



Developing Your Online Course

In the Develop module, you were introduced to legal requirements and accessibility standards that form the foundation of your course content. You explored strategies for building assessments, creating interactive course elements, writing for an online audience, and curating readings and multimedia to bring your online course to life.

Policies and Regulations

There are federal, state, and possibly school-specific guidelines you must comply with to make sure you follow fair use intellectual property policies and to make your course accessible to all students. Fully research your responsibilities. To comply with copyright requirements, seek out public domain images, ask publishers for permission to use intellectual property, link to materials instead of reposting them in your course, and always cite your sources. Include links to privacy policies and accessibility statements from creators of course materials. Comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) by ensuring that private student data, like grades, is not accessible by other students or the public. Because laws may change, always check with your institution for the most current legal restrictions.

Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act are two crucial pieces of legislation that make it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities and require institutions of higher education to make all online content accessible to people with disabilities. You may be authoring or gathering content that necessitates remediation to make it accessible for all students, including providing:

- Alternative (alt) text
- Descriptive hyperlinks
- Legible and readable text
- Closed captioning

Tools such as accessibility checkers integrated within your Learning Management System can support your work. Also consult with an accessibility expert on your campus for help, such as the Accessibility Services Office.

Align Assessments with Student Learning Outcomes

Develop assessments that effectively introduce, reinforce, or evaluate students' understanding of course concepts as they relate to learning objectives. After crafting an assessment and selecting a technology tool to implement it within your course, make sure to clearly communicate assignment details and expectations to your students. Consider the purpose of the assessment, required skills, skills to develop, knowledge students will gain, a thorough description of the task, and an explanation of what constitutes "success" in that assessment.

Creating and Collecting Content for Online Delivery

You can create course content from scratch as well as utilize purchased, public domain, or Creative Commons materials. Sequence how students will encounter your selected readings, multimedia, and activities. Your writing should draw connections between course materials, raise key questions, and help students build their ideas. Be conversational and address the student as "you." Keep page formatting simple and avoid excessive use of bold or italic words, elaborate fonts, or distracting colors. For readings and multimedia, prioritize accessibility and consider what may give students new perspectives on topics, such as peer-reviewed journal articles, fiction books, historical documents, TED Talks, or documentaries. Your institution's library can be a resource for accessing both copyrighted materials and Open Educational Resources (OER).

Final Walkthrough

Complete your course ahead of its initial offering to test links, activities, and overall functionality. Make sure it functions the way you envisioned. Ask for feedback from a colleague or former student. Course content rubrics like Quality Matters guide you through a checklist of standards to ensure your course is in alignment with student learning objectives. Make adjustments as needed, before your course goes live.