



# KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## **PROCEDURE TITLE:**

**KYSU Online Course Content Management Procedures**

## **VOLUME, SECTION & NUMBER:**

**1.3.7**

## **ENTITIES AFFECTED:**

**Faculty**

**Administrators**

**Subject Matter Experts**

**Instructional Designers**

## **ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY:**

**Academic Affairs**

**Office of Online Education**

## **APPROVED BY:**

**Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs**

**Office of Online Education**

## **EFFECTIVE DATE:**

**7/1/2024**

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## **PURPOSE:**

The KYSU Online Course Content Management Procedures aims to establish procedures for implementing the *KYSU Online SME Model for Online Courses* (1.3.8). This document describes the procedures Subject Matter Experts use when developing, redeveloping, changing, and editing the content of courses for KYSU Online. It also lists the timelines involved in the procedures.

## **PROCEDURES STATEMENT:**

KYSU Online manages the content of online courses in the Learning Management System (LMS) following a SME Model for online education. The Subject Matter Expert (SME) is the primary source of academic expertise for an asynchronous online course. The SME develops the primary course shell within the LMS. Before each term or subterm, the Office of Online Education coordinates with the Registrar in the course copy process to create copies of the primary course shell, which are assigned to online faculty and populated with online students. The timelines for changes to the primary course shell are driven by the course copy process, which starts four (4) weeks before the term/subterm in which the course is offered to students.



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After the course copy occurs, credentialed online faculty are assigned to each section as the online instructors. They may supplement the course materials with optional instructional materials and activities, but they may not alter the course content. Nor can online faculty change the assignments in their section. Online instructors cannot add or remove course requirements.

## Course Developments and Redevelopments

Beyond course development completed by third-party instructional designers in collaboration with SMEs, the SME is the primary individual responsible for developing, maintaining, and redeveloping an online primary course shell. All course developments and redevelopments are done by KYSU-approved Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), which could be full-time faculty or adjunct faculty. Each course will be assigned a SME, and only the SME can change course content after seeking approval from the program coordinator and Director of Online Education.

### New Course Developments

New course developments involve courses that have never existed in the online modality. If the course is new to Kentucky State University, the development work will typically be coordinated with *Curriculum Proposal Form 1 – new course proposal*. However, suppose the course exists in a different modality but has never been offered in the online modality. In that case, the development work will typically be coordinated with a *Curriculum Proposal Form 2 – course change proposal*.

New course developments are the most time-intensive aspects of a SME's work. When a new course development is needed for an online program, the Office of Online Education will coordinate the timeline, resources, and personnel required for the development on the [Course Development Plan](#). Most new course developments will be initiated by the planning of Academic Affairs and the work of the Online Advisory Committee in conjunction with the Office of Online Education.

New course developments require a SME to develop course content for asynchronous delivery through the LMS in the online modality. A new development could involve a course not offered previously. Alternatively, if existing courses offered in the traditional, hybrid, or virtual modalities do not have instructional content that comports well with asynchronous delivery through the LMS in the online modality, the SME will complete a new development for KYSU Online. New course developments require creating instructional content, learning resources, and course documents within the LMS for KYSU Online.

The initial SME develops the course content during the development of an online course. This involves contributing to the selection of learning resources, the production of instructional content, and the development of course assignments and assessments. Sometimes, this also includes completing the instructional design of the course in the LMS.

The Office of Online Education often utilizes Instructional Designers (IDs) alongside SMEs in developing online courses. This can include IDs within the Office of Online Education or embedded IDs whose roles have been tied to specific departments and programs. Additionally, KYSU Online contracts IDs to support the ambitious course development plan needed to launch online programs according to schedule in conjunction with student recruiting initiatives.

Instructional Designers work with SMEs to design and develop effective online courses. SMEs provide each course's academic expertise and instructional content, while the IDs build the primary course shell



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in the Learning Management System and optimize the content for the student experience. This helps showcase the SMEs' academic expertise without requiring them to become experts in instructional design and LMS functionality.

Whenever KYSU Online contracts outside course development services to reduce the development load on faculty, SMEs are not required to design the course in the Learning Management Systems. However, the SMEs will work closely with contracted Instructional Designers during course development on matters requiring academic expertise and faculty involvement.

Once course development is completed, the initial SME or newly designated SME manages the content in the primary course shell, collaborating with faculty, Faculty Mentors, and the Office of Online Education on course edits, changes, and redevelopments. SMEs report to the Office of Online Education concerning the online course(s).

### **Course Redevelopments**

Course redevelopments involve courses that have been offered previously in the online modality. Redevelopments usually involve significant changes to the course, such as changes to the learning outcomes, instructional content, assignments, or course schedule. Although there is some content to work with, the SME will create a lot of new content for the online course. A redevelopment will typically be coordinated with a *Curriculum Proposal Form 2 – course change proposal*, which identifies the changes that will be made to the course in the redevelopment process. Sometimes, if the changes are not significant enough, the Director of Online Education or the Online Advisory Committee will approve the course changes without requiring a *Curriculum Proposal Form 2 – course change proposal* to be finalized. In other words, the course changes can be made without requiring curriculum legislation.

Redevelopments require less work than new course development since there is usually a considerable base of existing content. No two redevelopments are the same. Redevelopments commonly involve several of the following:

- Converting LMS course content from semester-length to subterm-length.
- Converting content from the traditional, hybrid, or virtual modalities for asynchronous delivery through the LMS in the online modality.
- Developing or converting course assignments/assessments for delivery through the LMS in the online modality.
- Significant changes to the instructional content (such as creating new video lectures or collaborative learning activities).
- Significant changes to the course learning resources (such as textbooks or software) that impact other course elements (i.e., syllabus, instructions, headings, assessments, point breakouts, etc.).

### **Timeline for Course Development and Redevelopment**

Course developments and redevelopments must begin about six (6) months or 24 weeks before the planned launch of the course. The Office of Online Education will engage the SME and typically an Instructional Designer (ID), formalize any agreements about the scope of work requested, and provide



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asynchronous training/orientation. A development shell (dev shell) will be created within the LMS. This will be where the SME and ID create the new course content. The dev shell request will include the associated Curriculum Proposal Form (if any exists), information about the proposed textbooks (if already known), and a short description of what the development, redevelopment, or course changes entail. The dev shell request will be reviewed and approved by the Program Coordinator and the Director of Online Education. Once approved, the SME and ID will be granted access to the dev shell in the LMS.

The Office of Online Education must notify the Bookstore of the textbooks the SME plans to use in the new course no later than 20 weeks from the launch of the new course. This allows enough time for the Bookstore to coordinate the direct integration of the learning materials as electronic resources within the dev shell.

The SME and ID must complete their course development or redevelopment ten (10) weeks before the course starts. Once completed, the dev shell will be reviewed by the Program Coordinator and the Director of Online Education. Those reviews must be completed eight (8) weeks before launch, which gives the SME another two (2) weeks to adjust based on their feedback. Work in the dev shell must be finalized six (6) weeks before the course starts. At this point, the Office of Online Education will convert the dev shell into the primary course shell, which will be replicated as course sections during the course copy process.

### Course Maintenance and Minor Changes

Once an online course has been developed, the initial SME will continue to oversee the ongoing maintenance of the course content in the primary course shell. In some circumstances, this initial SME might not be able to continue with SME duties, in which case the Office of Online Education will appoint a new SME to oversee the course content after the course has been designed.

In a post-development scenario, the SME will be responsible for adjustments, updates, and corrections to the course materials within the primary course shell. These are considered minor changes as opposed to redevelopments. For example, after a course is offered, instructors might suggest adjustments to questions on assessments or clarifying instructions for an assignment. The SME will receive this feedback and implement needed changes in the primary course shell. Additionally, the SME is responsible for ensuring that the course design and learning activities conform to the standards of online instruction to cultivate regular and substantive interaction throughout the course. When assessment results suggest that a course or learning activity is needed, administrators should coordinate course changes with the program coordinator and SME.

The SME is also responsible for collaborating with online faculty and Faculty Mentors to review critical indicators of course health. The data will come from several sources, such as *ad hoc* or regular reports. Relevant items to review will include,

- Metrics of student success at the course level.
- Metrics of student success at the assignment level.
- Outliers in student performance at the question level of assessments.
- Metrics of student engagement with course content within each module.
- Student responses on end-of-course surveys.



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- Feedback and suggestions from faculty instructors.
- Feedback from Faculty Mentors.

The SME will implement improvements in the primary course shell to ensure the online course is as effective as possible.

### **Timeline for Minor Course Changes**

Sometimes, a primary course shell requires minor changes that do not rise to the level of redevelopment. For example, a SME wants to change assignments, the syllabus, or other course elements. Minor changes do not typically require as much development time for the SME. Therefore, the timeline for developments and redevelopments is compressed significantly.

The SME submits the dev shell request to the Office of Online Education approximately ten (10) weeks before the start of the course. The request is reviewed, and the dev shell is created. The SME has two (2) weeks to complete the course changes, which must be completed eight (8) weeks before the course starts. The changes are reviewed by the Program Coordinator and Director of Online Education within one (1) week, and the SME has another week to finalize their suggestions. The dev shell becomes the primary course shell and is ready for the course copy process.

### **Course Updates for Textbook Changes**

SMEs must select electronic textbooks to be integrated directly into the LMS. The Office of Online Education must approve exceptions for printed resources.

If a course requires an update due to a change in the current textbook edition, the SME will contact the Office of Online Education to request a course development shell. Once the Office of Online Education provides access to the development shell, the SME will update the course test banks, chapters, appropriate reading prompts, etc. The updates must be completed six (6) weeks before the next term.

However, if a textbook edition changes, even if the required changes to the primary course shell are considerably minor, the SME should initiate the dev shell request as soon as possible. Depending on feedback from the Bookstore and Office of Online Education, the textbook changes could require a longer course redevelopment timeline to ensure the bookstore has sufficient lead time to procure the updated edition. The bookstore must be informed about a textbook change five (5) months in advance.

**Note:** When textbook-related changes are made to an online course, the bookstore must be informed five (5) months in advance, and the changes must be completed in the development shell at least six (6) weeks before the next term.

### **Syllabus Revisions**

Each online course must include a syllabus posted in the LMS at the beginning of each online course before students gain access. The SME will maintain the syllabus in the primary course shell, consistent across each online section of a particular course. For this reason, the syllabus should include essential information about the course rather than section-specific details about the online faculty in each section.

The SME for each course should work with Instructional Designers to create a syllabus using the template established for KYSU Online. The syllabus template supports a student-centered delivery of



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online courses through consistency – appearance, order, and terminology. The syllabus must comply with relevant departmental policies and procedures.

Revisions to the syllabus in online courses must be coordinated with the course SME. Suppose an instructor notes an error or outdated information. In that case, they should notify their faculty mentor to propose a revision to the course syllabus and coordinate any further actions with the appropriate SME. The SMEs will notify the Office of Online Education of their intent to change a syllabus. In most cases, a course development shell will be created. Then, after the changes in the development shell are approved, they are transferred to the primary course shell to be reflected in the course copy.

### Course Copy

In coordination with the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Online Education will determine the number of online sections needed to accommodate student enrollment for each course offering. The Office of Online Education will assign sections to online faculty based on their requested online load and their capacity for online load. Once the course sections are assigned, online faculty will be notified of their course load assignments and the anticipated online course copy schedule.

In general, course copy will begin four (4) weeks before the start of the subterm and will continue until enrollment for the subterm has closed. Due to this course copy timeline, Subject Matter Experts should know the deadlines for primary course shell changes. The Office of Online Education will give each online faculty member access to the assigned online course sections in the LMS two (2) weeks before the start of the subterm. This gives faculty time to report any issues that need to be fixed in the course before students gain access. Students will gain access five (5) days before the start of the subterm.

### Content Management Procedures & Deadlines

1. **Curriculum Planning:** The Office of Online Education manages the Course Development Plan with the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, third-party content development vendors, and the Online Advisory Committee. Since course development and redevelopment must coordinate with KYSU Online academic programs and curriculum planning, these procedures often relate to a *Curriculum Proposal Form 1* (for new course proposals) or *Form 2* (for course change proposals).
2. **Content Managers Engaged:**
  - a. **New Course Developments** will involve the Office of Online Education collaborating with the departments and faculty to identify a SME for the course. This might include contracting with an outside Instructional Designer (ID) to support the SME's work. Sometimes, the SME and ID will participate in training or orientation before starting development work.
  - a. **Course Redevelopments** are usually completed by a SME who has already been overseeing the course. The Office of Online Education will determine whether an Instructional Designer will assist with the redevelopment. Sometimes, the SME and ID will participate in training or orientation before the start of the redevelopment work.
  - b. **Course Changes** do not require the Office of Online Education to engage a SME since the SME's ongoing duties involve managing and changing the course content as needed.



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2. **Development Shell Requested:** Any development, redevelopment, or course changes occur within a development shell (dev shell). This involves completing an electronic request that relates the request to relevant curriculum proposal forms and bookstore logistics. Once the form is submitted, the request will be reviewed by the Program Coordinator (if relevant) and the Director of Online Education. When approved, the dev shell will be created, and the SME and ID (if relevant) will be notified of the milestones and deadlines.
  - b. **New Course Developments:** The SME requests the dev shell for course developments when prompted by the Office of Online Education based on the Course Development Plan. The dev shell is created from a blank template. This must occur about five (5) months before the course launch.
  - c. **Course Redevelopments:** The SME usually makes the dev shell request for course redevelopments when prompted by the Office of Online Education based on the Course Development Plan. However, SMEs can also determine that a redevelopment is needed and initiate the request without prompting. In that case, the reviewers ensure the request aligns with the Course Development Plan. The dev shell is usually created from a blank template for redevelopments unless a considerable amount of content remains consistent with an existing online course version. In that case, the primary course shell would be copied to become the dev shell for redevelopment. This must occur about five (5) months before the course launch.
  - a. **Course Changes:** The SME makes a dev shell request for course changes when a dev shell is needed so that a minor change can be made. This always involves making a copy of the primary course shell to become the dev shell in which changes are made.
    - i. **No textbook changes:** if the course changes do not involve textbooks, the dev shell request should be made about ten (10) weeks before the course launch.
    - i. **Changes to textbooks:** If the course changes involve textbooks, the dev shell request should be made about five (5) months before the course launch and coordinated with the bookstore. However, if a textbook edition changes, the bookstore might not need as much lead time prior to the course launch. Either way, the dev shell should be requested as soon as possible while coordinating with the bookstore.
3. **Textbooks Coordinated:** The bookstore generally requires five (5) months of lead time to ensure that books and electronic resources are in place for the course launch. This involves the SME, the Office of Online Education, and the Bookstore communicating about the planning needed for the development, redevelopment, or course changes.
4. **Dev Shell Created, Access Granted:** once the dev shell request has been approved, the Office of Online Education creates the dev shell and grants the SME and ID access.
5. **Work in Dev Shell:** The SME and ID will work in the course's dev shell in the LMS.
  - d. **New Course Developments** will begin no closer than twenty (20) weeks before launch. The dev shell should be completed for review at least ten (10) weeks before launch.



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- a. **Course Redevelopments** will begin no closer than twenty (20) weeks before launch. The dev shell should be completed for review at least ten (10) weeks before launch.
  - b. **Course Changes** will begin no closer than ten (10) weeks before launch. The dev shell should be completed for review at least eight (8) weeks before launch.
6. **Dev Shell Reviewed and Finalized:** The SME submits the dev shell for review. The Program Coordinator and Director of Online Education review it and give the SME feedback. The SME then finalizes the dev shell and notifies the Office of Online Education that it is complete.
- a. **New Course Developments:** the reviewers have two (2) weeks to review the dev shell and supply feedback. The SME has two (2) weeks to finalize the dev shell no later than six (6) weeks before launch.
  - b. **Course Redevelopments:** the reviewers have two (2) weeks to review the dev shell and supply feedback. The SME has two (2) weeks to finalize the dev shell no later than six (6) weeks before launch.
  - c. **Course Changes:** The reviewers have one (1) week to review the dev shell and supply feedback. The SME has one (1) week to finalize the dev shell no later than six (6) weeks before launch.
7. **Dev Shell Converted to Primary Course Shell:** After the reviews, the Office of Online Education finalizes the dev shell and converts it into the primary course shell. This conversion should happen no later than five (5) weeks before launch.
8. **Course Copy Process:** The Office of Online Education coordinates with the Registrar to determine how many sections of an online course are required in the launch term/subterm. Course copy should begin no later than four (4) weeks before launch and continue until enrollment closes whenever a new section is needed. Course copies are made from the primary course shell.
9. **Faculty Access and Review:** The Office of Online Education will collect faculty requests for online course sections and course load planning. After the course copy process has mostly concluded, the Office of Online Education will associate course sections with faculty in the LMS. Faculty access will be granted around two (2) weeks before the term/subterm starts. Upon gaining access, faculty should review the contents of the online section and notify the SME of any broken links or missing content.
10. **Student Access:** The Office of Online Education and the Registrar will coordinate course registrations with online course sections in the LMS. Students will be granted access to their online courses in the LMS approximately five (5) days before the term/subterm start date.
11. **Course Launch:** On the start date of the term/subterm, the course sections launch. Although there might be multiple sections of an online course, each being an identical copy of the primary course shell, each section will pair a roster of students with an individual online faculty member (online instructor). In some sections, that online instructor might be the SME, but students will engage a live, credentialed online faculty member in regular and substantive interaction as they work through the course content developed and managed by the SME.



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## **RELATED POLICIES/DOCUMENTS:**

- 1.3.8 KYSU Online SME Model for Online Courses
- 1.3.19 KYSU Online Curriculum Proposal Procedures
- KYSU Curriculum Proposal Checklist
- KYSU Curriculum Proposal Workflow
- KYSU Curriculum Proposal Form 1 - new course
- KYSU Curriculum Proposal Form 2 - course change

## **STATUTORY OR REGULATORY REFERENCES:**

N/A

## **POLICY OWNER/INTERPRETING AUTHORITY:**

- Office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Office of Online Education

## **DOCUMENT DATE AND VERSION:**

5/25/2024 – 2024.05.25\_KYSU\_Online Course Content Management Procedures\_v4.docx