Best Practice for Online Course Delivery

Getting Ready

Students are generally enrolled two-weeks prior to the start of the semester. However, course content is not visible to students until it is made active. Prior to activation, it is good practice to double-check the content, links, and settings.

- Copy your sandbox, master course, or course from a previous semester into the current Folio course shell.
- Update the syllabus.
- Check and set calendar dates as well as calendar settings for tools such as quizzes, dropboxes, and discussion areas.
- Check that tools used to assess students (quizzes, dropboxes, and discussion areas) are linked to gradebook columns and Folio rubrics.
- Check content for broken links to documents, Web pages, images, and videos.
- Export a backup .zip file of your course and save it to your computer.
- Activate the course one week before official start date of class if possible.
- Email students directly and remind them of the start date, first-week requirements, how to access the course online, and what to do when they log in for the first time.

First Week

The first week of class is typically not used for instruction since students often need to become familiar with course structure, course technologies, and course expectations. Be prepared to direct students to campus technical support staff if necessary.

- Publish a News Item to help the students understand how and where to get started – don’t expect them to know where the syllabus is located.
- Verify attendance during the first three days of the course using a discussion activity, quiz, or check for student login activity.
- Provide students with opportunities and activities to practice using Folio technologies – such discussions and quizzes or external sites such as MathLab.
- Establish a “presence” as an instructor by responding to students in a timely manner. Call them by their first names or nicknames to enhance your connection as an approachable instructor. Let them know how you wish to be called as well.
- Monitor student activity and send reminders to students who are not completing activities in accordance with prescribed timelines.
Additional Weeks

For each module, it is good practice to follow a specific routine to help you better structure your time:

- Wrap up the weekly activities in discussion areas with a summary post or with a News tool announcement.
- Create an announcement using the News tool describing what will happen during the week or module. You might also send the announcement as an email to help get students in the habit of checking their email on a weekly basis.
- Monitor and respond to student-to-instructor questions as quickly as is appropriate to support their needs as learners.
- Provide timely grading on class activities – typically within seven days of the due date, but always within sufficient time frame to support student learning and progress.
- Monitor student activity. Send occasional reminders to students who are not completing activities in accordance with the prescribed timelines. At some point, you may wish to notify an academic advisor if a student appears to have disappeared off the map.
- Make note of problems and complaints as they occur and makes corrections immediately if necessary. Instructor. Keep a diary of observations and ideas for continuous course improvement semester to semester.