

Question and Response #4 - Continuing and Distance Studies Roles and Responsibilities (Written Response)

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Question

1.
 - a. *What process does Continuing and Distance Studies (CDS) use to:*
 - i. *have their courses approved?*
 - ii. *develop their courses?*
 - iii. *assign instructors to teach their courses?*
 - iv. *decide who grades their courses?*
 - v. *update and revise existing courses?*
 - b. *Is the academic home unit consulted during these processes?*
 - c. *What is the relationship between CDS and the academic home unit*
2.
 - a. *Who bears the cost of a CDS course?*
 - b. *Explain the revenues and expenses that flow from CDS courses.*
 - c. *Are these processes consistent across the university?*
 - d. *How are revenues generated by CDS used?*

Response

There are three documents on the Continuing and Distance Studies website that, taken together, are of pertinence to these questions:

1. [Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations](#): An overview of the roles, responsibilities of faculty members, instructional designers, and Continuing and Distance Studies in the design, development and teaching of online courses.
2. [Quality Assurance for Online Courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science](#): An overview of the current processes for selecting, developing and offering online courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science, and for assuring that quality standards are met.
3. [Support and Process for Developing Online and Blended Courses](#): An overview of the formal, four-stage design and development process for online and blended courses.

Approval

CDS offers online versions of university-credit courses from the Arts and Science Calendar. All new university-credit courses offered through CDS (i.e. those not already in the Arts and Science Calendar) go through the standard Departmental and Faculty curricular approval processes. New Plans and Programs follow the University's standard approval processes.

CDS works collaboratively with departments to develop and offer online courses. Online courses are designed to meet the academic standards of the home department and faculty, and to share the same learning outcomes as the equivalent face-to-face classroom courses. Beginning in the Fall 2014, proposals for development of online versions of existing courses (referred to as a "variants") will be considered by the academic department. Deliberations will include an examination of the learning outcomes for the online "variant" as compared to the existing version to determine if they are equivalent.

Development

Before a project is formally underway, the course developer (or course development team) and the instructional designer consult to identify the scope of the project and a specific timeline to be followed. The instructional designer reports on the scope and agreed-upon timeline in writing to the Associate Dean for a blended course, or to CDS for a fully online course. This report becomes the basis for a Memorandum of Agreement between the course developer, the Department, and the Faculty of Arts and Science. Its acceptance by the parties marks the beginning of the formal four-stage design and development process.

Stage 1 (Conceptual): The course developer works collaboratively with the instructional designer to develop broad learning outcomes and select the appropriate teaching and learning strategies to achieve these outcomes. During this stage, the types of learning resources to be used are identified and a preliminary selection of appropriate technologies is made. For a blended course, these initial discussions assist the course developer in determining how the learning hours will be distributed among in-class activities and out-of-class online activities and private study. The key tasks involved in the conceptual design stage include

- carrying out a learner needs analysis;
- identifying key skills and competencies to be developed and demonstrated;

- identifying key learning objectives (using action verbs, e.g., by the end of this course, you will be able to...);
- identifying appropriate teaching and learning strategies for the blended environment or for the fully online environment;
- identifying key learning resources and technologies to be used in the online environment;
- helping the course developer prepare a curriculum course revision submission for a blended course.

Stage 2 (Development): The instructional designer works with the course developer to create a comprehensive framework for the course. Developing a framework involves sequencing course content with appropriate learning activities (whether these activities are to take place online or in a classroom). A learner feedback plan is also put in place, as appropriate for a blended or fully online course.

Key tasks in Stage 2 include

- developing the learning framework;
- identifying engaging learning activities;
- determining interaction, feedback, and assessment plans that are closely tied to learning objectives;
- preparing online course materials, scripting out learning activities, case studies, scenarios, etc.

Stage 3 (Production): The production phase focuses on organization of the course content. The instructional designer and CDS staff perform the technical work of building the online course site.

Key tasks in Stage 3 include

- gathering and producing all course materials (e.g., copy, images, audio files, video clips) and posting to Moodle;
- creating an intuitive, accessible and graphically appealing user interface;
- doing any required programming;
- testing all course elements and correcting as needed.

Stage 4 (Feedback and Revision): The instructional designer and CDS staff work closely with instructors in the weeks leading up to the start of term, assisting with the training of TAs, including guidance in facilitating active learning in the classroom for a blended course and in the online environment for a fully online course. Throughout the first few

weeks of term, the instructor may need to adapt and adjust instructions in response to feedback from students and TAs. The instructional designer and CDS staff will advise and assist when needed.

Key tasks in Stage 4 include

- introducing TAs to teaching, learning, and facilitating for a blended course or a fully online course;
- introducing instructor and TAs to Moodle, and using effective strategies to interact with students in a fully online course;
- adjusting and tweaking instructions and activities as needed, based on feedback from students and TAs;
- addressing unanticipated problems.

Assignment of instructors

The academic department recommends a faculty member to teach the course in accordance with the Queen's-QUFA collective agreement.

Grading

The academic department recommends who shall be offered teaching assistant positions in accordance with the relevant collective agreements.

Course revision

Prior to being offered, all online courses are reviewed by both CDS and the instructor. After three years, CDS and the Departments review courses to determine whether major revisions are needed.

Consultation with academic units

The academic home unit is always consulted during the processes described above.

Relationship between CDS and the academic home unit

CDS is responsible for ensuring that best practices (or principles) for online course design and delivery are being followed in the courses it offers, so that the quality of student learning is equivalent to that in the face-to-face version of the course. The Department is responsible for ensuring that the content and learning outcomes of an

online course correspond to the on-campus version of the course, and that Departmental and disciplinary academic standards are being upheld.

Costs and Revenues

Currently, CDS receives a budget allocation from the Faculty of Arts and Science for the development and delivery of online courses.

In the current Arts and Science budget allocation process, CDS, in common with Arts and Science departments, does not receive revenues directly. Expenses to develop and offer courses are covered by the CDS budget. Revenues from enrolments in courses offered through CDS flow to the Faculty in the same way as do revenues collected from students enrolled in on-campus courses.

Revenues generated from enrolments in online courses offered through CDS are used in the same way revenues from on-campus courses are used: to support the University central services, the Faculty Office, Arts and Science departmental budgets and other Faculties and Schools.

The Faculty of Arts and science is adopting a new budget allocation model, with implementation planned for 2015-2016. This model will take a revenue-attribution approach along the lines of the University's new model. The plan for CDS courses in the new Arts and Science budget model will see the tuition and government grant revenue assigned to CDS. CDS will pay its fair share of University-wide and Faculty-wide expenses, along with the direct costs of the CDS unit and any course costs that it bears. Revenue and expenses will be attributed on a course-by-course basis, with any resulting surplus being transferred to the home department.