



# Online Course Teaching Requirements



In order to ensure the success of students in online courses, and in order to ensure the university's compliance with federal regulations and accreditation requirements, these teaching requirements were established in to help you and your students be successful.

The requirements are detailed on the following pages and are designed to help you successfully deliver courses, while at the same time facilitate student engagement and learning. These requirements are consistent with the best practices used across institutions delivering online courses.

Research supports that the use of these requirements also results in improved student outcomes such as regular engagement with course materials, fewer dropped courses, enhanced retention of content, and improved performance on course objectives.

**In order to continue being offered online teaching opportunities, it is important that you meet these requirements. Please work with your instructional designer if you need any assistance. Teaching requirements will be monitored and evaluated on a regular basis for compliance.**

**These Online Teaching Requirements are approved and supported by the Provost's Office and Human Resources. The Instructional Design & Technology (IDT) department supports faculty in meeting these requirements.**

**Richard Wiscott, Ph.D.**  
Provost



# Prepare Your Courses Completely and On Time

**You are required to set up the entire course(s) **10 days** prior to the start date so the IDT team can ensure each course is set up correctly.**

**It is the responsibility of faculty to make sure each course is set up completely and on time before they begin. Online courses open to students three days before the official start date. This gives them a chance to view the course requirements and plan their schedules. The IDT team plays a supportive role in checking courses before they open to make sure each course is complete, and to ensure students can successfully start the course.**

1

Review the Instructor Materials folder, including the Instructor Guide if one is available, and all instructor notes throughout the course to make sure you understand how the course works.

2

Set the [weekly areas to open](#) at least one week in advance (e.g., Week 3 opens at the start of Week 2) or make all weekly areas available from the start of the course.

3

Set up the syllabus and course schedule using the syllabus template that was sent to you. Post the syllabus in the Syllabus and Course Info area of the course.

4

Set [due dates](#) for all graded activities in the grade center in alignment with the important dates document that has been sent to you. All due dates should be on Sundays, except for noted exceptions on the important dates document.

5

In the Syllabus and Course Info area, complete a required introduction by including one of the following: a [photo of yourself with alt text](#), or a [short introductory video](#) with captions.

6

Create a [welcome announcement](#) for students that is [set to be available](#) on the first day of the course.

7

Review the course syllabus and ensure the content within the course, including all assignments, readings, and instructions, accurately reflect the textbook edition specified in the syllabus. Make updates as needed.

8

If you want to make any changes to your course, contact your instructional support team or [idt@jwu.edu](mailto:idt@jwu.edu) for assistance in making the changes so we can ensure the grade center is calculating correctly and content is accessible.

9

DO NOT change images, fonts or colors in the course due to accessibility issues. Ensure any content you add is accessible. Review [Course Accessibility](#) information.

**New for 2025-2026:** You must have at least one video assignment in each class, either an initial video discussion post or another video-submitted assignment. Contact IDT to adjust a discussion or assignment.

# Establish Your Presence in the Course



Research shows that instructor presence and interaction with students in online courses leads to better student engagement, outcomes, and satisfaction. Additionally, federal regulations require that instructors have regular and substantive interaction with students. The following requirements help to establish instructor presence that benefits students and meets federal requirements.

**1** Create short videos that you use throughout the course to cover key material that will assist students with assignments, review assignment expectations, and/or engage students in a meaningful conversation about a course topic.

**2** Schedule set office hour times on Zoom and list them in your syllabus. Make yourself available via Zoom or phone at other times by appointment for students not able to attend the office hours.

**3** Welcome each student in the **introductory discussion board** with a personalized message. General statements such as "welcome to class!" or "nice to meet you!" are not personalized responses.

**4** Respond to all student communications within 24 hours. This includes questions posted in the Questions Forum of your course and sent to you via email or phone. [Subscribe to the Questions Forum](#) so you do not miss any student questions.

**5** Contribute to course discussions, just as you would if you were in a physical classroom. This does not mean that you respond to every student in every discussion. Find 2-3 spots in each discussion where you can add value with a response. Ideas for posting include:

- Ask students clarifying questions or ask them to expand on their personal experience related to the topic.
- Correct any misinformation students have shared or redirect a discussion heading in the wrong direction.
- Present a different perspective to get students thinking more broadly.
- Rotate who you respond to so you don't respond to the same students every week.

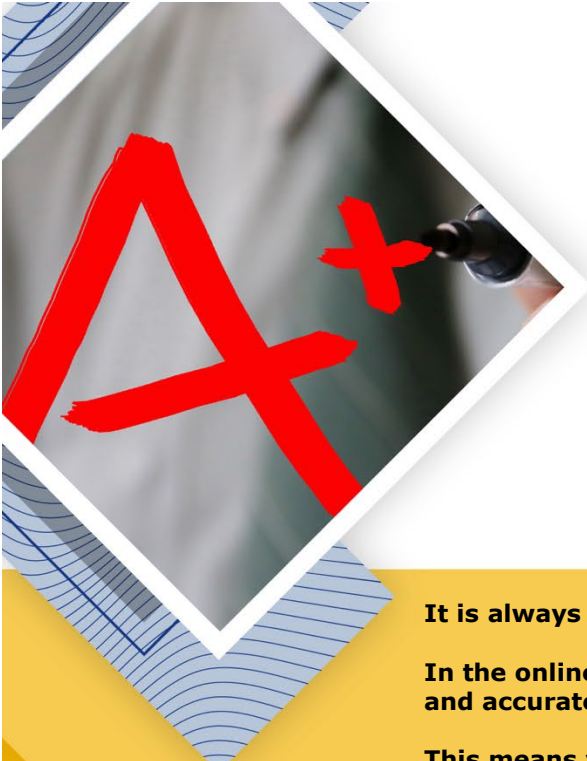
**6** Communicate with students every week with a substantive course announcement. A substantive course announcement does one or more of the following:

- Promotes interest and excitement about what will be learned in the coming week.
- Shares personal/professional knowledge you have about the upcoming topic.
- Provides general feedback for the whole class on completed assignments and clarifies expectations, academic integrity requirements, etc.
- Includes a [faculty-recorded video](#) with captions about the weekly topic, accompanied by a descriptive written comment that gives the video context (e.g. Welcome to week 4! Watch my video this week in which I cover...)

A substantive course announcement **does not:**

- Include or cover the same information as a weekly overview and to-do list
- Repeat throughout various weeks of the course
- Get replaced by any link to external videos or promotional materials outside the scope of the weekly topic





## Provide Students with Timely Grading, Use Course Rubrics, Offer Meaningful Feedback, and Maintain an Accurate Grade Center

It is always important for students to know how well they are doing in a course.

In the online classroom, it is especially important for students to have an up-to-date and accurate picture of their academic standing.

This means you must provide your students with timely, detailed information that explains their current grades and helps them understand what they specifically need to do to improve.

### Grading

- Grade all items within 7 days of the due date.
- Add a "0" grade for assignments not submitted within 7 days of the due date.
- For work that is submitted late and is allowed per your late policy, the "0" is removed and the [grade is updated](#).
- Use the rubrics included in your course.
- Do not rename Grade Center columns.
- Do not reorganize the Grade Center.

### Rubrics

If rubrics are included in your course, they must be completed for the following with feedback to students:

- [Rubrics for discussions, journals, or blog assignments](#)
- [Rubrics for ulearn assignments](#)

### Meaningful Feedback

- Meaningful feedback refers to individualized comments made by you to a student that specifically identifies areas of strength and weakness in student work that can contribute to that student's academic growth or improvement. Meaningful feedback should always be provided on students' application of course content. Feedback related to MLA/APA formatting and writing may also be provided.
- Comments such as "excellent work!" or "needs more detail" do not provide meaningful feedback. They do not explain what a student did well or where/how a student should specifically try to improve.

For assistance in learning more about giving meaningful feedback to students, contact your instructional designer.

# Meet All Administrative Responsibilities



**Administrative responsibilities for online courses are slightly different than for on-ground courses due to the nature of the courses and the students.**

**You are required to do the following:**

1

Respond to all JWU staff communication within 48 hours.

2

Reach out to students who are struggling. For example, you might ask them if they would like to meet with you on the phone or Zoom to review material, or ask them if everything is okay and how you can help get them back on track.

3

Complete the required enrollment verification surveys in uSucceed after the second Saturday of the course.

4

Refer suspected academic integrity violations (i.e. plagiarism, cheating, non-authorized collaboration) to Community Standards and Conduct for review. Referrals serve as education and support to students by providing early intervention, writing/research support and direction to other university resources. See the university's [Academic Integrity Referral Form](#).

5

Submit final grades in [jwuLink](#) before the deadline.

6

Submit outcome scores in TaskStream (applicable only for courses capturing outcomes).

7

Reach out to your academic director regarding student issues or with questions about the teaching requirements.