

Appendix 2

Guidelines for Motlow Online and Hybrid Courses

Course Design and Structure

- To ensure consistency, all online courses should adhere to the Motlow Common Course Design framework (see [Distance Education Policy Appendix 3](#)).
- The course should be easy to navigate (related content organized together, self-evident titles, etc.).
- Within each module, all relevant course materials and assessments—including readings, assignments, quizzes, rubrics, and instructional content—should be interlinked to facilitate seamless student navigation.
- Technical elements and formatting—such as naming conventions, font type, font color, and link destinations—should be applied consistently throughout the course.
- Hyperlink text should be descriptive and make sense when out of context (avoid using “click here”).
- When possible, information is displayed in a linear format instead of as a table. When present, tables are correctly formatted with titles, header rows and columns.
- The course should be formatted to meet web accessibility standards, with clear titles, headings, and styles that enhance readability and document structure. The overall course accessibility score should be at least 90%.
- Course content should be free of grammatical and spelling errors, with consistent and professional typography throughout.
- A sans-serif font with a standard size of at least 10 pt. should be used. Flashing and blinking text should be avoided.

Accessibility and Compliance

- The course should be formatted to meet web accessibility standards, with clear titles, headings, and styles that enhance readability and document structure. Authors should use the YuJa Panorama tool to assess accessibility issues in the course. The overall course accessibility score should be at least 90%.
- A text equivalent for every non-text element is provided (“alt” tags, captions, transcripts, etc.), and audio description is provided for video-only content.
- Any changes to the master course shell must remain aligned with the department’s official Student Learning Outcomes. Instructors making such changes are responsible for updating the syllabus, schedule, materials, assessments, and related components accordingly. They also assume full responsibility for ensuring compliance with accessibility and copyright standards.
- Resources and materials should follow expectations for appropriate copyright documentation and usage.

Course Content and Alignment

- Course materials, activities, and assessments should reflect departmental norms/expectations.
- Alignment between activities, assessments, learning outcomes, and objectives should be articulated clearly.
- All courses should include a clear schedule or calendar to help students stay organized with due dates, materials, and assessments. Ideally, the schedule should be easily linkable for use in announcements. If using the LMS or a publisher's calendar instead, a brief explanation of how students will access deadlines and updates should be included in the Getting Started module.

Student Engagement & Interaction

- The course should provide discussion boards and other activities intended to build a sense of class community, support open communication, and promote regular and substantive interaction.
- The course should offer opportunities for substantive interaction with the instructor.
- Expectations for all course interactions (instructor-to-student, student-to-student) should be clearly stated and modeled in all course interaction/communication channels.
- Technological tools and media should be used to enhance student engagement and promote active learning.
- Courses should include a variety of activities that promote engagement with course content, support interaction between students and instructors, and build a sense of community (e.g., introductory activities).
- Expectations for student participation and interaction should be clearly communicated in the course materials.
- Where appropriate, faculty should promote the use of appropriate D2L tools such as Notifications, the Work to Do Widget, etc.

Course Communication, Assessment, and Feedback

- The course information should state whether the course is fully online, hybrid, or web-enhanced
- Faculty should clearly communicate contact information and response expectations.
- Feedback on student work should ideally be provided within two weeks of the due date, keeping in mind the length of the course and other practicalities.
- Regular Announcements that include hyperlinks to course materials and assessments should be used to maintain engagement.
- The course should offer instructors timely and meaningful opportunities to provide feedback.
- Students should have easy access to a well-designed, up-to-date gradebook.
- Assessments should be varied, frequent, and clearly aligned with student learning outcomes.
- Clear and consistent expectations should be communicated through rubrics, assignment samples, and/or other evaluation criteria for major assessments, projects, discussions, etc.
- Faculty are encouraged to enable Turnitin for all major assignments to ensure submissions are added to the database for future similarity checks.

Additional Practices for Hybrid Courses

- Online and in-person activities are intentionally integrated, with clear pedagogical rationales for determining which components occur in each setting.
- The connection between in-person and online components is clearly explained so that students understand what is expected before, during, and after each in-person meeting.
- Assessments are thoughtfully balanced between online and in-person modules to ensure equitable evaluation of learning outcomes.
- The specific hybrid course format is explicitly described within the course materials and, when applicable, communicated to students prior to the start of the term.