



Online Instruction

Resource Guide

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Introduction

Arts & Science Online (ASO), upholds the level of educational quality associated with Queen's University by using researched-based practices in online learning to guide the development of and instruction of online courses. We work collaboratively with academic departments to plan course and program offerings and to identify qualified faculty member to develop and teach courses, and by maintaining the academic standards of the Faculty.

The purpose of this document is to provide new online instructors with instructional supports and strategies that will maximize their ability to facilitate learning in an online environment.

"One of the most important ingredients for successful online learning is the creation of social learning online through interaction between the student and Instructor among students. In addition, a key role for Instructors is to be facilitation, monitor and support online communication."
(Folinsbee, 2008)

Online vs On-Campus Learning

Online Learning

Advantages of Online Learning

- Flexibility to have online discussions at any time.
- Additional interaction among students and Instructors.
- Students are responsible for their learning.
- Students can study at their own pace and time within given module
- Students can revisit course material as necessary.
- Can lead to a more diverse student body.

Disadvantages of Online Learning

- Without a clear structure, students could fall behind with course assignments
- Potential isolation from the Instructor and/or classmates.
- Learners with low motivation or lack of study skills could fall behind.
- Technical issues could create frustration when accessing course materials.
- Perception of the difficulty in fostering peer collaboration & facilitating student learning.

On-Campus Learning

Advantages of On-Campus Learning

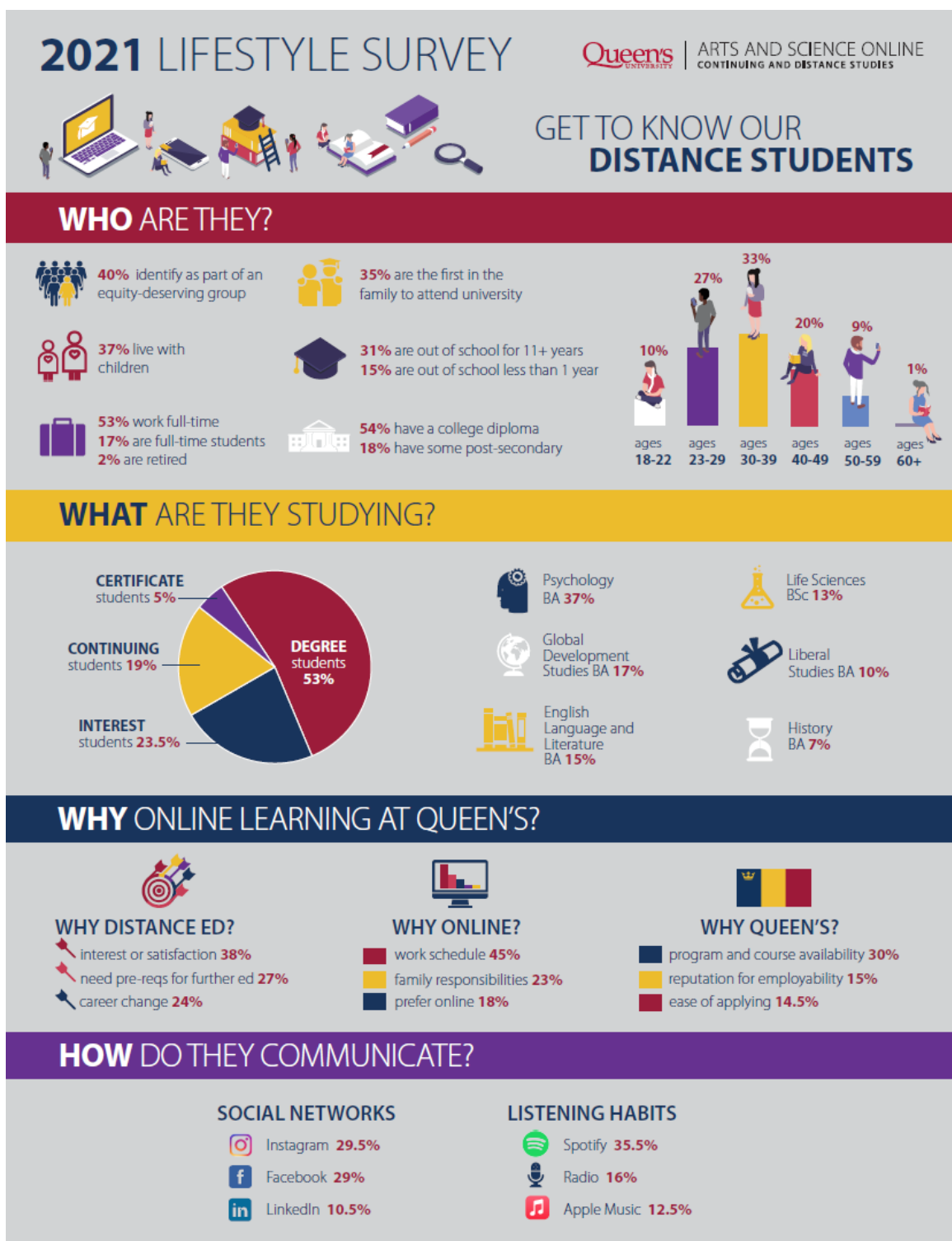
- Face-to-face instruction.
- Students can ask questions immediately.
- Face-to-face interaction with classmates.
- Easier to network with fellow students/Instructors.
- Physical access to on campus-facilities (gyms, residence halls, libraries etc).

Disadvantages of On-Campus Learning

- Students have to go to the 'on-campus' location (which may conflict with personal circumstances, work, seasonal weather etc.).
- No flexibility as to when or where classes are taken.
- Learning is dependent on the speed of the Instructor, rather than at their own pace.

as adapted from Sadara, E. (2014), Gaya, J (2013) and Bass, S. (nd)

The Demographics of our Learners



Source: [ASO Lifestyle Survey, 2021](#)

Note: The 2021 Lifestyle Survey was sent only to Distance Students.
Arts & Science Online courses include both distance and on-campus students.

Best Practice in Teaching Online

Chickering and Gamson (1987) identify seven principles necessary for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education (see table) that guide our practice in teaching and learning online.

Principle		Rationale	How
1	Maximize Learner-Instructor Contact	Learners need to feel supported and Instructors aware of learners' concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be present • facilitate communication • provide clear guidelines • manage conflict
2	Support peer-to-peer contact, teaching and learning	Learners need to feel connected to each other and this helps build a strong community of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empower learners • set up a social forum • provide well-designed discussion assignments
3	Emphasize active learning and applied practice	Learners need to actively engage with the course material in meaningful ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use case studies or tutorials that apply content to real-world scenarios • design challenging discussions • encourage connections through group work or peer review
4	Provide prompt feedback	Affirm learners' achievements and knowledge to promote greater online confidence and participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to general questions promptly • keep learners on track • provide timely feedback
5	Allocate realistic amounts of time for effective learnings	Learners and teachers learn to use their time well and setting this precedence establishes the basis for high performance for everyone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define time and expectations upfront • establish a basis for performance • outline time management for learning content
6	Good practice communicates high expectations	Instructors set high expectations for not only themselves but also for their students by expecting them to perform well.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set high expectations • expect that students will perform well • make extra efforts
7	Respect Diverse Talents and Ways of Learning	Each learner brings different talents and ways of learning to us.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide opportunities for students to display talents • create a variety of ways for students to learn

While all seven principles for good practice outlined by Chickering and Gamson (1987) guide our practices, three factors play a critical role in effective course pedagogy in the online learning environment: **active learning techniques, cooperative learning among students, and student and faculty interaction** (Bangert, 2008). Engaging students in active learning increases their knowledge of content and promotes critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Anderson et al., 2005; Williams & Lahman, 2011), while instilling a sense of belonging to the learning community, increasing communication with the instructor, and enhancing student persistence in online courses (Hart, 2012).

Active Learning

Increased student engagement and improved student learning is achieved by focusing on active and collaborative learning and minimizing or eliminating the passive transmission of information. Additionally, active learning increases student's knowledge of content and promotes critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Anderson et al. 2005; Williams & Lahman, 2011). Further, students actively engaged with the content promotes participation in a meaningful way and fosters development of new knowledge (Partlow & Gibbs, 2003).

Examples of active online learning strategies may include: case studies, simulations, role play, peer-review, paper/reflections, Socratic questioning, debates, problem-based learning, guided questions, graphic organizers, group projects and virtual labs.

Interaction

Frequent and ongoing interaction is a significant component to a successful online course. Social interaction and the development of an online community reduces feelings of isolation, eases stress and increases confidence (Haythornthwaite, C., Kazmer, M., Robins, J., Shoemaker, S., 2000). Additionally ongoing interaction promotes motivation and learner satisfaction (Harris and Martin, 2012; Sargeant et al., 2006). Part of the course design is establishing ways for peer interaction and Instructor-to-student interaction to develop an online community is essential and should be woven throughout the course.

Interaction between Teaching Team and Students

The effectiveness and quality of the instructor contributes more towards student satisfaction than technology. A key component of a quality Instructor and/or TA is their interaction with students. Listed below are a few ways to increase interaction with students.

Instructors can:

- Encourage students to stay motivated and engaged, post weekly updates
- Comment on student progress
- Highlight connections between course topics and current real-world examples
- Provide online instructional support that addresses students' difficulties based on quiz scores, questions on discussion board, etc.
- Host online office hours
- Offer a synchronous exam preparation session, which may be recorded and posted

TAs often provide the front-line contact with students by checking forums regularly to respond to course-related questions, providing timely and supportive feedback on assignments, outlining current accomplishments, and identifying ways to improve.

Interaction among Students

When students collaborate with one another they are more likely to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, develop higher levels of interest and have a more positive online experience.

A few ideas to consider:

- Create small groups at the beginning of the course and perform activities in the same groups throughout the course such as case studies, presentations, etc.
- Have students participate in weekly discussion forums.
- Have students engage in peer feedback for various assignments papers.
- Encourage students to respond to questions posted by peers about content or activities.
- Include synchronous small group activities to promote real-life application of knowledge

Facilitating Discussion Forums

The information provided below is from Rick Nigol's Facilitator's Guide (2011).

A facilitator models respectful and engaging online demeanor in how they communicate.

Specifically, an effective facilitator:

- Establishes a safe, open, non-threatening, comfortable, respectful, constructive, and inclusive environment that encourages open participation;
- Helps the group define norms and codes of conduct and models these;
- Allows for a range of member roles within the group;
- Helps groups build trust among members; and
- Injects humour into the proceedings appropriately.

Task Master

Sometimes the facilitator needs to play the role of task master, helping ensure that the group does not veer too far off track and stays focused on its stated goals. This also involves reminding the group of important deadlines and helping them ensure that all their important tasks are completed in a timely matter in order to maintain the pace of the course or program.

Catalyst and Prober

A very important role for a facilitator is to spur their learners on to think more deeply about the topics, issues, challenges, etc. they are examining. A good facilitator is always asking the provocative questions that encourage critical or creative thinking among learners. Socratic questioning gets learners to go beyond the obvious and to think more deeply and to critically re-examine their own thinking from time to time.

Synthesizer

A good facilitator can help a group find consensus on key issues. She/he is able to weave together areas of agreement among the group and find the common ground. This often involves summarizing or encapsulating discussions and stating these back to the group so that members can focus more upon what unites than what divides them.

Facilitators also make linkages between various topics and themes and provide the relevant segues to the next topic or task at hand for the group.

Cheerleader

Often times the facilitator needs to ensure that the energy and enthusiasm of the group is maintained. This is especially the case of longer duration courses / programs. Groups will need to be working closely and intensely together for a long time and can experience natural ups and downs during the course of a program.

It is important that the facilitator celebrate group victories, accomplishments, and key milestones. Simple words of encouragement and support and validation go a long way during the course of an extended program. Group members are sometimes too close to the process

and sometimes do not recognize the progress and accomplishments they have made along the way. It is up to the facilitator to ensure that these accomplishments be acknowledged and celebrated.

Referee

There are times that the facilitator needs to help mediate and resolve disputes within a group. Of course, groups should be empowered to do this themselves via the adoption of an agreed-upon group contract around their vision, goals, procedures, and community norms, rules, and netiquette, etc. However, there may be times that a facilitator needs to intervene to ensure that disputes do not fester and undermine the ability of the group to function properly. Often times, this may involve talking to some group members offline to either get to the bottom of things or to address particularly negative online behaviours directly one-on-one.

Facilitation Tips

Despite this being an online community, all members of the teaching team, along with students, are expected to interact as they would in a face-to-face classroom. You may find the following Netiquette guidelines useful (for both you and students) when participating in discussion activities, giving feedback etc.

- Avoid “over-facilitating” – Provide students the opportunity to join the discussion;
- Draw out the quiet or non-participating members – perhaps check in on them privately (offline) to see why they are not participating;
- Popular emoticons such as 😊 or L can be helpful to convey your tone but do not overdo or overuse them
- Model respectful online behavior;
- Take things “offline” if some disputes do become contentious;
- Be very careful in the use of humour, irony or satire – these often do not come across as intended in online environments;
- Present ideas appropriately.
- Be cautious in using Internet language. For example, do not capitalize all letters since this suggests shouting.
- Share ‘tips’ with students.
- Keep an “open-mind” and be willing to express even your minority opinion.
- Think and edit before you push the “Send” button.

Mintu-Wimsatt, Kernek & Lozada, 2010, p.266

Providing Feedback

"Advice, evaluation, grades - none of these provide the descriptive information that students need to reach their goals. What is true feedback - and how can it improve learning?"
Wiggins (2012)

Feedback to students is an area that our students often identify of high importance to them. In your course, students will be offered several opportunities for both formative feedback and summative feedback. In other words, feedback is **information about how we're doing in our efforts to reach a goal**. In order for a student to know how they are doing, they need to know what it is that they are trying to achieve.

Feedback is a tool that:

- develops cognitive understanding, motivation and engagement, and interpersonal connections.
- helps students learn course material but also helps keep them motivated, engaged in what can feel like an isolated environment, and connected to the course.
- fosters interpersonal connections between Instructors and students.
- has a direct implication on whether students have meaningful interactions with course materials and overall positive course experiences.

Mandernach J. & Garrett, J. (2014)

Feedback is an area that our students often identify of significant importance to them. In your course, students will be offered several opportunities for both formative feedback and summative feedback. In other words, feedback is **information about how a student is doing in their efforts to reach a goal**. In order for a student to know how they are doing, they need to know what it is that they are trying to achieve.

There are several ways that students can get the feedback they need (from Instructors, TA's, peers, technology and so on):

- Discussion activities
- Forum posts
- Course questions & answers
- Email queries
- Assignments
- Tests, quizzes, etc.

Feedback is not advice, praise, or a performance evaluation. When giving feedback, consider... 'given the feedback, does the learner have some ideas about how to improve'?

On a practical level, examples of what feedback can 'look' like is as follows:

Timely:	Provide feedback on assignments within 7 days Respond to forums & emails within 24 hours
Meaningful:	Target individual needs Specifically link to assignment criteria
In-time:	Give time for the student to improve before the next assignment
Constructive:	Highlight strengths and weaknesses

The following table illustrates seven (7) key areas that should be considered when providing feedback:

Feedback should be:	Which means:
Goal-referenced	Remind the student about the initial goal ('the goal of this assignment was...') and then give goal-related information about his or her actions (when re-reading your assignment, this could be achieved by considering...doing...evaluating...)
Tangible and Transparent	Feedback must be clear and understood by the student. Avoid jargon and be specific so that the student will understand what they can learn from the feedback. Consider responding like a 'reader' and not just a 'marker'.
Actionable	Let the student know what they have to do, what they could consider reviewing, what areas of research they should look at next time etc. Students need to understand how they could do a better job the next time.
User-friendly (specific and personalized)	Consider the person that you are giving the feedback to and target the feedback to them. Consider just providing feedback in one or two areas where they could make improvements (giving too much feedback can be overwhelming and not user-friendly).
Timely	The sooner that students receive feedback, the better. Students need to know what they can do to improve prior to the next assignment, test, discussion etc. Giving feedback too late can take away from the relevance of it (and restrict their ability to improve).
Ongoing	Ongoing feedback provides the student with the opportunity to adapt their skills, style, etc. and then implement the advice in a practical manner.
Consistent	Students can only adjust their performance if the information fed back to them is stable, accurate and trustworthy. As a part of the teaching team, it is your responsibility to agree the standards of what high quality work 'looks' like, how you will give feedback and what that feedback 'looks' like.

As adapted from Wiggins G (2012)

Tips for Students

Students may ask you for advice or 'tips' when taking an online course. The following table highlights a few key areas & skills that students will need to consider developing in order to succeed in the online environment:

Self motivation	A set routine and/or schedule will help to keep students motivated. By doing so, tasks will be achieved, and students will see that they are progressing through the course. Finding ways to apply the knowledge that they are learning (such as in the workplace) will help to reinforce their learning, see the relevance and encourage them to continue with their studies.
Independent working	Taking an online course requires students to be able to work without the daily supervision of an instructor. This skill will prove to be invaluable in other areas (such as the work environment, volunteer duties etc). Minimising the opportunities for distractions will help students to succeed when working independently. Saying that, students should still look for opportunities for networking with other students (for study and work purposes alike).
Organization & time management	Students will find it helpful to identify all tasks that need to be completed on a weekly/monthly basis. This includes coursework, assignments, work commitments, personal/family activities and so on. Once all tasks have been identified, an overall timetable can be developed, including the days/times allocated to completing course requirements. Students may find it helpful to allocate specific study day(s), sessions for writing assignments, reading, etc. within their personalized timetable.
Realistic workload	It is important that students are realistic about the workload that they are taking on. For example, if they are working full time, new to online study or a returning student, then starting with a smaller course load may be more suitable. Students who have concerns in this area are welcome to contact an Academic Advisor for an appointment to discuss their concerns and strategies to deal with them (via phone or in person).
Clear communication	In an online environment, students must be willing to ask questions, discuss issues and generally be up front when communicating with the teaching team and fellow students. Making the most of online discussions will help students in this area. Doing so as clearly as possible to ensure that the message is clear is of utmost importance in an online environment, as the physical communication 'clues' (such as body language) are not present, making it somewhat easier to misinterpret the message! Making the questions useful to the student's personal learning will also help to make the subject more understandable.
Access to resources	A requirement of taking an online course is that students must have access to high speed internet (ADSL, cable or better) and meet the minimum computer requirements identified during enrollment. Other resource that students should ensure they have access to include books, articles, dedicated space, stationary etc.

as adapted from Roper, A.R. (2007) and Bass, S. (nd)

Roles and Responsibilities

In the online environment, it is important that the existing design and framework of the course is maintained to preserve the integrity of the course. The role of the instructor is to facilitate student learning within this framework. In the absence of the face-to-face environment and the feedback loop that occurs naturally within that environment, online communication and learner support are key. Communication takes place through feedback on assignments, facilitated online discussions, regular progress reports and real-time chats. A significant investment of time from both students and Instructor is required to sustain a vibrant and effective online learning community.

Before the Course Starts

- Adopt course textbooks through the Campus Bookstore and order desk copies.
- Contact the Library to set up the e-reserve (if applicable).
- Check the Syllabus and Timeline in the course onQ site for inaccuracies/needed changes.
- Check assignments and Discussion Forum instructions for inaccuracies/needed changes.
- Check dates in the course and ensure they are correct.
- Inform your Learning Management System Specialist (LMS) or Instructional Designer (ID) of any changes you make in onQ so that they can ensure that important information is updated everywhere, including the Arts & Science Online website.
- Work with your LMS Specialist to ensure that any outstanding issues are resolved before the course begins.
- Decide how the marking will be divided for the course, keeping in mind the numbers of students on your own contract and each TA's contract. Inform TAs how marking will be divided and which Grader is responsible for which assignments/students.
- Create an audio or video welcome message (see Appendix A for details).

During the First Week

- Post an introduction and welcome message to course announcements that includes something about yourself. You may want to remind them of the requirements for week 1.
- Make sure all of your students have logged into onQ by the end of the first week. If not, send them an email and invite them to the course.
- Monitor the course questions forum and your email, respond within 24 hours.

While the Course is Running

- Read student emails and the forums frequently, responding to students as appropriate. This is extremely important in an online course since students usually do not have the option of finding their instructor in person for urgent matters. Try to respond within 24 hours.
- If applicable, attend and host any synchronous sessions that have been set up, unless a TA is hosting the sessions.
- Grade assignments and provide feedback to students in a timely manner. Turnaround time should be within a week or before the next assignment.
- Connect with students who have not logged in within 7-10 days.
- Use the Course Announcements to make any important announcements.
- Coordinate with your LMS specialist for student accommodations. See below for details.

At the End of the Course

- Assign any remaining grades in onQ.
- Final grades are due in PeopleSoft by the following deadlines ([PeopleSoft Grade Entry](#)):
 - Courses with a final scheduled exam: 10 days after the course exam date
 - Courses with no final scheduled exam: 10 days after the end of term
- If an exam has not been returned from an off-campus exam centre by the grade deadline, enter GD (Grade Deferred) for these students and follow up with a Change of Grade form once the exam has been marked.

Administrative Information

- Any inquiries from students that you are unable to answer can be forwarded to asc.online@queensu.ca
- If you are waiving the prerequisite(s) for a student to enrol in your course, please forward the email to asc.online@queensu.ca and we will create a permission number and follow up with the student.

Student Accommodations

- Where appropriate, consider the use of [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) Principles](#) such as a universal 72-hour grace period for all assignments, and built-in additional time (e.g., 'time-and-a-half' for all students) for exams, as a means to account for additional time required for students with accommodations or those experiencing extenuating circumstances
- Ensure that your course has an 'Accommodation and Considerations' onQ Homepage widget. This widget will take students directly to Ventus.
- Please note that decision for extensions for assignments are at your discretion.

Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances

- [The Senate Policy on Academic Consideration for Students in Extenuating Circumstances](#) was approved in April, 2017. Queen's University is committed to providing academic consideration to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that are beyond their control and which have a direct and substantial impact on their ability to meet essential academic requirements. Each Faculty has developed a protocol to provide a consistent and equitable approach in dealing with requests for academic consideration for students facing extenuating circumstances. Arts and Science undergraduate students can find the Faculty of Arts and Science protocol and the portal where they submit a request at: <https://www.queensu.ca/artsci/undergrad-students/student-services/academic-consideration-for-students>. Students in other Faculties and Schools should refer to the protocol for their home Faculty.
- Further information can be found at: <https://www.queensu.ca/artsci/undergrad-students/student-services/academic-consideration-for-students>.

Technical Support

- During working hours (**Monday-Friday from 8-4**) students can **contact ITS** if they are experiencing technical difficulty in the course onQ site. We recommend that quiz and assignment deadlines fall during these working hours so technical support is available.
- Encourage your students to post their technical questions to the Course Question Forum in your course in onQ. This discussion forum is monitored daily by ASO staff.
- If your course uses Zoom for synchronous sessions, training for TAs and Instructors can be provided by request. For an in-depth guide to Zoom, including where to reach out for additional support, please see our [Zoom for Instructors](#) page.

onQ Announcements/Forums

- During the term, we will post Announcement reminders to students about upcoming sessional dates (i.e. last day add/drop, examination-related information, etc.).
- The Course Questions forum is monitored on a regular basis by the ASO team. We will follow up with you regarding any outstanding issues. We will respond to administrative-related questions in the forums as needed.

Examinations

If your course has a final proctored exam, students who are enrolled **exclusively in online courses** will have two options to write their proctored exams:

1. You may choose to write your exam(s) online using Examity proctoring services where you will be charged the additional \$100 exam fee to your Solus account;
2. You may choose to write your exam(s) in-person on Queen's campus in Kingston where you will NOT be charged the additional \$100 exam fee

Students enrolled in **at least one on-campus course** are expected to write all their proctored exams on-campus during the scheduled exam time.

- Students who contact us to request a deferred exam, are referred to the Instructor. Please refer to the [Faculty and Arts and Science website](#) for details regarding deferred exams.

ASO Contact Information

https://www.queensu.ca/artsci_online/about-us/contacts/staff-directory

Main Departmental Contacts	
ASO main / front desk	asc.online@queensu.ca Phone: (613) 533 – 3322 Fax: (613) 533 - 6805
ASO multimedia team	asomm@queensu.ca
ASO exams	aso.exams@queensu.ca
Specific Contacts	Roles
Director, Arts and Science Online Wanda Beyer, wanda.beyer@queensu.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General feedback, concerns, and ideas regarding online course development and delivery
Associate Director, Instructional Design and Curriculum Development (TBD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course revisions Pedagogical questions TA/Instructional Training
Associate Director, Educational Technologies Rebecca Sweetman, rls16@queensu.ca , ext. 74124	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical questions Multimedia Software inquiries
Associate Director, Administration and Planning Maria Cardoso, cardosom@queensu.ca , ext. 75762	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TA contracts Instructor and TA Payments
Departmental Administrator Amanda Meekel, Amanda.meekel@queensu.ca , 74539	
Student Services Team- asc.online@queensu.ca Heather Carter, carterh@queensu.ca Andra Efosa, iae@queensu.ca Lise Yeatman, lise.yeatman@queensu.ca , 78405	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic advising Student support issues
Exams Coordinator, ASO Exams Brandon Villeneuve, bjrv@queensu.ca	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-campus exams / proctor coordination
Instructional Design and Curriculum Developers Keren Akiva, keren.akiva@queensu.ca , ext. 77819 Laura Shannon, laura.shannon@queensu.ca , ext. 78078 Toni Thornton, thornton@queensu.ca , ext. 74109 Bobbie Osborne, bobbie.osborne@queensu.ca Nadine LeGros, nadine.legros@queensu.ca Tyson Baker, tyson.baker@queensu.ca Julia Savage, julia.savage@queensu.ca , ext. 77325	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course development and delivery project management Collaborates with faculty to design and implement courses Provides the course developer with expertise in online course design and best practices Helps to align learning objectives, learning activities, and assignments Provides training and support regarding teaching strategies, learning activities, assignments etc. Coordinates with other ASO staff, Faculty, Librarians etc.
Instructional Design Associates Rachel Eagen, rse@queensu.ca Mehak Jamil, m.jamil@queensu.ca Mark Sokolsky, mark.sokolsky@queensu.ca	

<p>Course Production and Delivery Lead Erik Bigras, eb105@queensu.ca</p> <p>Learning Management Systems Specialists Ziyad Muslat, zm20@queensu.ca Corey Russell, corey.russell@queensu.ca Julia Sullivan, julia.sullivan@queensu.ca Nouran Abdelrazik, nouran.abdelrazik@queensu.ca Patricia Oprea, po13@queensu.ca Jeff Leach, jeff.leach@queensu.ca Kate Brothers, katherine.brothers@queensu.ca</p> <p>Learning Management Systems Assistant TBD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Importation of content into the LMS prior to the course opening (quizzes, assignments, videos, etc.) • Creation of groups in onQ • Gradebook inquiries & revisions • Provide assistance with technical and LMS issues throughout the course (3rd offering onwards) • Help to provide ideas on structure of the course in the LMS in partnership with the ID
<p>Multimedia Production and Support Lead Julian Enright, julian.enright@queensu.ca, ext.74704</p> <p>Multimedia Support Team ASOMM@Queensu.ca Nadia Morel (on leave), nadia.morel@queensu.ca Fenton Isaacs, fri@queensu.ca Rodrigo Moran Ramon, rmr7@queensu.ca Lowell Cochrane, cochrane.lowell@queensu.ca Sadaf Amini, sa189@queensu.ca</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of multimedia content (e.g. video editing, activity creation, interactive material) • Streaming video management • Zoom training/troubleshooting • AODA compliance (e.g. video captioning, transcripts, etc.)

Appendix A: Welcome Message

Structure of Welcome Message

- Introduce yourself
- Personal connection or enthusiasm about teaching this course
- Overview of course/pacing
- Highlight various course components (modules, weekly activities, key assignments etc)
- Remind them to read course syllabus and timeline for due dates
- Contact information
- How to get started/first activity
- [An exemplary Instructor welcome video](#)

Appendix B: Sample Letters to Students

A. Sample Introductory Forum Post

Dear Students,

Welcome to Course 101. I am delighted to have you in my online course.

My name is Dr. Alice Ken and I will be your online Instructor. I have been teaching this course for a few years and looking forward to teaching it every term. I completed my degree at Queen's University in Psychology and my current research focuses on students with exceptionalities and their psychological need to belong in inclusive classrooms. My years as a special education teacher have given me the opportunity to work in a variety of settings with diverse learners. The most significant undertaking of my teaching career was co-teaching with a regular education teacher in an inclusive classroom.

I am looking forward to learning more about you as I read your introductions. Please take time to read your classmates' introductions and feel free to ask questions about one another. If you have any course questions or concerns, please feel free to post them on the discussion forum titled, *Course Questions*. If your question is more personal in nature, please feel free to send me an email. I will respond within 24 hours. I would like you to feel supported throughout the course.

Warm regards,

Dr. Alice Ken

B. Sample Letter to Disengaged Students

Dear <insert student's name>,

I am checking in to ensure that you are doing okay. I noticed that you have not been active in the course within the past week. If there is anything I can do to support you, please let me know.

Kind regards,

<insert your name>

Sources

Anderson, W., Mitchell, S., & Osgood, M. (2005). Comparison of student performance in cooperative learning and traditional lecture-based biochemistry classes. *Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Education*, 33(6), 387-393.

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