Getting Started in Distance Learning

Faculty members who wish to teach online should not only possess basic proficiency in computer skills but should also be acquainted with and feel comfortable using more advanced programs and applications.

Technological Readiness

The following technical skills, listed from **least** to **most complex**, are examples of what would be needed to teach online and hybrid courses:

Basic Computer Skills	• Keyboarding • Audio recording (microphone)
Database Management	• Data entry • Data editing • Database creation
File Management	• Create & name files • Understand file formats (doc, docx, rtf, text, JPEG, GIF, PDF, WAV, MPEG etc.) • Understand file storage • Organize and manage files
Wordprocessing	• Create, edit & save documents • Use formatting techniques (bulleted/numbered lists; page numbers, etc.) • Insert tables, graphs, and graphics into documents • Create Table of Contents (TOC) and Indexes
Presentation Software	• Create, edit and save presentations • Add multimedia to presentations • Record audio narration for presentations
Email	• Send & receive email • Attach documents & pictures • Participate in email discussion groups/listservs • Create & manage contact groups • Create & manage discussion groups
Internet	• Understand & use different browser types • Know how to do targeted searches • Understand how to use online databases

	• Be familiar with YouTube, Skype, podcasts, blogs, webinars & wikis
Social Networking	• Use Facebook, Twitter, and/or Google+ • Create a social media group (or circle)
Learning Management System (LMS)	• Upload content • Create, design, and edit course modules • Make content accessible • Create announcements, discussion forums, blogs, and wikis • Create assessments, surveys, and polls • Use the Grade Center • Upload multimedia • Use IM or chat • Understand and use other learning management system tools

Pedagogical Readiness

The following pedagogical skills are needed to teach online and hybrid courses:

Fundamental Principles	• Understand the differences between face-to-face and online instruction. • Utilize student-centered pedagogy where concepts of interactivity, instructor-led facilitation and feedback are core elements. • Create learning activities that actively engage students and which encourage top-down cognitive processing skills (such as synthesis and problem-solving tasks) • Accommodate a variety of learning styles and strategies in both content delivery and learning activities.
Management and Interaction	• Follow guidelines for regular and effective contact with students in both synchronous and asynchronous modalities. • Communicate and maintain learning objectives.

	- Cultivate and develop learning communities through group activities. - Create and maintain an atmosphere of trust. - Clarify clear participation requirements, facilitate and monitor interaction accordingly. - Integrate practical tasks into learning activities to illustrate practical real-world content applications. - Lead discussions rooted in inquiry that challenge students to question and develop their own conclusions. - Provide ongoing personalized feedback and suggestions for improving student performance. - Make additional resources available for learning.
Technology Integration	- Identify the most appropriate technologies for content and learning outcomes. - Determine the modalities that are best used for course communication, discussion and assessment. - Present content that is easily navigable and accessible to all learners. - Integrate multimedia content that meets the learning styles and needs of all students as well as accessibility requirements. - Encourage cooperative learning through group activities that utilize current technology.
Assessment	- Provide multiple opportunities for ongoing authentic assessment that measure both student understanding of course content and participation. - Ensure that assessment tools are linked to learning objectives. - Use a variety of asynchronous assessment techniques in which students are able to demonstrate higher-order critical thinking skills.

	• Employ multiple assessment strategies to maintain active student engagement. • Make use of data from the assessment tools in Bb 9.1 to evaluate the validity and reliability of the various assessment instruments. • Incorporate surveys to receive regular constructive student feedback and integrate it into the course structure. Understand the unique challenges that affect academic integrity and student authentication in the online environment.
Accessibility	• Know how to create or modify course content to make it **accessible** to students with disabilities. • Design the course layout so that it is easily navigable and readable and has alternate options for students with special needs.