

ONLINE EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES (Version 2.0)

RATIONALE

Education is one of the essential things that a person must acquire. Their future or career is dependent on their education and it also improves the way one interacts with rest of the people. Education/learning is very beneficial to be more productive in this contemporary world. With so much competition now, education and degree programs are very important. With the advancement of technologies, it has become easier for teachers and learners to sit at home and educate themselves. This is possible with the help of distance learning.

Online learning is education that takes place over the internet. It is a type of distance learning that takes place across geographical locations and not in a traditional classroom. Distance learning has a long history and there are several types including correspondence courses, telecourses, CD-ROM courses, online learning, and mobile learning.

With the recent turn of events, the University of Negros Occidental – Recoletos, in its aim to continue with its educational mission to educate the minds and hearts of its learners, implements a platform which pursue quality education notwithstanding pace, path, space, and time using a flexible/enhanced online learning environment.

A. LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) UTILIZATION

Learning management systems are used to plan, execute, and assess a specific learning process. It is a software used in eLearning programs which helps in administration, documentation, tracking, and recording. The following are to be performed by teacher in the utilization of the learning management system :

1. **Course Preparation** : This stage is the time-consuming activity that a teacher has to perform to best address course content creation and curation. Course contents in various forms are encouraged to respond to the multimedia orientation of the learners.
 - a. Course Account Creation : With the use of Schoology, the teacher, upon receipt of the class list, with learners' names, e-mail addresses, and contact numbers, creates his virtual class and invites learners or registers the learners for a notice to be sent for class entry/confirmation. The account passkey must be shared to allow entry to the virtual classroom. The teacher installs the application (in his mobile devices) and/or locates the website where the learning management system is accessed.
 - b. Course Welcome Page : An opening page for an online/virtual classroom must start with the course welcome page which comprises the following contents :
 1. Augustinian Recollect Prayer
 2. Welcome Message (of the teacher)
 3. Coursework Plan (Syllabi)
 4. Activity Plan (at least for the first week)
 5. Course Materials (at least for the first week)
 6. Rules and Procedures in using the LMS, video conferencing, and assessment
 - c. Class Orientation : Teachers are advised to organize materials and present to the learners the coursework plan, to include the schedule of online facilitation/discussion, availability of materials and assessment. The materials and schedules, mentioned in A.1.b, be discussed with the learners. It is expected that the first online session covers not only class orientation but also the first course content delivery period.
2. **Course Content Administration** : Materials to be used and provided to learners must be properly curated. The teacher must provide a balance of materials to be used for virtual classroom activities. The following are the format of materials to be shared with the learners:
 - a. Portable document format (pdf) of course notes, book references and presentation slides. All handwritten materials are to be converted into .pdf format
 - b. Video and audio clips
 - c. Simulators
 - d. Uniform resource locators (URL) /links to other sources of materials

- e. Softcopies of research transcripts and other scholarly works
- 3. **Course Implementation Monitoring** : Effective online education does not only depend on connectivity but also in the appropriate delivery of course content, facilitation, and assessment. Supervisory functions performed by the deans and program heads ensure the quality and quantity of content and delivery of the course.
 - a. Deans and program heads are required to have membership to all of the online courses offered under his/her college/department.
 - b. In coordination with the course teacher assigned, deans/program heads give comment and suggestions on materials used, delivery mode, facilitation process, questions formulated, manner of scoring, among others.
 - c. In no means that the deans and program heads interact in the virtual classroom. Their roles are plainly focused on observation and clinical counselling, thereafter, in the activities and assessment conducted by the teacher.
- 4. For other LMS utilization concerns, please coordinate with the training facilitators for assistance.

B. FACILITATION THROUGH VIDEO CONFERENCING

In facilitating online learning, like in any other situation, it works with human beings. It is important to share warmth (Caritas), to be curious about who your learners are and how they think (Scientia), to set a clear course, to provide encouragement, and to be there. It is aimed that participants succeed, leave the virtual classroom looking at the surrounding with brighter perspective, feel confident of his own learning, and know how to support inquiry-based learning in its new environment.

1. Before the Scheduled Meeting

- a. Test your meeting connections in advance.
- b. Establish online video conferencing connections several minutes before the meeting start time.
- c. Create a backup communication plan (e-mail, messenger, among others) in case you have trouble connecting with remote participants. A backup plan can include asking onsite participants to connect to the meeting through their laptops, using a mobile or speakerphone, and/or collaborating through an online collaboration tool (e.g., Google docs).
- d. If connection is not that good in the teachers' areas, they can conduct the activity in the University and avail of the wireless communication facility, provided by ICTD.

2. During the Scheduled Meeting

- a. Set expectation for the session, ground rules, and consider you class size.
- b. Have all participants share their video and audio. No lurkers allowed.
- c. Ensure all participants can see and hear all other participants, as appropriate.
- d. Ensure meeting room microphones are distributed appropriately to pick up all speakers.
- e. Ensure location lighting does not limit a participant's visibility (e.g., avoid backlighting from windows or lamps).
- f. Have participants mute their microphones if their location has excessive background noise or they will not be speaking.
- g. Have a meeting facilitator — often, but not always, especially if the teacher is religiously following his coursework plan, the person who called the meeting. The facilitator is responsible for:
 - 1. providing an agenda to participants — ahead of the meeting is nice, but minimally at the start of the meeting — that includes an overview of topics to be covered and planned outcome;
 - 2. establishing the visual or verbal cues, such as raising a hand, or use thumbs-up emoticon, to indicate when someone wants to actively contribute verbally to the meeting;
 - 3. engaging participants at all locations to ensure discussion understanding, and alignment;
 - 4. limiting “side conversations” and multitasking or ensure all participants are made aware of that content;
- h. Make sure all participants have equal access to content by sharing all content within the video conferencing connection and using online tools (e.g., Google docs) whenever possible.
- i. Send a reminder to the learners the day before the virtual meeting.

3. After the Scheduled Meeting

- a. Teachers are reminded to apply the first-in, last out approach. This means that after the closing statements of the teacher and/or learners, the former is expected to let all learners sign out first before he sets the meeting to a close.

- b. Advise learners to follow instructions and use worksheets for their assignments, as posted in the LMS.
- c. Review recording of the video conference to identify areas of improvement for the next session.

4. Video Conferencing Etiquettes

- a. Be on time.
- b. Ensure that the technology works correctly.
- c. Use technology to fully engage remote participants.
- d. Choose the proper software and hardware.
- e. Wear school-appropriate clothing.
- f. Frame the camera correctly and have the right light.
- g. Look into the camera.
- h. Pay attention.
- i. No food allowed.
- j. For virtual backgrounds, avoid using distracting images/videos.

To ensure learners are engaged in the video conference, they must be prepared, answered the pre-session questions, and write out questions they may have, related to the topic. Teachers are expected to require each learner to post one question at the start of the session. In addition to the learners' preparation requirement, the faculty must also be prepared. Ask learners questions at the start of the video conferencing session to assess prior knowledge about the content area. Start the session with a check in, and ask each learner to share something about themselves. The question prompt is as simple as, "How you are today?". This provides each learner the chance to speak and actively participate at the start of the session. Teacher must prepare a specific video conferencing lesson, plan the discussion topics, share and follow the coursework plan, and conclude the session at a specific time. In providing learners with a well-designed and specific video conferencing session, it encourages active participation and that learning goals are met.

C. ONLINE ASSESSMENT

Online assessments do not have to be radically different to those used in face-to-face courses. Many assessments can be transferred to the online space. A few considerations should be made during this transition process.

1. Time Management: Online courses tend to be front-heavy, requiring a lot of preparation before the start of the course. Assessment descriptions, rubrics, and supporting resources all need to be ready for learners from the first day of the semester. However, the amount of work does not diminish afterwards. Although there is no physical classroom, it is the teachers' role to be present and accessible for learners and to monitor their progress (Beebe et al., 2010).
2. Course and Material Organization: Without face-to-face opportunities to communicate with learners, it becomes essential that course materials are clear, accessible and easy to find. Instructions may need to be re-worded to ensure they are not misinterpreted (Page & Cherry, 2018)
3. Informal Assessment Opportunities: In online courses, teachers cannot monitor learners' progress by assessing their body language or by checking in with them during class. This makes structured formative assessment even more important. Plan more formal opportunities to check in with learners, such as question and answer discussion boards, feedback requests, or news bulletins (Beebe et al., 2010).
4. Communication with Learners: Teachers who are used to making comments, suggestions, or clarifications about assessments in class need to find new ways to share these thoughts with learners, whether through news bulletins, emails, or discussion board comments (Beebe et al., 2010).
5. Adjustment Time: Learners who are unfamiliar with the LMS and other technologies used may benefit from an opportunity to practice navigating it, such as through a practice assignment. Ensure learners know where to find help with navigating the LMS if needed (Duesbery et al., 2015).

D. GRADING SCHEME

For online learning approach in the delivery of course content, the following are the components of grading scheme:

1. **Class Standing** (to include facilitation activities, discussion board, quizzes, and assignments) **50%**
2. **Examination** (conduct of two major examinations – midterm (15%) and finals (15%)) **30%**
3. **Projects** (end-term requirements, project-based implementation and documentation, among others) **20%**

E. CLASS SCHEDULES

1. A phase implementation of virtual/online instruction will be observed, (where the semester, with 18 weeks ,be divided into three phases), with six week time allotment per period/segment, as follows :
 - a. Phase One : August 17 – September 25, 2020
 - b. Phase Two : September 28 – November 6, 2020
 - c. Phase Three : November 9 – December 18, 2020
2. Students' enrolled courses are to be distributed into three phases, where a maximum of five 3-unit course will be allowed. Arrangements of courses and other course-related issues are to be settled by the program heads/deans.
3. Lecture type courses, with a three-unit academic credit, must comply with the CHED contact hours requirement of 54 hours (3 hours per session x 3 sessions per week x 6 weeks).
4. For courses, with laboratory component, requiring two to three phases for completion, the teacher will be required to submit students' grades, using a temporary gradesheet, after completing the activities in the said phase(s).
5. Students will be informed of the revised schedule thru the University Information System (UIS).

F. ON ENROLMENT

1. Students may be allowed simultaneous enrolment of courses with prerequisites and are required to comply the documentary requirements for such purpose.
2. Extra courses may be allowed to non-graduating students, provided that the total overload does not exceed three academic units.