Policies, Procedures, & Tips: What You Need to Know

Before your online course is posted as an offering:

1. **Communication regarding your course delivery method is key.** Instructors are responsible for ensuring that their courses are listed properly on Banweb, including the correct section code (see sidebar on next page) and comments:

   - Communicate with your department early on before course sections are determined, if possible (specify whether your course is to be an F, P, H, or T)

   - For accreditation documentation, acceptance of minimum responsibilities, as well as the department's, the DDEC's, and the Registrar's records, this form is required each term for each course section: http://www.westga.edu/~distance/courseRequest/courseRequest.php

   - Once courses are posted, check http://banweb.westga.edu to ensure that your course section code and comments are correct

   - If you want course sections grouped together in one CourseDen site, you can do this by requesting that they be cross-listed. This has to be done well in advance of the term start date and must be done before you start building the course or you could lose all of you work when the change takes place.

   - Info from Banweb is extracted and posted on USG's GeorgiaOnMyLine.org

   - Failure to properly market a course's info and delivery method could negatively impact accreditation, student billing, and subsequently financial aid

2. **Minimum responsibilities.** The course request form linked above, currently also articulates just some of these additional minimum responsibilities:

   - At least 2 hours of training on developing and teaching a course

   - Instructors are responsible for maintaining final course grades and records (backup your grades often, by exporting the gradebook)

   - Instructors are responsible for reviewing campus security and privacy guidelines, as well as providing them to their student, grad assistant, or anyone whom they may give access to their course. See http://www.westga.edu/policy/index_3706.php

   - Accreditation, BOR, and campus guidelines may require that instructors include certain student services information in their course; and that a copy of the syllabus be included in the CourseDen course site. A template for this info as well as other helpful materials can be found at: http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/faculty/syllabus_checklist.html

Online Course Designations—What do they mean?

F (95-100% = Fully at a Distance) - Gets an N in the section code: The course requires only one face-to-face meeting and perhaps a proctored exam; it uses DE technologies for more than 95% of instruction time; it will impact the student's fees and residency requirements and is marked with an N in the Section Code in the bulletin on BanWeb. The eTuition rate is $80 above the base tuition, but the students only pay the one-time tech fee (unless they also take on-campus courses). Out-of-state students pay the same as in-state students. As of SP09, 40% of the $40 goes back to the offering department, 40% to the DDEC, and 20% to the Deans.

P (51-94% = Partially at a Distance) - Gets a D in the section code: Those which meet at least 51% - 94% through videoconferencing, online, or other technologies, instead of face-to-face; they are marked with a D in the Section Code in the bulletin on BanWeb. There is no price difference.

H (1-50% = Hybrid) Technology is used to deliver 50 percent or less of class sessions, but at least one class session is replaced by technology. There is no price difference and no section code in the public Banweb, though the info is collected and reported to the BOR in a hidden field and ADM.

T (Technology Enhanced) Technology is used in delivering instruction but no class sessions are replaced by technology. (Ask yourself if the students could perform well in the class without it? If not, your class is a T.) There is no price difference and no section code in the public Banweb, though the info is collected and reported to the BOR in a hidden field and in the USG Academic Data Mart.

3. **CourseDen (formerly WebCT, powered by GeorgiaVIEW) is the official USG-course management system,** providing 24-hour/ 365 day support, security, back-up, disaster recovery, and documentation of student info, course records, and content. If instructors use tools hosted on alternate servers, through which neither USG or UWG has a service level agreement, the instructor is responsibility for the security and maintenance of student records and course content, student support, and making sure that the use of the outside tool is in compliance with all university policies covering data security, records retention, [any others there may be] along with any legal requirements, such as FERPA.

4. **Program planning is important.**

   - Be careful not to offer a degree program more than 50% online without campus, BOR, and SACS approval; eCore and partially online (D section) courses count. What this means is that if a student can take more than half of the courses/credit hours required of your program, as either N, D, or G sections, then pre-approval is needed. See http://www.westga.edu/~distance/programs/

   - As a group, the faculty and admin of the degree program should articulate the degree-specific policies, procedures, and best practices in designing and teaching online courses within the program. A sample of new SACS guidelines, expectations, and best practices, from the documents linked at http://www.westga.edu/~distance/programs/sacs.html

     ⇒ There is a logically sequenced course development schedule involving faculty input and ensuring availability of courses as students need them. A schedule of course offerings is available so that students can plan their programs.
     ⇒ There is consistency in course format.
     ⇒ Course design takes into consideration the need for and importance of interaction between faculty and students and among students.
     ⇒ There are policies concerning expectations of full and part time faculty planning for, designing, and teaching distance education courses…

2. **Tuition & fees for online classes are different and may change.** For example, right now, students taking courses designated with an N or G section pay a different (higher) eTuition rate but pay less student fees. Also, non-residents do not pay the out-of-state tuition, they pay the same eTuition rate as GA residents (this makes online courses more competitive and attractive to out of state students). But, there is talk of changing this current structure by adding additional student fees. The Bursar's Office posts fees here: For Fall 2010—Summer 2011: http://www.westga.edu/bursar/index_14088.php

3. **A portion of the eTuition your course generates goes back to your department.** Out of the $80 etuition charged per credit hour, half ($40) is currently retained by the VPAAs office to be used to supplement general funds. The remaining $40 per credit hour is divided as follows: 40% to the offering department, 40% to the DDEC for centralized services and licenses (like Wimba, Turnitin, etc.), and 20% goes to the offering college's Dean's office. All units are required by the VPAA to report how they will use these funds to directly support further growth in online courses or programs.

Retention in DE courses (not eCore & webMBA):

Fall 08 (D,N) = 92.7%
Fall 08 (F2F) = 91.7%
Fall 09 (D,N) = 93.2%
Fall 09 (F2F) = 92.3%

eCore Retention

Since UWG assumed eCore Admin Services for the USG, retention has gone up as high as 15%. Spring '10 = 83.2%

# of fully online UWG course sections (not eCore & webMBA):

Spring 2008—54
Spring 2009—68
Spring 2010—138

All Distance Ed:

Enrollment/ Courses
Spring 2008—4435/186
Spring 2009—5791/231
Spring 2010– 7019/309

% of UWG Credit Hrs delivered via DE

Summer'07—18%
Summer'08—25.5%
Summer'09– 34.6%

Student Opinion:

91% found CourseDen easy to use by the second week of class. (Spring 2010)

47% agreed that they were more comfortable participating in class online than in a F2F setting. (Spring 2010)

CourseDen Usage

Spring 2010 there were 11,325 active users (faculty & students w/100+ actions in a 7 day period) (Source: BOR Active Sections & User Report)

As you are designing the course:

1. **5-Star Rubric/ Checklist.** Consider using our rubric or one specifically designed to meet the specific needs and guidelines for your degree program: http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/Rubric/Rubric.html

2. **Syllabus checklist and boilerplate info.** Remember to include the required info in the syllabus or elsewhere in the course (see previous minimum requirements); if you use an alternate CMS, students must still authenticate through CourseDen and a syllabus must be provided there (for accreditation & security guidelines). This checklist also links to or provides standard boilerplate info for your course (like where students can go to get help): http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/faculty/syllabus_checklist.html

3. **Decide if you will have proctored exams, how they'll be implemented, and be sure to include detailed info in the syllabus or course.** See http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/exams/

4. **Consider requiring student orientation work during week 1.** We provide two versions of a ready-made student orientation module, either of which can be imported into your course and edited to your liking. Requiring some sort of introduction discussion may also be a good idea, to ease the students in to the online classroom and break the ice and build a sense of community. Retention research shows that the more comfortable an online student is with the online tools, his/her classmates, and approaching an instructor with questions, the more likely they are to succeed. Here's a sample instructor bio/ introduction: http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/Rubric/Exercises.html

5. **Note: Students do not get access to the course the minute they register in Banweb—it can take up to 48 working hours.** As a result, it's advisable to not require a substantial assignment or exam until at least 72 working hours after the last drop/add date. Or, build in some flexibility with early deadlines.

6. **Other boiler plates, samples, free content, best practices** are also linked from the FACULTY link on the http://webct.westga.edu login page. Direct links here:

   - http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/Rubric/Exercises.html

   - http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/faculty/best.html

   - http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/faculty/examples.html

6. **Remember copyright and ADA guidelines.** See http://www.westga.edu/~distance/webct1/help/copyright_ada.html

7. **Note: Students are not loaded until 1-2 days prior to the course's official "term" start date, as programmed in Banner.** For summer, this could mean students get access in May. Even if you deny students' access, the nightly data reloads could allow them back in. If your course is not ready, either post a disclaimer in the course header or hide all content. Students are denied access to courses according to the term end date in Banner (typically 2-3 weeks into the next term). There is one exception: students are not denied access to cross-listed sections unless you request it manually (this is a known bug).

After your course begins and ends:

1. **Note: myUWG/Banner and CourseDen rolls do not auto-synch and may not match.**

   - **When a student registers or adds a course** in Banner, the course may appear in their "myCourses" tab on myUWG immediately. However, the student may not be able to login to CourseDen for 24-48 hours, because the two systems must be synchronized through a manual process.

   - **When a student drops a course** in Banner, they are not dropped in CourseDen. Instructors must compare the two systems and manually un-enroll students, as needed. We advise this be done after the last drop for nonpayment students are typically reinstated (a week past the last drop/add day) and every few weeks during the semester.

2. **Note: You may be able to go ahead and add missing students, teaching assistants, co-instructors, and auditors (if they are in our database).**

   - **To add missing users:** From the Teach tab > Gradebook > choose Enroll Members > type student's username – it is the same as their email username - for ex. jdoe2 > check the role you wish to assign > click Enroll > do not forget to click Save)

3. **Banner is the official course record.** If you want a student dropped for non-participation, a student wishes to withdraw, etc… do not un-enroll them in CourseDen until this action is done in Banner first. Even if you do un-enroll them in CourseDen, when the database updates and pulls info from Banner, if the students are still in Banner they will be re-enrolled in CourseDen.

4. **Use your Demo Student wisely.** The Student View tab puts you in the course as a Demo/ Sample Student. Use this tab to see what students really see, take tests and see how they grade, etc... BUT be sure to use either the Build or Teach tab when posting to the Discussion Board or sending Mail messages. If you do so while on the Student View tab, the name displayed will be your "Demo/ Sample Student" identity and not your real name. If you accidentally send Mail from Demo Student, the students may Reply to this different Mail box.

5. **Backup your Grades often.** From the Teach tab > Gradebook > Click Export to Spreadsheet > Accept all of the default settings > Click Export button > Choose to Open file >After you confirm that the downloaded information is correct, select File > Save As > Select the area on your computer where the file should be saved > Name the file so that you will be able to identify it later > Click Save.

6. **For info on preserving other course data, more tips, FAQs, bug reports, and help 24/7 365 days/yr.** Go to http://help8.view.usg.edu

7. **Formative evaluations/ End-of-term evaluations:** If you need help conducting a formative eval during your course, we can help. During the last week of the term, the DDEC conducts its own online student survey. In addition, provided it is allowed by campus policy, the DDEC can also put your SEI online. Our evals are conducted outside of CourseDen, in CourseEval, and can be accessed online any time. Specific results are shared with the instructor, the Chair, and the Dean. All distance faculty are sent a form along with the results of their distance course surveys. The Evaluation Summary for Distance Courses form requires that the faculty provide written documentation reflecting on their DE course evaluation results and how the students' feedback will be used for improvement. Aggregate results are made available online at http://www.westga.edu/~distance/data/eval/