Standards for Online Instructors

Overview

Recent changes made to the standards in the last few semesters are indicated below with a ⭐

Online Teaching Standards AAU Online Teaching Standards (PDF)	The Academy of Art University has established these standards for online instructors to ensure that our students have the best possible educational experience. • You can download the attached **rubric** to use in assessing your own teaching practice vis-à-vis AAU standards. • **Teaching coaches** will use a version of this rubric in supporting new instructors. --- **NOTE:** The various tasks required to teach online are paid at different rates. Please review the FAQ and tutorial to learn more about how to report your work hours. --- ## Specialized Teaching
Online Teaching Standards: Self-Assessment Checklist AAU Online Teaching Standards Self Assessment (Word)	• **Standards for Online Workshops** The Academy's online workshops are an extension of our online education program. The workshops provide students additional help to ensure that they master fundamental skills, offer tutoring and guidance on course assignments and projects, and provide clarification of concepts and techniques. As with all our online offerings, the success of these workshops depends on the instructors' regular presence and timely feedback. **The standards for workshop instructors conform to the general Online Teaching Standards**, described below. In particular, Standard III: Presence in the Online Classroom (see below) is most relevant to workshops. Please review these criteria to make sure you understand our expectations. Talk with your director, if you have questions. • **Managing Group Directed Study & Thesis Forum Classes** • **Expectations for Directed Study Mentors** • **Expectations for Internship Supervisors** • **Working with High School Students in the Art Experience Program**

Online Teaching Standards

I. Teaching Preparation, Training & Coaching

The following standards ensure that online instructors are prepared for the technical and pedagogical responsibilities of teaching online. The support resources described below are here to help you succeed, and to ensure that you have mastery of your course content and instructional tools. (**Note**: Part-time instructors are compensated for training and coaching time as "other work" hours.)

Meets Requirements	**Does Not Meet Requirements**

Meets Requirements

- Completes the Teaching Online training course before beginning to teach online for the first time.
- Works regularly with their Teaching Coach through at least the first 5 modules of their first semester of online teaching.
- Reviews all course content (e.g., modules, media, assignments, tests) before teaching a class for the first time.

  - Quick Start Guide for New Online Instructors
  - Teaching Online Training: Support Materials
  - Navigating the Online Learning System
  - Your Teaching Coach
  - The Course Learning Modules

Does Not Meet Requirements

- Does not complete the Teaching Online training before starting to teach online.
- Does not work regularly with their Teaching Coach.
- Does not review the course content before teaching a class for the first time.

II. Timely Communication of Course Policies, Expectations & Grades

By clearly articulating your policies at the start of the term, providing timely updates throughout the semester, and setting accurate expectations, you allow your students to plan appropriately while supporting their success. (**Note**: Part-time instructors are compensated for non-classroom tasks as "other work" hours .)

Meets Requirements

- ⭐ Posts their Office Hours on their Profile page *before the semester begins*.
  - Office Hours are the times the instructor will be online to answer student questions or concerns.
  - Instructors must check in six days a week — *including Saturday* (Pacific Time) — at times of their choosing.
  - In the optional "Instructions" space, includes a reminder to students to post their questions before the instructor's check-in times, so that their concerns can be answered in a timely fashion.
- Posts clear expectations and greetings by the end of Module 1, including:
  - ⭐ An explanation of the course learning outcomes and the relevance of this course to students' future development or careers
  - How students can succeed in this class
  - Grading practice
  - Late homework policy
  - What students can expect of their instructor — including
    - reiteration of their daily check-in times (office hours)
    - a reminder about posting questions before the daily check-in time
- Communicates timely information to students throughout the semester via announcements, topics, Mailbox messages, etc.
- Posts midterm, final, and progress grades on time.
- If absent, arranges for substitute teacher with the department and informs students through classroom post.

Exceeds Requirements

Meets requirements + Posts additional information and guidance throughout the semester, such as assignment tips, checklists, suggestions for scheduling tasks, samples and rubrics of past student work, inspiring imagery, timely articles, and video messages.

- Announcements & Policies
- Online Office Hours
- Creating an Online Profile
- Online Mailbox
- Posting Progress Grades
- If You Must Be Absent from Your Online Class

Does Not Meet Requirements

- Fails to post Office Hours.
- Fails to remind students about posting their questions before instructor's check-in times.
- Expectations or policies are not posted for all the items listed.
- Instructor's policies are vague, confusing, or not clearly articulated.
- Fails to communicate timely information to students throughout the semester.
- Does not submit midterm, final, and progress grades on time.
- Fails to make arrangements for absences.

III. Active Engagement in the Online Classroom

The consistent presence and responsiveness of online instructors is the most frequently cited factor in online student satisfaction. These requirements ensure that you are actively and visibly engaged in your classes throughout the week, and that students receive timely feedback on their work. **Learn more** : Instructor Presence | If You Must Be Absent from Your Online Class

Meets Requirements

- Posts profile, including a photo and bio and online office hours.
- Introduces self by the end of Module 1 and greets students, individually or as a group.
- ⭐ Enters every section they are teaching 6 days a week, including Saturday, and leaves public evidence of their presence each day.

  - answers to students' questions
  - a post indicating that you checked into the class at the specified time, but that there were no questions for you to answer.
  - new announcements
  - comments that deepen or broaden students' understanding of a key concept from the current module
  - for **assignments:**

    - clarification of the assignment instructions — and what you're looking for (use the Instructor Update)
    - tips for completing the assignment successfully
    - common mistakes students make — and how to avoid them
    - public feedback on early submissions
    - an example of the work of a student from a previous semester with an explanation of its strengths and weaknesses
  - for **discussions:**

    - an introduction to the week's discussion
    - a new question to take the discussion in a different direction (**Learn more**: Writing Effective Discussion Questions)
    - responses to student comments (**Learn more**: Tips for Discussion Facilitation)
    - something from the news that's relevant to the class
    - a wrap-up of the week's discussion
- Stays current: reads all posts, comments, and Mailbox messages during each active module.
- Answers students' questions (in the Discussion or in the Mailbox) within 1 business day.
- Instructor's communication is professional, approachable for questions and assistance, and respectful of all students.

Exceeds Requirements

Meets requirements + Answers students' questions within *less* than 1 business day

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- Do your students know you're there?
- Creating an Online Profile
- Online Office Hours
- Instructor Presence
- Communicating Online
- Making Announcements

Does Not Meet Requirements

- Does not post a profile with photo and bio.
- Does not introduce self or greet students before the end of Module 1.
- Enters classes less frequently than 6 days per week, leaving little evidence of their presence.
- Does not stay current: fails to read all posts, comments, and Mailbox messages for every module.
- Students' questions (in the Discussion or in the Mailbox) remain unanswered for more than 1 business day.
- Instructor's communication is disrespectful, irritated or unprofessional.

IV. Critiques

The Academy is committed to ensuring that all students receive the clear, direct, and detailed feedback that models and supports their growth into successful creative professionals.

Meets Requirements

- Critiques the work of every student in each module.
- Posts critiques and grades for assignments to the LMS within 3 business days of submission (2 business days in the Summer semester).
- Critiques address *all* of the following:
  - what was done correctly
  - areas for improvement
  - why the improvements are needed
  - how to make improvements
- Uses language that is clear, objective, and professional. Avoids slang.
- Critiques in accordance with the expectations laid out in the module, the assignment instructions, and/or the rubric.
- Posts critiques in public areas within the online class, to ensure that all students can see one another's feedback.
- General class critiques (optional feedback offered to the class as a group) highlight common successes and weaknesses — and are paired with specific comments to each student.
- Requires that student work be submitted to the Class Discussion in the LMS. Provides feedback only through the LMS.
- When providing instruction or doing critiques via Adobe Connect (or similar), records the session and posts the recording in the class for everyone to see. Students who cannot attend a live session receive their critiques either during the live session or through the LMS. In case of technical difficulties with the recording, posts a summary of each student's critique.

Exceeds Requirements

Meets requirements + Provides highly-detailed individual feedback.

- Feedback & Critiques
- Online Critique & Feedback
- A small change can make a big difference
- Do your students know you're there?
- When should feedback be private? (from my Inbox, #7)
- Teaching in a Virtual Office

Does Not Meet Requirements

- Does not review the work of every student.
- Falls behind in critiquing and grading — i.e., does not post feedback within the required timeframe.
- Critiques are minimal, vague and/or generic feedback (e.g., "Nice job — Keep going!").
- Critiques fail to address all the following:
  - what was done correctly
  - areas for improvement
  - why the improvements are needed
  - how to make improvements
- Comments are subjective (e.g., "I love this!") rather than objective (i.e., based on observation of specific elements related to assessment criteria).
- Makes identical comments to multiple students (copy/paste), demonstrating a lack of individual attention.
- Critiques have a condescending or unprofessional tone (e.g., uses slang).
- Feedback contradicts the expectations laid out in the module, the assignment instructions, and/or the rubric.
- Posts critiques through private channels (e.g., grade comments, Mailbox, etc.), so students cannot see one another's feedback.
- Posts feedback outside the online class Discussion.
- When doing critiques via Adobe Connect (or similar), does not record the session and/or fails to posts a record of the session (i.e., the video recording or a written summary of each student's critique) in the class.

V. Discussion

Discussion is essential in creating community in an online class. It may take different forms, depending on the course content and structure, but regular group interaction is essential in every class. By actively contributing to and guiding the conversation, you model effective ways to participate and encourage engagement.

Discussing Course Concepts	Peer Critique Discussions (students giving one another feedback on their work)	Does Not Meet Requirements

Meets Requirements
 	
- Ensures that there are prompts for discussion that relate to the Course Learning Outcomes.
- Actively leads the discussion by posting new information, asking follow-up questions, and responding to key points being discussed by students.
- Encourages students to interact with each other.
- Instructor's comments are context-sensitive (i.e., not generic) and respond directly to students' remarks.
- Makes frequent connections to real-world situations. Shares industry experience and knowledge, where relevant.
- If conducting live (synchronous) discussion sessions, instructor makes provisions for students who cannot attend to ask questions in advance, review the recording of the meeting (posts a link), and post follow-up comments.
	Meets Requirements
	
	- Ensures that there are prompts for discussion that relate to the Course Learning Outcomes.
	- Facilitates peer review discussions by, for example:
	  - Modeling peer critique.
	  - Encouraging students to discuss their instructor critiques with one another.
	  - Asking students to explain how they will apply instructor feedback to future assignments.
	- Makes frequent connections to real-world situations. Shares industry experience and knowledge, where relevant.
	- If conducting live (synchronous) discussion sessions, instructor makes provisions for students who cannot attend to ask questions in advance, review the recording of the meeting (posts a link), and post follow-up comments.
		Is minimally present in the discussion — mostly lets students talk amongst themselves.

VI. Class Management

Just like physical classrooms, online classes must be actively managed. Instructors must organize class activities, track student progress, and help streamline participation and communication. (**Note**: Part-time instructors are compensated for housekeeping tasks as "other work" hours.)

Meets Requirements

- Ensures that there are always open topics where students can post.
- Archives topics from completed modules.
- Does not require students to purchase supplies beyond those listed on the course syllabus.
- Follows posted grading breakdown percentages in calculating progress grades.
- Sets up an external gradebook for tracking student progress (e.g., Easy Grade Pro), as needed.
- Contacts students who have been absent for two or more modules via the LMS Mailbox to encourage their return and provide assistance to get them back on track. Encourages students to contact Online Student Academic Support (OSAS), as needed.
- Quickly addresses issues that detract from the learning environment of the class, such as plagiarism, cheating, or disruptive students. Does not ignore problems and seeks support, as needed.
- Contacts the Help Desk and the academic department as soon as possible about issues with the course content (e.g., broken links, etc.).

Does Not Meet Requirements

- Does not ensure that there are always open topics.
- Does not archive topics; completed topics more than 2 modules old are still posted on the Current Topics page.
- Asks students to purchase additional supplies — or to substitute for supplies listed on the course syllabus.
- Does not adhere to the percentages defined by the course grading breakdown.
- Has no system for tracking grades.
- Does not contact absent students or encourage students to seek additional support from OSAS.
- Fails to address issues that disrupt the learning environment of the class.
- Fails to address issues related to course content.