

	<b>Online Courses and Programs Procedures</b>	
	<b>Responsible Administrative Unit:</b> Academic Affairs - Trefny Innovative Instruction Center	<b>Procedure Contact:</b> Jennifer Velloff, Online Programs Manager jveloff@mines.edu

## 1.0 PROCEDURES PURPOSE

The Colorado School of Mines (“Mines”) is committed to the development and delivery of high-quality online (distance) education. As part of this commitment, Mines has established the following procedures to identify relevant faculty policies to support online teaching, training requirements for developing online courses, the online course design/development process, and quality standards for all online programs and courses. These procedures supports Mines’ mission, vision, and institutional goals as it relates to the development and delivery of high-quality online (distance) education.

## 2.0 PROCEDURES

### 2.1 Relevant Faculty Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines

#### 2.1.1 Selection of Faculty to Teach Online

Faculty teaching online courses are selected by their Department based on qualifications related to the course outcomes and content. They are selected using the same qualification standards as our face-to-face courses with the addition of having an interest in, training for, and ability to teach online. All faculty delivering online instruction are required to complete online instructional training through the Engineering and Facilitating Online Learning (EFOL) course (see section 2.2 for more information).

#### 2.1.2 Program and Course Approval Process

All new programs and courses must go through the normal review and approval process (Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, Faculty Senate, and the Board of Trustees in the case of new degree programs). Any new online credit-earning, degree program must also be approved through our regional accreditation process with the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Online programs may not be promoted or advertised until HLC accreditation has been granted.

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Additionally, any course that is reducing contact hours (time spent in the physical classroom) must be approved for a change in delivery mode by the Department and the Executive Committee. Departments or faculty requesting a change in course delivery mode need to complete the [Executive Committee Change of Modality](#) form to start the review process with the Executive Committee. Once a decision has been made, the Executive Committee notifies the Registrar, Trefny Center, Department Head, and submitter of status (approved or not approved).

### 2.1.3 Academic Program Review

Programs are reviewed on a three-year cycle by visiting committees that are composed of experts with diverse backgrounds and interests appropriate to the missions of that unit and the University. Visiting committees provide the University with long-term programmatic direction, audit department programs and operations, and, as appropriate, assist with fundraising. Committee members are selected from nominees submitted by the academic units, the Mines' Foundation, the Mines' Alumni Association, and the administration. The visiting committee member participates in an audit visit to review progress and future plans with respect to academic programs, research activities, and faculty and student development. (See Section 7.5 Academic Programs of the Academic Affairs Program Manual)

### 2.1.4 Workload

Faculty expectations related to instruction, scholarship, and service are defined in section 6.1 of [Faculty Handbook](#). Section 6.1.2 explicitly defines teaching obligations of faculty in terms of the number of course credit-hours each faculty member is expected to teach. No distinction between the instructional delivery modes is made in terms of teaching obligations.

Faculty designing online courses should allow for a minimum of 8-10 hours of development time per week during the 12-week design and development phase outlined in section 2.3 Online Course Design and Development Process. This is approximately the same amount of time required to develop any new course (regardless of modality: online, residential, hybrid).

Departments are encouraged to “buy-out” one course load for faculty during the semester when they are building any new course (online or residential). Departments that do not have sufficient funds for

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development may request innovation funds or funds from the Provost's office to support the online development.

### 2.1.5 Evaluation

The [Academic Affairs Procedure Manual](#) provides policies for faculty evaluations (refer to Section 5: Faculty Evaluation on page 49).

### 2.1.6 Course Facilitation (TAs/Support Staff)

The [Academic Affairs Procedure Manual](#) provides policies for TAs and support staff (refer to Section 3.4: Instructional Use of Graduate Students on page 21).

### 2.1.7 Course Requirements for Contact Hours

Contact hours are the same regardless of delivery format (face-to-face, hybrid, or fully online). Contact hours (office hours, discussions, group work, etc.) are defined by regional accreditors based on a national practice (see; [HLC Assignment of Credit Hours](#)). See Schedule of Activities/Interactions Online document in section 7.0.

### 2.1.8 Mines' Intellectual Property Policy for Online Courses

In general, ownership of academic instruction materials by Mines' faculty members is treated the same regardless of delivery modality (see section [10.1 Intellectual Property Policy](#) of the Faculty Handbook) for the course (e.g., traditional face-to-face, hybrid, online, etc.). The critical distinction in ownership between online courses and all of these other course modalities is that Mines will own the online course as a whole, including any videos contained therein and associated technical infrastructure by which the course is delivered (collectively, the "Online Course"). What this means is that while faculty members retain ownership rights in the academic instructional materials they have included within an online course, and as a result may use, modify, and disseminate these as they see appropriate; faculty members may not export, upload, distribute, transfer, sell, license, or otherwise disseminate the Online Course in its entirety.

Decisions on the re-use of developed content (e-media and other recorded content) will be made by the academic department (department head or program coordinator/lead) in consultation with the original content developer (when reasonable) and new instructor. Mines will encourage new instructors to re-record any media containing an original instructor's voice or image.

## **2.2 Training Requirements for Developing Online Courses**

The Trefny Innovative Instruction Center (TIIC) offers the paced, asynchronous EFOL course for faculty to experience online learning from the perspective of a learner as they work through their initial course design. This five-week online course for faculty is intended to support the development of the highest-quality online courses. The TIIC will offer \$2,500 in professional development funds to selected full-time teaching or tenure/tenure-track faculty for successfully completing the EFOL course. This money will be allocated directly to the faculty member's PD fund to help compensate for the time commitment.

Completion of the EFOL course is required before building or teaching any online course at Mines. Participation in the course will require approximately 10-hours of effort each week and faculty must receive an average grade of 80% on assignments to "pass" the course. After completion of the course faculty work collaboratively with an Online Learning Experience Designer (OLED) to continue the design and building of their own online courses.

Faculty who have recently gone through an online certification at another institution may be excused from the full five-week EFOL course with the appropriate documentation (course outcomes, certificate of completion, etc.) from another academic or recognized institution/organization. They may instead be required to go through an EFOL short course at the discretion of the TIIC Director.

Faculty who are not designing an online course but are facilitating an online course are required to take the Facilitating Online Learning course before teaching an online course.

## **2.3 Online Course Design and Development Process**

To ensure a high-quality course is developed, reviewed and ready to be offered by the intended launch date, the course must be completed in a timely and coordinated manner based on a standard course development process. All items, tasks, and deadlines apply to new courses and courses under revision. The typical commitment from faculty is 8-10 hours a week across a 12-week collaborative build to develop learning outcomes, assessments, learning activities/materials, and multimedia. Making a firm

time commitment is critical to the successful build of high-quality courses and allows the TIIC to coordinate resources to support the collaborative build. See the Online Program/Course Approval and Development Process diagram and document in section 7.0.

During the development of an online course, the TIIC Director may decide to put the course on hold if major milestones are missed until such time that the Online Program Manager and Faculty Designer can commit resources to the development of the course. The Department Head, Provost and Registrar will be notified along with faculty member that the course has been put on hold and students will be informed that the course will not be offered online as scheduled. If the course is part of a fully online program, this may delay the start/launch of the program or the continuity of the course sequence.

### **2.4 Software Acquisitions Process**

During the design and development process, faculty needing software are required to go through a review process to ensure that the software used at Mines complies with a variety of Mines policies, requirements, and best practices. Software is reviewed to ensure that the data of our campus community is protected and that new software is implemented as efficiently and effectively as possible.

In certain circumstances (scope, expense, complexity, etc.) reviews may take additional time, be designated an ITS project (request estimated to take over 100 hours of effort to implement) or require a formal request for proposal (RFP) process (over a certain dollar amount). See the [New Software Purchase or Acquisition Request](#) service request for more information.

### **2.5 Quality Standards for Online Programs and Courses**

#### **2.5.1 National Guidelines for Distance Education**

Mines adheres to the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (Online Learning) which were developed by the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) to assist institutions in planning distance education and to provide an assessment framework for institutions already involved in distance education. See CRAC Guidelines in section 7.0.

#### **2.4.2 Mines Online Program Course Standards**

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All online courses are submitted to the Online Standards Committee to check against [Mines Online Program Course Standards](#). The committee will have one week to review the course using the [Mines Online Course Rubric](#). The Faculty Designer and OLED will have 2-3 weeks to make revisions.

### **2.5 Online Course Facilitation and Continuous Improvement**

#### 2.5.1 Mines Facilitation Standards

Faculty are required to adhere to [Mines Online Program Course Facilitation Standards](#) when teaching an online course. These standards are intended to help faculty create opportunities for learners to interact with each other, the instructor, and the content. See Mines Online Program Course Standards in section 7.0.

#### 2.5.2 Online Course Coaching

Faculty will be coached and guided by an OLED as they teach an online course for the first time. The coaching will include a regular review of course data, including student outcome measures built into the course (e.g., assignments, tests, quizzes) to formatively adjust the course based on student needs. The faculty member and OLED will meet regularly each week either on campus or virtually to discuss feedback and guidance.

#### 2.5.3 Continuous Improvement

Once the course has concluded, feedback obtained from the mid-course evaluation, end of course evaluation and coaching observations will be reviewed by the Faculty Designer and OLED to determine if any revisions need to be made before the course is taught again.

### **3.0 HISTORY AND REVIEW CYCLE**

The procedures within this document will be reviewed at least every 2 years, or as needed by the Responsible Administrative Unit.

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