Ecampus Online Teaching Principles

Derived from research-based best practices, these principles are intended to supplement the Quality Matters (QM) Higher Education 7th edition course design rubric and the Ecampus Essentials to guide effective facilitation of online and hybrid courses at Oregon State University. These principles are a tool for faculty development and are not intended as an exhaustive list of online or hybrid instructor competencies or tasks; moreover, other "applied examples" beyond those listed may fulfill the spirit and intent of these principles. Fulfilling these principles does not guarantee compliance with the U.S. Department of Education's regulations for regular and substantive interaction, but can help faculty meet RSI guidelines and support online student success.

QM endorsed

The Ecampus Online Teaching Principles have been endorsed by Quality Matters.

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Principles	Applied examples
Stay current: Ensure that the course content is updated, functional, and published ontime.	Posting an updated syllabus, instructor information, and communication policy in the course site; checking assignment due dates and times for accuracy; validating links to learning materials and other course resources; setting up any external tools; and making the course site available to students no later than 8 a.m. PT on the first day of the term.
Encourage equity: State and implement course policies that are sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students.	Creating consistency in recurring cycles of work; allowing at least one weekend day for recurring and large assignments and exams; allowing late submissions (for partial credit if desired); scheduling module releases so students can review materials in advance if needed.
Communicate clearly and quickly: State and implement a clear communication policy that supports the pace and structure of the course. • a 24-hour response time on business days • information about how to schedule an "office hours" appointment outside of email • when to expect grades and feedback.	Setting the expectations and tone for the course with a clear communication policy, which communicates to nontraditional, online and hybrid students that you are aware of their needs. Ecampus can provide individualized recommendations about how to support students while balancing your workload, including:

Principles (continued)

Applied examples (continued)

Provide notice: Provide timely notice to students about changes to course materials, due dates, procedures, or your communication availability.

Giving students notice as soon as possible (via email, a course announcement, etc.) that something has changed. It's especially important to notify students about any deviations from the stated communication plan, such as illness, conference travel or family emergencies.

Commit to timeliness: Provide grades and meaningful feedback before the next assignment is due, including on graded discussion board activities.

Aiming to return feedback within 5–7 days (or sooner if the pace and structure of the course requires it) and letting students know if you need longer. Students need timely feedback to understand their progress in the course and to apply that feedback before the next assignment.

Be present: Demonstrate instructor presence by using course tools effectively to engage with learners and to encourage active learning.

Using Canvas course tools, email, and external tools in intentional and effective ways to communicate with students and encourage them to be active participants in their learning. Instructor presence in the online and hybrid classrooms is a strong determinant of student success and satisfaction.

Foster community: Cultivate a community among online/hybrid students by facilitating regular and meaningful interaction between learners.

Playing an active role in creating a sense of community by participating in and facilitating student-to-student interaction in discussion forums (including an introductions forum); checking in with project groups, etc. to help students feel connected and a sense of belonging to the OSU community.

Support students: Communicate in a supportive manner.

Using positive and encouraging tone and content in your communication with students, with the intent of supporting students through challenges and encouraging a growth mindset. This communication includes course announcements, emails, discussion board posts, written feedback on assignments, etc.

Principles (continued)	**Applied examples** (continued)
Reach out and refer: Check in with students who may be struggling, and refer students to the appropriate technology, academic or student support services in response to their articulated or observed needs.	Observing student progress and proactively checking in with students who are unresponsive or not meeting course expectations; being responsive when students reach out about any course-related, academic, personal or financial issues; referring students to appropriate resources available to Ecampus students as needed, and connecting with Ecampus Faculty Support or Ecampus Student Services for assistance in making referrals.
Cultivate inclusion: Make facilitation choices that support diverse students and make each student feel welcomed and valued.	Welcoming students to the course; referring to each student by name and with their chosen pronouns; highlighting student successes; encouraging students who may not feel like they belong in higher education; and respecting and honoring diverse student identities, experiences, and perspectives.
Promote a culture of academic integrity: Support student questions and their developing knowledge about what academic integrity means in the context of each course and discipline.	Providing clear guidance about academic integrity in the course, especially if and when students can use external resources and tools; taking a developmental approach to academic integrity where students learn about applying principles of integrity in both their coursework and discipline through practice and conversation; observing student posts and submissions and providing feedback on appropriate use of resources and tools.

For Hybrid Courses Only:

Blend learning: Explicitly draw connections between in-class and online learning activities to blend learning across the modalities.	Making intentional connections between in-class and online learning and identifying those connections for students (e.g. students might summarize an online discussion in class that launches an in-class group activity that leads to a follow-up writing assignment online).

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Select resources supporting the Ecampus Online Teaching Principles are listed below, and can be consulted for additional information.

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