College of Health and Human Development
Online Instructor Performance Best Practices and Expectations

1. **Follow Penn State policies regarding all aspects of your course.** Familiarize yourself with Penn State policies before classes begin. Consult policy resources when questions occur and seek advice from Department and Outreach contacts. Three primary sources regarding policies are the following:
    a. **University Faculty Senate Policies and Rules for Undergraduate Students: https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/**
    b. **Penn State Undergraduate Education Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual: https://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/index.html**
    c. **Penn State Graduate School Policies: https://gradschool.psu.edu/graduate-education-policies/**
    d. **The College also provides some suggested guidance on certain syllabus and course policies:** Syllabus and Class Policies.docx
2. **Follow the established course schedule and teach within the scheduled timeframe.** If schedule adjustments are needed to meet deadlines for graduating students and others with special circumstances, please make sure Penn State policies are followed.
3. **Communicate with the class on a regular basis (at least weekly) using announcements and/or messages.** Use this class-wide communication to remind students about upcoming events, reinforce deadlines, clarify potential points of confusion, highlight interesting parallels between class content and current events, etc. If you are using prewritten announcements, personalize them so that your students know that they are hearing directly from you.
4. **Actively engage with your students** by being creative in how you share your own teaching style and presence in the course. You can create a valuable educational experience for your students by facilitating their learning of the material.
5. **Establish a regular schedule for yourself to be present in the course, preferably on a daily basis, and communicate this schedule to the class at the start of the semester.** Bear in mind that many online learners are more active in their coursework on weekends. Therefore, your presence in the course on weekends will be important to them. Accreditation and regulatory guidance require instructors to have regular and substantive interactions with students.
6. **Respond to all communications from students within 24 hours.** Be sure to address inquiries as clearly and completely as possible. If the issue is complex, respond to the student within 24 hours to let them know that you received their message and are seeking more information before responding.
7. **Notify your class at least one week in advance if you expect to be unreachable via email or Canvas messaging or unable to respond to inquiries within 24 hours for a period of time.** Please also notify your department lead contact for World Campus courses and the HHD Outreach Office if you must be away from your course for an extended period of time.
8. **Grade all regular assignments in a reasonable amount of time.** "Reasonable amount of time" depends on the assignment, but for most short assignments (e.g. discussion forums, short papers, quizzes), grading within a week after the due date is reasonable. Determine what is most reasonable for the course and assignments and let your students know upfront what your typical timeframe for grading assignments will be. Also, inform them of any unanticipated deviations from that timeframe. It is very important to ensure that students have grades and feedback on previous assignments in time to make improvements in future assignments.

9. **Share feedback on assessments like quizzes and exams with students** by offering individual meetings (via phone, Zoom, or Canvas conference) and/or sharing something class-wide through announcements, message, or video about the most common mistakes. Being able to learn from past mistakes is an important part of learning. These strategies allow you to provide helpful feedback while reducing risk of students sharing answers with other students.
10. **Submit final grades in a timely manner.** Many critical processes that impact students regarding graduation checks, academic warning or suspension status, prerequisite checking for the next semester, etc. depend on submission of final grades within 2 business days following your final evaluative assignment. Instructors submit final grades via LionPATH, unless notified otherwise due to special circumstances.
11. **Provide early feedback to all students who are not meeting course expectations**. Instructors are expected to provide this feedback by participating in the Early Progress Report (weeks 2 and 3 of semester) and Midsemester Progress Report (seeks 6 through 9 of the semester), a Starfish function integrated into LionPATH. Review the guidance for instructors regarding Starfish (https://sites.psu.edu/starfishinfo/users/instructors/). All faculty are expected to provide progress reporting feedback to all students at those two time periods so that students and advisers can make important decisions about dropping courses, scheduling for next semester, etc. Instructors can provide feedback to students and advisers at other times, too, and the College recommends additional feedback through Starfish after major assignments are completed.
12. **Ensure the security and tracking of class communication and all interactions with students** by using communication tools within Canvas and through Penn State email. Communicating with students through a non-Penn State email address may be a violation of educational privacy, so please always use Canvas or a student's Penn State email address. Please review student privacy guidance from Penn State's Registrar (https://www.registrar.psu.edu/confidentiality/guidelines-faculty-staff/index.cfm)
13. **Contact the HHD Outreach Office regarding any issues in your course**, such as broken links, inaccurate content, typos, or technical problems.
14. **Ensure that you have reliable and sufficient access to the same technology required for your students.** A complete description of World Campus technical requirements can be found at: https://www.worldcampus.psu.edu/general-technical-requirements.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

The following information from Penn State's University Faculty Senate Policies and Rules for Undergraduate Students is important for all instructors to understand:

> "*Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.*
>
> *Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.*
>
> *To protect the rights and maintain the trust of honest students and support appropriate behavior, faculty and administrators should regularly communicate high standards of integrity and*

reinforce them by taking reasonable steps to anticipate and deter acts of dishonesty in all assignments. At the beginning of each course, it is the responsibility of the instructor to provide students with a statement clarifying the application of University and College academic integrity policies to that course."

A statement about academic integrity is included in the syllabus of each course offered by the College of Health and Human Development via the World Campus. As noted above, each instructor must also clarify the application of academic integrity to their course and assignments, where necessary. Having provided information on academic integrity in these ways, instructors are expected to hold students accountable for academic integrity violations. If an instructor believes a student has violated academic integrity, they should take the following steps:

- Communicate privately to the student that you have a concern about their work and request a meeting (zoom or phone) to discuss your concern.
- In the meeting, describe your academic integrity concern, share a copy or view of any documents that support your concern and ask the student for an explanation.
- If the explanation and any subsequent discussion indicate that the student had violated academic integrity, report the violation through the online academic integrity system (https://ai.la.psu.edu/). The College encourages reporting all violations, since this is how repeated violations of academic integrity are discovered and addressed.
- In the system, you will be asked to provide a description of the violation, any documentation that supports the violation, a copy of your syllabus, and a copy of the assignment (including, for example, any specific academic integrity guidelines in the assignment). Please download or screenshot these items so you can be ready to submit them.
- You will be asked to recommend a sanction and can consult the sanctioning guidelines (https://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/sanctioning-guidelines.html). In general, sanctions for minor violations might be just a warning or loss of points for the assignment. More significant violations might include a reduction in the course grade, up to an F for the course. Major or repeated violations might include notations on the student's transcript.
- The system will give the student the opportunity to respond to your report. You will be given an opportunity to respond to their report, too. Students have the right to contest the report and receive an independent hearing from the College's Academic Standards Committee.
- You must give students due process in suspected violations of academic integrity. You cannot penalize a student's grade without going through the process. You must clearly inform students of the problem and give them the opportunity to accept responsibility or receive an independent review.
- Information regarding policies and procedures for the University and the College of Health and Human Development regarding academic integrity can be found at: https://hhd.psu.edu/undergraduate/advising/academic-integrity-college-of-health-and-human-development

HHD Academic Integrity Contact: At any time, both students and faculty can ask questions and seek guidance from the College of Health and Human Development Academic Integrity Coordinator. The Academic Integrity Coordinator office aims to ensure that HHD provides both faculty and students with a fair process for addressing academic integrity. For the HHD Academic Integrity Coordinator contact information, please go to: **https://hhd.psu.edu/academic-integrity**

Turnitin.com: As part of our efforts to improve the climate for academic integrity, Penn State has licensed a tool from Turnitin.com that will help faculty prevent or detect plagiarism. Turnitin performs originality checks on submitted papers, checking against searches of billions of pages from both current and archived instances of the Internet, millions of student papers previously submitted to Turnitin,

commercial databases of journal articles and periodicals, and approximately 120,000 papers submitted by Penn State students. If a student's paper has strong similarities to materials in any of these searches, the software indicates the sources. For more information about Turnitin and to create an account, visit http://turnitin.psu.edu/.

Ghosting and Contract Cheating: An increasingly common problem in online courses is students hiring third-parties to complete portions of or even entire courses for them. Watch carefully for the signs of ghosting. Check file properties to see if the author name is the same as the student name. Inconsistencies in quality of writing between low value writing assignments (e.g., discussion forums) and higher stake assignments can often be a sign of ghosting or contract cheating. If you suspect ghosting or contract cheating, contact the HHD Outreach office, and we can work with you and Penn State to identify patterns of logging in and computer use that may reveal ghosting, too.

Generative Artificial Intelligence: Current Penn State academic integrity policy sets any use of outside resources that are not approved by the instructor as a violation of academic integrity. Instructors have the academic freedom to decide to give students permission to use tools like Gen-AI. These should be clarified through course and assignment academic integrity policies by the instructor. Penn State has provided some initial guidance for instructors at this web site: https://aiai.psu.edu/

DEFERRED GRADES:
If a student is prevented from completing a course within the prescribed amount of time, students may request and faculty may provide for additional time to complete course requirements and for a final grade to be deferred until a later date. Please familiarize yourself with the policies and guidelines related to deferred grades by going to the following sites:

- University Registrar: https://www.registrar.psu.edu/grades/deferred-grades.cfm

In the event that a student requests a deferred grade, direct the student to the information in the links above. Contact the individual listed below in your academic department as soon as possible for help with procedures and establishing a plan for the student.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Academic Department Contacts:
BBH: Beth Edwards, baq102@psu.edu, 814-863-7256
CSD: Sommar Chilton, sah152@psu.edu , 814-865-6110
HPA undergraduate program: Jennifer Deutsch, jll955@psu.edu, 814-863-8514
HPA OMHA program: Chris Calkins, cxc20@psu.edu, 814-863-4791
HDFS: Shannon Corkery, sac301@psu.edu, 814-863-5910
HM: Donna Quadri-Felitti, dlq3@psu.edu, 814-863-0081
KINES: Michele Duffey, mlp127@psu.edu, 814-865-2418
NUTR undergraduate courses: Meg Bruening, mmb203@psu.edu , 814-865-2238
NUTR master's program: Gina Pazzaglia, gps3@psu.edu, 814-865-1857
RPTM: Brian Soule, bjs48@psu.edu, 814-863-2924
Pete Alison, pra7@psu.edu, 814-865-5559
MSW: Rukmalie Jayakody, rxj9@psu.edu, 814-865-2659

HHD Outreach Office Contacts:
Brian Soule, Assistant Dean of Innovative Lifelong Learning, bjs48@psu.edu, 814-863-2924
Emory McKenna, Administrative Assistant, emm5514@psu.edu,
Ravi Patel, Learning Design Manager, rep129@psu.edu, 814-863-7549