

Center for Online Education and Instructional Technology (COLEIT)



TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

Guidelines for Online Course Structure and Student Engagement At Texas Southern University

The following guidelines have been adopted for the design and delivery of online courses at Texas Southern University. Instructors are encouraged to work with COLEIT staff to ensure compliance in course design and best practice adoption.

Campus Wide Guidelines

1. Blackboard is the Official course delivery system for the university. All online courses must use blackboard for coursework activities and instructional engagement. Instructors are not permitted to use third party systems to host student academic records.
2. All Online courses must adhere to the standard course template with a left-aligned navigation menu bar. Instructors may not realign the menu within their respective course(s).
3. Each user on the blackboard system, instructor or student, is responsible for safeguarding their unique assigned access credentials. Compromised credentials pose significant liability to the whole system. Contact COLEIT for assistance when a breach or compromise is suspected.
4. It is assumed that both instructors and students are informed of the technical requirements and personal computer proficiencies needed to participate in a course and complete assigned activities on time.
5. Online courses are offered directly through academic departments, including faculty hiring for instruction.

Structured Content Guidelines for Online Courses

1. **Faculty information tab**
This tab in blackboard must contain the faculty name, email address, office location, office hours, and office number so that students have quick access to contact information.
2. **Announcements tab**
Use as frequently as needed. Faculty should post as an initial welcome message to introduce your students to the class and any initial activity/events for the first assignment. Keep the lines of communication clear and frequent, use the announcements section to send new or time sensitive information to your students.
3. **Detailed Syllabus tab**

Adopted at Academic Deans Council meeting on Tuesday June 14, 2011

A crucial component of the course, the syllabus is your contract with students addressing issues that are important to the online environment. The syllabus must contain:

- Course description
- Instructor information
- Textbook information
- Expected learning outcomes
- Module or weekly objectives
- Materials, assignments, requirements
- Grading scale
- Course evaluation (rubric strongly recommended)
- University policies
- Plagiarism information
- Accessibility Accommodations

4. Course content tab

This should include course objectives and all the required tasks and learning materials that have been assigned by the instructor to complete the course. The course activities will include required readings, lecture materials (Power Points, text, audio, video, etc.), links to websites for important reference materials.

5. Student engagement via asynchronous tools such as Discussion Board

Keeping students engaged with weekly course activities through tools such as discussion boards is important for instructional engagement and coursework completion. The discussions can take place asynchronously within the time-frame set by the instructor and participation grading can be automated.

6. Assignments, Quizzes, Exams

The list of the required assignments, by week/module/topic, should be included in the Course Content section of the course. This provides a quick and easy way for students to access due activities as they progress in the course.

7. Instructor Feedback/Communication to student requests, questions, or email correspondence must be within 48 hours, but preferably sooner, and grades must be posted in your Blackboard course for assignments, exams, and other activities, in a timely manner.

- Usually, grades should be posted no later than five business days after the completion of the assessment.
- Instructors or assigned Teaching Assistants (TAs) must login to the course daily to moderate class activities and conversations, as needed.
- Ensure students are receiving your communication and vice versa.