearance
- provide guidance on accessibility issues
- provide technical assistance

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Teaching Assistants. Teaching assistants are instrumental in preparing and delivering an online course.

Teaching assistants will:

- monitor, record, and edit lecture audio
- provide help to faculty as needed (grading assignments, uploading files, reviewing course materials, etc.)

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Students

Admission requirements and tuition are the same as for traditional MBA students. There is no residency requirement. The fees are comparable to traditional classes (there is a distance learning fee, but students are exempt from fees such as student union, recreational facility and medical service). Students can combine online courses with traditional classroom courses within the SOM.

Recent GMBA statistics:

- Nearly half reside in the Metroplex; two-thirds in Texas
- 20% are in the rest of the USA, 10% overseas
- The majority of students are male (73%), 25-35 years old (62%), and US Citizens (92%)
- The average GMAT Score is 575

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Requirements.

Students will:

- have regular access to a computer that meets the specifications outlined
- have regular access to a reliable Internet connection (56K minimum, high speed preferred)
- access WebCT three times per week (minimum)

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Knowledge/Attitude/Skills.

The online student must be:

- proficient using a computer
- disciplined to complete projects by deadlines
- a self starter with intrinsic motivation to read, write, and participate fully in class activities
- able to manage time effectively
- able/willing to work independently and in virtual teams
- willing to devote approximately 12 hours a week to a 3-credit course
- committed to academic honesty
- willing to contact the instructor immediately if a problem with course content should arise
- willing to contact technical support immediately should a technical issue arise

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Legal Issues

Copyrighted Material. The instructor may not use copyrighted material without proper clearance. Obtaining clearance to use copyrighted material is the responsibility of the instructor. To determine if clearance needs to be obtained, the following four factors should be considered:

1. The purpose and character of the use, including whether use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes.

2. The nature of the copyrighted work.
3. The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole.
4. The effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

It is recommended that the instructor attends the “UT System’s Crash Course in Copyright” located at:

<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/cprtindx.htm>

Accessibility. Course materials should be accessible to students, regardless of disability. A text equivalent for every non-text element should be included for all course materials. This includes images, graphics, video, and audio files. A detailed set of guidelines can be found at the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) website:

<http://www.w3.org/1999/05/WCAG-REC-fact>

A student identifying him/herself as having a disability should be directed to the UTD ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance office.

Website: <http://www.utdallas.edu/legal/title9/contactada.html>

Phone: 972-883-212

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References

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