

**This document provides responses to follow up items and requests for information from NWCCU from MSU for the Fall 2024 Visit.**

**Follow up Items and Requests for Further Information: NWCCU MSU EIE Fall 2024 Visit**  
***The items listed below were sent to the ALO on 09/12/2024:***

**1. p. 7 of the EIE report, the link to “American Indian/Alaska Native Student Success Services” is broken**

**Response:**

Our apologies. The corrected link is:

<https://www.montana.edu/aiansss/>

**2. p.8 broken link. Note that this hyperlink just googles this phrase, it is not a link to MSU's site.**

**Response:**

The correct link for the Academic Council that is within the montana.edu domain is:

<https://www.montana.edu/deanscouncil/>

**3. Is there a dashboard of the indicators listed on page 25 that the team could review (see below for the listed indicators):**

Some examples of widely used indicators of success across organizational levels (college, department, program):

- Entering undergraduate student (first-time and transfer) retention to the first spring, second fall, and subsequent terms, disaggregated for many demographic groups (race, ethnicity, gender, rurality, high school size, Pell status, etc.).
- Entering graduate student retention to the first spring, second fall, and subsequent terms, disaggregated for many demographic groups (race, ethnicity, gender, rurality, etc.).
- Entering first-time undergraduate student movement between majors and departments.
- Undergraduate and graduate time to degree for every degree level, disaggregated for demographics.
- Employment and wage outcomes by discipline and degree level.
- Student success intervention effectiveness (grades, persistence, graduation) disaggregated as appropriate.
- Student and faculty survey results, with national benchmarks where appropriate and available (e.g., [BCSSE](#), [HERI](#), [COACHE](#)).
- Faculty grant, scholarly product, exhibit and performance, and outreach activities.
- Faculty and staff salaries relative to appropriate peer benchmarks.
- Employee turnover, position vacancies.

**Response:**

The Strategic Plan metrics are one important source of measures of success at the institutional level and these metrics can be found at:

<https://www.montana.edu/planningcouncil/goal-updates/>

Other relevant dashboards are currently not publicly available. For these examples, Dr. Jason Browning, Chief Data Officer of University Data & Analytics, is compiling these dashboards to make them available to the Accreditation Team. We will send those dashboards to you next week (Sept 16-20, 2024).

Interim dashboards: <https://www.montana.edu/data/facts/Accreditation2024.html>

4. From page 39, with a reference to Appendix C, the link to the actual syllabus doesn't work in the sample document provided in Appendix C. The team would like to see the syllabus that was uploaded to explore the connections between learning outcomes and assessment.

### Upload Syllabus

advanceddietanddiseasesyl.pdf

#### Response:

We have provided a copy of the syllabus for NUTR 520 <file name: NUTR 520 2024 Syllabus.pdf> below. Upon the Accreditation Team visit, we can make other course syllabi available in the Accreditation Team workroom, so that the team can see the examples of connections between learning outcomes and assessments in the syllabi.

5. From page 76, are there any data available from the survey mentioned on the attainment / progress on the advising student learning outcomes?

#### Response:

The survey was completed and the results are being analyzed in September. Preliminary results will be made available to the Accreditation Team during the campus visit in mid-October.

6. From page 77, could the team get a copy of the advising manual that was mentioned?

#### Response:

Yes. A pdf version of the advising manual is provided below <file name: Adv Commons Advising Manual May.2023.pdf> .

7. From page 77, the link to the annual performance review takes you to place behind a login, so it's not reviewable. Could they send some aggregated results from this review process for advisors as evidence?

#### Response:

We may have miscommunicated on this portion of the answer. A pdf of the MSU Employee Performance Evaluation form, which was where the intended link should have taken you, is provided below <file name: 2024TemplatePerformanceEvals.pdf>. This form is a Human Resources Employee Performance Evaluation form, which typically is for individual evaluation and privacy protected such that results are not aggregated. We cannot provide aggregated results from this review process. A separate advising assessment process to determine if advising commons is meeting advising outcomes is in development. In addition, advising commons will launch in the next two weeks a feedback survey on individual advising appointments from the student.

## NUTR 520 – Advanced Diet and Disease Systems

Dietetic Systems MS and MDI Internship Program  
Department of Health and Human Development, Montana State University

**Course Description:** NUTR 520. Advanced Diet and Disease Systems. Cr. 3. Summer.

Prereq: Graduate standing in Dietetic Systems MS and Internship program or consent of instructor.

Community and population nutrition health theories as related to nutrition-based intervention, education and program planning toward a goal of disease prevention and health promotion.

**Instructor:** Kirsten Krane, MS-MPH, RDN, LN

**Email:** [kirsten@yarrowcommunity.org](mailto:kirsten@yarrowcommunity.org)

**Dates:** May 13 - June 21, 2024

**Office Hours:**

**Cell Phone:** 406-845-2939

- Mondays\*, 6-8p Mountain via Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85491544955>  
*\*No Office Hours on the following dates: May 13, 2024*
- This course is asynchronous, but does **involve significant partner work**
- Expect to spend approximately 12-18 hours each week on this course

**Course Description:** This online course will provide a chance for students to make connections between nutrition and disease - with an emphasis on the global, national, and local **systems/programs** through which nutrition interventions are applied. Students will gain a basic understanding of community and population nutrition health theories as related to nutrition-based intervention, education and program planning toward a goal of disease prevention and health promotion. As well, the intent is to cultivate leaders that will integrate evidence-informed practice, research principles and critical thinking into their future dietetic practice.

This course will develop informed health care leaders: (a) who value nutritional science as the platform for effective public health promotion and disease prevention; (b) who are highly capable individuals able to identify considerations surrounding food choices, nutrition policy decisions; (c) who have competent skills that foster an expanded vision of health and well-being in the context of food with an appreciation of a system approaches to solving public health challenges; and (d) who display in their professional practice a sincere care for the wellbeing of communities and individuals.

### Course Goals

The goals of this course are to help create informed professionals who:

- Value nutrition as a science and as a platform for public health promotion and disease prevention;
- Can apply critical thinking skills to decision-making about food choices, nutrition issues, and health;
- Appreciate the behavioral, cultural, social and environmental issues underlying dietary patterns; and
- Who are able to identify considerations surrounding food choices and nutrition policy decisions.

Additional goals for the course include instilling within students enthusiasm for life-long learning about nutrition and for the universal importance of adequate diets to public health and the well-being of all people.

**Competencies**

This course meets the following ACEND Future Education Model Competencies:

**Foundational Knowledge**

Applies foundational sciences to food and nutrition knowledge to meet the needs of individuals, groups, and organizations.

Competencies	Performance Indicators
<p><b>1.7: Integrates the principles of cultural competence within own practice and when directing services.</b></p>	<p>1.7.1 Demonstrates knowledge of the cultural competence models.                      1.7.2 Applies knowledge of foods, cultural foods, eating patterns and food trends.                      1.7.3 Identifies challenges that arise when different cultures, values, beliefs and experiences exist between clients/patients and nutrition and dietetics professionals.                      1.7.4 Identifies and implements strategies to address cultural biases and differences.                      1.7.5 Applies culturally sensitive approaches and communication skills.                      1.7.6 Develops awareness of one’s own personal beliefs, values and biases to better serve clients/patients of different cultures and backgrounds.</p>
<p><b>1.15: Applies knowledge of nutritional health promotion and disease prevention for individuals, groups and populations.</b></p>	<p>1.15.1 Recognizes and communicates the cause of disease and nutrition risks.                      1.15.2 Identifies, prioritizes and implements health risk reduction strategies for individuals, groups and populations.                      1.15.3 Examines the influence of the determinants of health on health and wellness.                      1.15.4 Designs food and nutrition activities for various audiences considering factors relevant to individuals, groups and communities.                      1.15.5 Applies behavior change theories for nutritional health promotion and disease prevention.</p>
<p><b>1.16: Gains a foundational knowledge on public and global health issues and nutritional needs.</b></p>	<p>1.16.1 Examines the trends and current issues that impact public and global health from existing, new and reemerging diseases that spread through immigration, travel and global trade.                      1.16.2 Examines the impact of global food supply and sustainability and related factors.                      1.16.3 Examines how globalizing processes impact nutrition, nutrition education and nutrition related diseases in developing countries.</p>

**Community and Population Health Nutrition**

Applies community and population nutrition health theories when providing support to community or population nutrition programs.

Competencies	Performance Indicators
<p><b>4.1: Utilizes program planning steps to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate community and population programs.</b></p>	<p>4.1.1 Recognizes how determinants of health, epidemiological findings, health disparities, political interest, availability of resources, and accessibility influence the nutritional health and well-being of a community and population.</p> <p>4.1.2 Conducts community and population-based assessments considering all relevant factors.</p> <p>4.1.3 Identifies the resources and connects with partners needed for sustainability of the program.</p> <p>4.1.4 Develops and implements a program considering relevant data addressing the nutrition needs of the community or population.</p> <p>4.1.5 Interprets and uses nutrition surveillance and global health and safety data.</p> <p>4.1.6 Evaluates the program using measurement indicators and outcomes.</p> <p>4.1.7 Communicates evaluation findings, outcomes, recommendations and research findings to promote change and justify programs.</p>

**Critical Thinking, Research and Evidence-Informed Practice**

Integrates evidence-informed practice, research principles and critical thinking into practice.

<p><b>6.1: Incorporates critical thinking skills in practice.</b></p>	<p>6.1.1 Considers multiple factors when problem solving.</p> <p>6.1.2 Incorporates the thought process used in critical thinking models.</p> <p>6.1.3 Engages in reflective practice to promote change and continuous learning.</p>
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Required Resources:

1. **Braiding Sweetgrass**, Robin Wall Kimmerer (*I recommend the audiobook that is read by the author, Robin Wall Kimmerer. She is a mesmerizing storyteller and I hope that you'll listen while walking and moving your body, as we are all doing far too much sitting.*)

There is no required textbook for this course. A cornerstone of this course is that the learning should be practical and, as much as possible, mirror the current resources that an applied professional would typically consult. Students will be responsible for reading online publications, journal articles and other assigned materials/videos that will be shared in this syllabus and posted on D2L.

Week 1: May 13 - 19, 2024	
Recorded Lectures	Course Introduction & Sustainable Development Goals
Readings	<p>Sustainable Development Goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read the United Nations. "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" 2015               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Full Text <a href="#">Here</a> (41 pages)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Sustainable Development Goals Website: <a href="https://sdgs.un.org/goals">https://sdgs.un.org/goals</a></li> <li>3. Supplemental SDG Readings: <b>You do not need to read all of these in their entirety, but they will be helpful for your global health assignments.</b> Read more about the SDG data and stories about interventions being used across the world to meet the SDG objectives.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. "The Future is Now. Science for Achieving Sustainable Development" 2020.                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. <a href="#">Full Text</a> (pg 68)</li> <li>ii. <a href="#">Ppt of Report</a></li> <li>iii. <a href="#">Website</a></li> </ol> </li> <li>b. UN DESA. <a href="#">SDG Good Practices Publication</a> (Second Edition) 2022</li> <li>c. FAO. <a href="#">The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023</a></li> <li>d. WFP - World Food Program. <a href="#">Various Publications</a></li> <li>e. WFP - <a href="#">Hunger Map</a></li> <li>f. FAO - Food and Agricultural Organization <a href="#">Nutrition</a></li> <li>g. Ceres2030 - <a href="#">Policy Briefs and Reports</a></li> </ol> </li> <li>4. United States Tracking of SDGs               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. US Indicators <a href="#">HERE</a></li> </ol> </li> </ol>
Assignments (See Assignment Section Below for Details)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 1 Min Intro Video</li> <li>● Partner Spreadsheet</li> <li>● Quiz (SDGs &amp; Braiding Sweetgrass)</li> <li>● Read 1st &amp; Last Chapters &amp; Allegiance to Gratitude Chapters of <i>Braiding Sweetgrass</i>, Robin Wall Kimmerer</li> </ul>

Week 2: May 20 - 26, 2024	
Recorded Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Census Data &amp; Additional Sources of Nutrition Data</li> <li>- AMA Citations &amp; Finding the Right Academic Journal Articles: <a href="https://youtu.be/mSzGTIb7KuA">https://youtu.be/mSzGTIb7KuA</a></li> <li>- Evidence-based Practices (EBP) in Nutrition Systems</li> </ul>
Readings	<p><b>Data Sources &amp; Citations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="#">SPREADSHEET</a> (Will continually update.)</li> <li>● MSU HHD Research Guide with AMA and EndNote added <a href="https://guides.lib.montana.edu/HHD">https://guides.lib.montana.edu/HHD</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence-based Practices:</b></p> <p><i>Today's Dietitian</i>, "Evidence-Based Practice: What Is it, and Why Is it Important to Registered Dietitians?" By Robin Sabo, MS, RD, MLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://www.todaysdietitian.com/pdf/courses/Saboevidencebasedpractice.pdf">https://www.todaysdietitian.com/pdf/courses/Saboevidencebasedpractice.pdf</a></li> </ul> <p>The Community Guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://www.thecommunityguide.org/">https://www.thecommunityguide.org/</a></li> </ul> <p>US Preventative Task Force</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/topic_search_results">https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/topic_search_results</a></li> </ul> <p>HP 2030 Evidence-Based Resource Toolkit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://health.gov/healthypeople/tools-action/browse-evidence-based-resources">https://health.gov/healthypeople/tools-action/browse-evidence-based-resources</a></li> </ul> <p>Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Evidence Analysis Library (EAL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://www.andeal.org/">https://www.andeal.org/</a></li> </ul> <p>Cochrane Reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://www.cochranelibrary.com/">https://www.cochranelibrary.com/</a></li> </ul> <p>Montana TEAM Nutrition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/nuted/index.html">https://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/nuted/index.html</a></li> </ul> <p>Food Research &amp; Action Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <a href="https://frac.org/">https://frac.org/</a></li> </ul>
Assignments <i>(See Assignment Section Below for Details)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SDG Advocacy Topic Draft</li> <li>● Census, Background, Citation Worksheet (Completed Individually)</li> <li>● Evidence-based Practice Worksheet (Completed Individually)</li> <li>● FAST: Read 2016/17 FAST Blackfeet Food Sovereignty Assess &amp; Intro to FAST Staff</li> <li>● FAST: Lead &amp; Assist meet to prepare Work Plans for their assigned sections</li> </ul>

Week 3: May 27 - June 2, 2024	
Recorded Lectures	None
Readings	None
Assignments <i>(See Assignment Section Below for Details)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SDG Advocacy Topic Draft - Peer Review</li> <li>● Braiding Sweetgrass - Allegiance Draft</li> <li>● Proposal: Background 1st Draft (Complete with Partner)</li> <li>● Proposal: EBP Module (Complete with Partner)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Proposal: Program Description 1st Draft (Complete with Partner)</li> <li>● FAST: Conduct work &amp; begin writing first draft of Lead section; Send to FAST Staff for review</li> </ul>
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<b>Week 4: June 3 - 9, 2024</b>	
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Recorded Lectures	- Monitoring & Evaluation Basics
Readings	<p><b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Resources:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CDC Evaluation 2 Pager. <a href="#">HERE</a></li> <li>● Logic Model Template <a href="#">HERE</a></li> <li>● Evaluation Plan Template <a href="#">HERE</a></li> <li>● CDC - <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/eval/">https://www.cdc.gov/eval/</a></li> <li>● Community Tool Box “12. Evaluating the Initiative” - <a href="https://ctb.ku.edu/en/toolkits">https://ctb.ku.edu/en/toolkits</a></li> </ul>
Assignments <i>(See Assignment Section Below for Details)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SDG Topic Advocacy Final Draft</li> <li>● Braiding Sweetgrass - Allegiance Peer Review</li> <li>● Proposal: EBP 1st Draft (Complete with Partner)</li> <li>● Proposal: Monitoring &amp; Evaluation Worksheet (Complete Individually)</li> <li>● FAST: Finish section(s) and incorporate FAST staff feedback</li> </ul>

<b>Week 5: June 10 - 16, 2024</b>	
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Recorded Lectures	- Alignment & Inclusion Diversity Equity Access (IDEA)
Readings	<p><b>Alignment</b> (These are not linked. Please find these resources for the states/communities for which your Proposal is located.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Global:</b> Sustainable Development Goals</li> <li>● <b>National:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Healthy People 2030 <a href="#">WEBSITE</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Browse Objectives</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ National Interest Groups on Food &amp; Nutrition Strategic Plans</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>State:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ State Health Improvement Plans (SHIP)</li> <li>○ Statewide Coalition Strategic Plans                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Food Security Coalitions</li> <li>■ Maternal &amp; Child Health Coalitions</li> <li>■ Council on Aging Coalitions</li> <li>■ Agriculture / Local Food Coalitions</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>County:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIP)</li> <li>○ County/Regional Coalition Strategic Plans</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



	<p><b>Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Access (IDEA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CLAS Standards <a href="#">WEBSITE</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 15 Items CLAS Standards <a href="#">HERE</a></li> <li>○ A Blueprint for Advancing and Sustaining CLAS Policy and Practice <a href="#">HERE</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Diversity &amp; Inclusion Resources <a href="#">HERE</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>● Health Equity Lab. A conversation guide for health equity. <a href="https://reospartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/AConversationGuideforHealthEquity_Feb2017.pdf">https://reospartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/AConversationGuideforHealthEquity_Feb2017.pdf</a></li> <li>● Yearby R, Clark B, Figueroa JF. Structural racism in historical and modern US health care policy. <i>Health Affairs</i>. 2022;41(2). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01466">https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01466</a></li> <li>● Solomon TA, Starks RRB, Attakai A, et al. The generational impact of racism on health: voices from American Indian communities. <i>Health Affairs</i>. 2022;41(2). <a href="https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01419">https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2021.01419</a></li> </ul>
<p>Assignments <i>(See Assignment Section Below for Details)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Braiding Sweetgrass Allegiance Final Draft</li> <li>● Proposal: Monitoring &amp; Evaluation 1st Draft (Complete with Partner)</li> <li>● Proposal: Align Priorities &amp; IDEA Module 1st Draft (Complete with Partner)</li> <li>● FAST: Review full Assessment and Finalize Lead Section(s)</li> <li>● FAST: Program Spotlight</li> <li>● Discussion: Healthcare Racism</li> </ul>

Week 6: June 17 - 21, 2024	
Recorded Lectures	- Final Farewell & Wrap Up
Readings	None
<p>Assignments <i>(See Assignment Section Below for Details)</i></p>	<p>SDG Topic Advocacy Review &amp; Vote            Proposal: Partner &amp; Process Evaluation            Proposal: Final Proposal            FAST: Partner &amp; Process Evaluation            FAST: Final Assessment</p>

**Assignments**

The following table outlines the assignments, points, and due dates for this course. Items without a specified Due Date or Point Value are shown here to ensure a full understanding of what might be the workload for each week of the course, but they are not graded separately. Items are due by midnight of the date shown in the “Due” column.

In this course, there are 3 primary assignments. Each assignment is broken down and will require submission of certain pieces in draft form and for peer review of several items before finalizing. Assignment details can be found in D2L.

1. **Sustainable Development Goals:** You will develop a funding request advocating for a specific project that supports the SDGs. At the end of the 6 weeks, peers will vote on the winning projects to be funded.
2. **Braiding Sweetgrass - An Allegiance:** You will develop your own Allegiance styled after the Haudenosaunee people’s Thanksgiving Address. This will promote identification of shared values across cultures and between people to establish mutually beneficial food and nutrition systems.
3. **Community Nutrition Proposal:** You will work **independently** as you master certain concepts for identifying and creating a community nutrition project proposal. You will work with a **partner** to take what you’ve learned and **together** create a community nutrition project proposal.
4. **(optional) FAST Blackfeet Food Security & Sovereignty Assessment:** If you are one of the 6 students chosen to work on this Assessment, you will do this instead of the Community Nutrition Proposal. You will still be required to do all assignments connected to Sustainable Development Goals and Braiding Sweetgrass.

**Primary Class Assignment Gantt Chart**

			Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6
Date Due	Points	Name of Assignment	May 13 - 19	May 20 - 26	May 27 - June 2	June 3 - 9	June 10 - 16	June 17 - 21
May 19	5	X: 1 Min Intro Video						
May 19	5	X: Partner Description						
		SDG: SDG Readings (Syllabus)						
May 19	15	SDG & BSG: Quiz (D2L)						
May 26	10	SDG: Advocacy Topic Draft						
June 2	10	SDG: Advocacy Topic Draft Peer Review						
June 9	15	SDG: Advocacy Topic Final						
June 21	10	SDG: Advocacy Topic Review & Vote on "Funding"						
		BSG: Read First, Last, & Allegiance						

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		<b>BSG: Read Assigned Part</b>					
June 2	10	<b>BSG: Allegiance Draft</b>					
June 9	10	<b>BSG: Allegiance Peer Review</b>					
June 16	20	<b>BSG: Allegiance Final Draft</b>					
		<b>L: Data Sources</b>					
		<b>L: EBP</b>					
May 26	20	<b>P: Census, Background, Citation Worksheet (Individual)</b>					
May 26	15	<b>P: EBP Worksheet (Individual)</b>					
June 2	5	<b>P: Background 1st Draft (Partner)</b>					
June 2	5	<b>P: EBP 1st Draft (Partner)</b>					
June 2	5	<b>P: Program Description 1st Draft (Partner)</b>					
		<b>L: Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>					
June 9	20	<b>P: Monitoring &amp; Evaluation (Individual)</b>					
		<b>L: Alignment &amp; Inclusion Diversity Equity Access (IDEA)</b>					
June 9	5	<b>Discussion: Healthcare Racism &amp; Weight Bias Readings</b>					
June 16	5	<b>P: Monitoring &amp; Evaluation 1st Draft (Partner)</b>					
June 16	5	<b>P: Align Priorities &amp; IDEA Module 1st Draft (Partner)</b>					
June 21	10	<b>P: Partner &amp; Process Evaluation</b>					
June 21	115	<b>P: Final Community Nutrition Proposal (Partner)</b>					

**FAST Blackfeet Assessment Assignment Gantt Chart**

			Wk 1	Wk 2	Wk 3	Wk 4	Wk 5	Wk 6
Date Due	Points	Name of Assignment	May 13 - 19	May 20 - 26	May 27 - June 2	June 3 - 9	June 10 - 16	June 17 - 21
May 19	5	<b>X:</b> 1 Min Intro Video						
May 19	5	<b>X:</b> Partner Description						
		<b>SDG:</b> SDG Readings (Syllabus)						
May 19	15	<b>SDG &amp; BSG:</b> Quiz (D2L)						
May 26	10	<b>SDG:</b> Advocacy Topic Draft						
June 2	10	<b>SDG:</b> Advocacy Topic Draft Peer Review						
June 9	15	<b>SDG:</b> Advocacy Topic Final						
June 21	10	<b>SDG:</b> Advocacy Topic Review & Vote on "Funding"						
		<b>BSG:</b> Read First, Last, & Allegiance						
		<b>BSG:</b> Read Assigned Part						
June 2	10	<b>BSG:</b> Allegiance Draft						
June 9	10	<b>BSG:</b> Allegiance Peer Review						
June 16	20	<b>BSG:</b> Allegiance Final Draft						
June 9	5	<b>Discussion:</b> Healthcare Racism & Weight Bias Readings						
		<b>L:</b> Data Sources						
		<b>L:</b> EBP						
		<b>L:</b> Monitoring & Evaluation						
		<b>L:</b> Alignment & Inclusion Diversity Equity Access (IDEA)						

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May 26	20	P: Census, Background, Citation Worksheet (Individual)						
May 26	15	P: EBP Worksheet (Individual)						
May 26	5	F: Read 2016/17 FAST Blackfeet Food Sovereignty Assess & Intro to FAST Staff						
May 26	5	F: Lead & Assist meet to prepare Work Plans for their assigned sections						
June 2	5	F: Conduct work & begin writing first draft of Lead section; Send to FAST Staff for review						
June 9	5	F: Finish section(s) and incorporate FAST staff feedback						
June 16	5	F: Review full Assessment and Finalize Lead Section(s)						
June 16	20	F: Program Spotlight (See instructions below)						
June 21	10	F: Partner & Process Evaluation						
June 21	115	F: Final FAST Blackfeet Food Security & Sov Assessment						

<p>X = Not part of larger project  SDG = Sustainable Development Goals  BSG = Braiding Sweetgrass</p>	<p>P = Proposal for Community Nutrition Project  L&amp;Q = Lecture &amp; Quiz  F = FAST Blackfeet Assessment</p>
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<b>Evaluation Scale</b>	
A = 93-100 %	C+ = 77-79.9%

Updated April 14, 2024

A- = 90-92.9%	C = 73-76.9%
B+ = 87-89.9%	C- = 70-72.9%
B = 83-86.9%	D = 60-69.9%
B- = 80-82.9%	F= <60.0

## Course Policies & Resources

**Copyright.** This syllabus, course lectures and presentations, and any course materials provided throughout this term are protected by U.S. copyright laws. Students enrolled in the course may use them for their own research and educational purposes. However, reproducing, selling or otherwise distributing these materials without written permission of the copyright owner is expressly prohibited, including providing materials to commercial platforms such as Chegg or CourseHero. Doing so may constitute a violation of U.S. copyright law as well as MSU's Code of Student Conduct.

**Respect for Diversity:** It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, age, first-generation college student, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, perspective, and other background characteristics. Your suggestions about how to improve the value of diversity in this course are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

In addition, in scheduling exams, I have attempted to avoid conflicts with major religious holidays. If, however, I have inadvertently scheduled an exam or major deadline that creates a conflict with your religious observances, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make other arrangements. *(Adapted from University of Iowa)*

**Inclusivity:** I Support an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated, and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty, administrators and staff at MSU will respect differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples' perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews may be different from their own. *(Adapted from the University of Northern Colorado)*

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is an act of academic misconduct, which carries with it consequences including but not limited to receiving a course grade of "F" and a report to the Office of the Dean of Students. Unfortunately, it is not always clear if the misuse of sources is intentional or unintentional, which means that you may be accused of plagiarism even if you do not intentionally plagiarize. If you have any questions regarding use and citation of sources in your academic writing, you are responsible for consulting with your instructor before the assignment due date. In addition, you can work with an MSU Writing Center tutor at any point in your writing process, including when you are integrating or citing sources. You can make an appointment and find citation resources at [www.montana.edu/writingcenter](http://www.montana.edu/writingcenter).

**Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability and wish to use your approved accommodations for this course, please contact me during my office hours to discuss. Please have your Accommodation Notification or Blue Card available for verification of accommodations. Accommodations are approved through the Office of Disability Services located in SUB 174. [Please see Disability Services for more information by clicking here.](#)

### You Are Not Alone

Students at Montana State University have the right to live and learn in an academic environment that is free from all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence including sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, please know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available at MSU. You can learn more at: [www.montana.edu/voice](http://www.montana.edu/voice). MSU has confidential resources available to you through the VOICE Center, MSU

Updated April 14, 2024

Counseling and Psychological Services, and University Health Partners Health Services. These services are available to provide support, resources, and referrals to numerous campus and community agencies that can provide the information and support you need.

Please know that if you choose to confide in me, I am required by the university to report to the Title IX Coordinator/MSU Office of Institutional Equity, as MSU and I want to ensure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. You are not required to respond to outreach from the university if you do not want to do so. You can also make a report yourself, including an anonymous report, through [switness@montana.edu](mailto:switness@montana.edu)

### **Mental Health and Wellness**

MSU strives to create a culture of support and recognizes that your mental health and wellness are equally as important as your physical health. We want you to know that it's OK if you experience difficulty, and there are several resources on campus to help you succeed emotionally, personally, and academically:

- Counseling & Psychological Services: <https://www.montana.edu/counseling/>
- Health Advancement: <http://www.montana.edu/oha/>
- Insight Program (Substance Use): <http://www.montana.edu/oha/insight/>
- Suicide Prevention: <https://www.montana.edu/suicide-prevention/>
- Medical Services: <https://www.montana.edu/health/medical.html>
- WellTrack wellness app: <https://montana.welltrack.com>
- Mental Health Screening: <https://screening.mentalhealthscreening.org/montanastateuniv>
- Let's Talk drop-in services: <https://www.montana.edu/counseling/letstalk.html>





# ACADEMIC ADVISING MANUAL

Best Practices and Resources for  
Primary Role Advisors

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## Purpose of Manual

This manual is designed to provide primary-role academic advisors with the tools needed to be successful in working with their advisees. This handbook summarizes some key policies and procedures and focuses on best practices to aid advisors in supporting their students. Detailed information about policies and procedures, as well as semester dates and deadlines can be found on the MSU website.

## Advising at MSU

### Mission, Vision, Learning Outcomes and Advising Responsibilities

#### Academic Advising Mission Statement

Academic Advising at Montana State University is a collaborative process between students, faculty, and professional advisors designed to empower students to discover who they are as learners, where their academic interests lie, and how their University experience will shape their lives.

#### Academic Advising at MSU

At MSU, we believe that academic advising is a critical component of a student's University experience. Advising teaches students how to navigate their academic journey and take ownership of their college experience. Academic advisors are guides, mentors, and educators who encourage personal development and lifelong learning, and who share information about curricula, resources, and engagement opportunities. Students who engage in the advising process regularly will benefit from the guidance and support of their advisor.

#### Student Learning Outcomes

Through their active participation in academic advising, students will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of academic requirements, policies, and procedures
2. Identify academic and personal goals
3. Create a plan to meet your goals
4. Gather and evaluate information to make informed decisions

## Student and Advisor Advising Responsibilities

### Student Responsibilities

1. Engage in the advising process
  - a. Meet with their academic advisor at least once a semester
  - b. Be honest and keep an open mind
  - c. Ask questions and seek clarity when something isn't clear
  - d. Discuss goals, interests, strengths, values, and challenges
  - e. Get to know their advisor
2. Adhere to MSU policies and deadlines
3. Learn and follow the degree and curricular requirements of their chosen major
  - a. Proactively monitor your progress toward graduation through DegreeWorks
  - b. Check your grades and academic standing at the end of each semester
  - c. Confirm your registration and course schedule each semester
4. Prepare for your advising meetings
  - a. Review DegreeWorks prior to advising meetings
  - b. Create a list of questions, topics to discuss
  - c. Identify courses for future semesters
5. Follow up on advisor recommendations
  - a. Utilize MSU's many resources to assist in meeting goals

### Advisor Responsibilities

1. Engage in the advising process
  - a. Get to know the student
  - b. Actively listen to their ideas and concerns
  - c. Guide students as they develop short and long-term goals and create plans to meet these goals
  - d. Review advising notes from prior conversations before or during advising meetings
  - e. Share accurate and timely information to assist in the student's decision-making process
  - f. Refer student to appropriate campus resources
  - g. Document advising conversations in DegreeWorks
  - h. Provide recommendations, but expect and encourage students to make their own decisions
2. Be knowledgeable about academic policies, procedures, deadlines

3. Maintain student confidentiality as specified by university policy and mandated reporting requirements
4. Facilitate your understanding of the nature and purpose of your curriculum and a university education
5. Use advising and registration tools
6. Review first-semester registration
7. Hold regular advising hours and communicate method of scheduling meetings
8. Follow up with advisees as appropriate

## Advising Structure

At MSU, academic advising reports through the Office of the Provost. Each student is assigned to either a primary-role advisor or a faculty advisor within their major. In 2018, MSU launched Advising Commons, which structured academic advising as a shared service. As a shared service, Advising Commons aims to put the student experience first, ensuring students have access to correct and consistent advising information and resources to support their success and academic progress. Advising Commons also aims to actively provide primary-role academic advisors with reliable training, professional development, and a cross-campus network of colleagues to share information and resources, as well as provide advising support as needed.

### Structure of Commons and Relationship with Academic Units

Advising Commons advisors serve students in every college at MSU. While budget and personnel reporting are centralized through Advising Commons, advisors are physically housed in the academic units that they serve. This physical placement allows advisors to connect with faculty and leadership teams of the units they serve.

Advising Commons advisors work primarily with new-to-major students in their degree program before the students transition to a faculty advisor. Some Commons advisors continue to support students through their junior and senior year, assisting with course selection and the graduation application process. All Advising Commons Advisors report to a supervisor within Advising Commons. Advising Commons is housed in Academic Affairs, with the Advising Commons Director reporting to the Vice Provost.

## Advising Commons Roles

### Advising Commons Advisors

Advising Commons Advisors are 'primary-role' advisors, meaning their primary focus is academic advising. Within Advising Commons there are over 35 advisors, all of whom report to a supervisor within Advising Commons. All Commons Advisors are physically housed in the academic units they serve. Caseloads for advisors vary depending on several factors:

- Advisor FTE (full-time equivalency)
- Students in unit(s) served
- Additional advising-related duties

### Flex Advisors

To assist students and colleagues, Advising Commons utilizes Flex Advisors. These advisors who have a small FTE are flexed to cover long term advisor absences as well as to provide additional support during heavy advising. While several Flex Advisors may focus their work in one or two areas, Flex Advisors can be shifted to any unit as needs merit.

### Advising Leads

Advising Leads are Commons Advisors who oversee a team of 3-7 advisors. Advising leads serve as liaison between their advising team, the units they serve, and Advising Commons. Leads are responsible for coordinating the advising in their units, assigning advising caseloads, and communicating with Advising Partners in their unit(s). In addition to the liaison work and supervising advisors, Leads also carry an advising caseload. Advising Leads report to the Director of Advising Commons.

## Non-Commons Advising Roles

### Faculty Advisors

Faculty advisors work with Advising Commons advisors, but report to their department head or director. Each unit determines when students transition to a faculty advisor. Once students transition to a faculty member as their primary advisor, Advising Commons advisors should assume a support role as defined by the particular arrangement made with their academic unit.

### Advising Partners

Each Commons advisor has an advising partner within the academic unit(s) they serve. These partners work closely with Commons advisors, and most hold leadership positions in their department, school or college. Advising Partners are not part of Commons, nor are they supervisors of Commons advisors. However, because these individuals work with Commons advisors regularly, Advising Partners typically:

- Offer initial approval of annual and sick leave
- Participate in performance evaluation
- Communicate with Commons Director regarding advising practices, needs of advising units, advisor performance issues
- Participate in new hire process and selection

## Advising Plans

Each year Advising Commons advisors review and update their units' Advising Plans. The purpose of the Advising Plan is to document how undergraduate students are advised within each academic unit, to ensure a systematic and comprehensive approach, and to articulate best practices. The document is developed and maintained by the Advising Commons primary role advisor assigned to the unit. For areas without an Advising Commons advisor, either the Advising Lead for the college will complete the plan. Upon completion, plans are reviewed by the key advising personnel within the academic unit to ensure it represents a consensus view of how advising actually happens. Plans will be reviewed and updated annually, ideally in September of each year.

Copies of advising plans are stored in the [Advising Plans](#) folder of the AAC Library Shared Drive. Academic units should also keep copies archived within their unit.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Academic Advising

### Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Advising Commons at Montana State University strives to foster a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for students, staff, faculty, and community members as a part of Montana State University's land-grant mission. We are dedicated to supporting underserved and underrepresented populations and we believe that every person deserves a safe working, learning, and living environment. At the heart of our commitment to creating a vibrant and welcoming culture, we expect and respect diversity. Through active listening we commit to recognizing and understanding students intersecting identities and positionality to better support students' unique and diverse individual needs. We believe this is an ongoing and evolving process to continue to better serve our students and prepare them to be successful in a diverse world. We intentionally continue to engage in ongoing dialogue so that we are prepared to thoughtfully respond to the evolving needs of our students.

For more information on Diversity and Inclusion at Montana State University, please visit [www.montana.edu/diversity](http://www.montana.edu/diversity)



## Land Acknowledgements

Some academic advisors choose to include a land acknowledgement in their email signatures and/or at the beginning of presentations they give.

“A territorial or land acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation that involves making a statement recognizing the traditional territory of the Indigenous people who called the land home before the arrival of settlers, and in many cases still do call it home.”

If you are interested in learning more about land acknowledgements or considering creating your own, please consult the resources listed in the appendix.

- <https://nativegov.org/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>
- <https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/territorial-acknowledgements-indigenous-1.4175136>

## Advising Procedures and Best Practices

### Advising Calendar

To assist advisors with their workflow, a sample Advising Calendar is available in the Appendix section. Creating and using an Advising Calendar enables advisors to anticipate upcoming projects, identify priorities and effectively manage their work.

### Advising Requirements

Students are required to meet with an academic advisor at least once a semester. In this meeting students should discuss courses for their upcoming semester, review progress toward degree, and receive their registration PIN. Students are encouraged to meet with their advisors as needed, as advisors can play a significant role in helping students make the most of their MSU experience.

The [advising syllabus](#) outlines student and advisor responsibilities. Students learn about academic advising requirements and responsibilities during orientation. Each advisor is responsible for communicating this information with their advisees every semester:

- Advisor contact information
- Advising availability, meeting options, and method of scheduling appointments
- Items you expect them to complete prior to their appointment: updated DegreeWorks plan, list of questions/topics to discuss, etc.

## Advising Availability

Advisors are expected to communicate their availability and method(s) of meeting with students. While in-person meetings on campus should be the default meeting format, advisors may offer video or phone appointments. In setting up their advising calendars, advisors should also:

- Offer a variety of meeting days and times
- Offer multiple options such as appointments and 'drop-in' times
- Factor in demand for advising assistance during peak times (beginning of semester, advising and registration, add/drop deadlines, etc.)

## Responding to Student Emails and Calls

Many students reach out via email or phone to ask advising questions. Advisors can refer students to set up appointments or work with them during drop-in times if their questions are too complicated to address via email

Expectations for returning student emails and calls:

- During non-peak advising times, respond to student emails and calls within one business day
- During peak advising times, respond within two business days.

When out of the office, advisors should set an autoreply to their email and update their voicemail to share their return date and alternate contact information. Advisors should work with their advising partner to confirm alternate departmental contacts should students have pressing needs specific to their major. When advisors are out, University Studies can offer supplemental assistance to students by answering questions about registration processes including CatCourse, Core, policies and procedures. These advisors will not share advising PINs with declared majors unless previously arranged with other departments.

## Text-Messaging Policy for Advising Commons

Advising Commons values communicating with students promptly and efficiently using communication processes which engage students, without overwhelming them. NavMSU offers text-messaging functionality that can be utilized for staff members to communicate with students.

Students will have the ability to opt out of receiving text messages. Students who have opted-out of receiving text-messages will receive messages to their university email address. If a student opts-out, they will not receive any NavMSU texts, regardless of sender. Therefore, texting should be reserved for information that is urgent and relevant.

Text messages are not password protected. Advisors should never send FERPA protected information (such as GPA, enrollment status, etc.) through a text message.

#### Approved Advisor Generated Text Messages:

- 1) Registration Campaign Reminders – Campaigns can be set up to include text nudges. Advisors should only utilize this at the start of the campaign and towards the end of the campaign. While email nudges are expected to be used throughout the campaign, text reminders should be used sparingly.
- 2) Unregistered Student Reminders – Text messages may be sent once to unregistered students during advisor outreach to this population. Additional follow-up is expected through email.
- 3) Department Specific Deadlines- If an advisor is responsible for communicating department specific deadlines (ex. application deadline for admission into a program), they may use NavMSU to send a mass text.
- 4) Individual Communication- Advisors should use their discretion in communicating individually with students via text. Texting can be a great tool, but we do not want to overload students. Texting is especially useful for time sensitive and individual student-specific information.

When sending texts messages, advisors should keep the following in mind:

- Always identify yourself in the text message.
- Avoid “text speak” (e.g., LOL, abbreviations, and slang).
- Be ready to respond to replies via email. Students view text as a more immediate form of communication than email.
- Advisors should refrain from sending texts between 9pm and 8am. It is recommended to text between 9am and 4pm.
- Text messages are limited to 160 characters.

#### NavMSU

Because new students are directed to use navMSU, all advisors are expected to use this platform for scheduling individual student advising appointments and campaigns.

#### Appointment Scheduler

NavMSU allows advisors to set appointment availability. Availability can be customized in a few ways: individuals or groups, drop-ins, in-person or virtual meetings, and various advising purposes. Length of appointments and how far out a student can book are set by location (generally department wide). The NavMSU appointment scheduler two-way syncs to Outlook calendars.

[https://www.montana.edu/navmsu/faculty-staff/appointments\\_training/appointments\\_index.html](https://www.montana.edu/navmsu/faculty-staff/appointments_training/appointments_index.html)

### Communication

NavMSU can be used to communicate with students via email or text. When NavMSU is utilized for communication, the message is saved in the student's account. Anyone who has advisor access to NavMSU can view the conversation history. This is particularly helpful when viewing mass communication sent by other offices (ex. the Registrar's Office).

Text messaging should be used sparingly to prevent student communication fatigue. Students have the option to opt-out of NavMSU texts.

### Campaigns

Appointment campaigns are a way to encourage targeted individuals to meet with you. Campaigns track which students have scheduled, attended, or still need to schedule an appointment. Campaigns include an initial email, as well as the option to schedule follow-up "nudges". "Nudges" are only sent to students who have not scheduled an advising appointment. NavMSU also tracks how many students open the email, and how many click the scheduler link.

It is best practice for advisors to utilize NavMSU appointment campaigns during pre-registration advising. Campaigns are also utilized to reach unregistered students at the end of each semester.

[https://www.montana.edu/navmsu/faculty-staff/campaigns\\_training/appointments\\_campaign/appointment\\_campaign\\_index.html](https://www.montana.edu/navmsu/faculty-staff/campaigns_training/appointments_campaign/appointment_campaign_index.html)

### Advanced Search & Lists

NavMSU's advanced search feature allows advisors to find students via a variety of criteria (class standing, GPA, credits earned, major, etc).

Lists allow advisors to save information from searches that can be utilized for a variety of reasons, such as checking-in on the student's progress, campaigns, or communication.

Lists can also be uploaded from Excel to NavMSU.

### Alerts

Advisors can see academic alerts submitted by professors in NavMSU. It is best practice to reach out to students that have alerts issued to check-in and see if they need to withdraw from the course. Discretion should be used, and professor's notes should be read prior to communicating with the student.

## Preparing for Advising Meetings

When possible, advisors should prepare for advising meetings in advance. Each student and each academic record will be unique. The student's record alongside previous advising notes, your expertise in advising and the curriculum, as well as the questions and information the student shares during advising will provide the framework for your advising meetings. When you can prepare in advance for your advising meetings, we recommend that advisors:

- Review student transcript and DegreeWorks records including notes
- Identify questions and topics to discuss with the student

If you are unable to review records in advance, take a minute to do so at the beginning of the advising meeting.

## During the Advising Meeting

At the start of the meeting, ask the student what they wish to discuss and accomplish during the meeting. Use the student's response to guide your conversation. If you have other topics to discuss, let the student know. General guidelines for advising interactions:

- Check in with the student to learn how they are doing
  - Ask open-ended questions that encourage student to share information about classes, engagement, their connection to their major and courses, need for referrals or resources
- Listen carefully to the student's questions without rushing to provide answers.
- If you're not the appropriate person to assist the student with a particular question or issue, show the student how to find contact information for the right person or office on the MSU website
- Share critical information such as
  - Registration holds
  - Academic standing
  - Classes that need to be repeated
  - Upcoming dates/deadlines
- Show students how to see and find this information themselves so they can track progress, know how to confirm academic standing, etc.
- Tell students that it's OK for them to let you know if they don't understand something you're explaining to them
- If the advisee wishes to discuss more than you're able to in the allotted time, inform the student of their options for follow up meetings to address their questions

See Appendix C for sample questions to ask students

### Documenting Advising Interactions

Advising conversations, advisor outreach, and pertinent advising information should be documented with a note in DegreeWorks. These notes are visible to anyone who has access to the student's profile and serve as a record of topics discussed and information shared with students. Notes should include:

- Information discussed in advising meetings
- Individual course recommendations
- If a DegreeWorks plan was approved, locked, or activated.
- Majors, minors, certificates, programs, student experiences and other opportunities discussed
- Upcoming deadlines relevant to student and curriculum
- Referrals or next steps for students
- Advising PIN and priority registration date
- Approved exceptions or substitutions

### Orientation Advising & Registration

All new-to-MSU degree-seeking students must complete orientation. Advising and registration are key components of the orientation process. All students will have an online component to their orientation. Each student will have access to their online orientation modules through their first year at MSU.

Transfer, Nontraditional Aged Students, Students using Veterans benefits complete orientation online and meet with an advisor in a one-on-one setting. New first-year students attend one of our group orientation sessions.

Orientation access and orientation dates are set by the Admissions Office in conjunction with the academic calendar. Students register for orientation through their Admissions Checklist.

Advisors should consult the Orientation Guidebook for updated information about orientation programming and processes.

## Continuing Student Advising & Registration

The Registrar's Office populates registration dates and registration PINs for the upcoming semesters after the fifteenth-class day of the current semester. The listed registration date marks the first date and time a student can register for the next semester.

Continuing student registration is based on the number of earned college credits, giving earlier access to graduate students and seniors. Classes for which students are currently enrolled as well as completed developmental or zero-level courses are not counted in this total. Some students, such as those using Veteran's benefits and student athletes, can register earlier than their earned credit would indicate.

To assist in managing advisee caseload, many advisors target their student outreach, offering appointments based on student registration date. This can prevent those with later registration dates from filling advising appointments when those with earlier registration dates need appointments.

## Appointment Scheduling Software

MSU's Appointment Scheduler allows students to schedule appointments with advisors through the MSU website. The software enables advisors to customize their individual calendar and offers options for screening questions, student reminders, and outlook calendar integration.

## Group Advising

To help manage significant caseloads, some advisors offer group advising sessions for students. Group advising can take several formats and can be an efficient way to share standard information with a large group of students. Advisors can use group advising as appropriate, but must also ensure

- Students have an option for one-on-one meetings
- Advisors document the advising conversation in a DegreeWorks note (see guidelines above).

## Common Advising Topics

### Developmental and Corequisite Coursework

Many students need to build foundational knowledge in math or writing. Our developmental courses prepare students for college-level work by refreshing or building skills in math and writing. Developmental courses are designed to improve a student's mastery of certain skills necessary to be successful at the college level in subsequent courses.

As advisors, we should educate our students about developmental coursework and help them understand:

- Developmental and co-requisite coursework builds foundational skills and serve as prerequisites
- These courses feature small class sizes
- These courses are led by Gallatin College faculty, but are primarily taught on the MSU campus
- Developmental (zero-level) courses count towards students' credit status for financial aid, residence hall requirements, insurance benefits and intercollegiate sports eligibility
- Graded developmental (zero-level) courses are not calculated into a student's GPA
- Developmental courses do not count as 'earned hours' toward graduation credit requirements.
- Developmental courses do not count towards the twelve credits required to be placed on the Dean's List.

Examples of Developmental and Co-Requisite Courses: WRIT 080, WRIT 001/101W, M 063/090, M 021/121Q, and M 005/105Q.

### Adding, Dropping and Withdrawing from Classes

The add, drop, and withdrawal timeframes shared here refer to classes that meet for full fall and spring semester. Timeframes vary for classes that meet for only a portion of the semester or during summer sessions. Deadlines for these classes are shared on the [Registrar's website](#).

### Adding Classes

Students may self-register for classes that have available space and for which they meet the prerequisite through the 5<sup>th</sup> class day. Instructor approval is needed to add classes when classes are full and between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> class day.

While students don't need advisor approval to add courses during these times, students may still seek advising help. Talk with students about these factors so they can make an informed decision about adding classes:

- Ask the student why they wish to add that course
  - Were they late to register?
  - Are they dropping something else?
  - Do they have a history of adding/dropping courses late – if so, discuss larger ramifications and offer to strategize ways to avoid this in the future
- If the student hasn't selected a specific class to add, review remaining degree requirements and ask student if they have any preferences for subjects
- Student's ability to cover any missed material in the course
- How the subject and anticipated workload fits their current course load



- Different options should their initial choice(s) not be possible
- Student history of adding courses after add deadline (if this is an ongoing practice)

Students are unable to add classes after the 10<sup>th</sup> class day. If students have extraordinary circumstances that warrant consideration, they will need instructor, advisor, and assistant dean approval to add any classes. Students are encouraged NOT to add classes after this point, as students typically struggle to catch up with course material.

### Dropping Classes

Students can drop a class online, without permission, through the 10<sup>th</sup> class day. Students must receive advisor permission to drop a class between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> class day because students can no longer add classes. Requiring advisor approval during this time allows advisors to talk with students about how dropping a course could impact progress toward degree. Advisors should discuss these topics, as appropriate, so students can make an informed decision:

- Ramifications of dropping a course that is a prerequisite for future courses
- Ramifications of dropping a course that isn't offered every semester
- Whom to connect with to confirm if there will be any financial aid ramifications
- Options: when students can retake, other courses to consider dropping

### Withdrawing from Classes

Between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> class day, students can withdraw from a course with a "W" grade, with advisor approval and instructor consent. Advisors should confirm why student wishes to withdraw from the course(s) and should ensure students understand the ramifications of withdrawing. Suggested questions and talking points—not all may be appropriate based on student situation:

- What has led you to want to withdraw from this course?
- Have you discussed the course material and your grade with your instructor?
- Have you looked at your DegreeWorks profile/plan to understand ramifications of the withdrawal?
- Do you have any financial aid that might be impacted by withdrawing? Use this opportunity to help students strategize how they can address such challenges, ensuring student knows about campus resources
- Ensure student know what a 'W' grade means for their situation:
  - Earns a 'W' grade on transcript
  - Does not impact GPA
  - Does count as attempted course
  - Can impact financial aid
  - Impact on progress toward degree

## University Withdrawal

When students need to withdraw from all of their courses, the process is initiated with the Registrar's Office. Students are likely to visit with their advisor before reaching out to the Registrar's Office. Items to discuss with students who are considering a university withdrawal:

- Reason for withdrawal
- Withdrawal deadline (same as W deadline)
- Confirm if student was able to utilize campus resources
  - Share relevant resources with student to assist them at this point and in future
- If appropriate, discuss courses for the next semester. If not, let students know about the 'Intent to Register' process and how to connect with advising in the future.
- If in university housing, confirm if student has talked with Residence Life about their housing and timeframe for vacating housing. Students need to be prepared to move-out within a quick timeframe less than 72 hours.
- Add a note in DegreeWorks if students visit with you about a full university withdrawal

## University Leave of Absence: Medical Leave of Absence

Students must request a Leave of Absence no later than the last day of the semester.

When an extenuating circumstance occurs, prohibiting a student from academic success for the current semester, the student may contact the Dean of Students' Office to discuss the situation and the Leave of Absence policy. Advisors do not determine whether a student's situation meets "extenuating circumstances". Advisors should refer the student to the Dean of Students' Office for them to determine if the situation meets extenuating circumstances.

A leave of absence permits students to temporarily withdraw from the University and their studies so they may address the issues that led to the need for leave. Students who want to explore this option need to speak with staff in the Dean of Students' Office and their academic advisor. Students are likely to visit with their advisor before reaching out to the Dean of Students.

The Leave of Absence process, when granted, results in a withdrawal from all courses; students cannot pick the courses they wish to apply the Leave of Absence to.

## Retroactive University Withdrawal

A retroactive withdrawal is for any previous semester and may be available for students who were unable to request a timely leave of absence, but who were forced to leave the University

due to a health or safety emergency, or who experienced a mental or physical illness, injury, or other extraordinary circumstance. The student may contact the Dean of Students' Office to discuss the situation and the Retroactive University Withdrawal policy. Advisors do not determine if the situation meets "extenuating circumstances". Students must meet with the Dean of Students' Office to determine if their situation meets extenuating circumstances.

A retroactive withdrawal is a withdrawal from all courses, and it not easily granted.

### Changing Majors

Many students change their major at least once. When students seek advising to discuss changing their major, asking questions like those listed below can help ensure the student has fully considered changing their major and that they feel supported in their ultimate decision.

- Tell me why you're thinking about changing majors
- Why did you originally choose this major?
- Are there particular classes that you're concerned about and are influencing your decision?
- Have you utilized tutoring, other resources to assist with these classes?
- Do you have concerns about changing your major out of \_\_\_\_\_?
- Do you have other majors in mind? Why are you drawn toward those areas?
- What class have you taken previously that you've enjoyed?
- Are there other areas that you're curious about or that you'd like to explore?
- What other information would help you in your decision-making process?

### Assigning Advisors and New Advisee Outreach

When a student changes their major using a Change of Curriculum form, the advisor must be updated in Banner, which will in turn update both navMSU and Degreeworks. When possible, advisor maintenance in Banner should occur upon the signing of the Change of Curriculum form. If this task can't be completed immediately (e.g., it's heavy advising time, someone else in the unit determines who advisee will be assigned to), the new advisor should be assigned within a week. The Registrar's Office uploads a weekly Curriculum Change Report to each college's Knox folder. These reports should be reviewed weekly. This will allow all DegreeWorks and navMSU information to be accurate throughout the semester.

Once the student's advisor has been updated, it is appropriate to reach out via email welcoming the student to their new major and sharing appropriate advisor contact information.

## Academic Standing

Academic standing is documented in DegreeWorks and on a student's academic transcript. The MSU catalog outlines the different levels of academic standing. When students are below 'Good Standing' advisors should discuss potential factors that led to this standing and ensure students are aware of resources and services that can help the student. It is critical to explain Academic Standing and potential impacts to students, as many students are unfamiliar with Academic Standing and potential ramifications of falling below Good Standing.

## Extraordinary Requests

When students make extraordinary requests, students will need to seek Assistant Dean approval. Assistant Dean approval is required for the following extraordinary requests:

- Adding, dropping, withdrawing from classes after published deadlines
- Appealing academic suspensions
- Registering for more than 21 credits
- Petitioning the Core Equivalency Review Committee (CERC) for a Core substitution or waiver
- Petitioning the Graduate and Admission Requirement Committee (GARC) for a waiver of admission or graduation requirements

When documentation is required for any extraordinary request, it is the student's responsibility to write their petition or appeal and provide supporting documentation. Students may seek advisor guidance on information to include and to confirm the appropriate process.

## Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides students with certain rights to privacy regarding their education records. FERPA Policies are outlined on the [MSU website](#). In addition to FERPA, MSU adheres to Montana law, which offers further protections for privacy.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) provides students with certain rights to privacy regarding their education records. FERPA Policies are outlined on the [MSU website](#). In addition to FERPA, MSU adheres to the Montana Code Annotated, which offers further protections for privacy.

As a general practice in academic advising, advisors should only work directly with students when discussing specific student information. Students may choose to grant third parties' access to their MSU records; however, MSU does not offer a single FERPA release that grants third parties access to student information throughout the university.

Due to FERPA and the Montana Code Annotated, MSU requires student consent for every release of non-directory information. Approval should only be granted for one-time conversations, ensuring that students are responsible for identifying when and with whom they want to share their personal information. When students request advisors share their personal information with a third party, whether to allow a family member to sit in an advising appointment or for completion of a reference form or recommendation letter, advisors should secure written approval from the student using the Advising Commons FERPA release form. Forms are stored in the [Advising Commons Library](#) on Sharepoint. Completed FERPA release forms are stored in student’s NavMSU account.

### Working with Parents and Family Members

While advisors must work within FERPA policies, advisors are still able to assist parents and family members by sharing general MSU catalog information. Often, parent and family outreach happen when they hope to better understand policies such as suspension and academic probation.

Advisors are encouraged to share non-student-specific information with parents and family members who are seeking to understand MSU’s policies and procedures and the resources and support we offer our students.

Examples of Info Advisors Can Share with 3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties	Examples of Info Advisors Cannot Share with 3 <sup>rd</sup> Parties
MSU Core requirements	Whether a student has completed a core requirement
Different academic standing levels	A student’s academic standing
GPA or grade requirements for a particular program	A student’s GPA or grades earned
Academic Suspension Appeal Process	A student’s suspension appeal packet or results
Offices, resources that can assist students	Whether or not a student has utilized a service
Add, Drop, Withdrawal Deadlines	Whether or not a student should withdraw from a course

### HR and Operational Policies for Advising Commons

## Reporting Hours

How hours are reported in MyInfo depends upon the advisor's classification and position. Guidelines are provided in the Appendix. These guidelines have been developed in consultation with HR.

Advisors are expected to work within their FTE. Approval to accrue overtime or comp time must be pre-approved by the Advising Commons Director.

Full Time Employees:

1. When a nonexempt employee is required to work in excess of eight (8) hours per shift or in excess of forty (40) hours per week, the employee is eligible for overtime at the rate of one and one-half (1 1/2) times the normal rate of pay for all overtime worked. When an employee agrees to an alternate work schedule such as ten (10) hours per day, forty (40) hours per week, only those hours in excess of forty (40) hours per week shall be considered overtime and paid at one and one-half (1/2) times the normal rate.
2. In order to constitute overtime for which an employee is entitled to be compensated, the employee must have obtained the approval of the supervisor (Director of Advising Commons) prior to working the additional time. When we are anticipating busier periods for advising needs, the advisor(s), partner and director can discuss a maximum number of hours that can be worked over-time during that period, so there's not the need to get approval on a daily basis. In the event something comes up late in the day or when it is not possible to obtain approval to work overtime, please do the essential work and make notification as soon as reasonable. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to ascertain that employee do not work any overtime for which the supervisor does not desire that the employer be charged and the responsibility of the employee to limit overtime to that which is requested by the supervisor or is essential under the circumstances, and to obtain the approval of the supervisor for any overtime worked. Overtime will be recorded in increments of no less than thirty (30) minutes, but all overtime earned in fractions of thirty (30) minutes will accumulate until the thirty (30) minute minimum is attained, at which point the overtime will be recorded.
3. Employees shall not be required to suspend work during regularly scheduled hours to absorb overtime.
4. For purposes of computing the eight (8) hour day or the forty (40) hour week to determine entitlement to overtime pay, all sick leave, vacation leave and holidays shall be considered as time worked to be added to other hours worked
5. Upon agreement of the employer and the employee, a nonexempt employee may receive compensatory time in lieu of overtime in accordance with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. The maximum amount of time which may be accumulated is 160 hours of overtime worked or 240 hours of compensatory time. Because of budgetary constraints, "comp time" is preferred. Accrued comp time should be used within the semester earned, but not later than the end of the fiscal year if possible. If there is unused comp time, it will be rolled-over or paid out, as outlined in the contract.

6. If employment is terminated, any unused compensatory time will be paid to the employee at the regular rate of pay at the time of termination.

PART-TIME EMPLOYEES:

1. Hours worked in excess of their normal scheduled hours are compensated at 1:1 ratio unless individual works over 40 hours that week. If hours exceed 40, then compensation would be 1 to 1.5 (per provisions above).
  - To clarify: With the pre-approval of the Adv. Commons Director and Partner -- If an employee normally works 30 hours/week, but during an Orientation week (for example) the employee works 36 hours – the employee would enter all 36 hours into their timesheet and be paid at the normal hourly rate for 36 hours that week instead of 30.
2. If OT hours are required by employer, employee may request OT pay or agree on comp time; if OT hours are requested for individuals to volunteer for, comp time is fine for their compensation. (OT means over 40 hrs/week).
3. In light of the university's new policy on recording all comp time on time sheets, the following is recommended for PT employees:
  - a. PT hourly employees should record all hours as worked. If the employee wants to flex their time (i.e., work fewer hours one week to make up for having worked more in a previous week), they can either:
    - i. report unpaid leave for weeks when they work fewer hours, thereby earning their normal/typical wage while also creating an unambiguous record of when they worked and when they took time off, OR
    - ii. Claim annual leave for weeks when they work fewer hours, thereby earning more than their normal/typical wage (extra hours worked plus annual leave taken).
  - b. Employees' work schedules shall not be changed unless given a ten (10) day notice prior to any change in schedule except:
    - i. those engaged in agriculture and stock raising;
    - ii. schedule changes necessitated by exceptional circumstances;
    - iii. by mutual agreement of the employee and supervisor; or
    - iv. Temporary schedule changes for employees working special events or for employees providing or supporting catering services, in which case a minimum of two (2) days' notice shall be given.

### Leave Requests

Advisors request leave by confirming their desired leave with both the Advising Partner and the Advising Commons Director.

Advisors are expected to be available for advising during key points of the year, and should refrain from scheduling annual leave during these periods:

- Start of the semester
- During orientation programs and MSU Fridays
- Advising and priority registration periods
- Drop and withdrawal deadline
- Other times of year where units have increased need for advising

When advisors have unique requests for leave that fall within one of the time frames above, they should submit requests to Advising Partners and Advising Commons Director to determine how and if the leave can be covered.

### Evaluations

Advisors are evaluated annually. Evaluations follow a fiscal year schedule, July 1 – June 30. Due to the unique nature of shared services, advisor evaluations follow this process:

- Advisor completes self-evaluation and shares the evaluation with the unit's Advising Partner
- Advising partner shares input on evaluation form and shares the form with the Commons Director. evaluates advisor and shares evaluation with the advisor and Commons Director
- Advisor, Advising Partner, and Commons Director meet to discuss evaluation. Commons Director completes evaluation form

### Equipment Requests

In March or April of each year, Advising Commons will put out a call for equipment requests. There will be a priority submission deadline. Requests made prior to this deadline will be considered first. If additional funds exist, requests received after the priority deadline will be considered based on available funds and nature of requests.

### Professional Development

Advising Commons works to support the growth and professional development of its advisors. As the Commons budget allows, memberships to NACADA, the National Academic Advising Association, are provided for all Commons advisors.

### Conferences, Workshops, Seminars

Advising Commons aims to provide on-campus professional development for academic advisors each semester. When advisors wish to participate in workshops, conferences, seminars that have financial cost, advisors are asked to submit a professional development funding request. Requests will require advisors to summarize their goals for the professional development, how



the professional development opportunity will influence their work, and a summary of funds requested, and an itemized budget of costs.

### Teaching, Taking Courses, Participating in Committee, Other Service Opportunities

Advising Commons values the opportunities available to advisors to teach or take courses and to participate in service opportunities and committee work at MSU or within professional organizations. Prior to participating in such activities, advisors should discuss the opportunity with both the Advising Partner and the Advising Commons Director.

### Taking Courses or Teaching Courses

When a course is only offered when an advisor is regularly scheduled to work, the employee should discuss the conflict with both the Advising Commons Director and the Advising Partner to determine if an alternate work schedule is possible or if the advisor would need to take vacation leave or leave without pay for all hours absent from their regular work schedule.

### Participation in Committees, Service Opportunities

Advising Commons encourages involvement in and wants to support advisors in professional development opportunities available on campus and in professional organizations such as NACADA. As advisors consider opportunities for ongoing leadership positions in professional organizations, advisors should discuss the opportunities with both their Advising Partner and the Advising Commons Director.

## APPENDIX A: NEW ADVISOR ONBOARDING

### ***Initial Onboarding Activities & Welcome: Director, Assistant Director, and Administrative Associate, Advising Commons***

- Discuss Advising Commons
- Advisor Role, Duties, Responsibilities, Expectations
- Hiring Paperwork (I-9, W-4)
- Cat Card – New employees. Advisor initiates, Commons covers cost
- Add advisor to Advising Listservs (once MSU email is established)

### ***General Advising Training: Facilitated by or Completed with Advising Commons***

- General Degree Requirements and MSU Core
- MSU Online Catalog
- Advising and Registration Time Periods and Commons Expectations
- Advising Special Populations
- Watch/complete student online orientation modules
- Using DW to log advising conversations
- Using CatCourse
- Set-up time to shadow University Studies advisors

### ***Technology Access Requests: Initiator in Parentheses***

- Banner Access and Training (Advisor)
  - Student Module
  - Security Information Training
  - Electronic Document Management (Banner EDM) Viewer Access
  - Email Commons Admin once complete
- DegreeWorks Access and Advising Services Tab (Advisor emails Registrar Office, copies Commons Director/Admin once Banner training is complete)
  - Advisors who make exceptions in DegreeWorks will need to complete 'Exceptions Manager Training' with Registrar's Office (Advisor)
- Registrar Knox Folders for Colleges Served (Commons Admin/Director requests with Registrar after Banner training and access granted)
- Appointment Scheduler (Advisor)
- Unit Shared Drives (College, Departments, or School)
- Orientation Knox Folder (Commons Director/Admin confirms with Orientation Director)

***Campus Introductions: Facilitated by Advising Commons***

- Campus Tour (set up with Admissions)
- Admissions and orientation team
- Registrar's team
- Academic Advising Council (AAC) introduction (at first AAC new advisor attends)
- Introductions to colleagues outside of unit with whom advisor will frequently interact (Commons and Unit)
- Athletics Academic Support Team

***Onboarding Within Unit(s): Facilitated by Advising Partners and Admin Associates in Units***

- Key requests
- Colleague Introductions
- Facility tour
- Program-specific curricular requirements
- Unit's Advising Plan, advising processes and division of responsibilities
- Coordinate time to shadow other advisor(s) in unit
  - Transcript evals
  - Substitution policies, procedures, making exceptions in DW
- Share any recurring meeting invitations
- College Introductions:
  - Dean's Office
  - Departmental Teams

***Training Outside of Commons and Units: Advisor Registers Self***

- MSU Jumpstart
- New Employee and Benefits Training
- Indian Education for All in Montana for One MUS
- Mandatory Reporter and Equity Training

## APPENDIX B: Advising Calendar Example

### January

- Continue with TR and FR orientation as needed, use BDM to look at transcripts that are not evaluated
- Spring semester starts mid-January
- MSU Friday
- 5<sup>th</sup> class day – last day for students to add themselves into classes online
- 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> class day – last day to add class with instructor approval
- 10<sup>th</sup> class day – last day for student to drop classes online through My Info
- 15<sup>th</sup> class day – last day for students to drop a class without a W
- Begin contacting students re: graduation paperwork for summer/fall

### February

- MSU Friday
- Begin contacting students to schedule advising appointments for summer/fall advising

### March

- Summer/fall graduation applications due this month
- MSU Friday
- Spring break – mid-March
- Continue advising appointments
- Summer/fall registration begins the last week of March

### April

- Summer/fall registration goes through early/mid-April
- Last day to withdraw from classes with a W (60<sup>th</sup> class day)

### May

- Commencement
- Summer session starts (both 4-week and six weeks)
- Virtual TR, Veteran, Nontraditional student orientation and advising begins early May
- Begin preparing for FR orientations in June
- Provost's Office mails academic standing letters
- Spring grades post the week after finals

### June

- First two FR orientations
- Check BDM for transcripts
- Student outreach as necessary
- June start summer session (4-week)

- Second six-week summer session starts

#### July

- Third FR orientation
- Begin preparing for early registration for OF4 students using student survey
- July start summer session (4-week)

#### August

- Fourth (and largest) FR orientation
- Summer class end early August
- Register students for OF4
- Fall classes begin

#### September

- 5<sup>th</sup> class day – last day for students to add themselves into classes online
- 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> class day – last day to add class with instructor approval
- 10<sup>th</sup> class day – last day for student to drop classes online through My Info
- 15<sup>th</sup> class day – last day for students to drop a class without a W
- Begin contacting students re: graduation paperwork for spring

#### October

- MSU Friday
- Begin contacting students to schedule advising appointments for spring advising
- Spring registration begins the last week of October

#### November

- Spring registration goes through early/mid-November
- Last day to withdraw from classes with a W (60<sup>th</sup> class day)

#### December

- Virtual TR orientation begins
- Commencement
- Final grades post the week after finals
- Provost's Office mails academic standing letters

## APPENDIX C: Sample Questions to Ask Advisees

### ***Learning about Their Semester and MSU Experience***

- How are classes going for you this semester?
- What are you enjoying in your classes?
- How are you balancing your academics, other commitments, and free time?
- What are you enjoying most and least about your semester?
- Are you happy with your major? What are you enjoying or not enjoying?

### ***Considering Non-academic Commitments***

- If you plan to work, how many hours will you work a week?
- What non-academic commitments do you need to factor into your schedule?

### ***Understanding and Capitalizing on their Strengths and Interests***

- What do you see as your personal strengths?
- What subjects come easily or naturally to you?
- What do you like to learn about in your free time; what subjects are you curious about?
- Tell me about your classroom successes. What has helped you succeed in classes previously?

### ***Understanding Challenges and Working through Adversity***

- Have there been any particular difficulties you have encountered?
- Tell me about a time when you overcame an academic challenge. What do you think helped you overcome the challenge?
- What resources do you think might help you?
- How are you allocating time to your classes outside of the classroom?
- Is there anything outside of the classroom that is impacting your academics?

### ***Identifying Goals and Exploring Possibilities***

- Why did you choose this major/minor/certificate?
- What do you want to get out of your MSU experience?
- What kind of engagement, involvement opportunities are you interested in?
- What kind of careers are you interested in?

## APPENDIX D: Common Resources for Student Referrals

### Academic Supports

***MSC (Math and Stat Center): Free drop-in tutoring for 100-level and above math and statistics courses***

<https://math.montana.edu/undergrad/msc/>

***Writing Center: Free individual or group tutoring for writing***

[writingcenter@montana.edu](mailto:writingcenter@montana.edu); (406) 994-5315

<https://www.montana.edu/writingcenter/>

***Chemistry Help Center: Free drop-in help for CHMY121, 141, 143 only***

<https://chemistry.montana.edu/undergraduate/help-center.html>

(406) 994-4224

***Physics Learning Center: Free drop-in help for PHSX205, 207, 220, 222***

<https://physics.montana.edu/ugrad/helpcenter.html>

***SmartyCats: Free drop-in tutoring and inexpensive group or individual tutoring***

<http://www.montana.edu/aycss/success/smartycats/>

***MSU Library: Research librarians, publications, study spaces***

Service Desk (406) 994-3139

<https://www.lib.montana.edu/>

***Bobcat Tech Hub: Links to essential programs and resources***

<http://www.montana.edu/aycss/techhub.html>

## Essential Offices

***Admissions: Transcript Evaluation, Incoming Major Classification, Orientation***

[admissions@montana.edu](mailto:admissions@montana.edu); (406) 994-2452

<https://www.montana.edu/admissions/>

***Registrar: Registration, Deadlines, Transcripts, Residency***

[registrar@montana.edu](mailto:registrar@montana.edu); (406) 994-6650

<https://www.montana.edu/registrar/>

***Financial Aid: Aid Award Letter, Scholarship Compliance, FAFSA***

[finaid@montana.edu](mailto:finaid@montana.edu); (406) 994-2845

<https://www.montana.edu/financialaid/>

***Dean of Students: CARE Program, Student Conduct, Associated Programs & Resources***

[deanofstudents@montana.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@montana.edu); (406) 994-2826

<https://www.montana.edu/deanofstudents/>

***Advising Commons: Supplemental Advising, Student & Advisor Support***

[advising@montana.edu](mailto:advising@montana.edu); (406) 994-3532

<https://www.montana.edu/universitystudies/advising/>

***AYCSS: Success Coaches, Career Coaches, Financial Education, Return to Learn, SmartyCats  
Tutoring***

[aycss@montana.edu](mailto:aycss@montana.edu); (406) 994-7627

<http://www.montana.edu/aycss/>

***Office of Disability Services: Academic Accommodations***

[disabilityservices@montana.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@montana.edu); (406) 994-2824



<https://www.montana.edu/disabilityservices/student.html>

## Health and Well-being

**University Health Partners: Medical Services, Dental Services, Prescription Services**

<https://www.montana.edu/health/>

**Counseling & Psychological Services: Mental Health Services, Crisis Services, Groups & Classes**

(406) 994-4531

<https://www.montana.edu/counseling/index.html>

**Bounty of the Bridgers Food Pantry: MSU food pantry**

[bobpantry@montana.edu](mailto:bobpantry@montana.edu)

<http://www.montana.edu/oha/bounty-of-the-bridgers.html>

**ASMSU Outdoor Recreation Program: Experiential education, rental shop**

[outdoorrecreation@montana.edu](mailto:outdoorrecreation@montana.edu); (406) 994-3621

<http://www.montana.edu/outdoorrecreation/>

**Recreational Sports & Fitness: MSU Fitness Center, group exercise, intramural sports**

<http://www.montana.edu/getfit/>

**Office of Student Engagement: Student organizations & government, campus programs, events**

[engagement@montana.edu](mailto:engagement@montana.edu); (406) 994-2933

<https://www.montana.edu/engagement/>

**VOICE Center: 24-hr Confidential, anonymous support, free walk-in counseling**

[msuvoice@gmail.com](mailto:msuvoice@gmail.com); (406) 994-7662

<http://www.montana.edu/oha/voice/>



## Montana State University Employee Performance Evaluation

Employee Name		GID (last 4 digits)	
Position Title		Position Number	
Supervisor Name		Date of Review	
Department		Period Covered	

### Summary Evaluation

Consider the employee’s demonstrated performance in each of the criteria on the evaluation form and select the description which most appropriately summarizes this performance evaluation as a whole. Ratings must include supporting evidence justifying each rating. Please consult with your HR Business Partner before giving a rating of “unacceptable performance.”  
**All performance evaluations should be completed by June 30.**

**Employee:** Please check one “E” box in each area to reflect your performance. **Supervisor:** Please check one “S” box in each area to reflect employee performance.

Unacceptable Performance	Below Expectations	Acceptable Performance	Strong Performance	Exemplary Performance
E      S <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	E      S <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	E      S <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	E      S <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	E      S <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Performance does not meet expectations and must be improved.	Certain aspects of the performance do not meet expectations and could be improved.	Meets expectations of the role and is a valued contributor to the success of the department’s mission.	Performance is strong and contributes significantly to achieving the department’s mission.	Unequivocally superior performance.

**Note:** By signing this form, the employee acknowledges only that this evaluation was discussed and a copy has been received by the employee but does not necessarily indicate his/her agreement with the contents.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee’s signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor’s signature Date

*Employee and Supervisor should keep a copy of all completed evaluations.*

*Last update: February 2024*

Performance Evaluation is required by MSU policy and is conducted on an annual basis. The process is designed to bring staff and supervisors together in reviewing each employee's input into departmental and institutional goals and objectives. This should be a collaborative experience between the supervisor and employee, affording an opportunity to celebrate achievement and to promote professional development.

### PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

Please select the statement which most appropriately describes the employee's performance:

1. **Job Knowledge and Skills:** application of knowledge, skills and experience in performing the required job tasks and functions.

**E: S:**

- Has sufficient knowledge to efficiently perform all expected functions of the job without instruction or assistance.
- Has the basic knowledge and skills to carry out the responsibilities of the job with only general supervision
- Lacks basic skills; needs instruction and guidance
- Other: Brief description

2. **Quality of Work:** accuracy, attention to detail, neatness and effective completion of assignments or tasks.

**E: S:**

- Consistently achieves excellent quality; attentive to detail; achieves desired results
- Work is usually thorough and meets departmental and customer standards
- Meets minimum department and customer standards
- Work is often inaccurate or incomplete and requires checking
- Other: Brief description

3. **Resourcefulness:** efficiency, timeliness and consistency of work production; effectiveness in prioritizing work.

**E: S:**

- Completes more work than expected; work is accurate and appropriate; seeks additional work when other responsibilities have been properly met.
- Completes all assigned work; sets priorities effectively
- Meets department and customer timeliness standards
- Works more slowly than required; assistance is necessary to complete tasks
- Other: Brief description

4. **Communication:** written, personal and oral communication skills (customer services techniques and skills); ability to collaborate and favorably represent the department.

**E: S:**

- Possesses strong and effective communication skills; exhibits professionalism in carrying out responsibilities
- Has the basic required skills and communicates effectively
- Lacks the basic communications skills required; needs instruction and guidance to be effective
- Other: Brief description

5. **Working Relationships:** provides quality service to a diverse group of individuals. Treats all people with respect and civility. Offers assistance proactively and ensures timely and complete responses.

**E: S:**

- Consistently contributes to meeting required objectives by positively promoting cooperation, productivity, and teamwork
- Works effectively and productively as a team member
- Prefers to work independently
- Reluctantly assists others; has difficulty providing the required level of cooperation needed to achieve teamwork
- Other: Brief description

6. **Reliability:** degree of supervision needed to carry out tasks to completion and to meet objectives; willingness to accept personal responsibility for their actions.

**E: S:**

- Extremely dependable; anticipates needs and follows through promptly with a sound course of action
- Needs minimum guidance in the development of projects and the application of resources
- Completes set tasks and objectives
- Frequently does not follow instructions; requires supervision to complete assignments
- Other: Brief description

7. **Judgment:** ability to make sound and sensible decisions leading to effective solutions.

**E: S:**

- Consistently demonstrates good judgment in analyzing and handling problems; exhibits good judgment in stressful situations
- Generally makes effective and sound decisions; judgments usually result in problem resolution
- Lacks basic decision-making skills; problems typically remain unresolved
- Other: Brief description

### SUPPLEMENTARY CRITERIA

*Please check all that apply:*

8. **Expertise:** demonstrates excellence in the requisite skills for the job; takes initiative in broadening own knowledge and improves skills through professional development.

**E: S:**

- Demonstrates an interest in learning; keeps current in field
- Produces high quality results; learns from mistakes
- Takes initiative to improve skills and proficiency
- Shares expertise with others
- Other: Brief description

9. **Ambassadorship:** reliably represents the department in all situations; consistently and positively promotes MSU's mission and achievements, on and off campus.

**E: S:**

- Demonstrates excellence in modeling desired behaviors
- Serves as a catalyst for change through positive attitudes
- Is dedicated to the departmental/institutional mission
- Positively represents the University
- Other: Brief description

10. **Compliance:** demonstrates a commitment to complying with applicable policies and regulations in the course of completing job expectations.

**E: S:**

- Is knowledgeable of and compliant with policies and regulations relevant to job duties and
- Is knowledgeable and compliant with policies and regulations relevant to being a member of the MSU Community.
- Is diligent about reporting concerns
- Is committed to safety and creating a safe environment for self and others
- Completes required trainings by the required deadline(s).
- Seeks out and completes optional training to increase knowledge about safety and compliance. Does so in a timely manner.
- Other: Brief description

11. **Supervision of Others:** effectively and appropriately exercises responsibility and authority.

*If the employee is not required to supervise others, please check "not applicable" and move on to the next section.*

**E: S:**

- Not applicable
- Demonstrates proper leadership
- Accepts responsibility and is accountable for own actions
- Maintains a positive attitude, even during challenging and difficult situations
- Ensures employees are given relevant tools, training, and support; develops employees' skills and abilities and motivates them to accomplish objectives
- Uses appropriate techniques to ensure all employees function well as a team
- Appropriately delegates responsibility and authority
- Proficiently monitors the work of others; clearly communicates departmental expectation; consistently conducts effective and well received performance evaluations
- Successfully motivates employees to accomplish objectives and meet performance standards
- Other: Brief description

**Goals & Objectives**

If goals were established during the last review, outline if/how they were met. Then, indicate goals to be accomplished within the next 6 to 12 months. These goals should be compatible with departmental and University objectives and should be mutually developed by both supervisor and employee. If performance level needs to be improved, specific development objectives should be established. Consideration should be given to the action's management can take to support the employee's effort to increase performance.

**E:** Outline accomplishments and future goals.

**S:** Outline accomplishments and future goals.

**Training (Optional):**

Human Resources, supported by campus leadership, encourages training for employees. There are no university requirements for training. This is intended as an *informational section only*. The purpose of this section is to:

- encourage a discussion about training for the next year
- provide a place on the form to document training needs from both the supervisor and employee perspective
- provide a place to allow employees who have attended training to list any professional development or job-related training attended during the review period

**Please list any training or professional development attended during the review period:**

**E:** Brief description

**S:** Brief description

**Please list any training or professional development that might be helpful during the coming year:**

**E:** Brief description

**S:** Brief description

**SUPERVISOR COMMENTS**

Referencing the categories above, please expand upon ratings.

**Strengths:** highlight specific performance criteria (observable skills and behaviors) that contributed to the employee's accomplishments and performance.

*Enter text here*

**Areas of Improvement/Development:** this relates to improvement needed in current job performance as well as development needed to prepare for future assignments.

*Enter text here*

**Overall Comments:** consider overall performance in summarizing the employee's contributions.

*Enter text here*

**EMPLOYEE COMMENTS**

*Enter text here*

## **Montana State University – Evaluation on Institutional Effectiveness Addendum on Distance Education Policy and Processes**

On April 3, 2024, MSU adopted a comprehensive distance education policy ([https://www.montana.edu/policy/distance\\_education/index.html](https://www.montana.edu/policy/distance_education/index.html)) to formally create a university-wide policy and document our procedures and best practices. MSU has been conservative in considering and implementing programs for distance education. These programs are mostly geared toward addressing the educational needs of rural Montanans, with few programs reaching beyond the state <https://www.montana.edu/online/degrees/>. All but two of the online programs are graduate programs.

Prior to the adoption of this policy, distance education programs were under the guidance of the *Principles of Quality for eLearning Courses in the Montana University System* first adopted by the Board of Regents in March 2008 and revised September 2021 (<https://mus.edu/online/quality-principles.html>). MSU is a member of NC-SARA as of 2015 and adheres to the Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education (Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions, 2011). NC-SARA membership was renewed in early 2024.

Early on, implementation of MSU's online programs included faculty preparation to teach online and careful consideration of the curriculum. Faculty train on the Learning Management System through our Academic Technology and Outreach office in workshops that are widely available to all course faculty regardless of mode of instruction. Several distance education training courses and workshops were developed by and are available through the Center for Faculty Excellence. Among these trainings is the Teaching Online Program (TOP), both basic and advanced (example modules provided in the Box folder) that many faculty in new online programs avail themselves. The best practices of these early highly successful programs are the foundation for the distance education policy that is now in place.

### **Policies and procedures for ensuring the student who registers in a Distance Education course or program is the same student who participates in the course and receives credit.**

MSU's policies and procedures on student verification in distance education courses and programs align with our current policies and procedures for all courses and programs. Namely, MSU requires student documents and records for admission to the university come direct from a secure source for student verification. A student record with a unique username and password is created upon admission to the university in MSU's student information system (Banner). All enrolled students must use the unique username and password obtained through the University to access course materials in the learning management system (currently Brightspace switching to Canvas summer 2025). Banner and Brightspace (and in the future Canvas) are integrated such that Brightspace courses are automatically created and populated from information in the Banner system. Brightspace's login page is integrated with MSU's single-sign-on (SSO) authentication

system, which uses a Banner-assigned NetID for each unique user. NetIDs consist of a completely random string of letters and numbers for data protection purposes. Students and instructors must authenticate every time they access Brightspace and participate in online coursework. The first time they use the password portal they must go through the new user setup and verify their identity; likewise, password changes require identity verification.

Sharing usernames and passwords is a violation of MSU Enterprise IT policy, [MUS policy 1304.1 and 1306](#), (<https://mus.edu/borpol/bor1300/>), and [MSU Student Code of Student Conduct 330.30](#) ([https://www.montana.edu/policy/student\\_conduct/#conductcode](https://www.montana.edu/policy/student_conduct/#conductcode)).

Additionally, online programs and courses individually implement further strategies and measures to assure the integrity of its online offerings. These strategies include but are not limited to:

- Participation in the national IDEA online higher education alliance (<https://idea.edu/>) and compliance with their processes
- Face to face or voice calls during the recruitment and application phase
- Virtual meetings at the beginning of the semester
- In-person courses during the summer term
- Required phone calls with instructors
- Submission of video recordings of lessons and other activities (music)
- Synchronous online meetings with cameras.
- Opportunities for camera-on activities
- Small group work
- Virtual office hours
- Alternative (to exam) assessments

### **Policies and procedures make it clear that these processes protect student privacy.**

All MSU courses, programs, and processes must comply with established MSU Policies and Procedures including protection of student privacy. MSU's Distance Education Policy distinctly calls out policies and practices pertaining directly to distance education: requiring all software vendors to adhere to the [MSU Data Stewardship Policy](#), administering the learning management system in ways to insure the protection of student privacy; and maintaining student privacy in accordance with [MSU FERPA policy](#) for student privacy.

### **Notification to students at the time of registration of any additional charges associated with verification procedures**

The current verification procedures do not require costs above and beyond the costs of attending in any mode. Students do not receive any additional charges associated with the current verification procedures.

### **Academic policies and procedures for instructors to implement requirements for regular and substantive interactions in Distance Education courses or programs**



Regular and substantive interaction policies and procedures are spelled out in the new policy adopted in April 2024. Prior to this policy adoption, distance education programs were guided by the *Principles of Quality for eLearning Courses in the Montana University System* (<https://mus.edu/online/quality-principles.html>) which provides guidance on regular and substantive interaction. Faculty also train in the Teaching Online Program (TOP) that emphasizes the best practice of regular and substantive interaction to build community in online courses and programs. This practice guided the writing of the policy to include mandatory training in TOP or other approved/appropriate distance education training.

The Provost's Office has created a list of faculty who have completed distance education training and remind department heads of faculty who have not completed their training but are slated to teach online. Trainings must be completed before teaching online for the first time. In addition, the policy holds faculty accountable for a requisite amount of virtual office hours, a practice included in best practices for regular and substantive interaction.

Teaching Online Program Example files provided in the Box folder:

< Maintaining Teaching Presence.pdf >

< Module 3 Mini-Lecture 1 - Establishing Teaching Presence.pdf >

< Module 3 Overview - Teaching Online Program - Basic (Level 1).pdf >

< Module 4 Mini\_Lecture 2.pdf >

< Module 4 Overview - Teaching Online Program - Basic (Level 1).pdf >

# MAINTAINING TEACHING PRESENCE

## Strategies for maintaining teaching presence:

- (1.) Contact policy and virtual office hours
- (2.) Wrap-up summaries and whole class check-ins
- (3.) Timely, personalized, and “frequent” feedback
- (4.) Presence in the discussions

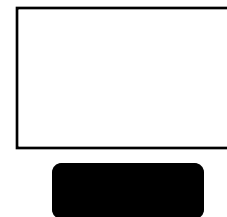
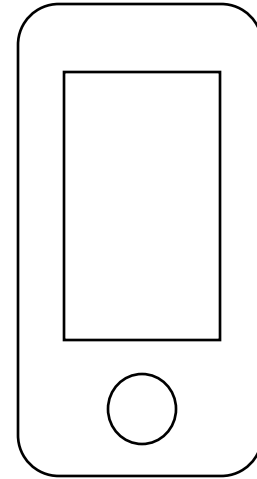
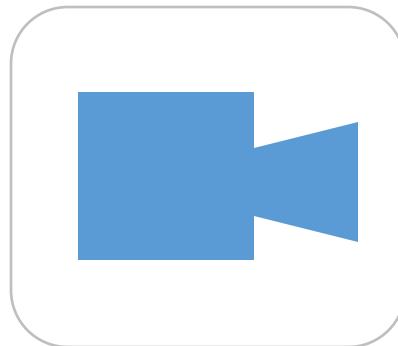
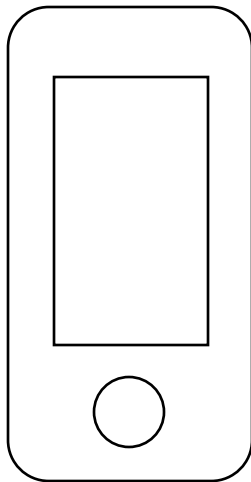


Image Source: iStockphoto.com

# Contact Policy and Virtual Office Hours (1)



**John Doe:** I had a question about our next assignment.

**Professor Smith:** I can certainly help with that.

SEND

# Wrap-Up Summaries and Check-Ins (2)

The screenshot shows the 'Compose New Message' interface. At the top left, there are buttons for 'Send' and 'Save as Draft', and an 'Address Book' button on the right. Below these are input fields for 'To', 'Subject' (containing 'Module 1 Wrap-Up'), and 'Body'. A rich text editor toolbar is visible at the bottom, featuring icons for undo, redo, insert link, paragraph style, bold, italic, underline, bulleted list, numbered list, font face, font size, background color, insert table, insert equation, undo, redo, and paste.

COURSE EMAIL

The screenshot shows the 'New Announcement' interface. It has a 'General' section with a 'Headline' input field. Below that is a 'Content' section with a rich text editor toolbar. The toolbar includes icons for undo, redo, insert link, paragraph style, bold, italic, underline, bulleted list, numbered list, font face, font size, background color, insert table, insert equation, undo, redo, and paste.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRIGHTSPACE/D2L  
COMMUNICATION TOOLS

# Timely, Frequent, and Personalized Feedback (3)



# Presence in the Discussion Forums (4)

Filter by: **Unread** **Flagged**

Sort by:  ▼

## MOD 3 - TOPIC 1 TEACHING PRESENCE

Professor Smith posted July 12, 2016 8:12 PM

<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Unread Replies</b>	<b>Replies</b>	<b>Views</b>

# ESTABLISHING TEACHING PRESENCE

## Strategies for teaching presence:

- (1.) Welcome message
- (2.) Instructor introduction/bio
- (3.) Course tour video

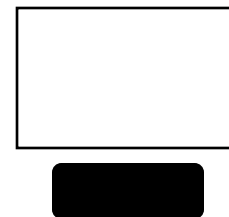
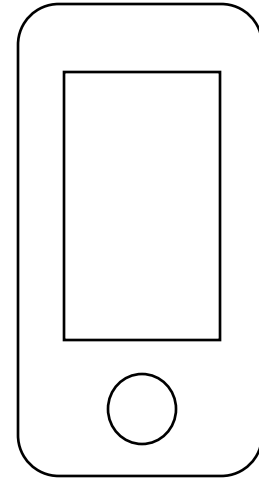
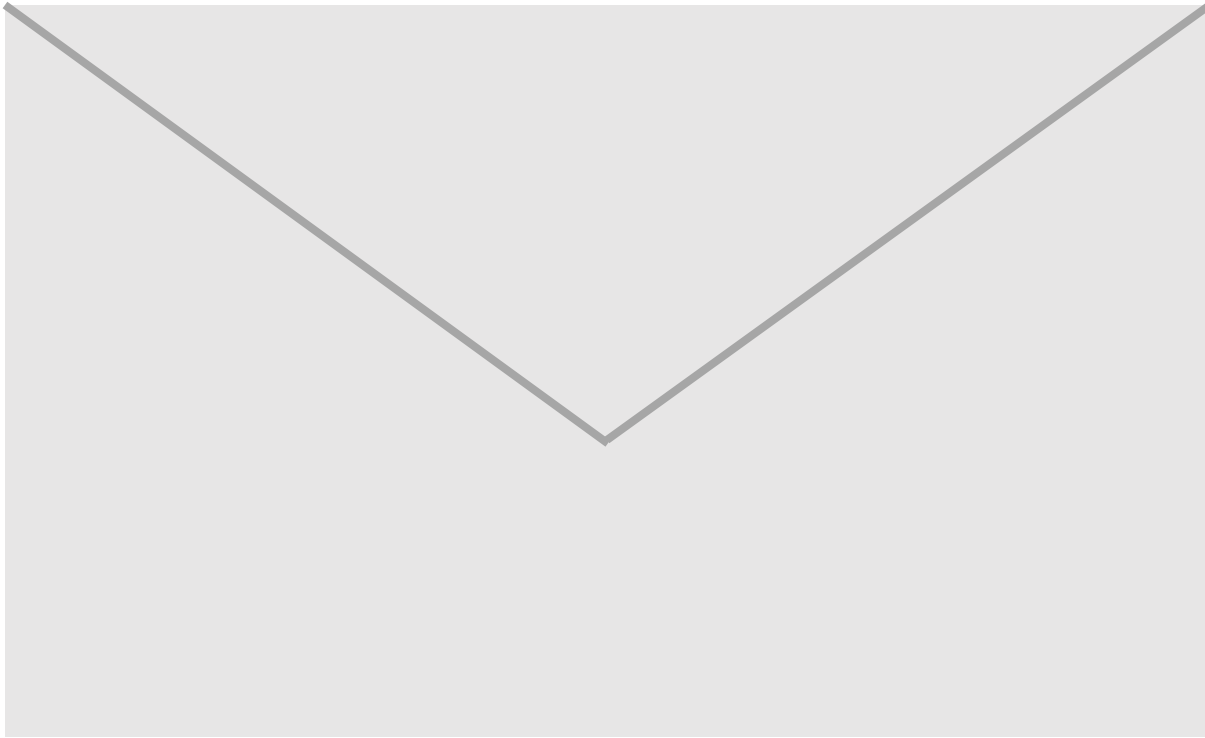


Image Source: iStockphoto.com

# Welcome Message (1)



- Note the message can be a video instead

- Course description
- Books or materials
- Expectations
- Communication protocol
- Getting started
- Course format



## Instructor Introduction/Bio (2)



- Background
- Picture
- Research interests
- Hobbies/interests

Source: <https://shsuonline.wordpress.com>

# Course Tour Video (3)

Teaching Online Program - Level I (Basic) - NCC\_TOP\_LI\_IF



[Calendar](#) [Content](#) [Discussions](#) [Dropbox](#) [Grades](#) [Quizzes](#) [Course Resources](#) [Edit Course](#)

News | ▾

Content Browser | ▾

Bookmarks Recently Visited

- COURSE OVERVIEW AND GETTING STARTED >
- MODULE 1 - Teaching in an Online Environment >
- MODULE 2 - Online Course Organization >
- MODULE 3 - Teaching Presence and Communicating in Online Environments >
- MODULE 4 - Building a Community of Learners >
- MODULE 5 - Putting It Altogether >

Updates ▾

There are no current updates for Teaching Online Program - Level I (Basic)

rec

## Module 3 Overview - Teaching Presence and Communicating in Online Environments

Module 3 allows you to achieve the following course learning outcome and meet part of [Montana University System Core Principle #5 for Learning Engagement and Support](#):

- *Devise and implement strategies for establishing and maintaining teaching presence in your online courses and communicate clear expectations to guide learning.*
- *Instructors regularly and substantively interact with students through social presence, teaching presence, and cognitive presence to support learning throughout the course*

Module 2 showed you how to plan and organize an online course to accommodate learning that takes place at varied times and from multiple and distant locations. Module 3 will illustrate how to be present, accessible, and communicate in an online course when you do not meet face-to-face at the same time and place with your students on a weekly basis.

A common misconception about online teaching is that the instructor does not get the opportunity to get to know their students and feed off the interaction that takes place in a physical classroom. On the contrary, many instructors teaching online actually report the opposite of getting to know students at a much deeper level online. The reason that online courses can often provide a higher degree of contact between the instructor and student is that there are more opportunities for reflection, in-depth discussion, and interaction than a traditional in-person course meeting once or twice a week. For this level of interaction to take place, the instructor must first be present and accessible using the various practices, tools, and methods discussed in Module 3.

### Why is teaching presence important?

When it comes to learner engagement and student success in online courses, teaching presence is often cited as one of the most important factors affecting the achievement of course learning outcomes. Boettcher and Conrad (2010), authors of *The Online Teaching Survival Guide: Simple and Practical Pedagogical Tips*, argue that “presence is the most important best practice for an online course” (p. 53). There is ample evidence to support the assertion of how teaching presence, or the lack thereof, can positively or negatively impact learning in and student satisfaction with an online course. A broad body of research has found that a student’s performance in and satisfaction with an online course is strongly related to the instructor’s active participation in the course (Bliss & Lawrence, 2009; Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005; Swan and Shih, 2005; Swan, 2001). For instance, LaPointe and Gunawardena (2004) found that students’ perception of teaching presence has a direct impact on their self-reported learning outcomes. In the same study mentioned in Module 1 “Instructor Characteristics That Affect Online Student Success,” respondents to a survey asking students from several sections of an online psychology course to name three characteristics of an outstanding online teacher selected, with 66%, communication/availability as the most important characteristic. In sum, the more you can establish and maintain your presence in an online course, the more likely your

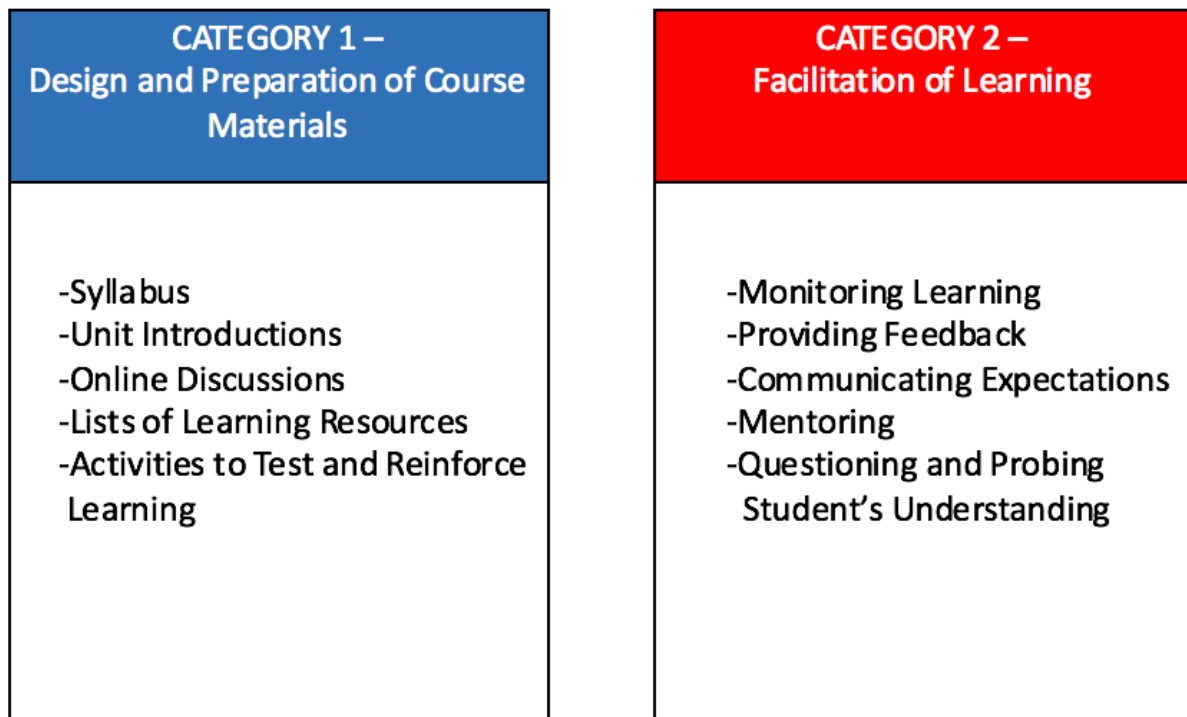
students will achieve the learning outcomes and come away with a positive learning experience in your online course.

## What is teaching presence?

"Being there" is a simple way to describe teaching presence. In a traditional face-to-face course, simply "being there" is a requirement of meeting each week. Being physically present in a space occupied by the learner, more or less, allows the instructor to forge authentic and meaningful relationships between the instructor and student. This is done through interaction between instructor and student that is centered around a shared inquiry and acquisition of knowledge as well as communicating passion and demonstrating enthusiasm for a subject and its content that can engage the learner on multiple levels. Although teaching presence in an in-person course is automatic and natural for many instructors, teaching presence in an online course requires an intentional initial and sustained effort by the instructor to "actively participate" and project themselves in an online environment in ways that cause students to believe there is a real person behind the course.

A more technical definition of teaching presence offered by Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000) conceptualizes it as the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes toward the goal of meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes.

Furthermore, their community of inquiry model separate teaching presence along two categories.



The design and preparation of materials is important, but the facilitation of learning is where "being present" takes on an added need in an online course and will be the focus of Module 4.

Beyond the preparation of materials and facilitating learning, an instructor must also be socially present in an online course to get acquainted with students on a social level by projecting their personal characteristics into the online course to appear as a “real person.” Before engaging in the guided learning of category 1 and 2, students must first trust the instructor before putting themselves out there to ask questions, seek out support, and discuss the content. The recorded mini-lecture will show you how to be socially present online in a way that builds trust.

## Communicating Expectations and Instructions

Teaching and learning from a distance and across geographic areas using tools and systems that, while generally are reliable, can be prone to failures ripe for misunderstandings. With this in mind, it is important to state clear, explicit, thorough and unambiguous expectations, guidelines, and instructions for both the student and instructor. Clarifying everything from what to do if technology fails to how to be a successful online student in the course to thorough, complete, and detailed assignment instructions can create a positive and trusting learning environment. Course contracts are one method to create a set of expectations and engender trust and responsibility for both the student and instructor. For a sample of course contracts, Robyn Woolridge from Earth Sciences, created a set that have been utilized and recommended by several online instructors at MSU. These course contracts are available below in the Module 3 Content section.

**Above all, make sure to (1) communicate to students if you are going to be absent and not logging in for an extended period of time (2) announce clearly and in multiple places, including the course messaging system and news tool, any adjustments to the course.**

## Module 3 Content

For Module 3, you will learn about and how to establish and maintain teaching presence and communicating expectations from:

**\*Note there are two recorded mini-lectures for this Module.**

- A brief recorded lecture on the best practices for establishing teaching presence (7:37) (located in the Module 3 Content section)
- A brief recorded lecture on the best practices for maintaining teaching presence (6:29) (located in the Module 3 Content section)
- A short article on additional context and strategies for establishing and maintaining teaching presence (located in the Module 3 Content section)

A short article on providing feedback on student writing that builds teacher presence while minimizing workload (located in the Module 3 Content section)

## Module 3 - Test Your Understanding Quiz

- A 5 question quiz with multiple attempts with questions drawn from this overview, the short articles and recorded mini-lectures
- Note that the final readiness quiz to pass the course will use questions from this quiz

## References:

Bottcher, Judith V. & Conrad, Rita-Marie. (2010) *The Online Teaching Survival Guide: Simple and Practical Pedagogical Tips*

Garrison, D.R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical Inquiry in a Text-Based Environment: Computer Conferencing in Higher Education Model. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2-3), 87-105

LaPointe D. & Gunawardena C. (2004). Developing, testing and refining of a model to understand the relationship between peer interaction and learning outcomes in computer-mediated conferencing. *Distance Education*, 25(1), 83-106.

Orso, Donald & Doolittle, Joan. (2011) "Instructor Characteristics That Affect Online Student Success." *Online Classroom*, October 2(7)

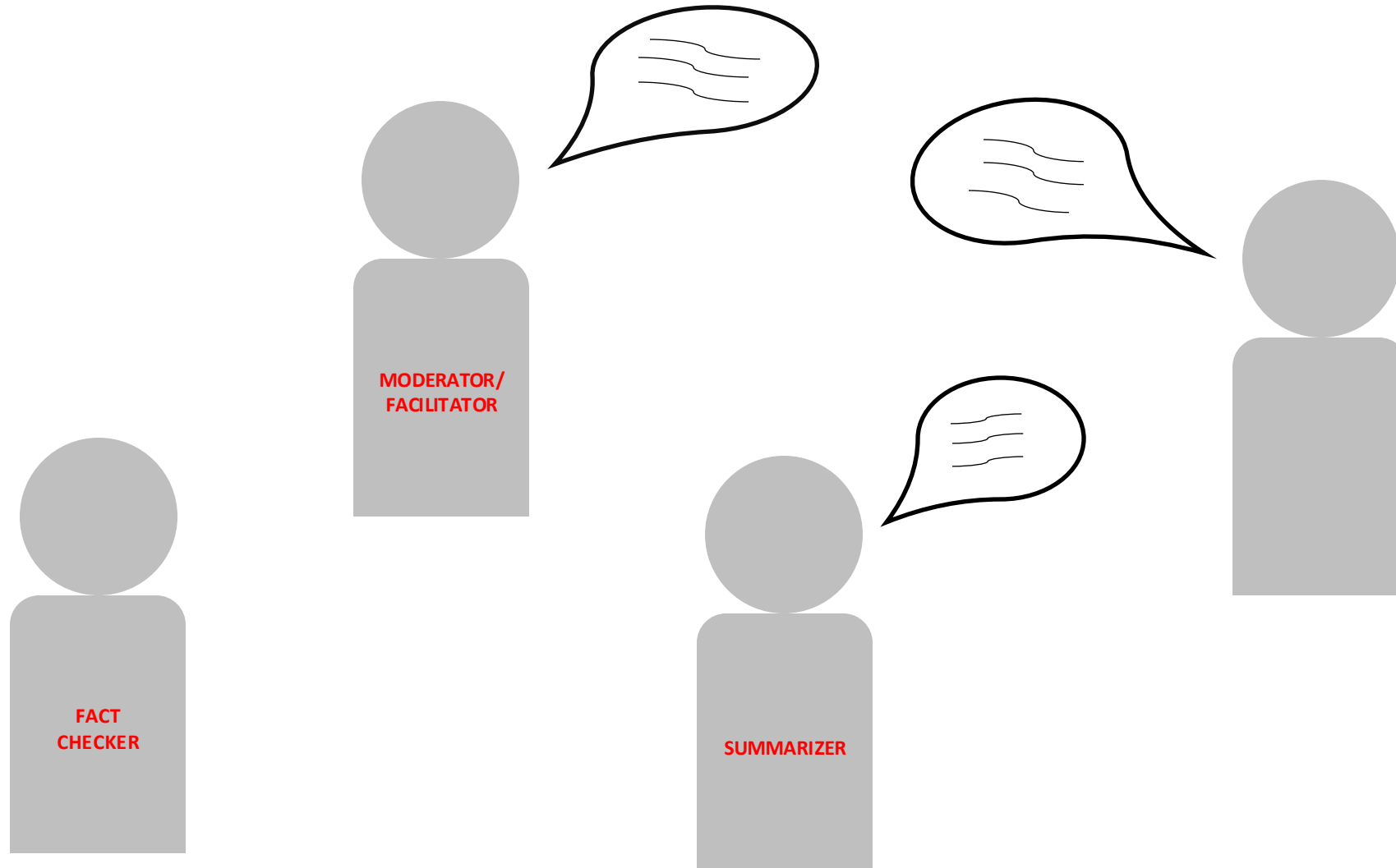
# BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF ONLINE LEARNERS



## **Collaborative Learning Opportunities for Online Courses:**

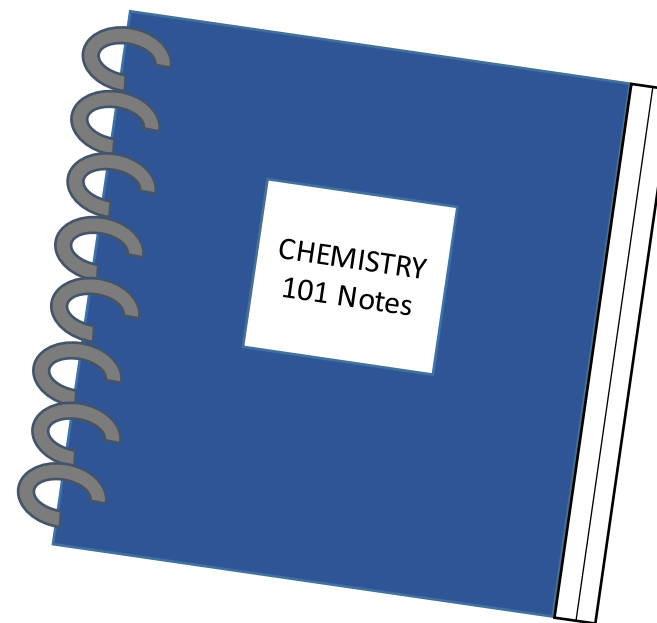
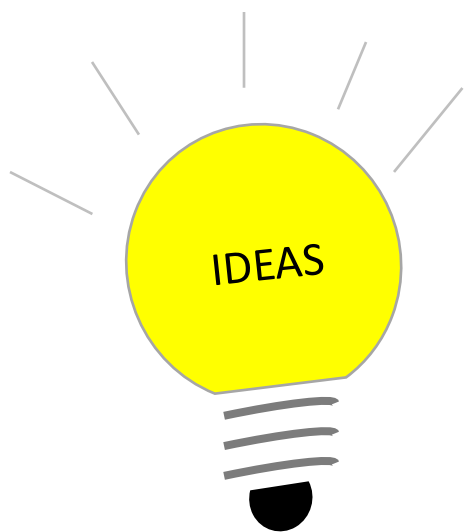
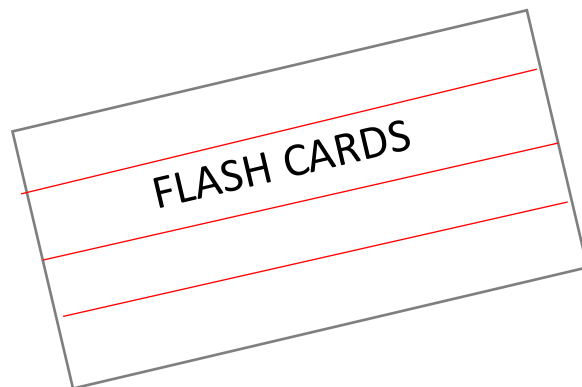
- (1.) Group Discussion Forums
- (2.) Online Study Groups
- (3.) Group Projects

# Group Discussion Forums





# Online Study Groups



# Group Projects

Tips for Assigning Group Projects

Collaborative Online  
Learning Tools



Google docs



## Module 4 Overview - Building A Community of Learners

Module 4 allows you to achieve the following course learning outcome and part of the Montana University System's fifth principle of quality e-Learning Courses for Learner Engagement and Support:

- *Create a plan to build a community of learners that fosters their social presence and lays the foundation for facilitating interaction among your students*
- *The course design and delivery includes meaningful engagement designed to enhance student's motivation, intellectual commitment, and personal development. Such engagement should include substantial instructor-to-student, student-to-student, and student-to-content interaction.*

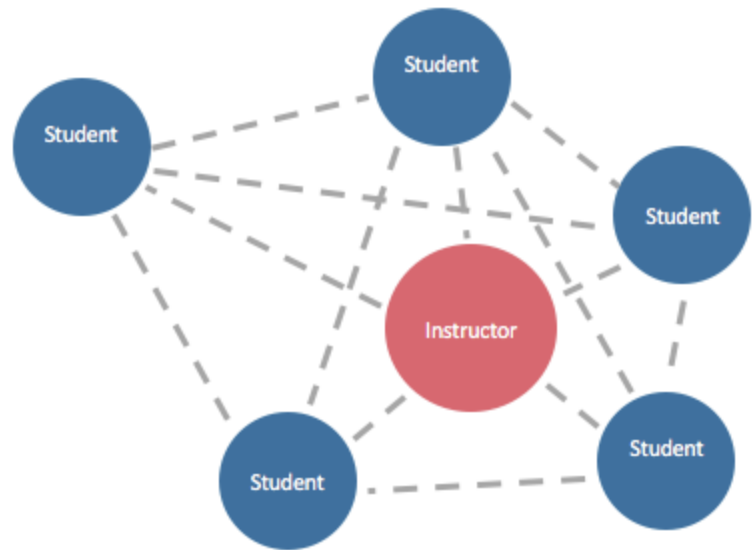


### Why do students need to be socially present when learning online?

There has been much discussion and emphasis on the importance and value of social interaction for learning in the philosophy of education literature. For instance, Vygotsky (1981), a famous learning theorist, posited that social interaction facilitated learning from the viewpoints of others. This led to his vaunted “zone of proximal development” theory, which is the difference between the problem-solving ability of an individual independently and the individual’s potential ability when working with an adult or more advanced peer. With the rise of constructivist educational philosophy, a greater emphasis on collaborative learning emerged. Constructivists viewed learning as a collaborative endeavor where knowledge and meaning are co-constructed and negotiated through peer-to-peer interaction and the integration of multiple perspectives.

If learning as a collaborative, social endeavor holds true for many, but not all, learners, then the online learning environment, where students do not benefit from personable face-to-face contact, needs to provide ample opportunities for students to interact, collaborate, and establish their social presence to reinforce learning. However, as we saw with teaching presence in Module 3, it takes an initial and sustained effort to carefully design and integrate those opportunities and social interaction points when developing and teaching an online course. Kearsley (2000) even goes so far as asserting “the most important role of the instructor in online classes is to ensure a high degree of interactivity

and participation. This means designing and conducting learning activities that result in engagement with the subject matter and with fellow students.” Building opportunities for engagement with fellow students can’t be underestimated or neglected in an online course as students frequently cite feelings of isolation and being disconnected from other students as the main reasons for either being dissatisfied with an online course or withdrawing from online learning altogether (Joyce & Brown, 2009).



## Building A Community of Learners

Social presence refers to the ability of participants to identify with the group, communicate in a trusting environment, and develop social relationships by way of expressing their individuality (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000)

To provide a space for students to establish their social presence in ways that they feel comfortable in putting themselves and their ideas out there in the discussion forums and other collaborative learning opportunities where knowledge and meaning can be co-constructed, an online course must first create a community of learners where they feel a sense of belonging and shared understanding. In a face-to-face learning environment, building a learning community “often develops spontaneously as students have more opportunities to get to know one another and develop friendships outside a particular course. More explicit nurturing and planning is required in the online environment” (Boettcher & Conrad, 2010, p. 39).

Boettcher and Conrad (2010) identify the following elements of community

- Sense of shared understanding
- Knowledge of one another
- Mutual support, even if values are not shared

By building a learning community based on these elements in an online course, students will not only be more likely to participate, they will also begin to turn to the community and each other as resource for support and help as they would in a face-to-face course, which should be a goal when developing and teaching an online course.

The content for Module 4 will show you the best practices for the explicit “planning” for and “nurturing” these elements to foster an online community of learners, including creating online group discussions and projects for groups of **4-6 students (the ideal size for group work, enough to bring in diverse perspectives but not too difficult to coordinate the schedules of that many people)**. The Module 4 activities will provide you with the opportunity to apply and reflect upon these practices.

## Module 4 Content

For Module 4, you will learn about and how to establish and nurture a community of learners:

**\*Note there are two recorded mini-lectures for this Module.**

- A brief recorded lecture on the best practices for building a community of learners to foster a student's social presence (located in the Module 4 Content section)
- A brief recorded lecture on building a community of learner through group work and collaborative learning (located in the Module 4 Content section)
- A short article that offers more tips and strategies for instructor behaviors to exhibit and practice when building a community of learners throughout the duration of an online course, including when and how much to be present in the course at each phase

### Module 4 - Test Your Understanding Quiz

- A 5 question quiz with multiple attempts drawn from this overview, the short articles and the recorded mini-lectures
- Note that the final readiness quiz to pass the course will use questions from this quiz

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#### References:

Bottcher, Judith V. & Conrad, Rita-Marie. (2010) *The Online Teaching Survival Guide: Simple and Practical Pedagogical Tips*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Garrison, D., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical Inquiry in a Text-Based Environment: Computer Conferencing in Higher Education. *The Internet and Higher Education* 2(2-3): 87-105.

Joyce, K.M., & Brown, A. (2009). Enhancing social presence in online learning: Mediation strategies applied to social networking tools. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 12(4).

Kearsley, G. (2000). *Online Education: Learning and teaching in cyberspace*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning

Vygotsky, L.S. (1981). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J.V. Wertsch (Ed), *The concepts of activity in Soviet psychology*. Armonk, NY: Sharpe

## Program Assessment Feedback and Original Assessment Examples

- Example 1 Feedback EHHD\_EDU\_Leadership Fellows Cert\_Year 0\_AOC Feedback\_2022-2023  
Example 1 Original Assessment EHHD\_EDU\_Leadership Fellows Year 0 Assessment Report 2022-2023
- Example 2 Feedback GRAD\_MS Health Sciences\_Year 0\_AOC Feedback\_2022-2023  
Example 2 Original Assessment GRAD\_MS Health Sciences\_2022-23 Year 0 Report
- Example 3 Feedback LS\_SOCI\_AOC Feedback\_2022-2023  
Example 3 Original Assessment LS\_SOCI\_UG\_Sociology Assessment\_2022-23
- Example 4 Feedback AG\_AGED\_AGED-TEIT\_AOC Feedback\_2022-23  
Example 4 Original Assessment AG\_AGTE\_TEIT Program Assessment\_AY2022-23
- Example 5 Feedback GC\_AH\_Medical Assistant\_AOC Feedback\_2022-23  
Example 5 Original Assessment GC\_AH\_CAS Medical Assistant 2022-2023 - Program Assessment Report