

## Online Undergraduate Course Development and Instruction at the University of Toronto General Guidelines

### Online and Hybrid Formats

The university has agreed upon the following [definitions](#):

**Online Courses:** A course is considered to be “online” if it has been designed such that all of the instructional interaction occurs without the student and instructor being in the same physical location, with the exception of a final exam requiring attendance on campus.

**Hybrid Course:** A course in which the face-to-face teaching time is reduced and replaced with time spent on online activities. Scheduled class time is reduced by at least one third.

In general, an online or hybrid course is understood to have been re/designed to ensure effective and engaging learning experiences are provided, with students participating in interactive activities and contributing to a learning community. The design process requires a significant time commitment on the part of the instructor, who will need to become familiar with best practices in online pedagogy as well as tools and techniques used for teaching online. In our experience, the time commitment required for both the development and the ongoing instruction of an online course is greater than that of a traditional classroom or lecture-based course format.

### Support for the Design Process

Support for the design of undergraduate online and hybrid courses is available through the [Online Learning Strategies](#) (OLS) portfolio. Instructors participate in the two-day annual Course Design Institute in May or June to ramp up their capacity to develop an online course that is well articulated and aligned with regard to learning outcomes, activities and assessments. Most instructors find a team-based approach is helpful, and they are encouraged to work with educational technology professionals and library staff either within their home division or through centrally provided services to leverage expertise with regard to the planning and resource curation processes. Ongoing consultation during the design phase, as well as a "pre-flight check" are available through OLS.

### Resourcing and Administration

Online and hybrid courses are not administered differently than face-to-face course in terms of student registration through ROSI, funding models, faculty work loads, etc. Decisions related to faculty course assignments, teaching assistant allocations, scheduling, and so on are divisional or department level decisions. For undergraduate courses receiving [Online Undergraduate Course Initiative](#) (OUCI) funding, direction on use of funding remains with the division and/or department. When available, typical uses of OUCI funding include, but are not limited to:

- course buy-out for the instructor or hiring of a co-instructor in accordance with unit-level Workload Policy provisions
- media/technology design support (buy-out of time for educational technology staff or contract hire)
- software or hardware
- professional development activities, conferences
- Teaching Assistant support in course preparation

It is anticipated that divisions accepting funding through the OUCI program will continue to offer the redesigned online or hybrid format courses for a minimum of three years. Divisional registrars must flag fully online courses as such in ROSI to support administrative functions including:

- communication regarding course format with students
  - institutional/government data reports
  - course evaluation customization (students are presented with three additional questions specific to online courses.)
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## FAQs

Q. How is academic integrity ensured?

A. Good practices for promoting academic integrity in online courses are discussed during the consultation and design phase. Assignment and assessment design is a key component. A final exam also acts as an important element of overall academic integrity strategy.

Q. How do online students take final exams?

A. Most undergraduate students enrolled in online courses take an in person final exam. For students residing at a distance, divisional registrars have been arranging for off site exam centres for those who are eligible for this option. eProctoring is being investigated as alternative.

Q. Can students from outside of the university take our online courses?

A. Normal admissions procedures apply. Typically a *Letter of Permission* is used by students from other universities in Ontario, if there is room in the course for additional registrants.

Q. Will our online courses be listed on the eCampus Ontario portal?

A. Only courses that have been funded by the provincial government are required to be listed on the portal. If there is generally space within the enrolment cap limit for more students to be registered from outside of UofT, divisions may opt to list other online courses as well to recruit additional students.

Q. Is a "WebOption" recorded course an online course?

A. The WebOption service is a form of lecture capture. Some divisions provide services to video-record lectures as they are delivered and make them available to students enrolled in the course. WebOption courses typically do not meet the online course definition as labs, tutorials and mid-term assessments in these courses typically require student attendance on campus. Also, the courses have generally not been re-designed to support active student engagement in online activities and opportunities for interaction with the instructor.

Q. Who decides when an online course will be offered?

A. The division or program decides in which terms and how often a course will be offered.