

Required Faculty Training to Teach Online

Question:

My institution (Oakland University) does not currently require our faculty to go through any sort of training whatsoever to teach an online course. I'm hoping to change that, but I've run into some issues, and I'd love to know what others are doing to get around this. If you require faculty to take training to teach online, would you please answer the following questions:

1. What does your training program look like? How many weeks long is it? Is it run only at certain times, or can they join at any time and work at their own pace? What format is it (fully online/blended/face-to-face).
2. Does your training include a how-to section to learn how to use the LMS? If so, how long is it, or how much of the course is it? If not, how do they learn how to use the LMS?
3. Do you compensate faculty for taking this training?
4. Do you have a requirement for ongoing training to stay certified to teach online? If so, what does it look like? If not, do you have plans for this, and how would you like it to work?
5. What do you do when a faculty needs to teach the course last minute, or has to fill in for a course mid-semester (for a faculty who cannot continue to teach the course) but hasn't been through the required training?

– Shaun A. Moore, Ph.D., Director of e-Learning and Instructional Support, Oakland University

Golden Gate University relies on adjunct faculty for roughly 70% of total units. Roughly half of our units are delivered online.

1. All new instructors must take an online course which introduces them to our learning management system, our support systems, and basic concepts in pedagogy. The course is pretty basic, and can be completed in just 2-4 hours.



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2. We introduce our new instructors to our LMS in the introductory course. We also encourage them to reach out to the full-time faculty coaches and our Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, which provides resources to build both online and web-enhanced courses.
3. We don't separately compensate faculty for taking the course.
4. We don't have an ongoing training requirement, though this is a goal for the future.
5. While we generally want our faculty to complete our training before teaching, there are situations that demand immediate action. We try to staff these "crisis" classes with experienced faculty, but will use a new instructor where necessary. We ask the instructor to complete the course as quickly as possible, provide support in the first few weeks, and decline to reschedule the faculty member for future semesters if the training is not completed quickly.

– Frederick W. Sroka, Dean, Bruce F. Braden School of Taxation, School of Accounting, Golden Gate University

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1. Our mandatory training course is four weeks long, asynchronous, fully online, and facilitated by a master teacher.
2. I've offered it both ways (no LMS training and with LMS training), and we put the LMS training back into the course. Instructors needing extra assistance are pointed to an instructional designer and technologist.
3. We do not compensate faculty for taking the training.
4. We do not require ongoing training, but faculty are required to go through the training when it is significantly revised.
5. Our training course is offered once a semester, and while we strongly encourage instructors to take it during the first semester of teaching for us, they may defer the training once if necessary.

– Tanya Grosz, Ph.D., Dean of Graduate, Online & Adult Learning, Assistant Professor of English, University of Northwestern St. Paul

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Here at Olivet Nazarene University, on the non-trad side we are now requiring a decent amount of training because in the past those f2f instructors who had never taught online generally didn't understand the difference in pedagogy when it comes to online courses. Our quality was suffering, even though we had subject matter experts teaching. So we have instituted a training regimen, and we are in the process of holding faculty accountable to it. Faculty are not paid or compensated for the training; it is simply required to teach for us. For new hires, it's easy. For those who have been teaching for a while, it's a little tougher. But we're making progress, and generally I think faculty appreciate the fact that we are holding



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them accountable and we are communicating clear expectations. I will add that our faculty are largely adjuncts, and this works in our favor as it pertains to holding them accountable.

- Jeremy Van Kley, M.Div., Senior Director of Faculty / General Education Program Director, Olivet Nazarene University

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As a highly unionized, shared-governance university, we have trouble with anything that is “mandatory.” However using the C-RAC guidelines which both our accreditor and SARA use, our Joint Committee on Online and Distance Learning has approved a policy providing several routes for faculty to show they are “qualified” to teach online. And then we work with chairs etc. to encourage them to only allow/hire “qualified” faculty to teach. We recognize that sometimes they are stuck with last minute hires who might not be “qualified,” and we’ve tried not to worry about that.

We offer a three-part training for faculty. The first is a self-paced intro to our LMS (Sakai). The second, which focuses on teaching online, is a fully-online facilitated three-week training which we offer 3-4 times a year. We want faculty to experience what it is like to be a student in an online course. The third part, which focuses on course design, is a flexibly-paced course. Students have three weeks to complete it.

Faculty who have been teaching online for some time can choose to submit a course for an internal Quality Matters review and/or submit training credentials from another institution or organization as alternatives.

- Diane J. Goldsmith, Ph.D, Director, Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, University of Rhode Island

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1. For our online program, we do require any new faculty member to go through our Faculty Certification Program. It is run once a quarter and we work with the individual colleges to ensure they are able to get their new faculty members into our program. The program itself is fully online with live chats, modules, and resources for faculty to successfully complete and understand the teaching requirements here at CTU. In the three-week program, each week is broken into units with assignments in each week. We cover topics such as: LMS, faculty expectations, technology, effective practices, and policies and procedures.
 2. We have recorded modules for our new faculty to review the LMS, also have a Virtual Campus and Classroom Training Directory, which provides a user manual for our faculty. Since our training program is in an actual classroom environment, faculty get the full student experience and then also have access from the faculty perspective as well to get the hands-on experience.
 3. Yes, we do [compensate faculty for attending this training]. We require faculty to complete and submit professional development hours based on their teaching schedule for the year. My team also supports faculty by hosting professional development events. If faculty attend any of our in-house



professional development events, they automatically receive professional development hour/s based on the event. If they complete their professional development hours externally they have to submit a form for approval.

4. We require all faculty to complete our Faculty Certification Program before teaching their first course, we do not run into this issue. We do have specialized classroom training requirements as well. For example, if there is a particular software being utilized in the classroom, we require faculty to go through that training before they can teach that course. If a scenario like you described does arise and we do not have anyone on our bench who is trained, the Lead Faculty member and my team will help support them and get them caught up to speed.

– Aziz A. Khetani, MBA, Manager, Faculty Development, Colorado Technical University

1. We offer a variety of short online courses to enable faculty to take any course on a continuous enrollment basis. Each self-paced course takes about 4 hours to complete and participants are expected to complete the course over a period of 4 weeks. Our courses are fully online.

2. Since we offer our training for a variety of client institutions, we don't train faculty on the specifics of a particular LMS. However, we offer core training regarding the functionalities of learning management systems as part of our basic courses.

3. Some of our client institutions compensate their adjunct faculty for the completion of required training.

4. Many of our client institutions provide continued training opportunities for their faculty to enable them to become Certified Higher Education Professional (CHEP) in Online Teaching, a designation awarded by NASASPS. CHEPs are required to complete 8 hours of continuing education to maintain their certification. You can learn more about the CHEP certification here: www.cheponline.org.

5. Our self-paced, short-course format enables faculty to get just-in-time training when they need it to get started on their e-teaching journey.

– Amir Moghadam, Ph.D., President/CEO, MaxKnowledge, Inc.

Additional Notes:

The Illinois Online Network Making the Virtual Classroom a Reality is a professional development program that directly addresses the questions raised here: <http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/courses/students/mot.asp>

– Scott B. Johnson, Program Coordinator, Illinois Online Network, University of Illinois System



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