

**POLICY:** Policy on the Design and Delivery of 100% Online Courses

**DATE:** February 5, 2025

## **Background**

This policy is based on a report by the Online Curriculum Task Force, August 23, 2022 (Task Force Members: Tim Brown, Accounting Abhijit Guha, Marketing; John McDermott, Economics Greg Niehaus, Finance; Carrie Queenan, Management Science Scott Turner, Management; Chris Yenkey, Chair, International Business).

The purpose of this policy is to ensure quality assurance in the design and delivery of online education in the undergraduate residential program. It provides effectiveness standards for the process and outcomes of online teaching.

## **1. Course Proposal**

- 1.1. ***Initial course design.*** The process of approval of online courses may occur with the conversion of a traditional existing course to an online format or by the introduction of a new course that will include an online format. The course proponent should first justify to their chair and department why this particular course is appropriate for 100% online delivery. The course proponent shall then design the course in accordance with the [Quality Standards for Online Courses \(QSOC\) Guidelines](#). Given that the online content is seldom completed before a proposed course is accepted, course proponents are expected to write a narrative generally outlining how they plan to meet each of the QSOC guidelines.
- 1.2. The proposal and approval of a new online course should follow the normal procedure for course approval, starting with approval by department chair and relevant department faculty. The DMSB Undergraduate Programs Faculty Committee (UPFC) shall evaluate the proposal against the [Quality Standards for Online Courses \(QSOC\) Checklist](#), approving only courses that have addressed all items in the checklist in a satisfactory manner.

## **2. Approval of Faculty Teaching Online Courses**

- 2.1. Instructors planning on delivering an approved online course should demonstrate to their department chair evidence of online instruction training through the USC Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE), or other reputable sources. This could be through prior online teaching experience, including training from a previous university, CTE one-on-one consultation or group training, or external certificate, (e.g. Udacity).

- 2.2. The initial course offering by an instructor will be evaluated by the Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness and Student Learning Committee according to the QSOC guidelines and checklist. Specifically, the instructor should provide to the Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness and Student Learning Committee a completed QSOC checklist. To the extent possible, the instructor should provide this checklist by the first day of class. The committee will evaluate the checklist and return it to the course instructor and department chair with feedback. If there are items on the QSOC checklist that have not been completed, it is recommended that the instructor works with their department chair to address the inconsistencies.
- 2.3. Instructors will be required to go through this process only once, for their initial online course offering. Therefore, such instructors will not need to undergo approval for subsequent offerings of this or any other approved online course.

### 3. Assessment Practices and Course Maintenance:

- 3.1. To ensure the integrity and security of assessments in online courses, the use of tools or services (e.g. **Respondus Lockdown Browser** and **Respondus Monitor**) is strongly recommended for proctoring timed online exams.
- 3.2. These tools help deter academic dishonesty and ensure that exams are conducted in a controlled environment. Faculty are encouraged to include clear instructions and expectations for students regarding the use of proctoring tools prior to the exam, as well as provide necessary resources or guides to familiarize students with the software.
- 3.3. Faculty are encouraged to review technological tools and platforms used in their online courses to ensure they remain current, functional, and aligned with best practices for online education.
- 3.3. Faculty should ensure that online course materials are regularly updated to reflect current knowledge, practices, and technology in the same manner as they would with in-person courses. This includes updating lecture content, resources, examples, and tools to ensure that students receive a relevant and high-quality learning experience.

### 4. Ongoing course review.

- 4.1. Online courses should be regularly reviewed through peer and student evaluations. Peer evaluation should be done using the [CTE Online Teaching Peer Observation](#) form. To ensure this, department chairs should facilitate the inclusion of online courses in the regular review of faculty's teaching performance. It is recommended that student evaluations include items that reflect the online teaching modality.
- 4.2. **Periodic update.** The Assessment of Teaching Effectiveness and Student Learning Committee will periodically review the QSOC guidelines for any changes. Such changes will be shared with department chairs for dissemination to their faculty teaching online courses. Faculty are encouraged to implement relevant changes to ensure consistency in online courses across the school.

