

# KYSU Online/Global Faculty Handbook

Kentucky State University

Updated May 7, 2026

## **Notice Regarding Senate Bill 185**

To the extent that any policy, procedure, role description, or administrative structure described in this Handbook conflicts with the provisions of SB 185 or actions taken by the University to implement SB 185, the legislation and the University's implementing actions shall govern. This Handbook is being revised on a rolling basis to reflect the legislation; faculty and administrators should consult the Office of Online Education for the most current guidance.

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**Appendix A: Faculty Workload Agreement**

**Appendix B: Revisions to the Online Faculty Handbook**

## 1 KYSU ONLINE ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

### 1.1 The Purpose of the Online Faculty Handbook

The KYSU Online Faculty Handbook aims to provide administrators and online faculty members with information essential to the operation of effective online programs. In this way, it is an extension of the Kentucky State University Faculty Handbook<sup>1</sup> (“Faculty Handbook” hereafter) and Policies.<sup>2</sup> The KYSU Online Faculty Handbook focuses more directly on the academic and faculty matters relevant to online education. Thus, there is both continuity and discontinuity with the Faculty Handbook.

Whereas the Faculty Handbook is the primary document for the faculty of Kentucky State University with reference to the traditional, residentially based academic programs, the KYSU Online Faculty Handbook is the primary document for the online faculty and online academic programs. Additionally, it stands upon the policies and procedures established by the institution. Sometimes those policies can be applied in the online programs as they stand; oftentimes, KYSU Online/Global has developed policies to accommodate the inherent differences between online and traditional programs. The KYSU Online Faculty Handbook refers to relevant policies throughout the document.

### 1.2 Mission

#### 1.2.1 Kentucky State University Mission Statement

Kentucky State University’s mission is to provide transformative educational experiences to prepare graduates for making meaningful contributions to society. Kentucky State University is a public, research-comprehensive, historically Black, 1890 land grant institution<sup>3</sup>.

#### 1.2.2 Online Learning at KYSU

KYSU Online/Global contributes to the mission of Kentucky State University by making its academic programs more accessible to students in non-residential programs. The Office of Online Education represents the mission of KYSU Online/Global.

The Office of Online Education at KYSU provides eLearning opportunities to support flexibility and convenience for working adults, traditional and non-traditional students, military personnel, recent graduates, state government employees, international students, and citizens across the state. KYSU Online/Global provides opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills necessary to meet the demands of a global marketplace.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.kysu.edu/policies/files/faculty-handbook-current.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kysu.edu/policies/policy-search-by-volume.php>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.kysu.edu/about-ksu/mission-vision-core-values.php>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.kysu.edu/policies/files/online-learning.pdf>

### 1.2.1.1 KYSU Online/Global Mission Statement

The mission of the Office of Online Education is to support excellence in teaching and learning, providing student-centered learning experiences, interactive media-enriched content, and innovation through emerging technologies.<sup>6</sup>

### 1.2.1.2 KYSU Online/Global Vision Statement

KYSU Online/Global will become a leader in online education, providing eLearning degree programs, industry certifications, and continuing education opportunities based on the university's strategic priorities and core values.<sup>7</sup>

## 1.3 Administrative Structure

This section describes the administrative structure of KYSU Online/Global and introduces the core roles involved in operating online academic programs.

### 1.3.1 Provost/Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs

The Provost/Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs is the chief academic officer responsible for the academic programs.<sup>8</sup> The Provost reports to the President of Kentucky State University.

### 1.3.2 Associate Vice President for Online Education

The Associate Vice President of Online Education ensures alignment of all aspects of the online programs, contracted services, and Academic Affairs. The Associate Vice President of Online Education is the primary administrative liaison between Magellan Learning Solutions and KYSU Online/Global, working closely with administrators to integrate contracted services with the regular academic operations. The Associate Vice President of Online Education works with the Director of Online Education and the Online Advisory Committee to support the development, launch, and maintenance of online programs and services within the scope of the contracted services. The Associate Vice President of Online Education reports to the Chief Academic Officer at Magellan while coordinating with the Provost/Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at KYSU Online/Global and the Director of Online Education.

### 1.3.3 Director of Online Education

The Director of Online Education oversees the Office of Online Education and reports directly to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs while coordinating with the Associate Vice President for Online Education. The Director oversees the work of program coordinators and directs the coordination of online programs and curriculum with the residential programs, establishing internal controls which ensure parity across various course modalities. Similarly, the Director collaborates with Institutional Effectiveness on accreditation requirements relevant to KYSU Online/Global and directs a plan of assessment in online programs, which is supported by Program Coordinators and online faculty. In conjunction with the Provost and the Associate Vice President of Online Education, the Director also develops partnerships with department leaders across the University to ensure operational alignment between the financial, administrative,

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.kysu.edu/academics/dist-ed/index.php>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.kysu.edu/academics/dist-ed/index.php>

<sup>8</sup> Kentucky State University Faculty Handbook, Section 1.5.2

technological, student service offices, and the operations of KYSU Online/Global. The Director is an *ex officio* member of the Online Advisory Committee.

### **1.3.4 Office of Online Education**

The Office of Online Education ensures quality and instructional effectiveness in KYSU Online/Global's courses and degree programs. It does this in a few ways.

#### **1.3.4.1 Faculty Training**

The Office of Online Education provides faculty with training and professional development for the unique aspects of online courses. Faculty can receive training on the Learning Management System (LMS), course design, quality standards, and compliance standards relevant to online education. The Office of Online Education maintains a repository of training resources for online faculty.<sup>9</sup>

Training typically covers two areas of online education: course design and instructional practices.<sup>10</sup> The Office of Online Education requires faculty to complete assigned training as a prerequisite for engaging in online course design or instruction. The online assigned training is available in the Online Faculty Hub.

#### **1.3.4.2 Course Design**

In partnership with faculty Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), the Office of Online Education will support faculty course design following a development plan established by the Provost, the Associate Vice President of Online Education, the Director of Online Education, and contracted service providers. The development plan coordinates course development resources internally and externally with marketing and student recruitment efforts. For this reason, adherence to the development plan is essential. Faculty should consult the Office of Online Education for details about serving as a course SME for their areas of expertise. See also Section *1.3.4 – Subject Matter Experts*.

#### **1.3.4.3 Liaison to Magellan Learning Solutions**

The Office of Online Education is the primary interface with contracted services relevant to KYSU Online/Global. This involves coordinating curriculum development with the faculty and providing operational support to advance KYSU Online/Global initiatives.

### **1.3.5 Online Advisory Committee**

The Online Advisory Committee is a University Standing Committee responsible for advising on standards of quality and best practices in online programs at Kentucky State University. This committee will serve as the separate governance structure for KYSU Online/Global while coordinating with the Faculty Senate. Appointed by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs, the committee collaborates with the Office of Online Education and, when relevant, the Faculty Senate to maintain parity between different modalities of courses and programs while adhering to accreditation standards within the framework of KYSU Online/Global.

The Online Advisory Committee's primary role includes reviewing, recommending, and approving policies, online courses, and online programs for KYSU Online/Global in

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.kysu.edu/academics/dist-ed/online-resource-portal/online-faculty-resources.php>

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.kysu.edu/academics/dist-ed/online-teaching-credentials.php>

coordination with the residential courses and programs of Kentucky State University’s traditional academic programs. The committee ensures that KYSU Online/Global’s courses and programs align with the traditional programs approved by the Faculty Senate.

The Online Advisory Committee will engage with two general areas of KYSU Online/Global’s academic operations: 1) policy and 2) curriculum. For further information about the Online Advisory Committee, consult the document, *KYSU Online Advisory Committee Procedures*, and the document, *KYSU Curriculum Proposal Procedures*.

### **1.3.1 Program Coordinator**

Program Coordinators support the curricular and academic affairs of their respective programs. As assigned, they serve as liaisons to the Online Advisory Committee, the Director of Online Education, and the Department Chairs of residential programs to ensure that degree programs are sufficiently coordinated and assessed across modalities. Program Coordinators report directly to the Director of Online Education.<sup>12</sup>

### **1.3.2 Faculty Mentor**

The growth of KYSU Online/Global will require hiring adjunct faculty who teach exclusively online courses. Unlike adjunct faculty who teach residential courses and report directly to the Department Chair, online adjunct faculty will not report to administrators within the residentially based departments. Instead, online faculty will report to a Faculty Mentor for instructional and general administrative matters. For content- and curriculum-related concerns, online faculty will report to other administrators, such as Subject-Matter Experts (SME).

Faculty Mentors are the primary source of administrative support for online faculty. Faculty Mentors work with online faculty across degree programs, Schools, and Colleges, focusing solely on the best practices vital to ensuring a student-centered approach to online instruction and compliance with distance education standards (e.g., roster verifications, adherence to online schedule, academic engagement, regular and substantive interaction, etc.). They provide administrative quality control and assess the course management practices of online faculty to promote continuous improvement. The Faculty Mentor also supports online faculty with student and administrative matters that require escalation or engagement with other offices.

Each Faculty Mentor oversees a maximum of 20 online faculty members. These faculty members may include part-time (adjunct) employees and full-time faculty members who teach online courses. The Faculty Mentor reports directly to the Associate Vice President of Online Education and coordinates with the Director of Online Education, Program Coordinators, and Subject Matter Experts to facilitating online faculty engagement as relevant.

### **1.3.3 Online Faculty**

The term “online faculty” refers to the group of qualified academic personnel (individual members of the online faculty) who are assigned to online course sections as the instructors of record. They perform instructional duties and provide other academic engagement with students in those online course sections. The online faculty includes any full-time faculty (i.e., full-time residential faculty) and adjunct faculty that receive course load and other assignments from the Office of Online Education in an academic year.

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<sup>12</sup> Kentucky State University Faculty Handbook, Section 1.5.7

Whenever a member of the Kentucky State University faculty requests and receives an online course load, they are considered an online faculty member in matters related to their online course load. The same would be true for an adjunct faculty member who teaches a residential course; if the adjunct requests and receives an online course load, they are considered a member of the online faculty in matters related to their online course load. This is a status in addition to any faculty status held concerning the residential campus and faculty. The purpose of the online faculty designation is to properly orient individual faculty members to the online administrative structure and requirements based on the nature of their duties.

The table below shows how various statuses and hypothetical contractual assignments relate to the “online faculty” designation.

Primary Type of Employee	Employment Status	Contracted Traditional / Hybrid Courses (per sem.)	Online Courses assigned by Office of Online Ed	Considered a member of the online faculty?
Fulltime faculty	Fulltime employee	Fulltime course load	At least 1 course during a semester	Yes – concerning online courses independently of contracted load
Fulltime faculty	Fulltime employee	Fulltime course load	None	No – apart from teaching an online course and being plugged into the online admin structure
Adjunct faculty	Part-time employee	No contract, but teaches 1 residential course	At least 1 course during a semester	Yes – concerning online courses only; reports to Dept. Chair for residential course
Adjunct faculty	Part-time employee	Teaches 1 residential course	Does not request or receive approval to teach online courses	No – apart from teaching an online course and being plugged into the online admin structure
Adjunct faculty	Part-time employee	None	Hired to teach online courses	Yes – concerning online courses

See 2.1 – Faculty Status and KYSU Online/Global.

### 1.3.4 Subject Matter Experts

The Office of Online Education appoints or approves Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). They are credentialed faculty who are the primary source of academic expertise for the content in an online course.

The relationship of SMEs to an online course takes two forms. During the development of an online course, the initial SME develops the course content. 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. Whenever KYSU Online/Global contracts outside course development services to reduce the development load on faculty, SMEs will not be required to design the course in the Learning Management Systems. However, the SMEs will work closely

with contracted Instructional Designers during the course development process on matters requiring academic expertise and faculty involvement.

The second form of a SME's relationship to an online course follows the conclusion of the development process. Once course development is completed, the initial SME or newly designated SME manages the content in the primary course shell thereafter,<sup>13</sup> collaborating with faculty, Faculty Mentors, and the Office of Online Education on course edits, revisions, and redevelopments. SMEs report to the Office of Online Education concerning the online course(s).

In addition to contributing to the development and maintenance of online courses, SMEs often teach in the online sections of those courses once the course launches, working separately as the online faculty in assigned sections. Instructional course load is separate from SME involvement in course development, so the Office of Online Education does not require that initial SMEs accept course load as online faculty after course development is complete.

See Section 3.1 – *Subject Matter Expert (SME) Model for Online Courses*. See also the document, *KYSU Online SME Model for Online Courses*, and the document, *KYSU Online Course Content Management Procedures*.

### **1.3.5 Instructional Designers**

The Office of Online Education often utilizes Instructional Designers (IDs) alongside SMEs in the process of 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/Global 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 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.

### **1.4 Online Course Modality**

KYSU Online/Global offers courses in the asynchronous online modality. As asynchronous, the courses do not require students to remotely participate in learning activities at specified times. This accommodates the needs of online students and their general preference for flexibility. Asynchronous requirements further support the ability of students in various time zones to engage academically with the course material. Exceptions to the asynchronous requirements of courses must be formally requested from the Office of Online Education at the outset of the course development process. The Office of Online Education will review the request and consult with the Online Advisory Committee as needed. Consideration will be given to the request's impact on the educational experience of students, the delivery of learning outcomes, and the logistics of the proposed synchronous requirements. This process serves as an internal control to prevent differences in advertised and actual requirements.

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<sup>13</sup> "Primary course shell" refers to the primary instance of an online course in an LMS from which copies are made each time the course is offered.

KYSU Online/Global courses are offered 100% through the Learning Management System (LMS) and do not require students to travel to specific locations. All course materials are housed within the course pages of the LMS. Textbooks are integrated directly into the LMS as well. Students submit their assignments for grading through the LMS. Faculty instructors also grade assignments and provide substantive feedback to students in the LMS. Although the LMS has messaging features, faculty and students may communicate through email and Microsoft Teams using their official KYSU accounts.

Online courses are designated in university systems and literature with the code letter “A,” “B,” “C,” “J,” or “P” prefixed to the course section number. Previously, Kentucky State University referred to a “virtual” course modality, which is broader than the online modality described above as it included courses in residential programs with synchronous requirements as well as asynchronous “distance education” courses. Beginning in the 2024-25 academic year, virtual courses (designated with the “V” code letter) will only include courses offered for the residential programs that permit students to attend scheduled lectures synchronously through the LMS rather than requiring their physical attendance in lectures on the campus of Kentucky State University. Courses that require a combination of physical attendance and non-physical academic engagement are referred to as “hybrid” courses and designated with the “H” code letter.

The table below includes the distinguishing features of each course modality:

<i>Modalities</i>	<b>Section Prefix</b>	<b>Other name</b>	<b>% face-to-face</b>	<b>LMS use</b>
<i>Traditional Course</i>		on-campus; residential	100	supplemental for the purpose of distributing announcements, notes, assignments, posting assignments and grades.
<i>Hybrid Course</i>	H	blended	varies	60% - 80% of the course content will be distributed through the LMS
<i>Virtual Course</i>	V	virtual	0	all course content and assessment is distributed through the LMS; synchronous requirements; residential programs.
<i>Online Course</i>	A, B, C, J or P	online; distance	0	all course content and assessment is distributed through the LMS; asynchronous; online programs.

See also the document, *KYSU Online Course Modality Policy*, and the document, *KYSU Online Course Registration Policy*.

### 1.5 Academic Calendar and Online Programs

The calendar system is “the method by which an institution structures most of its courses for the academic year.”<sup>14</sup> Kentucky State University operates according to a standard term calendar system consisting of two semesters and a summer session. An academic semester is a period of time that shall consist of no fewer than fifteen (15) calendar weeks and no more than eighteen (18) calendar weeks of instructional time. The inclusion of breaks or holidays within any

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<sup>14</sup> IPEDS 2023-24 Data Collection System Glossary. “Calendar System.” Accessed 11/27/2023. <https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/public/glossary>

particular semester shall be at the discretion of the institution so long as the institution is in compliance with the criteria for awarding semester credit hours.<sup>15</sup>

Kentucky State University's fall semester runs from the middle of August until the end of December.<sup>16</sup> The spring semester runs from the beginning of January until the middle of May. The summer session runs from the middle of May until early August.<sup>17</sup> Each semester is a standard term consisting of *at least 15 weeks* of academic engagement. These are defined in the Catalog as "academic terms."<sup>18</sup> The current calendars are posted on the web pages of Academic Affairs and/or the Registrar's Office.

### 1.5.1 Online Terms and Subterms

With the launch of KYSU Online/Global programs and courses in the 2024-25 academic year, the academic calendar will incorporate online subterms into the standard term academic calendar. Each subterm is roughly half the length of a semester; it consists of no more than nine (9) and no less than 7.5 weeks of instructional time. KYSU Online/Global's subterms are eight (8) weeks long.

On the one hand, these online subterms can be considered nonstandard terms. Generally, nonstandard terms are terms that are not semesters, trimesters, or quarters. For example, a 5-week term or a 23-week term would be considered a nonstandard term because no standard term can be fewer than nine (9) weeks or greater than 21 weeks in length. However, "[i]n a program using a standard term academic calendar you may combine two or more consecutive shorter nonstandard terms (often called modules) and treat them as a single standard term such as a semester or quarter."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, for financial aid purposes, since the nonstandard terms run consecutively within the delimitations of Kentucky State University's standard term semesters, they will be treated as a single standard term.

The courses offered in 8-week subterms are measured in credit hours (34 CFR 600.2 "Credit hour"). In general, an asynchronous online course occurring within an 8-week subterm is a compressed version of a semester-length version of the same asynchronous course. However, this might not be the case if the modality of the courses is different (e.g., a subterm course in the online modality might not be just a compressed version of a semester course in the virtual or traditional modality). Nevertheless, there must be parity between courses and programs offered in multiple modalities. The content, assignments, assessments, learning outcomes, and curricular value of the course credit hours are the determining factors in the relationship between courses delivered in various modalities and timeframes.<sup>20</sup>

KYSU Online/Global courses offered in subterms are eight (8) weeks long and contain study modules. As such, a module corresponds to a calendar week within the subterm. If the course

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<sup>15</sup> Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1)

<sup>16</sup> See the Academic Calendar Policy (1.1.1) for more specific details.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.kysu.edu/academics/registrar/academic-calendar/index.php>

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 2, "Section 1. Definitions" in the 2022-23 Undergraduate Catalog. <https://kysu-public.courseleaf.com/undergraduate/admissions/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/fsa-handbook/2024-2025/vol3/ch1-academic-years-academic-calendars-payment-periods-and-disbursements>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2\(Credit%20hour\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2(Credit%20hour))

were offered in an academic semester term over 16 weeks, for example, each of the eight modules would span more than a calendar week.

A module is a discrete collection of learning activities that focuses on elements of the course topics and learning outcomes. Each module provides students with opportunities for academic engagement with the course and instructor. Modules organize the course learning activities into a logical progression that facilitates a scaffolded approach to student learning in an asynchronous course.

A student-centered school is mindful of the different needs of residential and online students. Sub-terms occurring within the delimitations of the standard terms of an academic year, such as semesters, are beneficial for online programs in several ways.

- For student recruiting and enrollment, subterms reduce the time between start dates for new students, which can be attractive to prospective students.
- Focusing on fewer courses at once can be helpful for students who are in a career or shouldering more substantial domestic responsibilities than a typical 18- to 22-year-old residential undergraduate student. Subterms enable students to consolidate their efforts on fewer courses at once while allowing them to complete the same number of courses within an academic term/semester.
- Full-time students can frontload or backload their course schedule across the subterms while remaining full-time. For example, a full-time residential student would carry 12 credit hours or four courses per semester. The equivalent credits for a full-time online student could be achieved in several configurations:
  - Two courses in subterm B and two courses in subterm C
  - Three courses in subterm B and one course in subterm C
  - One course in subterm B and three courses in subterm C<sup>21</sup>

See also the document, *KYSU Online Academic Calendar, Terms, and Subterms Policy*.

### **1.5.2 Configuration of Subterms and the Academic Year**

The academic calendar, consisting of two semesters and a summer session, is depicted below, along with academic terms and subterms for the online programs. The fall is in the top third of the image; the spring is in the middle. The summer is in the bottom third. Since the summer session is shorter than a typical semester, subterms B and C overlap.

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<sup>21</sup> Students should be limited to a maximum of 3 courses per sub-term apart from rare exceptions.

<b>Fall</b>	Part of Calendar	<i>Fall (mid-August to late-December)</i>																	
	Online AY weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20																	
	Term	<b>Fall Semester / Fall A</b>																	
	Term weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17																	
	Subterm	<b>Fall B</b>									<b>Fall C</b>								
Subterm weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8									1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8									
<b>Spring</b>	Part of Calendar	<i>Spring (early-January to early-May)</i>																	
	Online AY weeks	21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38																	
	Term	<b>Spring Semester / Spring A</b>																	
	Term weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17																	
	Subterm	<b>Spring B</b>									<b>Spring C</b>								
Subterm weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8									1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8									
<b>Summer</b>	Part of Calendar	<i>Summer (early-May to mid-August)</i>																	
	Online AY weeks	39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52																	
	Term	<b>Summer Session</b>																	
	Term weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8																	
	Subterm	<b>Summer B</b>																	
Subterm weeks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8																		
Subterm							<b>Summer C</b>												
Subterm weeks							1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8												

1.5.2.1 Term A

Term A is a semester-length online term. As shown in the image above, term A runs in parallel with the traditional semester for residential programs. In the fall, this is referred to as Fall A; in the spring it is called Spring A. There is no term A in the summer. The separate online term helps differentiate semester-length online course offerings from residential, hybrid, and virtual course offerings for the residentially-based programs. The separate online term also helps with enrollment processes and data management by distinguishing online course sections from those offered in other modalities at the same time. Internships and dissertations for online students might be listed in term A depending on program needs.

1.5.2.2 Subterm B

Subterm B is the first 8-week interval of a traditional academic semester or term. In the fall, this is referred to as Fall B. In the spring, it is referred to as Spring B. In the summer, this is referred to as Summer B.

1.5.2.3 Subterm C

Subterm C is the second 8-week interval of a traditional academic semester or term. In the fall, this is referred to as Fall C. In the spring, this is referred to as Spring C. In the summer, this is referred to as Summer C. Since the summer session is shorter than a semester, Summer B and Summer C overlap.

## 2 ONLINE FACULTY

### 2.1 Faculty Status and KYSU Online/Global

The online programs are supported by two faculty types: full-time faculty (i.e., full-time residential faculty) and adjunct faculty. When each type of faculty member completes instructional or administrative duties in an academic year, they are considered “online faculty” regarding those duties. Online faculty are similarly referred to as instructors. This is a status in addition to any other status held at Kentucky State University, such as full-time faculty, staff, or adjunct faculty (in residential courses). The remainder of this section clarifies the various ways in which full-time faculty are involved in the online programs. It also clarifies the relationship between their contracts and work performed for KYSU Online/Global.

#### 2.1.1 Full-time Faculty

Full-time faculty members are the primary faculty for the traditional (residential) academic programs. Their involvement in the campus life of Kentucky State University is an essential component of the students’ campus experience and the institution’s mission. One purpose of faculty contracts is to ensure an adequate faculty is in place to support the operations and offerings required by the residential student body. Therefore, their full-time teaching load should be fulfilled through courses delivered in the residential, hybrid, and virtual modalities (see Section 1.4 – *Online Course Modality* for an explanation of the difference between “virtual” and “online” modalities). Full-time faculty can also receive release from portions of their teaching load for administrative assignments, committee service, or special research projects.

Despite this primary orientation of the full-time faculty to the residential campus, they are integral to the success of KYSU Online/Global. Full-time faculty serve as Subject Matter Experts to support KYSU Online/Global course development. Some full-time faculty also might want to serve as online instructors for KYSU Online/Global. This can occur in two ways:

- Full-time faculty may request online course load from the Office of Online Education. Once approved, a full-time faculty member could serve as an instructor for KYSU Online/Global. Online course load would be treated separately from the terms of their full-time contract. Compensation would be in accordance with standard online adjunct rates in this scenario.

When a full-time faculty member carries online courses, they will be considered an online faculty member in addition to their status on the residential campus. As online faculty, they will report to the appropriate administrators concerning online courses.

See Section 1.3.3 – *Online Faculty*.

##### 2.1.1.1 Online Faculty Workload Policy

To ensure that an adequate number of full-time faculty are available for the residential academic programs, administrative assignments, and committee service, full-time faculty may not count online course load towards their full-time teaching requirements. Whenever a full-time faculty member carries an online course load, it will be separate from the terms of their full-time faculty contract. Similarly, online course load will not trigger a reduction in teaching load the following semester. When full-time faculty function as online faculty and carry an online course load, they are paid at the standard rates specified in Section 2.3 – *Faculty Compensation*.

**Note:** Full-time faculty may not use online course load towards their full-time teaching load obligations; online course load is handled separately. Exceptions to this must be approved by the Provost in advance.

This policy allows full-time faculty involvement in KYSU Online/Global while preventing it from eroding the full-time faculty availability for residential courses and program/student support. Exceptions to this policy must be approved beforehand by the Provost/Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs.

For a full statement of this policy, see the document, *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Policy*.

#### 2.1.1.2 Online Course Load Assignments

The Office of Online Education will assign sections to online faculty based on their requested online load, their capacity for online load, and the needs of the KYSU Online/Global. Although online course load is separate from the contracted load of full-time faculty, the Office of Online Education engages with administrators of the residential programs, such as Department Chairs, to ensure effective coordination of faculty workload across modalities. This is to ensure that full-time faculty remain adequately available for their primary obligations. The Office of Online Education also evaluates faculty workload capacity in the process of assigning online course load.

See Section 2.2.2.1 – *Calculating Workload Capacity for Full-time Faculty*. See also the document, *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Procedures*.

### 2.1.2 Adjunct Faculty

Adjunct faculty may be recruited for specific work in the online programs. Unlike full-time faculty, the adjunct faculty do not hold contracted teaching load in the residential programs. When an adjunct faculty member carries an online course load, they will be considered an online faculty member (in addition to any status on the residential campus, such as a residential adjunct instructor). As online faculty, they report to the relevant administrators, such as Faculty Mentors and SMEs, concerning online courses. Adjunct faculty are paid per the rates listed in Section 2.3 – *Faculty Compensation*. See also Section 1.3.3 – *Online Faculty*.

The Office of Online Education will offer adjunct faculty opportunities for workload as online faculty using the Adjunct Workload Agreement form, before the start of each term or subterm.

#### 2.1.2.1 Adjunct Faculty Qualifications

Adjunct faculty must meet University criteria and the Faculty Credentials Guidelines of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC),<sup>22</sup> for each course taught. It shall be the responsibility of the relevant program coordinator to ensure that adjunct faculty members are qualified to teach courses in their respective programs. This should involve a review of the hiring packet and transcripts. The Office of Online Education maintains records of transcript reviews and course qualifications for online faculty.

#### 2.1.2.2 Adjunct Faculty as Part-time Employees

Adjunct faculty are considered part-time employees of the University. The Office of Online Education assigns online course load to adjunct faculty as needed. As much as possible, course

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<sup>22</sup> <https://sacscoc.org/app/uploads/2019/07/faculty-credentials.pdf>

load assignments consider the requests and preferences of each adjunct faculty member. In some circumstances, an adjunct faculty member might be asked to complete additional duties beyond the scope of their part-time teaching load, such as administrative support of the online programs, service as an SME, or curricular assessment. Other assigned duties are tracked by the Office of Online Education. Adjuncts are compensated for additional duties per the established rates. See Section 2.3 –*Faculty Compensation*.

### 2.1.2.3 Tracking Adjunct Faculty “Hours of Service”

Adjunct faculty are not hourly employees of the University. They are paid a flat rate per course and other duties. However, to comply with regulations relevant to the part-time status of adjunct faculty members and benefits administration, the university will use adjunct faculty workload information to track *adjunct hours of service*.

The term *adjunct hours of service* refers to the average calculated time per week a part-time adjunct faculty employee works. Since adjunct faculty are part-time employees, *adjunct hours of service* must be tracked to confirm that their workloads, in fact, remain below a calculated average of 30 hours per week, which is the threshold for full-time employment under the Affordable Care Act.

The method of calculating adjunct hours of service must fit the definition of a “reasonable method.”<sup>23</sup> One reasonable method is described in the Federal Register:

[T]he Treasury Department and the IRS have determined that, until further guidance is issued, one (but not the only) method that is reasonable for this purpose would credit an adjunct faculty member of an institution of higher education with (a) 2 ¼ hours of service (representing a combination of teaching or classroom time and time performing related tasks such as class preparation and grading of examinations or papers) per week for each hour of teaching or classroom time (in other words, in addition to crediting an hour of service for each hour teaching in the classroom, this method would credit an additional 1 ¼ hours for activities such as class preparation and grading) and, separately, (b) an hour of service per week for each additional hour outside of the classroom the faculty member spends performing duties they are required to perform (such as required office hours or required attendance at faculty meetings).<sup>24</sup>

Three timeframes are involved in tracking adjunct hours of service: the *stability period*, the *administrative period*, and the *measurement period*.

- The current academic year corresponds to the *stability period*. In the *stability period*, the employee’s benefit status, which had been previously established for their position, remains stable, regardless of fluctuations in their hours worked. The *stability period* is generally 10 or 11 months.
- Following the *stability period* is an *administrative period* of 1 or 2 months. During the *administrative period*, the past workload of each adjunct faculty member is measured to determine a benefit status for the subsequent *stability period*, which follows the *administrative period*.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2014-03082/p-72>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2014-03082/p-77>

- The *measurement period* is the most recently completed *stability period* used during the *administrative period* to calculate the average weekly *adjunct hours of service*.

Once per year in the *administrative period*, the average weekly hours of service in the *measurement period* are calculated for each adjunct using a “reasonable method.” The university will use the “look-back measurement method.” Per the Federal Register,

The proposed regulations provide a method, referred to as the look-back measurement method, under which employers may determine the status of an employee as a full-time employee during a future period (referred to as the stability period) based upon the hours of service of the employee in a prior period (referred to as the measurement period).<sup>25</sup>

In the *administrative period*, the Office of Human Resources will evaluate *adjunct hours of service* during the *measurement period* to determine the appropriate actions to take for benefits administration in the *stability period*. Any part-time faculty employee (i.e., adjunct faculty member) averaging 30 or more hours of service during the *measurement period* will be contacted by Human Resources to review health insurance coverage options for the subsequent *stability period*.

## 2.2 Faculty Workload and KYSU Online/Global

Faculty workload is covered in Section 2.11 of the Faculty Handbook, but that Handbook does not distinguish any specific duties associated with KYSU Online/Global from general faculty work completed in support of the traditional programs. Additionally, given the KYSU Online Faculty Workload Policy,<sup>26</sup> which prohibits full-time faculty from using online course load to satisfy their full-time teaching load obligations (apart from pre-approval from the Provost), further guidance is needed to relate online faculty workloads to the existing framework used for residentially-based programs. Online courses are offered in subterms; the compressed course delivery timelines impact faculty workload, which requires guidance beyond the Faculty Handbook. Moreover, additional guidance is needed to track the *adjunct hours of service* for benefits administration.<sup>27</sup>

Full-time faculty workload at Kentucky State University traditionally has been measured in credit hours for course instruction or administrative release and in workdays for various aspects of faculty service and overload. Both credit hours and workdays relate to approximations of faculty time spent working in a semester or contract period. These approximations of time (whether hours or workdays) are predicated on the relationship between course credit hours and time spent in academic engagement with students during a semester, which is a minimum of 15 weeks of academic engagement in a semester. The table below presents this system of values and assumptions used in credit hour and time-based faculty workload calculations at Kentucky State University.

Quantity	Unit	Formula / Explanation
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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2014-03082/p-99>

<sup>26</sup> See 2.1.1.1 – Online Faculty Workload Policy

<sup>27</sup> See 2.1.2.3 – Tracking Adjunct Faculty “Hours of Service”

1	Semester	= 15 semester weeks of academic engagement. <sup>28</sup>
1	Credit hour	= 1 hour of instruction AND 1 hour of grading/preparation PER semester week FOR 15 semester weeks. This equals 30 faculty work hours per credit.
1	Faculty workday	= 10 faculty work hours.
1	Credit hour	= 3 normal faculty workdays for the purposes of tracking overload.
1	Credit hour	= \$900 overload/adjunct compensation, up to \$2700 per course apart from summer incentive compensation for residential courses.
1	Credit hour	For full-time faculty, office hours are triggered for residential courses at a rate of 2/3 faculty office hours PER credit hour PER semester week in addition to the hours of instruction and grading/preparation.

Relating faculty workload to time spent working is unavoidable to an extent because of the credit hour system. One weakness of this relationship, however, is the potential to inadvertently convey an association between faculty work hours and compensation. This is undesirable since neither full-time nor part-time adjunct faculty are classified as non-exempt, hourly employees. So, it is helpful to disjoin workload from time spent working by implementing an atemporal metric to quantify faculty workload. Additionally, the assumptions and system of calculations in the table above do not readily lend themselves to various conversions, such as determining the workload represented by non-credit-bearing work or projects paid at a flat rate.

Therefore, building upon the historical approaches to faculty workload at Kentucky State University, this section details KYSU Online/Global’s standard unit of tracking faculty workload: *faculty workload units* (abbreviated as *WLU*). *Faculty workload units (WLU)* facilitate compensation; they are not directly tied to course instruction (as are credit hours), and they disjoin compensation from time-based approximations of faculty work (such as workdays and work hours). *Faculty workload units (WLU)* meet the needs of KYSU Online/Global by accommodating different faculty types (full-time and part-time), different types of work (e.g., instructional, non-instructional, special assignments), different units of quantifying the work (e.g., credit hours, workdays, flat rate stipends), different timeframes in which the work is completed (e.g., semester, subterm), and different purposes for tracking the work (e.g., monitoring overload caps, overload pay, adjunct benefits thresholds). The remainder of this section explains KYSU Online/Global’s use of *faculty workload units*.

**2.2.1 Faculty Workload Unit Values and System**

KYSU Online/Global will measure faculty workload in *faculty workload units (WLU)*. *Faculty workload units* are a single way to quantify various types of faculty workload. The table below shows how traditional elements of faculty workload in the credit hour systems of calculations are quantified in *faculty workload units*.

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<sup>28</sup> The system of calculations uses 15 weeks of academic engagement even if there are more weeks of academic engagement in a semester. A course can also be delivered across fewer weeks than the 15 weeks of academic engagement thereby intensifying the course load.

Quantity	Other Metric	Abbr.	Equivalent Quantity <i>WLU</i>	Formula
1	credit hour ( <i>cr</i> )	<i>cr</i>	2 <i>WLU</i>	$WLU = cr * 2$
1	release from credit hours ( <i>cr<sub>r</sub></i> ) <sup>29</sup>	<i>cr<sub>r</sub></i>	2 <i>WLU</i>	$WLU = cr_r * 2$
15	faculty work hours ( <i>fwh</i> )	<i>fwh</i>	1 <i>WLU</i>	<sup>30</sup> $WLU = fwh / 15$
1.5	faculty workdays ( <i>fwd</i> )	<i>fwd</i>	1 <i>WLU</i>	<sup>31</sup> $WLU = (fwd * 10) / 15$
0.333	office hours triggered by residential teaching per <i>WLU</i> per semester week ( <i>ofh/swk</i> )	<i>ofh/swk</i>	1 <i>WLU</i>	$WLU = ofh/swk / (1/3)$
\$450	pay per <i>WLU</i> (\$) <sup>32</sup>	\$/ <i>WLU</i>	1 <i>WLU</i>	<sup>33</sup> $WLU = \$ / \$450$

These crosswalks to *WLUs* accommodate faculty workload tracking regardless of the known values (whether credit hours, release from teaching credit hours, special projects paid at a flat rate, faculty work hours and workdays).

### 2.2.2 Tracking Full-time Faculty Workload

With this framework of values, faculty workload policies can be articulated more simply with *faculty workload units (WLU)*. The table below presents full-time faculty workload requirements and overload caps in *faculty workload units (WLU)*.

Full-time faculty required teaching/release workload per semester	
Undergraduate faculty	24 <i>faculty workload units (WLU)</i> residential teaching/release <sup>34</sup>
Graduate faculty	18 <i>faculty workload units (WLU)</i> residential teaching/release <sup>35</sup>
Full-time faculty overload caps per semester – excluding KYSU Online/Global workload	

<sup>29</sup> The abbreviation for credit hours (*cr*) has a subscript letter “r” denoting that these are credit hours of contracted teaching from which a faculty member is released; the equivalent workload is directed towards other duties, such as administrative assignments, committee leadership, or special projects.

<sup>30</sup> The denominator value of 15 relates to the standard number of weeks of academic engagement per credit hour.

<sup>31</sup> The multiplier value of 10 relates to the standard number of faculty work hours in a faculty workday.

<sup>32</sup> Rate per *WLU* up to 6 *WLU* per course; rate per non-course *WLU*.

<sup>33</sup> This formula calculates the *WLU* represented by an amount of compensation that is not otherwise triggered by a *WLU* value. It facilitates tracking of faculty workload (or overload) represented by a stipend or flat amount of compensation for workload.

<sup>34</sup> The Faculty Handbook articulates this as 12 credit hours of teaching per semester, which can be reduced by teaching release for administrative duties, research, and other workload assignments.

<sup>35</sup> The Faculty Handbook articulates this as 9 credit hours of teaching per semester, which can be reduced by teaching release for administrative duties, research, and other workload assignments.

9-month faculty	13 <i>faculty workload units (WLU)</i> teaching and/or other workload <sup>36</sup>
12-month faculty	16 <i>faculty workload units (WLU)</i> teaching and/or other workload <sup>37</sup>
<b>Overload Compensation</b>	
Full-time overload rate	\$450 per <i>faculty workload unit (WLU)</i> , up to \$2700 per course.

2.2.2.1 Calculating Workload Capacity for Full-time Faculty

In each subterm, the capacity of a full-time faculty member for workload as an online faculty member will depend generally on their total faculty workload.<sup>38</sup> The total workload in support of the residential programs will factor into decisions made by the Department Chair and the Director of Online Education when assigning course load for KYSU Online/Global. For this reason, there could be times when a full-time faculty member does not have the capacity for duties as an online faculty member in a subterm or semester.

See the document, *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Policy*, and the document, *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Procedures*, for additional details.

2.2.2.2 Calculating Compensation

Regardless of faculty employment status, all KYSU Online/Global course load is paid at a standard rate of \$450 per *WLU*, up to \$2700 per course section, apart from low-enrollment and over-enrollment pay adjustments. See the pay scales in the document, *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Procedures*, for additional details.

**2.2.3 Tracking Adjunct Faculty Workload for KYSU Online/Global**

Unlike full-time faculty, adjunct faculty are not contracted annually for a specific amount of teaching, service, and scholarly activity. However, the Faculty Handbook specifies that adjunct faculty workloads are normally less than the required teaching loads of full-time faculty, and workload must be tracked to administer compensation. Additionally, as noted in Section 2.1.2.3 above, adjunct faculty workload must be tracked to calculate the average adjunct hours of service during the look-back period of benefit administration for part-time faculty.

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<sup>36</sup> The Faculty Handbook articulates this as 39 workdays of overload per year (or 19.5 workdays of overload per semester). The overload is comprised of teaching (capped at 6 credit hours per semester) and other overload (which is quantified in workdays). The credit hours are converted to workdays equivalents based on a 1/3 ratio (3 credit hours is the equivalent of 9 faculty workdays).

<sup>37</sup> The Faculty Handbook articulates this as 48 workdays of overload per year. It is unclear whether this should be understood as 24 workdays of overload per semester (fall and spring) or as 19.5 workdays of overload per semester (fall and spring) and 10 more workdays of overload in the summer session. The overload is comprised of teaching (capped at 6 credit hours per semester) and other overload (which is quantified in workdays). The credit hours are converted to workdays equivalents based on a 1/3 ratio (3 credit hours is the equivalent of 9 faculty workdays).

<sup>38</sup> This calculation must account for whether a faculty member is an undergraduate or graduate faculty status, the length of their faculty contract (9 or 12 months), their residential course load, their administrative release, other required faculty assignments, residential teaching overload, and non-credit bearing overload for the residential campus.

KYSU Online/Global will track adjunct faculty workload with *faculty workload units (WLU)*. Relevant to adjuncts, the table below includes the values and system presented in Section 2.2.1 with calculations for tracking adjunct hours of service.

Quantity	Other Metric	Abbr.	Equivalent Quantity <i>WLU</i>	Formula
1	credit hour ( <i>cr</i> )	<i>cr</i>	2 <i>WLU</i>	$WLU = cr * 2$
15	faculty work hours ( <i>fwh</i> )	<i>fwh</i>	1 <i>WLU</i>	<sup>39</sup> $WLU = fwh / 15$
1.5	faculty workday ( <i>fwd</i> )	<i>fwd</i>	1 <i>WLU</i>	<sup>40</sup> $WLU = (fwd * 10) / 15$
\$450	adjunct or overload pay per <i>WLU</i> (\$) <sup>41</sup>	\$/ <i>WLU</i>	1 <i>WLU</i>	<sup>42</sup> $WLU = \$ / \$450$
1.125	adjunct hours of service per course related <i>WLU</i> <sup>43</sup>	<i>ahs</i>	1 <i>WLU</i>	$WLU = ahs / 1.125$
1	adjunct hours of service per non-course related <i>WLU</i> <sup>44</sup>	<i>ahs</i>	1 <i>WLU</i>	$WLU = ahs / 1$

These values and the system of tracking workload in *faculty workload units (WLU)* accommodate more than just course workload. Like full-time faculty, adjuncts also can carry other assignments quantified in *faculty work hours (fwh)*, *faculty workdays (fwd)*, or stipends for completed work. Adjunct workload policies can be articulated simply with *faculty workload units (WLU)*, as in the table below.

Adjunct faculty workload threshold per semester	
Workload threshold	Generally, less <i>faculty workload units (WLU)</i> teaching than full-time faculty requirement.
Adjunct hours of service threshold and calculations	

<sup>39</sup> The denominator value of 15 relates to the standard number of weeks of academic engagement per credit hour.

<sup>40</sup> The multiplier value of 10 relates to the standard number of faculty work hours in a faculty workday.

<sup>41</sup> Rate per *WLU* up to 6 *WLU* per course; rate per non-course *WLU*.

<sup>42</sup> This formula calculates the *WLU* represented by an amount of compensation that is not otherwise triggered by a *WLU* value. It facilitates tracking of faculty workload (or overload) represented by a stipend or flat amount of compensation for workload.

<sup>43</sup> The “reasonable method” for calculating adjunct hours of service involves different calculations depending on the type of faculty workload. For credit-bearing workload, the ratio is 2.25 adjunct hours of service for every credit hour of a course. For non-credit-bearing workload, the ratio is 1 adjunct hours of service for every hour of adjunct faculty work.

<sup>44</sup> See previous footnote about the adjunct hours of service for two types of workload.

Part-time employee benefits workload threshold	Average less than 30 <i>adjunct hours of service</i> per active semester weeks over the <i>look-back period</i> , as calculated during the <i>administrative period</i> .
Course workload	1 <i>WLU</i> is 1.125 adjunct hours of service ( <i>ahs</i> ) per semester week
Other workload	1 <i>WLU</i> is 1 adjunct hours of service ( <i>ahs</i> ) per semester week
<b>Compensation</b>	
Adjunct rate	\$450 per <i>faculty workload unit (WLU)</i> [up to \$2700 per course].

2.2.3.1 Calculating Workload Capacity for Adjunct Faculty

Like full-time faculty, adjunct faculty can carry workload for residential and online programs. KYSU Online/Global uses the values and system for tracking *faculty workload units (WLU)* to determine workload capacity for adjuncts and to project average *adjunct hours of service*.

See the *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Policy* and the *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Procedures* for additional details.

2.2.3.2 Accounting for Subterms in Adjunct Faculty Workload Tracking

Since KYSU Online/Global offers courses in subterms, workload calculations must factor in the compression of a semester-length course into a subterm. This has an amplifying effect on calculations of adjunct hours of service. In other words, if an adjunct delivers the *WLU* in half the number of semester weeks, there is a corollary doubling of the adjunct hours of service in each delivery week. This is important because the average adjunct hours of service per week, which is calculated during the look-back period, only considers active weeks. So, the same workload can lead to different *ahs* calculations depending on how it is distributed across terms and subterms.

See the *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Policy* and the *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Procedures* for additional details.

**2.3 Faculty Compensation**

Online faculty are compensated at a standard rate of \$450 per workload unit (*WLU*) up to 6 *WLU* per course, apart from low-enrollment and over-enrollment pay adjustments. See the pay scales in the document, *KYSU Online Faculty Workload Procedures*, for additional details. Not every *WLU* triggers compensation (e.g., meetings and office hours). The average online course is 3 credit hours, which is 6 *WLU*. Standard section sizes are targeted at 28 seats for undergraduate courses and 24 seats for graduate courses. Full pay (100%) is issued when enrollment meets the minimum threshold for full pay: 26 seats for undergraduate courses and 22 seats for graduate courses. When enrollment falls below these thresholds, pay is prorated according to a tiered schedule detailed in the Adjunct Workload Offer Form. Course workload offers are contingent upon the enrollment of at least 12 students in undergraduate courses and at least 10 students in graduate courses; sections that do not meet these minimums may be canceled or consolidated. Pay will be calculated based on the total enrollment of the course after the add/drop date. Human Resources will issue payment to online faculty after final grades have been posted. Compensation for 8-week terms will be issued as a one-time payment at the end of the term. Compensation for 16-week terms may align with the university’s adjunct pay schedule. Non-

instructional duties that trigger additional compensation will be paid at the end of each term. Payment is made separately from any payroll the employee might receive for duties as, e.g., a full-time faculty member or a full-time staff.

## **2.4 Faculty Evaluation**

The KYSU Board of Regents approved a Faculty Evaluation Process, which involves an annual faculty review in three areas according to a standard rubric: teaching effectiveness, high-impact practices in scholarship, and university and community service. In addition to this regular evaluation process, the Office of Online Education will implement a supplemental evaluation process for online faculty.

### **2.4.1 Evaluation Process**

Once per academic year, each online faculty member will engage in an assessment of online instructional practices. This evaluation aims to facilitate continued growth as an online faculty member in the instructional practices emphasized by KYSU Online/Global.

The process involves several steps.

1. **Notification:** The Faculty Mentor initiates the evaluation process by notifying the online faculty of the details, timeline, and instruments used.
2. **Self-evaluation:** The online faculty member completes a self-evaluation survey and sends it to the Faculty Mentor along with end-of-course surveys and other selected artifacts from the relevant timeframe. Faculty may be asked to reflect on course-related data from dashboards.
3. **Review and evaluation:** The Faculty Mentor reviews these materials and instructional items such as course announcements, discussion boards, and assignment feedback. The Faculty Mentor also reviews the compliance reports from the relevant timeframe.
4. The Faculty Mentor completes the assessment rubric, which includes numeric ratings and substantive feedback.
5. The Faculty Mentor sends the assessment rubric to the online faculty member, and they communicate about the results.
6. Once the online faculty member has approved the assessment results, they are forwarded to the Director of Online Education for review. No further action is required unless initiated by the Director of Online Education.
7. The online faculty member retains a copy of the assessment to include in their regular performance evaluation process and faculty promotion portfolio (when relevant).

### **2.4.2 Evidence for the Effectiveness of Online Faculty**

#### **2.4.2.1 End-of-Course Surveys**

Each course solicits feedback from students about the class and the faculty. Once final grades have been posted, the survey results are available for the faculty member to review. The Office of Online Education and administrators, such as the Faculty Mentor, use the surveys when evaluating faculty performance of online duties.

#### **2.4.2.2 Compliance Reports**

Online faculty must adhere to online teaching standards to provide regular and substantive interaction with students while maintaining an active online presence in courses. Compliance reports track the completion of specific regular duties by the appropriate deadlines. Relevant

items covered in compliance reports include weekly announcements, faculty activity in the LMS, upholding the student “attendance” policy, posting final grades on time, etc.

#### 2.4.2.3 Academic Engagement

Evidence of an instructor’s academic engagement with students can take many forms. This might include engagement in discussion boards, assignment feedback, and other instructional presence in the course. Information about the standards of instruction is found in Section 4 below.

### **2.5 Faculty Rank and Promotion**

Online faculty do not hold any rank apart from their full-time status. When a full-time faculty member applies for promotion, their work as an online faculty member in support of KYSU Online/Global is one component of their portfolio. The primary duties of full-time faculty are oriented toward the residential campus and degree programs. For this reason, the workload completed as an online faculty member for KYSU Online/Global is not a significant factor in faculty rank and promotion decisions for full-time faculty.

Online faculty members who hold rank at another institution can appeal to use their rank and title at KYSU Online/Global. Appeals should be directed to the Office of Online Education. No additional compensation or benefits are afforded to faculty who hold rank at another institution. The appeal, if granted, allows academic rank elsewhere to be reflected in the email signature of the adjunct faculty member at KYSU Online/Global.

### **2.6 Subject Matter Experts**

See 3.1 – *Subject Matter Expert (SME) Model for Online Courses* for a description of SMEs.

### 3 ONLINE COURSES

This section presents the Subject Matter Expert model for online courses at KYSU Online/Global. It explains how the SME's duties relate to different phases of an online course lifecycle. SMEs are integral to the development and redevelopment of online courses; they maintain the primary course shell of online courses; they are responsible for coordinating textbook updates; and they engage with online instructors to drive continuous improvement of online courses.

#### 3.1 Subject Matter Expert (SME) Model for Online Courses

##### 3.1.1 Rationale

Since online courses are delivered entirely through the Learning Management System, and since students engage the content asynchronously, the content within the LMS essentially stands in place of the instructional content represented by lectures in a traditional/residential course. Therefore, apart from regular face-to-face interaction with faculty in a classroom setting, students must encounter a well-designed, easy-to-navigate online course that facilitates their learning. Developing an effective online course is time-consuming and requires more advanced proficiency with the LMS. When multiple sections of the same online course are needed, the student experience can vary greatly depending on the ability of the instructional designer and the amount of time allocated to developing the course in the LMS.

KYSU Online/Global aims to deliver a consistent educational experience to students in different online sections of the same course. Their experience should also remain consistent from term to term, as the general layout and elements of various online courses should be familiar. Moreover, there should be consistency (or parity) between online and residential versions of the same class. A consistent student experience will also reduce the burden on faculty to assist students in locating instructional content within the LMS.

Toward this end, KYSU Online/Global will implement a Subject Matter Expert (SME) model in its online programs. The SME model is an approach to differentiating the roles of online faculty in developing and maintaining the content of online courses; it ensures consistency across multiple sections of an online course. This model positions KYSU Online/Global to implement standards of consistent instructional design while minimizing the burden on faculty to become instructional designers. This model also supports assessment and accreditation reporting.

The SME model is a more formal approach to the traditional, informal collaboration among faculty members in a department who teach sections of the same course in a residential setting.

- For example, in a residential setting, two professors might agree to use the same textbooks in their respective sections of the same course to help students and the bookstore with simpler logistics and matching costs.
- The faculty might also agree to use similar assignments and examinations to simplify program-level assessment efforts in a residential setting.
- At other points, a faculty member might cover a residential course usually taught by a colleague on sabbatical; the covering faculty member might inherit and incorporate the syllabus, the textbooks, the assignments, and the lecture notes of their colleague rather than redesigning the course from scratch.

The point is that faculty in traditional residential programs often collaborate on courses to meet the needs of the students and the department.

The same spirit of collegiality and collaboration undergirds the online programs. However, the online modality of courses, the subterm schedule, and the unique needs of online students require a more formalized approach to faculty collaboration than what might occur less formally in a residential department.

The SME model formalizes faculty collaboration by designating one credentialed faculty member as the SME for one online course. The SME collaborates with the Office of Online Education, program coordinators, online faculty, and instructional designers to select content, arrange modules, develop assignments, write the syllabus, and ensure alignment with learning outcomes.

The SME of a course has access to a development shell of a course in the Learning Management System. This development course shell is where content updates are made, and input from other faculty is incorporated. Once changes are completed in the development course shell, the Office of Online Education reflects the changes in a primary course shell. The primary course shell is the official version of the online course that is copied to create the appropriate number of sections needed each subterm. Therefore, each section of the course is identical upon copy and reflects the work of the SME in the primary course shell. 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. However, instructors are responsible for routine maintenance of their assigned course sections, which includes fixing typographical errors, repairing broken links, and clarifying assignment instructions for students. Routine maintenance does not constitute a change to the course content; rather, it ensures that the course functions as designed. Instructors should notify their Faculty Mentor and the SME of any recurring issues that may warrant updates to the primary course shell.

See also the document, *KYSU Online SME Model for Online Courses*, and the document, *KYSU Online Course Content Management Procedures*.

### **3.1.2 SME Duties**

KYSU's Office of Online Education oversees the appointment of credentialed faculty as SMEs for specific courses. This process involves collaboration with the academic department, faculty, and other relevant parties engaged in course development. Some full-time faculty will be appointed as SMEs, and their service in this role is included within the scope of their full-time faculty contracts with Kentucky State University. In some cases, adjunct faculty will serve as SMEs. Full-time and adjunct faculty can serve as SMEs for multiple classes simultaneously, contingent upon other workload. Depending on the nature and extent of the workload represented by a SME assignment, the Director of Online Education can submit a proposal to the Provost to formulate a SME agreement detailing the rationale for additional compensation for a SME's scope of services.

#### **3.1.2.1 Course Liaison**

The SME for each course is the primary representative of the Office of Online Education at the course level. As directed, the SME will work with program coordinators, the Director of Online

Education, and the Online Advisory Committee to maintain sufficient parity between the online course and other modalities. For example, assessments of learning outcomes may require coordination between faculty teaching residential and online modalities. The academic department and the Director of Online Education should ensure that the SME has appropriate involvement in department meetings and assessment planning to ensure efficient coordination of objectives in online sections. Additionally, if the residential faculty votes to modify a learning outcome shared by multiple courses, they should ensure effective coordination with the Director of Online Education and the Online Advisory Committee, who will involve the program coordinator and SME of the affected online courses as needed. The department administrators must exercise particular care to ensure information-sharing with colleagues who are SMEs and may not be present on campus to participate in administrative meetings.

### 3.1.2.2 Course Development and Redevelopment

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 a 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.

Requests for course developments and redevelopments will be submitted through an online form, which can be accessed in consultation with the Office of Online Education. Once the SME completes the form, it will route to the program coordinator and Director of Online Education, who will open a development shell, which will become the primary course shell once development is complete. Once access has been granted to the development shell, the SME is responsible for ensuring that course content is aligned with the course learning outcomes. They must consult with their program coordinator to ensure the proper outcomes are listed for the course.

The SME must meet all development and redevelopment deadlines leading up to the online subterms in which the online course will be launched. These development deadlines are set by the Office of Online Education with reference to the course copy schedule for each online subterm. In general, the SME must complete development, redevelopments, and changes ten (10) weeks prior to the launch of the course in a subterm. Major updates would include changes to the course instructional content, course syllabus, or substantive changes to the course assignments.

When the SME has completed the course development, redevelopment, or changes, the program coordinator and Director of Online Education will review the development shell. They will evaluate the course for consistent design, alignment with learning outcomes, and support of regular and substantive interaction (RSI). This review should be completed at least eight (8) weeks before the targeted launch date, which allows time for the SME to adjust the course to the feedback of the reviewers, as needed. All changes must be finalized at least six (6) weeks prior to the launch date of the course to avoid interfering with the course copy process. Once all changes to the development shell are finalized, the Office of Online Education will convert the development shell into the primary course shell. The primary course shell becomes the version of the course from which individual sections are created each time it is offered.

### 3.1.2.3 Course Maintenance and Improvements

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 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 the results of assessments suggest that a change in a course or learning activity is needed, administrators should coordinate course changes with the program coordinator and SME. See *4.1 – Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in Online Education*.

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 in *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.
- 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. All changes to development course shells must be completed six (6) weeks before the beginning of the subterm in which it will be deployed. This will allow for the changes made in the development shell to be copied to the primary course shell, which will then be used in course copy to create sections of the course. Course copy begins four (4) weeks before the subterm start date.

### 3.1.2.4 Course Updates for Textbook Changes

SMEs must select electronic textbooks to be integrated directly into the LMS. Exceptions for printed resources must be approved by the Office of Online Education through the process described in the policy for Course Developments and Redevelopments.

If a course requires an update due to a textbook edition change of the current textbook, then the SME will request a course development shell by contacting the Office of Online Education. 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 at least six (6) weeks before the next term, but the bookstore needs to 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 changes made to the online course must be completed in the development shell at least six (6) weeks before the next term.

After a course has been updated in the development shell, the program coordinator and Director of Online Education will review the updates. The program coordinator will ensure that learning outcomes are met and that the course meets RSI standards. The program coordinator must have all reviews completed five (5) weeks before the next term. If the program coordinator finds corrections that need to be made, the SME will have one (1) week to make appropriate updates (i.e., four (4) weeks before the subterm start date).

See the document, *KYSU Online Course Content Management Procedures*, for full details on the course development, redevelopment, and changes procedures and timelines.

#### 3.1.2.5 Manage the Course Syllabus

The SME for each online course is the “keeper” of the syllabus for the online course with particular focus on the instructional components of the course. As such, the SME must ensure that the information in the syllabus is accurate, current, and sufficiently coordinated with residential counterparts. The SME will work with the program coordinators and the Office of Online Education to ensure that the course syllabus conforms to the standards of KYSU Online/Global. See 3.2 – *Online Course Syllabus* for more details.

### 3.2 Online Course Syllabus

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, and the syllabus will be 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.

#### 3.2.1 Syllabus Procedures

The procedures related to the syllabus in an online course parallel the procedures related to course content changes more broadly.

##### 3.2.1.1 Creation

The SME for each course should work with Instructional Designers to create a syllabus using the template established for KYSU Online/Global. The syllabus template supports a student-centered delivery of online courses through consistency – appearance, order, and terminology. The syllabus must comply with relevant departmental policies and procedures. See 3.1.2.5 – *Manage the Course Syllabus*.

##### 3.2.1.2 Revision

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 development shell are approved, they are transferred to the primary course shell to be reflected in course copy thereafter.

### 3.2.1.3 Review

Review of course syllabi is ongoing. Online faculty should inspect the syllabus in their online courses in Week 0 after the course sections have been copied from the primary course shell but before students can access the system. This is primarily for quality control. Instructors should notify their Faculty Mentor if they spot anything needing to be adjusted in the course syllabus.

SMEs are primarily responsible for ensuring that the information in the syllabus matches the information in the online course pages within the LMS. Additionally, SMEs must confirm that the course documents relevant to each assignment match the assignment details listed in the syllabus. SMEs must also stay abreast of any changes made to the textbooks and learning materials that would require changes to the information in the syllabus. For example, when a new textbook edition involves changes to headings and page numbers, the SME should ensure that the syllabus reflects information that matches the version of the textbook students use.

The SME works with the Office of Online Education whenever a syllabus review is needed. Reasons for special syllabus review could include assessment and accreditation efforts, coordinating online courses with residential counterparts, and auditing syllabi to comply with the specified template and policy statements.

## 3.2.2 Syllabus Contents

The syllabus should include the following information, which should be presented in the language recommended by the Office of Online Education and other offices where relevant. The information should be incorporated into the KYSU Online/Global syllabus template so that standard information appears consistently from course to course.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.2.2.1 General and Identifying Information

The syllabus should include the basic information for the course. This includes the course title, number, and credit hours. This should be consistent with the information maintained by the Registrar and what is displayed in the Catalog. The syllabus should also identify the modality of the course as “online.”

### 3.2.2.2 Course Description

The syllabus should include the official course description from the academic catalog. It should also list the official prerequisites per the catalog and/or the Registrar.

### 3.2.2.3 Course Learning Outcomes

The syllabus should include course learning outcomes or objectives. These learning outcomes should match the learning outcomes of the same course in other modalities, such as traditional or hybrid sections.

SMEs should consult with the Office of Online Education about including program learning outcomes in the syllabus. Doing so can help students appreciate the ways in which the course and its components (i.e., the parts of the degree program) contribute to their acquisition of program objectives and their development of graduate-ready knowledge, skills, and abilities (i.e., the totality of what the degree represents).

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<sup>45</sup> See Section 2.11.2.2 of the Faculty Handbook for corresponding guidelines for course syllabi in traditional and hybrid course modalities.

The course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes should be distinguished with numbers or letters in such a way that these can be aligned with assignments in the syllabus and in the course schedule. For example, each course learning outcome could be designated with a capital “C” followed by the number of its place in the list of course learning outcomes (e.g., C1, C2, C3, etc.). Each program learning outcome could be designated in this same way, using a “P” instead (e.g., P1, P2, P3, etc.). SMEs and Program Coordinators are responsible for establishing and updating these alignments in the course as they see fit.

#### 3.2.2.4 Required Textbooks and Learning Materials

The syllabus should list the full bibliographic information of each required textbook and learning resource, including the ISBN. The details should match what is on file with the bookstore for the course. It might be appropriate to include brief comments about whether the resource is provided within the LMS, such as in the case of electronic resources integrated directly into the course pages.

#### 3.2.2.5 Instructional Methods

The syllabus should describe the instructional methods briefly. This might include a description of the learning activities in each module, such as video lectures, reading, discussion forums, or video conferences.

#### 3.2.2.6 Assignments

The syllabus should include a description of each assignment, its point value, and a reference to the course learning outcomes to which the assignment relates. When the assignments related to instructions posted elsewhere in the online course (whether as a file or a course page), the syllabus to refer students to these resources for further guidance on the assignment. Both the description of the assignment and the course schedule should identify the Module due date of the assignment (e.g., due at the end of Module 7).

#### 3.2.2.7 Evaluation Procedures

The syllabus should include an explanation of the grading scale, including the total points achievable in the course. All courses at KYSU Online/Global are based on a possible one thousand (1000) points. The grading scale should clearly distinguish the point ranges relevant to each possible final grade.

#### 3.2.2.8 Course Schedule

The syllabus should include the course schedule, which presents the assigned learning activities and assignments in each module.

#### 3.2.2.9 Course Expectations and Policies

The syllabus should include the “syllabus statements” from the KYSU Online/Global policies whenever relevant or required. Some of the policies, such as those relating to Disability Accommodations and Failure for Non-Attendance (i.e., Administrative Withdrawal), must be upheld as they are written. Other policies set the baseline student expectations in the course, but they allow faculty more flexibility to make exceptions. For example, the policy on late work describes the penalties students can expect when they miss deadlines. An online faculty member cannot be more severe than the policy in penalizing a late assignment, but they can relax the penalties if it is appropriate to do so based on their professional judgment.

#### 3.2.2.9.1 Attendance Policy and Administrative Withdrawal

The syllabus should include a statement of the KYSU Online Course Attendance Policy with a clear description of the requirements for students to remain active in the course by demonstrating academic engagement. See the document, *Online Course Attendance Policy*.

#### 3.2.2.9.2 Technology Requirements

The syllabus should include a statement of the general technology requirements. If the course requires specific software or technology, that should be foregrounded in the “Required Textbooks and Learning Resources” section. Students must have reliable access to a personal computer and a high-speed internet connection. Most students will have this equipment, but some students might have the impression that their assignments can be completed entirely on a smart phone. Although smartphones and tablets provide access to high quality apps, such as the LMS and Microsoft 365, SMEs should determine whether this equipment alone is sufficient for the course.

#### 3.2.2.9.3 Late Work Policy

The syllabus should include a statement of the KYSU Online Policy on Late Work and Extensions. This policy includes the standard percentage deducted per timeframe late. See the document, *KYSU Online Late Work Policy*.

#### 3.2.2.9.4 Academic Code of Conduct

The syllabus should include a statement of the KYSU Online Academic Code of Conduct. This statement might need to be reiterated with reference to the various types of assignments in the course. See the document, *KYSU Online Academic Code of Conduct*, and the document, *KYSU Online Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)*. See also Section 4.3.5.4 – *The Problem of Plagiarism*.

#### 3.2.2.9.5 Title IX Policy Statement

The syllabus should include a statement about the Title IX policy.

#### 3.2.2.9.6 Student Support Services

The syllabus should refer students to the student support services available to them for various needs, including academic tutoring.

#### 3.2.2.9.7 Disability Accommodations

The syllabus should include a statement about the availability of Disability Accommodations for students who might request them. This information should be coordinated with official policy documents and relevant student support service offices. See the document, *KYSU Online Disability Accommodations Policy*.

### **3.3 Online Course Copy Schedule**

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 online 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 prior to the start of the subterm, and it will continue until enrollment for the subterm has closed. Due to this course copy timeline, Subject Matter Experts should be aware of the relevant deadlines for primary course shell updates. The Office of Online Education will give each online faculty member access to the assigned online course sections in the LMS two (2) weeks prior to 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.

See 3.1 – *Subject Matter Expert (SME) Model for Online Courses*. See also the document, *KYSU Online Course Content Management Procedures*.

### **3.4 Curriculum Proposals**

Curriculum proposals for KYSU Online/Global must be coordinated with the Online Advisory Committee and the residential programs of Kentucky State University. This will require collaboration between the Office of Online Education, the Online Advisory Committee, and the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate.

Faculty should consult with the Director of Online Education for guidance on submitting a curriculum proposal for KYSU Online/Global, such as a new course or a new program; the same is true when faculty would like to change an existing online course or program.

These actions will likely involve preparing relevant forms from the list below:

- *Curriculum Proposal Checklist*
- *Curriculum Proposal Form 1: New Course Proposal*
- *Curriculum Proposal Form 2: Course Change Proposal*
- *Curriculum Proposal Form 3: New Program Proposal*
- *Curriculum Proposal Form 4: Program Change/New Modality Proposal*.

Faculty should consult the document, *KYSU Curriculum Proposal Procedures*, and the document, *Workflow for Curriculum Procedures*, for additional details.

## 4 STANDARDS OF ONLINE INSTRUCTION AND STUDENT SUPPORT

This section presents the standards for how online faculty will engage in regular and substantive interaction with students in online courses. These standards provide a framework for ensuring a consistent student experience in KYSU Online/Global courses that combines well-designed online courses with an active faculty presence.

### 4.1 Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) in Online Education

The KYSU Online/Global faculty who receive course load assignments are the course instructors. As such, the instructor is “an individual responsible for delivering course content and who meets the qualifications for instruction established by an institution’s accrediting agency” (34 CFR 600.2 “Distance education”).<sup>46</sup> Additionally, the online faculty are responsible for monitoring student engagement and satisfactory academic progress in online courses. Online faculty are the primary instructional presence within each online course.

#### 4.1.1 Regulatory Background and Definitions

The instructor in an online course must engage students with regular and substantive interaction. According to the Department of Education,

[S]ubstantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following— (i) Providing direct instruction; (ii) Assessing or providing feedback on a student’s coursework; (iii) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency; (iv) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or (v) Other instructional activities approved by the institution’s or program’s accrediting agency (34 CFR 600.2 “Distance education”).<sup>47</sup>

Furthermore, an institution ensures regular interaction between instructors and students by –

(i) Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and (ii) Monitoring the student’s academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student (34 CFR 600.2 “Distance education”).<sup>48</sup>

Several characteristics of regular and substantive interaction emerge from this information: teaching, learning, assessment, assignment feedback, responding to student inquiries, facilitating discussions, etc. Additionally, its timing is predictable, scheduled, proactive when needed, and responsive when contacted.

These federal regulations for Distance Education provide the framework for effective online interaction between KYSU Online/Global faculty and students.

See also *Regular and Substantive Interaction: Background, Concerns, and Guiding Principles*.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2\(Distance%20education\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2(Distance%20education))

<sup>47</sup> [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2\(Distance%20education\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2(Distance%20education))

<sup>48</sup> [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2\(Distance%20education\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2(Distance%20education))

<sup>49</sup> <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED593878.pdf>

### 4.1.2 KYSU Online/Global Policy for RSI

Online programs require regular and substantive interaction (RSI) between faculty and students. While physical distance can separate faculty and students, asynchronous online learning presents additional challenges to RSI for faculty and students.<sup>50</sup>

To align with the Department of Education’s RSI guidance to provide “*the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency,*” instructors will initiate regular communication with students.

To align with the Department of Education’s RSI guidance, instructors may use announcements, emails, assignments, activities, and other means to provide *direct instruction* to students. Direct instruction entails any faculty-led interaction with a group or individual specifically engaging in course-related guidance.

Faculty must be attentive to the frequency and quality of their interaction with students. The frequency of faculty interaction with students must be *regular*; regular interaction provides “the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course.”<sup>51</sup> Online faculty must be present for interaction, instruction, and outreach.

A predictable and scheduled basis for regular and substantive interaction can be achieved by the course design, scheduled learning activities across its modules, and the instructor’s actions before the course starts, while the course is active, and after the course concludes.<sup>52</sup>

### 4.1.3 Design of the Course

The course design in the learning management system should include elements that facilitate regular engagement. For example, course designers should create an ungraded community discussion forum for general communication and online student conversations. The community forum allows students to engage with their classmates and instructors informally. This approximates the informal interaction in a residential class before and after class periods as students enter and exit their classrooms. It helps cultivate a sense of community, inclusion, and support among students.

In addition to the community discussion forum, the course design should include graded discussion forums focused on the course content at planned intervals. These discussion forums approximate the more formal discussions that typically occur in a residential class setting, where students express their points of view on the subject matter or discuss content presented in lectures or assigned readings. The role of an instructor is to prompt these discussions with thought-provoking questions, guide the direction and tone of the discussion as it develops, and help students appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of various points of view. This looks

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<sup>50</sup> The nature of teacher-student interaction in distance education can make it more time-intensive than needed for traditional courses, as noted by the American Association of University Professors’ *Special Committee on Distance Education and Intellectual Property Issues* “Statement on Online and Distance Education” (<https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-online-and-distance-education>).

<sup>51</sup> [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2\(Distance%20education\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/part-600#p-600.2(Distance%20education))

<sup>52</sup> See the short introduction to RSI: <https://rise.articulate.com/share/vbTizQ9cVITJY1MP9Y-4ZEW3sgXlRbag>

different in a residential classroom lecture than in an online course. However, a well-designed online course will provide assigned discussion forums in various course modules to ensure regular and substantive interaction with the course content.

#### **4.1.4 Scheduled Learning Activities**

Although online courses allow for asynchronous academic engagement, the course must follow a schedule. The course schedule outlines the modules' sequence and the corresponding learning activities, assignments, and deadlines. Module deadlines ensure that students complete and submit work throughout the course (typically eight weeks) rather than submitting most of their assignments (or perhaps all their assignments) at the end of the course. The course schedule also plans for a regular feedback loop of substantive interaction whereby the online instructor evaluates students' work and instructs them accordingly. Students can learn from and respond to the instructor's substantive feedback as the course progresses. The course schedule should be posted in the syllabus within the online course.

See also *3.1 – Subject Matter Expert (SME) Model for Online Courses*.

## **4.2 Instructor's Actions: Before the Course Starts**

Before the online course is made available to students, the online instructor must complete the Course Onboarding Checklist and a few set-up tasks to establish an active and welcoming presence within the course. The Course Onboarding Checklist is provided by the Office of Online Education and must be completed before the course launches for students. The checklist includes verifying course content, confirming faculty information, and ensuring all links and resources are functional.

### **4.2.1 Faculty Information**

Fostering a positive faculty-to-student relationship is vital in building community in online courses. A well-written and personable faculty profile can set a positive tone for the course. This puts students at ease and increases their confidence to reach out with questions and ask for help.<sup>53</sup> Instructors should set up a profile, including a brief bio, professional headshot, contact information, email, best contact hours, and any other desired information before the course launch in a timeframe specified by the Office of Online Education. Apart from this faculty information displayed within the online course, the course can feel "uninhabited" when students explore the course upon gaining access.

### **4.2.2 Welcome Announcement**

In addition to personalizing the course with faculty information, the instructor should post a welcome announcement and display it on the landing page for the online course. The welcome announcement further conveys an active faculty presence within the course. It is an initial point of connection with students and provides them with guidance on the next steps to take upon gaining access to the course.

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<sup>53</sup> <https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/online-course-delivery-and-instruction/instructor-bio-humanize-course-reduce-student-anxiety/>

This communication should focus on essential course- and content-specific items rather than student policy and logistical information. For example, the welcome announcement might introduce the following:

- A few details about the instructor.
- Comments about the relevance of the subject matter.
- The location of course documents, such as the syllabus and course schedule.
- Actions the students must take to establish a presence in the course through academic engagement.
- Guidance on the best ways to contact the instructor for various reasons.

The welcome announcement should be posted before students gain access to the course; a good target would be five (5) days before the start of the course (which typically falls on a Thursday). However, after students gain access, the welcome announcement should be sent by email to the student as well (this might require the instructor to select an option to email the announcement once the course goes live; the announcement should not be sent as an email prior to students gaining access to the course). This proactive, multi-channel communication from the course instructor will prompt students to engage with the syllabus immediately.

### **4.2.3 Textbooks and Learning Resources**

Textbooks are integrated into online courses as electronic resources. There may be instances where instructors are required to set up their textbook in the course so that students can utilize courseware. There may also be instances where resources require separate login credentials or verification codes from students. The instructor should include guidance about the form of the textbooks and the way students access those resources. If a printed textbook is required, instructors should include guidance on how students should obtain the printed textbooks as soon as possible so as not to delay progress in the course.

### **4.2.4 Introduction Post in the Community Forum**

The community forum is an excellent way for the instructor to introduce oneself to students less formally, describing hobbies and other background information appropriate to the online course. This is also a great place to invite students to introduce themselves to the instructor and classmates. For example, the instructor could ask students to introduce themselves and share their degree program and current city or occupation. These self-introductions in the community forum are like those often occurring on the first day of a residential course. The goal is to create a welcoming, inclusive, friendly, and collegial environment for students to engage with one another and their instructor(s).

Responding to each student's post in an introductory discussion forum effectively allows faculty to show presence and establish rapport in the learning community. This should be done where applicable. However, faculty can choose to build community with a summative response to the students' introductions.

An introductory post is a minimal expectation, but instructors are encouraged to use other methods of facilitating community.

### 4.3 Instructor’s Actions: While the Course is Active

#### 4.3.1 Establishing the Active Roster

In the first week, students must exhibit academic engagement in an online course to avoid being dropped. This involves completing a course assignment or engaging the instructor about the course content.<sup>54</sup> The instructor must ensure that each student who has not participated in the course through academic engagement is marked as “inactive” on the course roster. At the end of the first week, the instructor must send the current roster to the Registrar for processing.

See the federal requirements to document students’ attendance for financial aid purposes (34 CFR 668.21(c)). See also the *KYSU Online Course Attendance Policy*.

#### 4.3.2 Accommodations and Academic Conduct

At the start of the course, online faculty should be aware of their responsibility to facilitate a learning environment that upholds standards of academic conduct and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students as needed. This involves several policies cited in the syllabus and webpages of KYSU. Online faculty should engage with students about the policies as relevant.

##### 4.3.2.1 KYSU Online Late Work Policy (1.3.2)<sup>55</sup>

All assignments must be completed by their deadlines as specified in the course schedule. Assignment deadlines typically coincide with the end of each module. Modules usually begin on a Monday and end on the following Sunday. Therefore, assignment deadlines generally are 11:59 PM on Sunday (except Module 8, which typically ends on a Friday).

Students who do not meet the deadline may submit their work late without requesting approval from the course instructor. Late work will be penalized with a standard grade reduction on the assignment. The standard penalty is a reduction of one (1) letter grade or ten percent (10%) of the assignment’s possible points per week after the deadline.

##### 4.3.2.2 KYSU Online Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (1.3.5)<sup>56</sup>

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, such as generative AI, must be in accordance with course-specific guidelines for each assignment. There is not a “one size fits all” policy. Students should carefully read the instructions for each assignment to determine the instructor’s requirements. However, if an instructor requests that students refrain from using AI on a particular assignment, a violation of that request would constitute academic dishonesty and could result in academic sanctions.

##### 4.3.2.3 KYSU Online Academic Code of Conduct (1.3.6)<sup>57</sup>

Academic Integrity is a fundamental value of Kentucky State University’s community of students, faculty, and staff. The University wishes to promote the highest and most honorable pursuit of intellectual achievement and emphasize the importance of in acts of academic

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<sup>54</sup> See the complete list of activities constituting “academic engagement” (34 CFR 600.2 “Academic engagement”).

<sup>55</sup> See the document, *KYSU Online Late Work Policy*.

<sup>56</sup> See the document, *KYSU Online Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)*.

<sup>57</sup> See the document, *KYSU Online Academic Code of Conduct*.

dishonesty may be subject to sanctions. Any student who knowingly assists in any form of academic dishonesty may also be subject to sanctions. Academic dishonesty can occur in several forms, some of which include cheating, plagiarism, and forgery.

#### 4.3.2.4 KYSU Online Disability Accommodations Policy (1.3.12)<sup>58</sup>

This policy requires all faculty and staff members at Kentucky State University to provide reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities to ensure equal access to educational opportunities. Faculty and staff must take proactive steps to facilitate accommodations for students with disabilities, including providing accessible course materials, collaborating with the Office of Accessibility and Disability Services, and maintaining privacy and confidentiality. By complying with this policy, faculty and staff members can help to create an inclusive and accessible learning environment for all students.

### 4.3.3 Weekly Module Announcement

Weekly announcements inform students about course expectations for the week ahead. These posts are most effective when they are concise, cover the basic requirements for the week, and are written or recorded professionally.

By 9:00 AM Eastern Standard Time on the first day of each module, the instructor should post a written or recorded announcement in the LMS introducing the new module to students. This weekly announcement should highlight essential aspects of the learning activities. It should also introduce the assignments for the week and invite students to contact the instructor if additional guidance is needed. It is an opportunity to engage in a personable way while conveying information on items such as reminders and the workload for the week. Specifics such as items that tend to be more challenging, intensive reading for the week, or a significant assignment being due are essential to highlight in these weekly announcements.

The weekly announcements are a point of regular and substantive interaction between the instructor and the students. The consistent posting at the start of each week establishes an expectation that students will progress collectively from one module to the next and that the course progresses from start to completion.

In addition to posting the announcement on the course landing page in the LMS, instructors should use the LMS to email the announcement to students directly. The arrival of the email in students' inboxes each week will help drive their academic engagement with the course.

### 4.3.4 Instructional Presentations

Most online courses are asynchronous and do not involve synchronous lectures. However, video recordings of lectures or recorded presentations are commonly used instead of (or in combination with) synchronous learning opportunities within the parameters specified by programmatic accreditors. The instructor might host a voluntary video conference for students to attend, recording and posting it for those who could not attend to view later. Instructors may find this is an effective way to facilitate academic engagement with students and efficiently discuss their questions about course assignments. Other effective practices include synchronous sessions by appointment or synchronous group projects.

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<sup>58</sup> See the document, *KYSU Online Disability Accommodations Policy*.

In asynchronous online learning, the instructor must not require students to participate in synchronous course elements to avoid creating conflicts with how the programs are marketed to students (i.e., professors must avoid requirements that conflict with the advertised program requirements). Additionally, in most online classes, it is not practical to coordinate students' schedules across time zones for a synchronous meeting.

#### **4.3.5 Evaluating Students' Work and Providing Feedback**

Robust feedback is essential for all online students, whether they struggle or do an impeccable job with an assignment. This mode of interaction is one of the most direct ways faculty members can teach, guide, inspire, and redirect students' efforts. Meaningful, constructive feedback will be timely, specific, actionable, and cordial. Utilizing assignment rubrics as a guide and rationale for the students' scores also enhances students' ability to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their work. The use of rubrics is recommended where applicable.

All coursework should be graded within six (6) days of the due date to mitigate the effects of the accelerated pace of online courses and allow students to adjust for subsequent assignments. There are noted exceptions to the six-day (6) deadline for courses in which the grading load is heavier (e.g., writing-intensive courses), and the Office of Online Education will specify which courses have increased flexibility based on recommendations from program coordinators and SMEs. In these instances, communication with students regarding when they will receive feedback is recommended, and instructors are encouraged to time the feedback so that the student has sufficient time to implement instructor recommendations before submitting the next assignment.

Assignments submitted early should be graded within six (6) days of the due date, not the early submission date. Coursework submitted late should be graded within six (6) days of the submission date. The same exceptions noted above also apply to this recommendation.

##### **4.3.5.1 Assessments (Quizzes, Tests, Exams)**

When assessing student work in online courses, instructors should return grades and feedback as soon as possible due to the faster pace and compressed timeline of courses in the online subterm. The standard requirement is a six (6) day turnaround time for grades. For assessments graded automatically by the LMS, instructors should review the scores and determine if there are patterns of missed questions and whether those patterns reveal an underlying issue with the question itself or the aligned instruction. In those cases, an instructor's discretion should be used to adjust a system-generated score on an assessment. Additionally, the instructor should determine whether to adapt/eliminate a problematic question from an assessment or develop supplementary/replacement instruction in the primary course shell. The procedure for doing so is detailed elsewhere, but changes to the primary course shell should be communicated to the Faculty Mentor and the SME.

Ideally, instructors will provide brief written comments for each student. The tone of the comments should be that of an encouraging coach – identifying positive elements of the student's work while focusing on areas for improvement and ways to improve. Many instructors will find that this type of feedback can open communication with a student who would not otherwise engage based merely on a system-generated score. Feedback on assessments will convey the instructor's active presence in the course and with student success.

#### 4.3.5.2 Collaborative Learning Assignments

Collaborative learning assignments encompass a range of assignments such as discussion forums, social annotation of an article, interactive maps and timelines, capstone projects, and interactive videos. As a minimum requirement to promote regular and substantive interaction, an online course will commonly include discussion forums as collaborative learning assignments. In an 8-week online course, it is common for the course to include two (2) or three (3) graded discussions.

Well-designed discussion forums and collaborative learning assignments effectively support learning, foster critical thinking, and give a human touch to the online classroom. Beyond a well-designed assignment or activity, an active faculty member can foster transformative learning experiences and drive student retention.<sup>59</sup>

Depending on the nature of the discussion forum prompt, the elements a professor evaluates will show up differently in scoring and feedback. For example, suppose an assigned discussion forum invites a range of opinions about a course topic. In that case, the instructor may be most concerned with evaluating the level of engagement, clarity of communication, and quality of argumentation students exhibit in their posts. In other discussion assignments, the instructor might be more focused on evaluating the quality of each student's comprehension, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis of the course readings.

For this reason, students and instructors will be helped by a rubric tailored to each discussion assignment. Although each instructor will use professional judgment when evaluating students' work, the rubric is helpful guidance that enables students to formulate quality posts in alignment with specific criteria. The rubric is also beneficial in relating assignments to course learning outcomes and assessing students' proficiency.

In addition to using a rubric to assess students' discussion assignments, instructors should provide written feedback to help students understand the strengths and weaknesses of their work and how to improve on future assignments. Once again, substantive feedback on discussion assignments promotes student success and reinforces a sense of the instructor's presence within the online course. Like other written assignments, feedback should be meaningful, constructive, timely, specific, actionable, and cordial.

#### 4.3.5.3 Formal Written Assignments

Aside from written discussion assignments, online courses often include more formal writing assignments such as reviews, essays, or research papers. Each written assignment should have an accompanying rubric. The rubric forecasts to students the general framework within which the instructor will evaluate and score their work. It also prevents an instructor's "pet peeves" from being unduly determinative in a student's grade on more significant assignments such as research papers.

Since writing assignments such as research papers are often due in the last week or two of a class (especially during the 8-week subterms), they often showcase the cumulative knowledge, skills, and abilities students have developed throughout the course. The assignment's focus and the

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<sup>59</sup> <https://elearningindustry.com/reasons-why-students-fail-study-online>

instructor's evaluation should involve the course learning outcomes directly or indirectly. Therefore, in addition to faculty evaluating each student's ability to produce work following relevant formatting conventions, instructors should use professional judgment about how much time the instructor should devote to marking up errors with formatting and grammar in students' written work.

- Some instructors prefer to use mark-up features within the LMS to insert corrections and comments into each student's assignment file.
- Other instructors prefer to download the file and use the MS Word or Adobe markup and review features to correct and comment on students' work. These external programs offer a more robust set of markup tools than the LMS, but they require several extra steps of downloading, saving, then uploading the file back into the LMS.

Whatever the markup tools and method an instructor uses, the instructor should score the written assignment using the rubric and provide substantive, summative feedback to each student. Some instructors will prefer to write a few sentences of feedback to the student; others will prefer to record a short video message using the tools in the LMS. In either case, the instructor should adopt the tone of an encouraging coach – unafraid to identify areas of improvement while remaining committed to, and focused on, helping the student improve and achieve success.

#### 4.3.5.4 The Problem of Plagiarism

The LMS includes tools that assist instructors in deterring and detecting plagiarism. This is essential to upholding the KYSU Online/Global's policies and safeguarding the quality and results of the school's degree programs. Even so, the use of plagiarism detection software alone is not enough. Instructors in online courses have an active, and perhaps more influential, role in promoting a culture of academic integrity among the students.

When instructors introduce writing assignments in their weekly announcements or other communication with students, they should remind students that all their work will be scanned for plagiarism. This allows students to contact the instructor to discuss strategies for engaging secondary sources and citing them in a way that avoids plagiarism. Instructors might find that performance anxiety, inexperience, or cross-cultural differences can influence students' research and engagement with sources. By reminding students to be vigilant in avoiding plagiarism, the instructor invites opportunities for academic engagement with students.

Instructors know that the results of automated plagiarism detection software in the LMS are not definitive. The software's scores and reports require an instructor's interpretation and professional judgment. For example, it is not uncommon for these platforms to return a score above 30% on the average paper; every correctly formatted and cited quotation of a source will be flagged, contributing to the overall plagiarism score returned for the file. Instructors should carefully evaluate these results. Should further action be required, based on the instructor's professional judgment about the plagiarism detection report, the instructor should consult with their supervisor to navigate the relevant Academic Conduct policies and procedures.

The bottom line is that online instructors can help deter plagiarism by reminding students of the expectations and that their work will be scanned by software.

See the document, *KYSU Online Academic Code of Conduct*, and the document, *KYSU Online Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)*, for more information.

### 4.3.6 Facilitating Discussion

Online faculty will participate in discussion assignments by actively interacting with the students and content. This should take several forms for optimal effect, including responding in the forum to specific student posts, pointing out strong arguments, tactfully correcting incorrect information, asking follow-up questions to promote conversation, and perhaps pointing students to additional resources on the given subject, such as embedding a video link, journal article, blog, etc.

Regarding regular and substantive interaction (RSI), faculty are encouraged to comment two (2) to three (3) times in each graded discussion forum and collaborative learning assignment. These comments can be concise or more expansive but should be instructional. Such comments could highlight thoughts from students' posts that are especially strong in content or reasoning. Additionally, they could spur the discussion deeper or redirect it as needed. It is recommended that the instructor not always respond to the same students, which can create perceptions of an inequitable classroom atmosphere.

At the end of each week, when there is such an activity, faculty are encouraged to post a summary within the forum to the class, providing feedback on themes they observed in the students' posts, strengths and weaknesses, redirection, and corrections where the discussion may have drifted. This is yet another teaching moment to stress the objectives of the assignment.

Faculty-to-student feedback related to grades for discussion forums/collaborative learning should be private in the LMS gradebook, not placed in the forum itself.

Additionally, instructors might decide to host a voluntary, synchronous video meeting with students using a platform like Microsoft Teams or Zoom. See *4.3.4 Instructional Presentations*.

### 4.3.7 Responding to Student Communication

Due to the often-accelerated nature of online education, timeliness in all online-related communications is one of the most critical factors for faculty engagement and student success. To ensure that students have timely responses to inquiries, instructors should respond to student emails, phone calls, or other modes of communication within forty-eight (48) hours. Additionally, instructors must check into the online course within the LMS at least every 36 to 48 hours to respond to in-course messages, discussions, and manage the roster. This frequent course presence supports the requirements of regular and substantive interaction. Written communications to students should be cordial, address the student by name, be well-written and thorough, and should answer content-related questions.

Internal communications between faculty and administration regarding urgent online matters require timely responses to triage and mitigate specific issues. When such an issue is flagged as urgent (which should be somewhat rare), please respond to applicable communication as soon as possible.

### 4.3.8 Appointments with Students (Virtual Office Hours)

KYSU Online/Global does not require that online faculty hold virtual office hours, but instructors can choose to offer this to their students. Due to the nature of online learning and the unique needs of online students, faculty are expected to schedule online appointments with students who request to one. Although KYSU Online/Global does not require a minimum number of virtual office hours each week, instructors should invite students to schedule

synchronous communication such as phone calls or video conferences when needed (on platforms like Microsoft Teams or Zoom).<sup>60</sup> The instructor should be reasonably available and accommodating to student’s meeting requests within a couple of days. Additionally, online faculty should be reasonably flexible to accommodate the schedules of online students, who sometimes prefer meetings outside the regular business hours of 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

Sometimes students inquire about the course content via email, but a response is more effectively communicated in a conversation rather than an email response. Instructors should proactively embrace these opportunities to engage students on a scheduled call. In other cases, instructors should use the scheduled calls to support student success and retention efforts.

#### **4.3.9 Student Success and Retention Efforts**

Faculty should intentionally identify and assist struggling students. This is an essential piece of a broader student support infrastructure. To that end, faculty should deploy a consistent range of strategies to help that portion of the student population.

Online faculty should contact students who miss assignment due dates. If a student misses an assignment due date or fails to post to the discussion board, instructors should contact them within 48 hours to indicate concern and to offer relevant support. Depending on instructor policies, the communication can encourage the submission of assignments even if there are late penalties and seek ways to work with the student to re-engage with the course.

Instructors should regularly reach out to students below a “C” average in a course throughout the term. This communication can include additional learning resources, i.e., assignment examples, field questions on challenging content, supplemental readings, videos, etc. Additionally, instructors can offer deadline extensions or re-submissions if appropriate.

Instructors will be trained to be well-versed in the specific student support services that will help triage these situations. Instructors are encouraged to discuss these situations with their Faculty Mentors.

#### **4.3.10 Monitoring Periods of Inactivity**

Students participate in the online course by demonstrating academic engagement with the content. They do this initially by completing a course requirement or assignment or communicating with the instructor about the course content. See Section 4.3.1 – *Establishing the Active Roster* for more details.

After that, students must remain in regular academic engagement with the course to avoid an unsanctioned period of inactivity lasting 21 days. At any point in the course, if a student fails to demonstrate academic engagement for 21 consecutive days, the student should be administratively withdrawn from the course. When a student is administratively withdrawn from a course due to an unsanctioned period of inactivity lasting 21 sequential days, it is to establish the date that the student ceased attendance in the class. Instructors should work with their Faculty

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<sup>60</sup> “Since instruction by distance education technologies does not allow for the same degree of interaction between students and teacher that is possible in a traditional classroom setting, provision should be made for the students to confer personally with the teacher at designated times” (<https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-online-and-distance-education>).

Mentor to communicate this status to the Registrar and other administrators on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of non-attendance.

See also the *KYSU Online Course Attendance Policy*.

#### **4.3.11 Student Support Referrals**

Online faculty should be familiar with the various student services available to online students. Information about service offices can be found on the KYSU website. Online faculty can refer students to these resources as relevant for online students to ensure that each student is aware of their access to support. In particular, instructors should proactively refer students to the Online Student Support Concierge for questions involving course selection, registration, and general student support needs. The Online Student Support Concierge is the primary point of contact for online students who need assistance navigating university services and processes.

##### **4.3.11.1 Student Support Services**

Student Support Services provides academic, social, and cultural support for students to increase retention, persistence, and graduation of students. Students are encouraged to visit the student support services webpage to explore the available services.

##### **4.3.11.2 Thorobred Learning Center**

KYSU Online/Global offers resources to assist students with academic success. Services include academic coaching, online tutoring, and guidance relevant to research and writing. Students are encouraged to visit the Thorobred Learning Center webpage for information about the services offered to online students.

##### **4.3.11.3 Academic Advising Center**

The Academic Advising Center (AAC) is designed to inspire and support students in their pursuits to identify and achieve personal, educational, and career goals. Students are encouraged to visit the Academic Advising webpage to learn more about the services offered.

#### **4.3.12 Encouraging Participation in the Course Survey**

To improve courses and instructional practices over time, instructors must promote the end-of-course surveys and encourage students to participate. The results of these surveys enable sound, data-driven course improvements and edits based on the student experience.

Response rates to student end-of-course surveys are rarely 100% in online courses. For this reason, the instructor must promote the survey during the concluding week of the course. The instructor should also clarify to students that the surveys are anonymous, and the instructor can only access responses once final grades have been posted.

#### **4.4 Instructor's Actions: After the Course Concludes**

The last day of an online course typically occurs on a Friday. Online faculty will remain engaged with several concluding activities.

##### **4.4.1 Finalizing Grades**

Instructors must be attentive to the deadlines set by the Registrar for posting final grades. Final grades are due within five (5) days of the course end date. There is typically less time to complete grading and post final grades in online courses than in a residential, semester-based

course. This is due to the online subterms, which often occur one after the other throughout the year.

For example, the Fall C subterm might start within a week of the Fall B subterm's conclusion. Students' ability to register for C-term classes might depend on their final grades achieved during the B-term courses. Faculty mentors will coordinate with the registrar and adviser to determine if the final grades of specific students should be prioritized in the roster to prevent any issues in their subsequent academic progress.

Despite this compressed timeline for final grades in online education, instructors should allocate sufficient time to provide quality substantive feedback on the final assignments in the course. Instructors should coordinate with their Faculty Mentor and the Registrar to determine procedures for granting extensions to students, requesting grading extensions for online faculty, or posting a grade of Incomplete. To qualify for an Incomplete, students must have completed at least 70% of the coursework at the time of the request and be able to document justification for requesting the Incomplete grade.

#### **4.4.2 Concluding Announcement**

After posting final grades, the instructor should post a concluding announcement in the LMS on the course landing page. Students will retain access to the course for a period after the end date, and this announcement signals that their work has been graded, their final grades have been posted, and that the instructor has concluded instructional activities apart from any special arrangements with students regarding extensions or Incomplete grades.

The concluding announcement is not simply an administrative close to the course; it enhances the student experience at the school. One of the most rewarding aspects of higher education is the opportunity to have some impact on a student. Students often take a moment to thank an instructor after a course or on an end-of-course survey. Likewise, instructors should use the concluding announcement to express appreciation for the students and gratitude for their efforts in the class.

In summary, the concluding announcement should express farewell to the students while notifying them that grades are finalized.

#### **4.4.3 Reviewing Course Surveys**

After final grades are posted, the student end-of-course surveys will be available to the instructor. Instructors can access the results within the LMS.

The surveys will help instructors assess the strengths and weaknesses of the course. Survey responses related to the course design, assignments, learning materials, and other aspects of the course are most relevant to the faculty member serving as the SME. Nevertheless, the instructor's perceptions of those responses will provide valuable context when online faculty collaborate about adjustments to the course for future terms.

Survey responses relating to the instructor's performance will facilitate instructional improvement and reinforce existing strengths. Faculty Mentors will consider these surveys when conducting performance evaluations of online faculty.

#### **4.4.4 Tracking Incompletes**

Whenever a final “Incomplete” grade is assigned, the instructor must work with their Faculty Mentor, the Registrar, and the student to determine the deadline for the student’s outstanding assignments. The instructor must communicate with the student and monitor assignment submissions in the course LMS. The instructor must post a final grade for the student on the date arranged with the Registrar.

See the document, *KYSU Online Standards of Instruction*, for more information.

## 5 SENATE BILL 185 AND KYSU ONLINE/GLOBAL

In the 2026 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly, Senate Bill 185 (SB 185) was enacted to reposition Kentucky State University with a polytechnic focus aligned with the workforce needs of the Commonwealth. SB 185 declares a state of financial exigency at the University for a period of up to five years beginning with the 2026–27 academic year. During this period, the University will undergo a comprehensive review of all academic programs in consultation with the Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) to align its offerings with the new polytechnic mission and ensure long-term viability and financial stability.

Under SB 185, the University’s in-person academic offerings are limited to no more than ten (10) areas of study during the exigency period, excluding programs that are exclusively online, within the College of Education, or determined to be necessary to the polytechnic mission by CPE. Programs offered exclusively through KYSU Online/Global are exempt from this cap. This legislative distinction elevates the strategic role of online programs and underscores the importance of the infrastructure, standards, and operations described in this Handbook.

Kentucky State University remains Kentucky’s only public historically Black university and 1890 land-grant institution. The polytechnic transition builds upon the University’s existing strengths in applied learning, workforce preparation, and community engagement. SB 185 preserves this heritage while charting a path forward that positions the institution for sustained growth and impact. Online faculty, as members of the KYSU Online/Global academic community, play an essential role in ensuring the continuity and quality of academic programs during this transition.

As the University implements the requirements of SB 185, the Office of Online Education will communicate updates to online faculty regarding any changes to programs, policies, or operations that affect their work. Faculty should direct questions about the polytechnic transition and its implications for online programs to the Director of Online Education.

## 6 APPENDIX: ADJUNCT WORKLOAD OFFER FORM

The following pages contain the current version of the KYSU Online/Global Adjunct Faculty Workload Offer Form, including Appendix A (Standard Section Sizes and Pro-rated Pay for Low Enrollment). The Office of Online Education issues this form to adjunct faculty before the start of each term or subterm. The form details the specific workload offer, course assignments, acknowledgements, and the compensation schedule referenced in Section 2.3 of this Handbook. The version included here is current as of the date of this Handbook; faculty should confirm they are reviewing the most recent version when they receive a workload offer.

### Workload Offer Information

### Acknowledgements for Course Workload Assignments

1. I shall not be assigned academic rank during the term of employment. However, I understand that I may use my academic rank in my kysu.edu email signature if I have held academic rank as a full-time faculty member at Kentucky State University or another accredited institution.
2. I shall work under the supervision of the academic administrators of the academic programs in which the course is listed and being taught.
3. I shall have the same duties and responsibilities with respect to the course(s) being taught as those normally expected of faculty in online courses, which includes ensuring regular and substantive interaction (RSI) with students. And, in teaching the course, I shall have the same academic freedom as other faculty working within the Subject Matter Expert model for online courses at KYSU Online.
4. I agree to attend asynchronous faculty meetings as required and regular review announcements and documents available in the Online Faculty Hub.
5. I will not be responsible for the advisement of majors in their programs of study. I will proactively refer students to Online Student Support Concierge for questions involving course selection and registration and general student support needs.
6. I understand that my work will be evaluated by the students in the course I teach (in the regular end-of-course survey process). I further understand that my work will be evaluated by administrators as relevant to their areas of oversight.
7. I understand that this offer is contingent upon the enrollment of at least 12 students in undergraduate courses, and/or at least 10 students in graduate courses. These students must have paid or made a commitment to pay all tuition and fees by the end of regular registration. For courses with less than the requisite number of students, payment will be made according to the low enrollment pay rates in Appendix A of this Workload Offer Form.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> See the attached pay table describing standard section sizes and low-enrollment pay in Appendix A.

8. I understand that I am not required to hold office hours since the course is offered in the online modality. However, if students request to meet via phone call or video call, I understand that I am required to respond within 48 hours and to schedule a meeting at the earliest mutually agreeable time.
9. I will start and end the course on the dates specified by the Online Registrar (which match the academic calendar and the dates listed in this form). I agree to submit final grades in Wired by the deadline. I will adhere to the course schedule for the modules/weeks of course content.
10. I understand that I will be paid in accordance with the established fee schedule. Regular compensation is based on seat counts after the add/drop deadline for my course. I further understand that compensation for 8-week terms will be issued as a one-time payment at the end of the term. Compensation for 16-week terms may align with the university's adjunct pay schedule.
11. I agree to the following expectations for regular and substantive interaction in online courses. This is not an exhaustive list of expectations, but they provide a framework for understanding how administrators will evaluate your work.
  - I understand that my grading and feedback on assignments must be specific, substantive, and meaningful so that students can improve their knowledge, skills, and proficiency in the course learning outcomes.
  - I understand that I must meet the administrative deadlines for course setup, roster verification, faculty credential verifications, weekly announcements, weekly check-in, etc.
  - I understand that I must check into the online course within the LMS at least every 36 to 48 hours to respond to in-course messages, discussions, and manage the roster. This frequent course “presence” supports the requirements of regular and substantive interaction.
  - I understand that I must respond to student e-mails or calls within 48 hours.
  - I understand that I must grade assignments within 6 days of their deadline or within 6 days of a late submission. I understand that final grades are due by the Registrar’s deadlines, which will be within 5 days of the course end date.
  - I understand that I cannot require synchronous class sessions; however, I can hold optional synchronous sessions and provide video recordings of sessions for students.
  - I understand that I am responsible for routine maintenance of my course, which includes typo fixes, fixing broken links, clarifying assignment instructions for students, and completing the Course Onboarding Checklist at the beginning of the term before the course launches for students.

### General Acknowledgements

12. I am not eligible for any economic fringe benefits provided to regular full-time faculty members by the University except as required by Federal and/or state law, and I am not eligible for tenure; and time served as an Adjunct Faculty/Online Faculty Member shall

not be counted toward tenure, or as prior service, should I later be appointed as a regular full-time member of Kentucky State University's faculty.

- 13. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures of KYSU Online/Global.
- 14. I understand that this workload offer is contingent upon a successful employment application for an adjunct faculty role at Kentucky State University.

**Signatures**

To accept or decline this offer, please check the appropriate box and sign electronically in the instructor’s signature block below.

**Important:** The KYSU Online Adjunct Hiring Process requires completed employee forms (i.e., Form W-4A, Revenue Form K-4, Employment Eligibility Verification Form, and a Demographic Form).

**Appendix A**

**Standard Section Sizes:**

Unless otherwise specified, KYSU Online sections will plan for the number of targeted seats in the table below at each degree program level.

Course Level	Targeted Seats	Min seats full pay
UG	28	26
GR	24	22

**Pro-rated Pay for Low Enrollment:**

Although every effort will be made to ensure that online faculty are assigned course sections with adequate enrollment to justify full compensation at the standard rate, pro-rated pay for low-enrollment courses will be made according to the schedule in the table below. The minimum and maximum seats for undergraduate courses are on the left side of the table; the right side presents the minimum and maximum seats at the graduate level.

Enrollment tier	UG min seats	UG max seats	% pay and WLU	\$pay (3 cr / 6 WLU)	WLU	GR min seats	GR max seats
targeted	26	28	100%	\$ 2,700	6	22	24
low 1	23	25	90%	\$ 2,430	5.4	19	21

low 2	20	22	80%	\$ 2,160	4.8	17	18
low 3	17	19	70%	\$ 1,890	4.2	15	16
low 4	15	16	60%	\$ 1,620	3.6	13	14
low 5	13	14	50%	\$ 1,350	3	11	12
low 6	10	12	40%	\$ 1,080	2.4	9	10
low 7	7	9	30%	\$ 810	1.8	7	8
low 8	4	6	20%	\$ 540	1.2	4	6
low 9	1	3	10%	\$ 270	0.6	1	3

APPENDIX B

**Cover Date** — Updated from November 12, 2025 to May 7, 2026.

**Branding** — 77 organizational references to "KYSU Online" were updated to "KYSU Online/Global" throughout the document. Document and policy titles (e.g., "KYSU Online Faculty Handbook," "KYSU Online Faculty Workload Policy," "KYSU Online Course Attendance Policy") were intentionally left unchanged since those are the formal names of existing documents.

**Section 2.3 — Faculty Compensation** — The old proration language ("prorated if a course enrolls fewer than 12 students") was replaced with a detailed description of the current compensation structure: standard section sizes (UG: 28 targeted, 26 for full pay; GR: 24 targeted, 22 for full pay), tiered proration by reference to the Adjunct Workload Offer Form, contingency minimums (UG: 12 / GR: 10), and payment timing (one-time payment at end of 8-week terms; university adjunct pay schedule for 16-week terms). This resolves the discrepancy between the handbook and the Fall 2026 Workload Agreement. A leftover tracked change from the earlier 10→12 edit was also cleaned up.

**Section 3.1.2 — SME Model (Instructor Restrictions)** — Added a routine maintenance clause clarifying that instructors are responsible for fixing typos, repairing broken links, and clarifying assignment instructions in their sections without violating the SME content-control model. Includes a reporting pathway to the Faculty Mentor and SME for recurring issues that warrant updates to the primary course shell.

**Section 4.2 — Instructor's Actions: Before the Course Starts** — Added the Course Onboarding Checklist as a required pre-launch step, with a brief description of what it covers (verifying course content, confirming faculty information, ensuring links and resources are functional).

**Section 4.3.7 — Responding to Student Communication** — Added the 36-to-48-hour LMS check-in requirement as a separate expectation from email/call response times. Simplified the communication response standard to a flat 48 hours to match the Workload Agreement.

**Section 4.3.11 — Student Support Referrals** — Added the Online Student Support Concierge as the primary referral point for questions involving course selection, registration, and general student support needs.

**Section 4.4.1 — Finalizing Grades** — Added a specific deadline: final grades are due within five (5) days of the course end date.

**New Section 5 — Senate Bill 185 and KYSU Online/Global** — Four paragraphs covering the legislative context (polytechnic transition, financial exigency period, CPE program review), the online program exemption from the 10-area-of-study cap, an identity and heritage statement (HBCU, 1890 land-grant, polytechnic), and a forward-looking paragraph directing faculty to the Director of Online Education for questions about the transition.

**New Section 6 — Appendix: Adjunct Workload Offer Form** — An introductory paragraph contextualizing the form and cross-referencing Section 2.3, followed by the complete Fall 2026 Workload Offer Form including instructions, workload offer details, all acknowledgements for course workload and general terms, signature blocks, and Appendix A (standard section sizes and the full 9-tier proration pay table for both undergraduate and graduate levels).