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1.1 Welcome to Penn State’s World Campus

Welcome to the community of instructors teaching online courses for Penn State’s World Campus. The collaborative learning enabled by online classes allows distance learners to interact not only with Penn State faculty but also with classmates from around the world. Penn State has been a leader in online education since 1998, and World Campus’s online graduate and undergraduate programs are in the nation’s top 25, according to the U.S. News & World Report’s 2013 rankings.¹

You’ve likely taught in a traditional, face-to-face setting—experience that will serve you well as you venture into the realm of online instruction. However, the virtual classroom presents unique challenges. We hope this handbook will serve as a useful start-up guide and a helpful reference as you manage your online courses.

1.2 National trends in online education

In 1998, Penn State became one of the first major accredited universities to provide online education, and it has kept pace with the growing demand for online courses over the past decade.

Longitudinal studies by I. Elaine Allen and Jeff Seaman of the Babson Survey Research Group have revealed these national trends in online education:

- Enrollment in online courses rose from 1.6 million in fall 2002 to 6.7 million in fall 2011.
- In 2002, fewer than half of Chief Academic Officers said that online education was critical to the long term strategies at their institutions of higher education. By 2011, that number increased to nearly 70 percent.
- In fall 2011, the proportion of college students taking online courses hit an all-time high of 32 percent.
- 67 percent of academic leaders say they believe that learning outcomes for online classes are the same or better than learning outcomes for face-to-face classes.
1.3 World Campus students

Penn State’s World Campus serves more than 16,000 students every year. Approximately two thirds of those students are distance learners, about 20 percent of them are University Park students, and about 12 percent attend Penn State’s branch campuses.

The majority of World Campus students are adult learners. The average World Campus undergraduate is 32 years old, and the average graduate student is 35 years old. Unlike traditional students, who have put their lives on hold to concentrate on their education, most online students, out of necessity or convenience, have chosen to incorporate their educational experiences into their existing lives. As an online instructor, you are likely to encounter some of the following students:

- Soldiers currently involved with military initiatives
- Mothers or fathers who are the primary caretakers of young children
- Parents who have taken a hiatus to raise their children and are returning to education
- Inmates who are completing courses as they work to rehabilitate themselves
- Working men and women motivated by potential promotions, career changes, or plans to attend graduate school

Because your students have busy family and work lives, they will likely require more flexibility than traditional students. Keep in mind that many of your students are located in different time zones, which will affect their response times to emails and discussion boards. When your students face unexpected and unavoidable situations, exercise empathy and give reasonable extensions, assignment adjustments, and make-up opportunities. At the same time, ensure that you maintain course standards and provide a fair course experience to all of your students.

World Campus has enrolled students from 54 countries. While the percentage of international students enrolled in its courses is small (approximately 3 percent), instructors should prepare for the challenges and take advantage of the benefits these students bring to the online classroom. If you have one or more international students in your class, consider the following:

- Some international students may not be native English speakers. Even though these students have met English proficiency requirements, it’s unreasonable to expect them to exhibit the same degree of fluency as their American peers. Keep this in mind when evaluating written work, knowing that some sentence-level errors are inevitable (and are rarely an indication of carelessness or incompetence).
- International students are less likely to comprehend jokes or allusions to U.S. pop culture. In your communications with the class, exercise sensitivity by avoiding references that will only resonate with Americans (or, if they’re necessary, giving sufficient context for them).
- Many cultures have different standards and practices regarding citation and
documentation of source material. Make sure to discuss your expectations and to provide students with clear explanations of Penn State’s plagiarism and academic integrity policies.

- When communicating directly with a nonnative English speaker, choose simpler vocabulary whenever possible. For instance, “doesn’t make sense,” is preferable to “incomprehensible.”
- Think about ways you can creatively use international students’ knowledge of their countries and cultures as a resource in your class.

### 1.4 Support for students

Your students have probably already used some of the numerous services World Campus offers them. Still, you may find it helpful to refer them to some of the following resources:

**Enrollment Advising.** World Campus staff members are available to walk students through the course application process including identifying the required supporting documentation; finding financial aid, scholarships, and other types of financial support; and preparing them for learning in an online environment.

**WebAccess Tools.** Students can access course syllabi and assignments, interact with professors and peers, make tuition payments, and order textbooks and software through Penn State’s WebAccess tools, which include ANGEL, WebMail, eLion, and the online bookstore.

**University Libraries system.** World Campus students can use the University Libraries system, the seventh largest research library in North America, whose holdings include 579 online databases and more than 200,000 e-books.

**Learning Support.** Online students can take advantage of undergraduate advising, career counseling, exam proctoring, tech support, and tutoring in writing and several math-related fields via the Internet or telephone.

**Special Services.** Military members and veterans, international students, corporate education, students with disabilities, and those transferring from other universities and colleges have access to community benefits and services.

**Networking.** Current students receive news and event updates that keep them connected to the Penn State community. They also have the opportunity to participate in THON, the World Campus chapter of the Penn State Blue & White Society, and clubs including the World Campus Psychology Club and Alpha Sigma Lambda national honor society.
1.5 Support for faculty

There are a number of resources for you as you teach your online course:

**Academic Department.** Your academic department in the College of the Liberal Arts can provide you with assistance with any academic question. Contact your department contact, [DEPARTMENT, PLEASE ADD DEPARTMENT CONTACT], if you have questions about the content of the course or any policies regarding grading, student issues, academic integrity, or similar matters.

**Instructional Designer.** A specialist in online learning assisted in the development of your online course and he or she is also available to help you throughout the semester as you are teaching. Some courses may have instructional designers at the World Campus, while others work in the College of the Liberal Arts. In either case, they will share best practices for online teaching, help prepare your course in the online course management system (ANGEL), resolve course technical or design issues, provide guidance in using ANGEL tools, help you integrate other course technologies, and guide you to other Penn State resources. Your instructional designer will contact you prior to the beginning of the semester to help you get started. He or she will have access to your course throughout the semester to provide guidance and resolve technical or design questions. Instructional designers will not communicate with students regarding grades or other academic issues.

**NOTE:** Some procedures for your online course may differ slightly depending on whether your instructional designer is from the World Campus or from Liberal Arts. This manual reviews the procedures for courses designed in the College of the Liberal Arts and will note if there are differences for courses developed at the World Campus. See your World Campus instructional designer for more information on procedural differences if necessary.
2.1 Reviewing course content

Textbooks and course documents

As in preparing for a face-to-face course, planning for your online course should include a careful review of the required readings and course documents such as the syllabus. You should have a strong sense of your course’s learning objectives and how each component of the course will help students accomplish those objectives. Know the assignments, activities, and assessments and when they will take place; and be prepared to answer students’ questions about course requirements, due dates, and policies.

To order a desk copy of your course’s textbook contact your academic department. They can either provide a copy or give you more information on how to obtain one.

In addition to being well acquainted with the texts required for your course, you should also familiarize yourself with its online content. World Campus courses are delivered through ANGEL, Penn State’s online course management system, which section 4.3 explains in greater detail. Several weeks before your class is scheduled to begin, you should log in to ANGEL and get to know the site’s layout, materials, and tools.

Schedule a walkthrough of the course website with the course instructional designer for a basic orientation to your course.

Additionally, use the following checklist to ensure that you know the course website and that all materials are in order:

- Review and/or update the course syllabus. Make sure that it contains your contact information.
- Confirm that all online content referenced by the syllabus (such as readings, or videos) is present.
- If your course employs discussion forums, online assessments, drop boxes or other ANGEL tools, make sure you know how to access and use them.
- Familiarize yourself with the ANGEL gradebook.
- If your course uses any other technology outside of ANGEL make sure you are comfortable with these tools.
- Check for any discrepancies between the syllabus, schedule, calendar, and gradebook.

If you come across any editorial concerns, such as typographical errors or missing content, during your review of course materials, please contact the course designer. Keep in mind that instructional designers are available throughout the semester to provide support to online instructors.
2.2 Establishing communication expectations and norms

Welcoming students
After scheduling a course, students receive an official Welcome Letter, which provides start and end dates, directions for obtaining materials, details on activating and using Penn State access accounts, instructions for logging in to the course, and contacts for technical help. This letter does not include instructor information, so you should send your own welcome message the first day of class to introduce yourself and establish your expectations. Consider creating a welcome video in addition to your written communication and include the following in your welcome message:

- **A brief biographical statement that highlights your experience and credentials.** You might also show your personality by mentioning a favorite hobby or a fun fact about yourself.
- **An overview of the course objectives and requirements.** There’s no need to rehash the entire syllabus, but this is a good opportunity to help students understand the arc of the course and how its individual components work together to build knowledge and expertise.
- **A review of course policies.** It may be useful to emphasize the importance of academic integrity, review plagiarism, or talk about timeliness and late submissions, especially if the course syllabus does not include this information.
- **An explanation of communication expectations.** Establish norms for how quickly you will respond to their emails and how quickly they should respond to emails from you and their classmates. You might also include a sentence or two on email etiquette and professionalism.

Maintaining contact
Weekly emails or announcements are a good way to reinforce the expectations you set up in your initial welcome message. They also reinforce instructor presence and help students to feel connected to the course community. In these contacts, you might provide additional insights into the lessons for the week, tips for completing assignments and activities, reminders about due dates, or supplementary resources (such as websites or articles) relevant to course content.

Personalizing individual communications
While your welcome message and weekly emails set standards and create cohesion, your communication with individual students plays an even more important role in their learning experience. Research shows that online students are more likely than their face-to-face counterparts to feel alienated, which can lead to disruptions and decreased motivation. With that in mind, view every communication with individual students as an opportunity to connect, and do your best to personalize your queries and responses.
2.3 Facilitating online discussions

If your course uses online discussion forums to encourage collaborative learning, consider the following ways to employ this tool effectively:

- Be clear about your expectations for student participation in these forums. When and how often are students required to contribute? What should be the length of their responses? Do you expect polished writing, or are more casual responses acceptable? How will posting on these forums be graded (if at all)?
- Make sure that students know how discussion forums connect with and enhance other aspects of the course.
- Know what discussion questions or prompts are intended to do, so that you can appropriately evaluate student responses. For instance, questions may assess students’ comprehension, ask them to apply knowledge, invite them to analyze information, challenge them to synthesize concepts, or require them to evaluate and make judgments.
- When you read student contributions to discussion forums, you may also want to look for command of course content, clarity of writing, complexity of thought, and the ability to interact with others’ ideas.
- Praise students (by name) for high quality responses via group or individual emails.

2.4 Encouraging peer-to-peer interactions

Research shows that online students who interact with their peers using communication technologies have increased motivation and higher perceptions of their overall learning. In addition to discussion forums, you can encourage peer-to-peer interactions using:

- **Peer reviews.** Before major assignment deadlines, have peers work in pairs or teams to review each other’s work and give suggestions for improvement.
- **Group work.** If a minor assignment lends itself group work, consider allowing students to complete it in teams. Some courses require group work for major assignments. If this is the case for your class, you should anticipate some of the potential problems groups can face. For instance, know how you will respond if a group member drops the course, if students complain that one group member isn’t completing his or her fair share of the work, or if group work is delayed by technical or communication problems.
You can also encourage the following informal interactions:

- **Facebook page / Google document.** You might suggest that students create an online hub for discussing ideas, posing questions, and giving and receiving help. Just make sure that you clarify when collaboration is appropriate and when it’s a violation of academic integrity.
- **Study groups.** Recommend that students hold group study sessions using technologies such as Google hangout.

### 2.5 Providing opportunities for students to seek support

In addition to responding to student emails, you may find it beneficial (and more efficient) to allow students to seek guidance via virtual “office hours.” You can use an instant messaging software (like ANGEL’s Live Office Hours) to converse with individual students or a conferencing software (like Blackboard Collaborate, Adobe Connect, or Google Hangout) to communicate with groups of students. Also consider holding online review sessions using video conferencing before major tests or exams.

### 2.6 Offering individual feedback

Because online students are more likely to feel alienated than face-to-face learners, providing personalized and detailed feedback is crucial. When possible, avoid copying and pasting the same feedback for all students, and don’t use mass emails to communicate personal feedback for individuals. The following tips will help you provide strong feedback to your students:

- Use an encouraging tone and make sure to include at least one positive comment. Remember that online students don’t have the benefit of smiles and reassuring nods that classroom students receive. Explaining what students did well will motivate them to continue putting effort into their work.
- Provide some commentary on all assignments. Just because a student receives an A doesn’t mean feedback is not necessary.
- Make improvement-oriented comments that are specific and constructive. If students believe their instructor has high expectations for them, they are more likely to perform well.
- Illustrate your points with examples.
- Help the student prioritize when many areas for improvement exist. It may be better to target the biggest areas instead of providing a long and discouraging list of weaknesses.
- Encourage further reflection and, when applicable, give follow-up questions.
- Avoid sarcasm and jokes.
- Be prompt. Students are more receptive and responsive to timely feedback.
- Refer students to helpful resources, like the online writing center.
2.7 Grading student work

Written notification of the basis for grades should be provided within the first ten calendar days of a semester or its equivalent. The syllabus should contain a detailed explanation of your grading practices, especially how the final grade will be determined. If you will compute the final grade on the basis of a formula involving percentages or points, describe the formula specifically. It is helpful to reinforce your grading policy in communications with the class and on individual assignment sheets. Any changes in the basis for grading should be presented to the students in writing (Senate Policy 47-20, Basis for Grades).²

The grades that you give your students should reflect their achievement in attaining the objectives of the course that you have presented to them. The University’s grading policy (Senate policies 47-40, Grading System, and 47-60, Definition of Grades)³⁴ is that grades shall be assigned to individual students on the basis of the instructor’s judgment of the student’s scholastic achievement according to the following definitions:

- A (EXCELLENT) indicates exceptional achievement.
- B (GOOD) indicates extensive achievement.
- C (SATISFACTORY) indicates acceptable achievement.
- D (POOR) indicates only minimal achievement and that the student may be seriously handicapped in carrying a more advanced course for which this course is a specific prerequisite.
- F (FAILURE) indicates inadequate achievement, necessitating a repetition of the course.

Furthermore, for undergraduates, grades of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, and F must all be available and used as appropriate, including the final grade.

Your academic department may have a grading scale which they use to determine the numerical grades required to reach each of the letter grades above (ex. 95-100% = A). This grading scale must be included in your syllabus.

If you are new to teaching or to Penn State’s World Campus, don’t hesitate to discuss grading and other issues related to instruction with other faculty or supervisors who are in a position to advise you. You might want to ask them to share their tests and their grading policies to compare with your standards so that you have a better sense of what other faculty members are requiring of students in similar courses. Instructors are not asked to be untrue to themselves; however, they are encouraged to work out the dilemma of aligning their standards with those of their colleagues after receiving advice from more experienced colleagues.
2.8 Using rubrics

A rubric describes differing levels of success for each of an assignment’s goals and gives corresponding point values. Using a rubric to grade assignments can save lots of time for instructors. Other benefits include:

- If provided to students in advance of deadlines, effective rubrics can ensure that they understand the requirements of assignments.
- They also allow students to self-assess more accurately before submitting an assignment.
- Additionally, rubrics emphasize the most important aspects of assignments, enabling students (and instructors) to rank priorities.
- Rubrics help to limit subjectivity in grading by making sure all students are assessed according to the same standards.

There are, however, some disadvantages to grading with rubrics. These include:

- Rubrics that are too generic (that don’t clearly and specifically express performance expectations) can create confusion and frustration for students.
- Developing an effective rubric can be time consuming.
- Rubrics may discourage instructors from assessing or commenting on nuanced and complex aspects of assignments.
- Rubrics can deprive students of the personalized feedback that is essential for their academic growth and satisfaction with the class.

If you use a rubric, consider adding a few personalized observations, suggestions, or explanations for each student.

Check with your instructional designer to find out if your department has pre-existing rubrics for your course, or if you want to incorporate a rubric in your grading.

2.9 Reviewing mid-semester teaching evaluations

Mid-semester evaluations are incorporated in many courses to solicit feedback from students. These evaluations will allow you to assess:

- Which components of the course are best facilitating student learning
- The current levels of student motivation and satisfaction with the course
- How students are receiving and responding to your personalized feedback

Use these evaluations to decide whether you are appropriately allocating your time and energy to the various aspects of the course. Although you can’t chance course content, you can change your strategies for communicating with students, providing personalized feedback, setting expectations for assignments, moderating discussions, etc.
If your course does not include a mid-semester evaluation, contact your instructional designer for help in incorporating one.

2.10 Managing your time

Although online teaching provides flexibility, its demands can easily snowball and become overwhelming if you do not manage your time well. You can save time and avoid falling behind by implementing these practices:

**Keep an organized digital filing system.** Categorize and save course materials, such as drafts of weekly emails and feedback templates, so that you can access them in future semesters. Use programs like Microsoft Word to draft feedback and messages to students, since ANGEL will occasionally drop a transmission. Save comments on student work, so that you can retrieve them in the case of a lost email or technical malfunction.

**Establish a routine.** Set aside designated times for responding to student emails, grading assignments, and previewing lesson materials. This will prevent work from piling up. Know what times of day you perform best, and schedule activities that require concentration accordingly.

**Stay at least one week ahead of your students.** Previewing lesson materials will allow you to anticipate student questions. It will also allow you to find unexpected problems, such as broken links or missing content.

**Foster group dynamics.** Encouraging student interactions early on in your course will allow students to rely on each other for answering questions, developing ideas, and reviewing assignments. The use of public posting areas or discussion boards, especially, will limit the number of commonly asked questions to which you must individually reply.

*Some of the information above came from the World Campus report “Effective Workload Management Strategies for the Online Environment.”*
Tools for Online Teaching

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3.1 Access Accounts

Obtaining an account

A Penn State Access Account is a digital identity for students, faculty, staff, and designated affiliates of the University. The electronic profile allows users to access protected online University resources and services, such as WebMail and ANGEL. Each person with an Access Account is assigned a unique user ID, comprised of three letters (your initials) coupled with a series of digits (i.e. xyz5002). Once your employment paperwork has been processed, you will receive your username. Then, you must activate your Access Account and obtain your password using one of the following methods:

In-person method

The first option is to visit an ITS Access Account Signature Station at one of Penn State’s campus locations. The signature station application requires the user to provide his/her nine digit Penn State ID (PSUID) number along with a valid photo ID. The application then displays key University policies governing the usage of the Access Account and Penn State’s computer network. Each Access Account holder needs to agree to the policy by signing his/her signature when prompted. A user has the option of choosing his/her own password for the user ID, or may choose to have a password randomly generated by the system. The user's user ID, along with the random password, if applicable, is displayed at the end of the application session. A complete listing of all signature station locations is available at the Penn State Access Account Signature Stations webpage.

You may also activate your account remotely. To do so, you must download and complete the “Penn State Access Account Acceptance Statement” regarding the Access Account policy. The completed and signed form, along with a copy of a valid photo ID must be sent to the ITS Accounts Services Office for processing. After the form is received and scanned into the database, the individual’s Access Account is activated/unlocked. The user ID and password will be sent separately to the Access Account holder’s home address of record, via U.S. mail. This method is practiced by World Campus on a regular basis.

3.2 WebMail

Accessing WebMail

Penn State WebMail is a web-based email client that provides you with access to your Penn State email via a web browser. To access WebMail, you will need to log in using your Penn State Access Account user ID and password. To use WebMail, you will need to make sure that your web browser is JavaScript-enabled and SSL-enabled. Some browsers are not compatible with Penn State’s WebAccess tools, so make sure to use Safari, Firefox, or Internet Explorer.

Forwarding WebMail to a different account

If you would like to have all of your Penn State email forwarded to your personal email account:
1. Go to the ITS Secure Server and log in using your user ID and password.¹

2. In the middle of the screen, under Other Directory Information, select the link that says Change your email forwarding address.

3. Enter your forwarding address, and select Change.

### 3.3 ANGEL Course Management System

**ANGEL’s applications**

All World Campus courses are housed in ANGEL (Authenticated Network Guided Environment for Learning), Penn State’s online course management system.¹° From your course’s ANGEL page, you and your students will be able to access course content and to communicate with each other. Typically, World Campus instructors use ANGEL to:

- Access and review lesson materials
- View the course calendar
- Receive and post grades for assignments
- Supervise discussion forums
- Post course announcements
- Email the class and individual students
- Assign students to teams (when applicable)
- Monitor students’ progress

As an instructor, you will see your course title(s) on the My Profile page under the My Courses subheading. By default, at the beginning of the semester, every course is disabled, meaning no students can see or enter the course. The course title appears in gray, and the word “Disabled” appears beneath it. You can work in the course while it is disabled, but you will need to activate it prior to the start of the semester. Students will not be able to view ANGEL email within a course until it is activated. If you wish to contact your class via email before the semester begins, be sure to select the option to send a copy to each recipient’s Internet email when sending an ANGEL email.

You will need to activate your course no later than 10 a.m. on the first day of the semester. It is often a good idea to activate the course earlier so students have plenty of time to review the course. Be aware, though, that once you activate a course you will need to be monitoring the course and be prepared to answer student questions and respond to student comments. When you are ready for students to see and enter a course, activate it as follows:

Go to ANGEL and log on using your Penn State Access Account user ID and password.

1. On the My Profile page, locate the name of the course you wish to activate under the My Courses subheading.

2. Select the Settings link beneath the course title, to the immediate right of the word “Disabled.” This will take you to the Course Settings for the course.

3. On the Access tab, from the Member Access pull-down menu, select All Members (by default, the Member Access pull-down menu is set to Editors
4. Click the Save button.

After following these instructions, you will be sent to the My Profile page. If you’ve activated the course, its title will no longer appear in gray under My Courses, and the “Disabled” label will not appear beneath it.

Some courses may be activated by the instructional designers. Check with your designer if you are unsure whether or not you are responsible for activating the course.

ANGEL has its own email system, but if you wish to view student emails in another email account, you can have your ANGEL mail forwarded to another e-mail account (WebMail or any other). To answer the email, you must go back to ANGEL. Email does not flow back into ANGEL.

To forward your email, follow these instructions:

- Log into your ANGEL homepage using your user ID and password.
- Select My Preferences under the My Toolbox tab.
- Select System Settings.
- Under Mail Settings, type in your forwarding address (i.e. xyz5002@psu.edu).
- Under Forwarding Mode, select Forward my mail and keep as new.
- Click Save.

Before your course begins, make sure that you know how to navigate ANGEL and use its tools. If you are unfamiliar with ANGEL, the following resources may be useful:

**ANGEL Help and Information Guide.** You can access this guide from your ANGEL homepage. Just click the question mark icon in the navigation bar on the left side of the page, and you’ll be directed to Penn State’s IT Knowledge Base. The guide contains a variety of helpful resources, including:

- Instructions on how to use ANGEL’s tools and applications (i.e. how to manage the gradebook, hold a live chat on ANGEL, or add calendar events)
- Online workshops and animated tutorials on topics such as discussion forums and course mail
- Suggestions for addressing technical problems
- ANGEL support contacts

**World Campus How-to Guide for ANGEL.** Although this resource is targeted toward students, it focuses specifically on the ways ANGEL features in World Campus classes. It provides a series of videos on topics such as “Taking a Quiz in ANGEL” and “Viewing Your Syllabus in ANGEL.”

The World Campus and Continuing Education Help Desk can also provide a personal orientation to ANGEL for faculty. Contact them to arrange a training session.
3.4 eLion

**eLion’s applications**

**eLion** is a web-based service for students, advisers, faculty, and parents that provides secure real-time access to academic and financial records in the University’s administrative database. To log in to **eLion**, you will need to provide your Access Account user ID and password—since you are a faculty member with grading authorization, you will also require a Second Factor Authentication Token Number. You can access this number via a small electronic device called a SecurID token, which is provided to you by your academic department.

From your eLion page, you can access resources such as the Academic Calendar, Schedule of Courses, and Code of Conduct for Students. More importantly, eLion allows you to enter, change, and review student grades, as well as give early progress reports.

**Entering grades on eLion**

There are two ways for you to enter final grades into eLion. The first option is to log in to your eLion homepage, select **Grade Entry** from the menu, and follow prompts for manually entering grades.

The second option is to synchronize your ANGEL Gradebook with eLion at the end of the semester.

To publish grades from ANGEL:

1. Log in to ANGEL and go to your **Gradebook**.
2. On the main **Gradebook** menu, beneath the **Gradebook Setup** subheading, select the **Publish Course Grades** link.
3. Select **Final** from the **Published Grade Type** pull-down menu.
4. Click the **Go** button.
5. Enter a **Grade to Publish** for each student. Note: This field will be automatically populated if you have previously set up a grading scale. Auto-populated fields can be edited.
6. Click the **Publish** all displayed grades button at the bottom of the screen. The message “Grades were Published” will appear.
7. Click the **Done** button.
3.5 Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE)

The Student Rating of Teaching Effectiveness (SRTE) is Penn State’s locally developed instrument for gathering feedback from students at the end of the course. Students access their SRTEs and instructors access SRTE results through their profile pages in ANGEL.

There is a preset period of time the SRTEs are offered. For the traditional fifteen-week course, SRTEs are offered the last two weeks of classes. At the beginning of this period, the SRTE system generates an email to students to announce the availability of their SRTEs. This message includes instructions on where to complete and how long they are available. Email reminder messages are sent to students who have outstanding forms to complete.

Since filling out SRTEs is not mandatory, it may be helpful for you to encourage students in your courses to complete them. Students are more compelled to complete a feedback survey if they know the information will be used to make improvements in the class. In general, it is good practice for faculty to communicate how they have incorporated past feedback into the course (e.g., included more teamwork, added visual examples, reordered topics). Although SRTE results are anonymous, you can track the percentage of students that have completed their SRTEs on your ANGEL profile page.

Standard online SRTE reports are available for faculty review about two weeks after the deadline for submitting grades (with the exception of the fall semester, when the University closes for the holiday break in late December). To access SRTE results for your course(s), select the Student Ratings of Teacher Effectiveness (SRTE) link beneath the SRTE tab on your ANGEL profile page. Then, click Instructor Report beneath the Report tab and select the desired semester and course(s).
3.6 Other Penn State Technology tools

In addition to ANGEL, World Campus instructors have access to a wide variety of other technologies which may be incorporated in your online course. These include:

- **Yammer**: a Facebook-like environment for students to communicate and collaborate with each other.
- **Blogs**: a Wordpress blogging platform where students can create individual sites to present their own work or collaborate with other students on a class blog.
- **VoiceThread**: a totally web-based application that allows you to place collections of media like images, videos, documents, and presentations at the center of an asynchronous conversation.
- **Turnitin**: A web-based writing assessment toolkit that allows instructors to provide feedback to students through markup tools, rubrics, proofing tools, and originality reports to detect plagiarism.
- **Blackboard Collaborate**: a web-conferencing software that provides two-way audio, multi-point video, interactive whiteboard, application and desktop sharing, rich media, breakout rooms, and session recording.

If these systems are already incorporated into your course, you should familiarize yourself with how they work. Your instructional designer can provide an orientation to these systems and can also provide guidance on how to best add them to your course to meet a specific instructional goal.
4.1 Library access for World Campus students and faculty

World Campus students and faculty have access to the Penn State University Libraries\textsuperscript{18} system, the seventh largest research library in North America. This enables them to retrieve online materials, including:

- Online databases, e-books, and e-journals
- Google Scholar
- Research guides tailored for World Campus

Students and faculty can also borrow materials using the Libraries’ distance delivery service for World Campus. To use this service you must register with both the University Libraries and Interlibrary Loan (ILLiad). Library registration gives you the ability to use “I Want It” on the CAT to request circulating items from the Penn State collection. ILLiad registration gives you the ability to request copies of articles from journals held in the Penn State University Libraries print collection and also books and copy from libraries outside Penn State. Access both accounts at the “My Accounts” page on the University Libraries website.\textsuperscript{19} Materials requested via University Libraries and ILLiad are shipped via UPS or U.S. Mail to the address in your library account profile (return mailing label included). Shipments outside the continental U.S. may not be possible.

Additionally, if you live in Pennsylvania you can access University Libraries resources at any Penn State Campus in the state.

Note that the University Libraries website has a special page for Information and Services for Faculty, Instructors, and Staff, which can be found by clicking the Faculty/Staff link under the Community tab.\textsuperscript{20}

4.2 Electronic Course Reserves

As a World Campus instructor, you can make course materials (such as book excerpts and articles) available to your students through the University Libraries’ Electronic Course Reserves. If your course is already using Electronic Course Reserves, your instructional designer may activate these reserves for you. Check with your designer if you are not sure if your reserves are activated. If you plan to add additional readings, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Make sure to obtain your department’s consent before assigning any readings that aren’t on the syllabus.
- Book excerpts placed on electronic reserve may not exceed 15 percent of the total pages in the book. This limit is cumulative over the course of the semester.
- No more than two articles from any single issue of a journal may be placed on
electronic reserve over the course of the semester, unless those articles are available through a library-licensed database (ProQuest, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, etc.) or on the open Web.

- Materials placed on electronic reserve for subsequent or repeated semesters for the same course and instructor may require copyright permission. Copyright permission will be sought by the Course Reserves staff.

To put additional material on electronic reserve, fill out the Electronic Reserve Request Form on the Course Reserve Services page at the University Libraries website. You must supply photocopies/files of all readings not available full-text online to the Lending Services Desk, 105 Pattee Library. The processing time is 3-5 days.

### 4.3 Course-specific resources

University Libraries provides the following resources that are specific to courses and research topics:

**Course Guides.** You can access library resources relevant to your course by clicking on the Course Information link under the Research tab on the University Libraries homepage. Entering your course number will direct you to course-specific links for topics such as brainstorming and digital project resources.

**Research Guides.** You can access topic-specific library resources by clicking on the Research Guides link under the Research tab on the University Libraries homepage. Hundreds of subject areas are available, from “Accounting” to “Peace and Conflict Studies” to “Sustainability.”

### 4.4 Accessing University librarians

**Research Consultation.** This service provides brief library and reference information. Just click on the Research Consultation link at the bottom of the World Campus Libraries homepage, and fill out the Research Consultation Request Form (Access Account login required). A librarian will respond to your inquiry within 24 hours.

**Chat with a Librarian** Talk to a University librarian through a live chat at the Ask a Librarian page. This service is available Monday - Thursday, 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Friday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.; and Sunday 6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

**Subject Librarians** University Libraries has specialized librarians in dozens of subjects—from architecture to women’s studies. For a directory of Subject Librarians, click on the Faculty/Staff link under the Community tab on the University Libraries homepage. Then, click on University Park Subject Specialists under the section Find a Library/Librarian.

Deborah Cheney is Head of Library Services to the World Campus and Penn State Online. If you have questions about library resources, you can reach her at dlc13@psu.edu or (814) 863-1345.
University and World Campus Policies

Faculty and Student Policies

5.1 Enrollment
5.2 Accessibility
5.3 The syllabus
5.4 Grading
5.5 Academic integrity
5.6 Student records (FERPA)
5.1 Enrollment

Course registration

Registration is a continuous process at Penn State. While extenuating circumstances may necessitate the need to process schedule changes after classes begin, students are encouraged to finalize all schedule changes prior to the first day of the semester. Once the semester begins, the process of changing the student’s course schedule is referred to as dropping/adding courses.

Students who have completed their registration by paying tuition and fees are permitted to add and drop courses during the drop/add period. This period is the first ten calendar days of the spring or fall semester, or approximately 10 percent of the way through a course.

It is possible that students wishing to enroll in a course with no open seats will contact you directly. Departments set enrollment caps for the benefit of both the students and the instructor. Exceeding those caps has implications for your work load and can limit the time and energy you have to give to each student. Instructors can, however, override enrollments in exceptional cases. To do so, you must get the permission of your department contact and submit an override request to the World Campus registrar (registrar@outreach.psu.edu).

Students are occasionally permitted to add a course after the drop/add period has passed, but late adding of courses is not recommended in most cases. It is especially hard for World Campus students to catch up because of delays in receiving course materials. Late adding requires permission of the instructor and the World Campus.

Late add/drop

The late drop period starts the day after the drop/add period finishes and ends approximately 80 percent of the way through a course (to find the late drop deadline for your course via eLion, click on Course Drop Dates). Students may need to be reminded of the academic and financial considerations of dropping a course during this time period. Associate degree students are limited to 10 credits worth of late drop courses; bachelor’s degree students are limited to 16 credits of late drop courses. Courses dropped during the late drop period will appear on your students’ records. Late dropping can affect students’ tuition, fees, student aid, and refunds.


5.2 Accessibility

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. When a World Campus student requests academic adjustments due to a disability, we work with the student and Penn State’s Office for Disability Services to determine the appropriate accommodation; this might mean extended time for exams, textbooks in alternate formats, etc.³⁰

The student may provide you with a memo from the Office of Disability Services with recommended academic adjustments. Contact your instructional designer for help in providing needed accommodations in your course.

If a student with a disability self-identifies to you and requests accommodations, please direct students to the World Campus Disability Contact Liaison, Terry Watson at TerryWatson@outreach.psu.edu or (800) 252-3592. The process of determining a student’s disability and appropriate accommodations can be a relatively lengthy one, and the earlier in the course it begins, the sooner the appropriate accommodations may be provided. You are not required to provide accommodations for students with disabilities unless you have been provided with a letter from a Penn State counselor listing the appropriate recommended accommodations.

5.3 The syllabus

For the majority of World Campus classes, the syllabus is pre-determined and embedded in the course’s ANGEL site. Online instructors, however, should still take the time to familiarize themselves with University’s policies regarding syllabi:

A syllabus must be distributed to students in each course within the first ten calendar days of a semester or its equivalent. In addition to course content and expectations, the syllabus must include the course examination policy, basis for grades, and academic integrity policy for the course. Changes to the syllabus shall also be given to the student in writing (Senate Policy 43-00, Syllabus).³¹ [NOTE: This policy is currently undergoing revision].

The course syllabus serves several functions. It enables students to plan ahead, to understand course goals and specific requirements, and to be made aware of the principles and practices that underlay your course design. It should include the class name and number, your name, campus phone number, email address, and, as appropriate, voice mailbox number and webpage address. It should also include your office hours, a list of required books and other necessary materials which the student must acquire independently. It should include or direct students to a calendar with dates of class meetings and exams and the due dates for written, oral, and reading assignments. It is helpful to indicate to students the amount of time you will need, and
the reporting form you will require to accommodate special absences necessitated by religious holidays and the like.

Students will perform best when you clearly define what you expect of them in terms of performance, behavior, and relevant policy areas. The syllabus is a good place to reinforce these messages. Each instructor is expected to provide clear policy statements on academic integrity and grading policy (all discussed below). You can help students to learn the importance of academic honesty to the learning process, and on the flip side, that the University will not tolerate cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty, and that you will take such offenses seriously.

You cannot assume that students know your policies prior to class, even things that may seem obvious. Providing clear policy statements in or with your syllabus can ease the resolution of any complaints raised by students over grades, late work, etc. The clearer the information that is provided to students (especially in written form), the easier it will be to prevent, or later resolve, student disagreements. The syllabus is the primary document (along with grade and attendance records) consulted in grade disputes.

The Office for Disability Services recommends that the following statement\(^\text{32}\) be included on the syllabus:

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University’s educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. The Office for Disability Services (ODS) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus: http://equity.psu.edu/ods/dcl. For further information, please visit the Office for Disability Services website: http://equity.psu.edu/ods.

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: http://equity.psu.edu/ods/doc-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus’s disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

The Office for Disability Services also provides a full Handbook for Faculty and Instructors working with students with disabilities.\(^\text{33}\)
5.4 Grading

Submitting grades
Submit end-of-semester grades to the Registrar’s office using the eLion system. Your final grades are to be submitted to the Registrar’s office within 48 hours of the final exam. It is essential to submit grades within a timely manner so that

- Grades for graduating seniors are available in sufficient time to allow for checking the final semester’s work to assure that graduation requirements have been met; and
- Students who are academically dropped for unsatisfactory scholarship can be notified of that fact prior to the beginning of the next semester.

Deferred grades
Students may request to defer their final semester grade. (There is no such thing as an “incomplete” grade in the Penn State system.) You may approve the request if, in your judgment, the student has a good and sufficient reason. Deferred grades should be approved only in unusual circumstances and never because a student failed to complete course work without good reason (Senate Policy 48-40, Deferred Grades).34

To assign a deferred grade, choose the grade symbol of DF from the drop-down box on the eLion Faculty Grade Entry application. This action will provide the student with the normal 10 week period to complete their course work.

Deferred grades that are not changed to a quality grade are automatically recorded as an F grade at the end of this 10 week deadline.

Grade changes
Grade changes are appropriate if a final grade has been assigned but a miscalculation on the part of the instructor has occurred. Grade changes should not be used to allow a student to do additional work or revise work after the semester has been completed and a grade has been submitted. Use the eLion Grade Change application to report the corrected grade. If the original grade was assigned more than a year ago, you will need to complete a Grade Change Authorization form (Senate Policy 48-30, Corrected Grades).35

Grade adjudication
The basis for grades, as stated in Senate Policy 47-20, is “...the instructor’s judgment of the student's scholastic achievement...”36 Occasionally, a disagreement arises in the assignment of a grade. A student who wishes to question or challenge the grade assigned in a course must first discuss grading practices and assignments with the instructor. It is expected that the student and instructor will try to eliminate any misunderstandings and will attempt to work out any disagreements over grades. Some examples of the basis for a legitimate disagreement could include, but are not limited to the following:

- The instructor did not inform the student of the basis for calculation of grades as required in 47-20.
- The instructor did not calculate the student’s grade in accordance with the instructor’s stated policy for calculating grades.
- There is an error in the computation of the grade that was not corrected.
• The student, through no fault of his or her own, was not provided with the same opportunity to complete the requirements for the course in terms, for example, of time, access to materials, or access to the instructor as the other students.

On the rare occasion that a student and instructor fail to resolve the grade dispute through informal means, the student may request that the head of the academic program offering the course review the issue and take appropriate action to mediate and seek resolution. If this does not resolve the dispute, the student who is an undergraduate may seek further review from the associate dean for undergraduate education for the College of the Liberal Arts. The student who is a graduate student may request the same of the associate dean for graduate studies of the College of the Liberal Arts.

If resolution does not occur, the student may request a formal grade adjudication process by completing a Grade Adjudication Petition Form and returning it to the associate dean responsible for undergraduate education, or the associate dean for graduate studies. The request form must be submitted within five weeks of the beginning of the semester immediately following the semester in which the grade was received. The basis for a grade adjudication petition is limited to cases in which a grade assignment does not conform to Senate Policy 47-20 and therefore, the petition must present clear evidence that the assignment of the grade was based upon factors other than the academic judgment of the instructor.

The associate dean will review the petition to determine if the student’s complaint provides evidence that the instructor’s assignment of the grade is in violation of Senate Policy 47-20. If the associate dean determines that the assignment of the grade does not violate Senate Policy 47-20, he or she will notify the student and the grade will stand.

If the associate dean believes that the assignment of the grade does violate Senate Policy 47-20, he or she will solicit a response from the instructor. The instructor must respond within ten (10) days. If upon review of the instructor’s response the associate dean concludes that the grade assignment does not conform to Senate Policy 47-20, he or she will determine a course of action that may include a recommendation for an amended grade to be determined. The associate dean will then provide the student and the instructor with notification of the instructor’s response and a brief summary of the reasons for the recommended course of action. [Note: Policy 47-20 is currently undergoing revision.]
5.5 Academic integrity

Academic integrity — scholarship free of fraud and deception — is an important educational objective of Penn State. The College of the Liberal Arts is committed to maintaining Penn State’s policy on academic integrity in all courses it offers. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating
- plagiarism
- fabrication of information or citations
- facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others
- unauthorized prior possession of examinations
- submitting the work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor and securing written approval
- tampering with the academic work of other students

Additionally, World Campus students are expected to act with civility and 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 own efforts. An environment of academic integrity is requisite to respect for oneself and others, and a civil community.

Information about Penn State’s academic integrity policy and college review procedures is included in the information that students receive upon enrolling in a course. Still, at the beginning of each course, instructors should provide a statement clarifying the application of academic integrity criteria to that course.

In cases where academic integrity is questioned, procedure requires an instructor to notify a student of suspected dishonesty before filing a charge and recommended sanction with the college. Procedures allow a student to accept or contest a charge. If a student chooses to contest a charge, the case will then be managed by the respective college or campus Academic Integrity Committee. If a disciplinary sanction also is recommended, the case will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Academic dishonesty can lead to a failing grade or referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

All Penn State colleges abide by this Penn State policy (Senate Policy 49-20, Academic Integrity), but review procedures may vary by college when academic dishonesty is suspected.38

The academic integrity policies and procedures specifically relating to the College of the Liberal Arts can be found at the college’s website on the Complete College Policies and Procedures page under Academic Integrity.39
5.6 Student records (FERPA)

As an instructor, before you are allowed to submit grades in eLion, you must go through a FERPA Tutorial and subsequently pass a quiz. Student educational records are subject to the constraints of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law enacted in 1974. FERPA protects the privacy of student education records. All educational institutions that receive federal funding must comply with FERPA. As an employee of Penn State with access to student education records, you’re obligated to comply with FERPA and to protect those records according to the law.

Education records are defined as records, files, documents, and other materials that contain information directly related to a student and are maintained by Penn State or by a person acting for the University. Education records take many forms, including paper and electronic. Education records include:

- Grades
- Class lists
- Student course schedules
- Disciplinary records
- Student financial records
- Payroll records for employees who are employed as a direct result of their status as students (e.g. work study, assistantships, resident assistants)

The following records are excluded from the definition of education records:

- “Sole possession” records made by faculty and staff for their own use as reference or memory aids and not shared with others
- Personal observations
- University law enforcement records
- Medical and mental health records used only for the treatment of the student
- Alumni records
- Peer graded papers and exams prior to the grade being recorded in the instructor’s grade book

FERPA gives students four basic rights with respect to their education record:

- The right to control disclosure of their education record
- The right to review their education record
- The right to request amendment of inaccurate or misleading portions of their education record
- The right to file a complaint regarding non-compliance of FERPA with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education

A student’s education records may be disclosed only with the student’s prior written consent. The prior written consent must:

- Specify the records to be released
- State the purpose of the disclosure
- Identify the party(ies) to whom disclosure may be made
- Be signed and dated by the student
Additional Resources for Instructors

Important Contacts
6.1 World Campus HelpDesk

Helpful Websites
7.1 Penn State Outreach Faculty Development Initiative
6.1 World Campus HelpDesk

Chat  
Talk with technical support staff online in a one-on-one chat environment. The first time you use our chat tool, you may be prompted to download a small file (1.43 MB) — the chat client — which is automatically deleted at the end of your chat session. This tool and hours of operation can be accessed at Technical Support -- Contact Us on the World Campus website.\(^{41}\)

Phone  
1-800-252-3592, option 4 (toll free within the United States) or 1-814-865-0047 (local and international calls)

Email  
wdtechsupport@outreach.psu.edu

Web Form  
Submit your question via the email webform.\(^{42}\)
7.1 Penn State Outreach Faculty Development

Homepage

Faculty Development – Outreach and Online Education

This website serves as an information hub for online and continuing education instructors.

Program

The Program tab directs you to information on the Certificate for Online Teaching, a professional development program. The program consists of five online courses that give faculty an “online student experience” while exploring a rich variety of critical topics necessary for mastery in the online classroom. Anyone interested in learning more about excellence in online teaching and learning are welcome to participate in the certificate. The Certificate for Online Teaching is comprised of both self-directed and instructor led online courses. The Course Catalog link allows you to access and register for online faculty development courses, including the five required for the Certificate for Online Teaching:

- Orientation to the World Campus
- Accessibility
- ProveIt!
- Effective Online Instruction
- Teaching Presence

Resources

The Resources tab provides you with links to information on a variety of topics, including:

- Teaching and Learning
- Technology
- Course Management

FAQ

The Frequently Asked Questions page collects answers to common questions.
### Table of URL links found in the document

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<td>4. Senate Policy 47-60, Definition of Grades</td>
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<td>10. ANGEL Course Management System</td>
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<td>11. World Campus How-to Guide for ANGEL</td>
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<td>12. World Campus Continuing Education Help Desk</td>
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20. Information and Services for Faculty, Instructors, and Staff <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/infosvcs/faculty.html>
21. Electronic Reserve Request Form <https://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/secure/forms/reservesforms/eres.html>
22. Course Reserve Services <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/reserves.html>
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29. University Park Subject Librarians <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/colldev/university_park_subject.html>
31. Faculty Senate Policy 43-00, Syllabus <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/43-00.html>
33. Office for Disability Services, Handbook for Faculty and Instructors working with students with disabilities. <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/faculty-handbook>


37. Grade Adjudication Petition Form  <http://www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/grademed.pdf>

38. Faculty Senate Policy 49-20, Academic Integrity  <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/separate_policy/49-20.htm>

39. Complete College Policies and Procedures (Academic Integrity)  <http://laus.la.psu.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity/college-policies/complete-college-policies-and-procedures>

40. FERPA Tutorial  <http://www.registrar.psu.edu/staff/ferpa_tutorial/ferpa_tutorial.cfm>

41. World Campus Technical Support – Contact Us.  <http://student.worldcampus.psu.edu/technical-support/contact-us>

42. World Campus Email Webform  <http://student.worldcampus.psu.edu/content/technical-support-email-form>

43. Penn State Outreach Faculty Development  <http://wcfd.psu.edu/>

44. World Campus Certificate for Online Teaching  <http://wcfd.psu.edu/?page_id=17>

45. World Campus Faculty Development Course Catalog  <http://sites.psu.edu/wcfacdev/programs/courses/>

46. World Campus Faculty Development Frequently Asked Questions  <http://sites.psu.edu/wcfacdev/about/faq/>