

ENSURING QUALITY ONLINE INSTRUCTION

Online teaching requires new skills and instructional strategies to address learning and legal issues not found in traditional face-to-face classes. The members of the Online Teaching and Learning Committee advise significant preparation for online teaching. The committee considers it critical for department chairs and coordinators to require teacher preparation and experience before assigning online courses so that students can experience the same rigor and quality expected in face-to-face courses.

PHASE 1: TEACHER PREPARATION

Before an instructor is assigned to teach an online class for the first time they should be able to:

- Describe and apply [best practices](#)ⁱ for effective online instruction in their subject area.
- Use a **course management system** (e.g. Blackboard) to create an online environment course that incorporates clear instructions, effective communication, appropriate and varied learning activities, and helpful learning resources.
- Create online materials that are [accessible](#)ⁱⁱ to all students in accordance with Federal and State ADA standards.

There are many ways to learn these basics, but the Online Teaching and Learning Committee recommends completion of the California Community College @ONE Online Teaching Certification (<http://www.onefortraining.org/certification/>) or a similar program with instruction in:

- **Pedagogy** (for example, @ONE *Introduction to Online Teaching and Learning* or *Developing an Online Course* offered through Grossmont College Professional Development),
- **Content Management System** (for example @ONE's *Introduction to Teaching with Blackboard 9.1*), and
- **Accessibility** (for example @ONE's *Creating Accessible Online Courses* or workshops offered by Cuyamaca Professional Development).

Alternative pathways to effective online teaching include:

- Demonstrated prior experience teaching a high quality online course (see [Best Practices Checklist](#) and [Guide](#)ⁱⁱⁱ)
- Working closely with an experienced online teacher/mentor (for example, team teaching with an online instructor mentor)
- Certification from another college

Faculty may request Professional Development hours and funding (when available) to help offset the expenses.

PHASE 2: CONTINUED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To stay current with online teaching, it is strongly recommended that online instructors:

- Explore multimedia products and learning resources pertinent to their course
- Consult with experienced online instructors and support staff
- Subscribe to the [Cuyamaca College Online Blog](#)^{iv}
- Continue professional development in online teaching (flex week workshops, online courses, webinars, conferences, etc.)
- Mentor new online instructors

EVALUATION

A critical component of maintaining the quality of online education is the evaluation process. This doesn't mean a new evaluation system needs to be developed; it simply means that online classes should be evaluated as part of the normal instructor evaluation process. Online and traditional classes require different skill sets for preparation and delivery. If an instructor teaches both online and in the classroom, it is strongly recommended that both venues be evaluated in a comprehensive instructional evaluation.

The committee strongly recommends that all evaluators of online sections have experience teaching online or have participated in a workshop on how to evaluate an online course.

SUPPORT

The Online Teaching and Learning Committee recognizes the value of mentoring and supportive assistance during a faculty member's first experience teaching online. Rhonda Bauerlein, an Instructional Design Technology Specialist, is available for individual consultation. It is recommended that instructors new to teaching online at Cuyamaca meet with Rhonda well before the semester begins. Teachers are also encouraged to work with a mentor in their field or in a related field. Mentors may request Professional Development hours to help compensate their time.

ⁱ Best practices checklist: www.cuyamaca.edu/teachingonline/pdf/best-practices-checklist-for-effective-online-instruction.pdf

ⁱⁱ Accessibility training: www.cuyamaca.edu/tlc/workshops/access/default.asp

ⁱⁱⁱ Guide to Best Practices in Online Teaching: www.cuyamaca.edu/cc/pdf/Guide-Best-Practices-Online-Teaching.pdf

^{iv} Blog: cuyamaca-online.blogspot.com/