

## Online Teaching Guide

At universities across the country, there has been a big push for more online classes. Morehead is no different. As this push occurs, it is important that the professors who teach those courses have the tools necessary to teach online to the same level that they teach in person. To that end, we have put together a reference sheet of tips and techniques for online education. This guide is designed not to teach you how to use online applications or Blackboard. Instead, our focus is on how to take the strategies you use in the classroom and transform them into successful tools online. When the technology might be confusing or unfamiliar, we do our best to break it down to its easiest form. Our goal is simply to let you know what you can do, so that you can make your classes the best possible versions of themselves.

*Note: the Table of Contents below has clickable links.*

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## Checklist of what you should have

Specific things that should be on your syllabus and/or Blackboard site.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Syllabus (including all the syllabus checklist things)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear Starting Point of the Class
<input type="checkbox"/>	Menu with easy-to-understand labels for navigation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Your contact information, including how to contact you
<input type="checkbox"/>	My Grades (with clear access point)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Course Calendar (either using the Calendar App on Bb or as a separate document)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Academic Honesty Policy
<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to any required materials
<input type="checkbox"/>	Access to all assignments
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible versions of all documents and assignments

## Best Practices

In this section, we will outline tips for ways to ensure your online courses are clear and keep students engaged.

### Regular Communication

In a face-to-face, in person class, you see your students at least once a week. These class periods are used for instruction, yes, but also for keeping the students on task and to remind them about upcoming assignments. Online, asynchronous classes lose this aspect of reminders. Thus, it is important to regularly remind students, not only about what assignments are upcoming, but

also that your class exists, and they cannot neglect it. Choose a day of the week and make that your “reminder” day. Send out a brief email that outlines what things the students should be up to this week. Keep it friendly and short! The students will come to expect such an email and it will help them remember to participate in your course for the week. When major assignments are coming due, you might consider sending more reminders (but not more than a couple times during the week) on a different day. You also need to make sure it is *easy* for the students to talk/meet with you. Are your office hours virtual? Do students need to sign up for them? Are there links to both the sign up and the virtual office on Blackboard? Do you respond to email quickly? Tell the student all these things. For more information about online classroom communication, see: <https://doi.org/10.18438/eblip29826>

### Clear Expectations

In every class, we know that we have to communicate with students what our expectations for them in that class are. This is typically done through the syllabus and on the first day of class. The same is true in online education. The syllabus is just as important as in an online course, but you are less likely to have a chance to make sure your students go through it. Consider using a syllabus quiz or other such tool to make sure the students read the syllabus. Additionally, make use of the Blackboard Menu and have clear guideposts throughout the class to inform students what you expect of them. In the section below about Blackboard, we will discuss these tools. In general, however, you need to make sure that everything you want the students to do is somewhere easy to find on Blackboard and that the assignments are very clearly laid out.

### Asynchronous and Self-Paced vs Synchronous and scheduled

Every subject we teach is different, and thus the format through which we teach the subject changes. So, it is important to consider the various virtual ways to conduct a class. There are two major elements, each with two parts, to consider when creating a virtual class: the synchronicity of the class and how much the students will be able to do on their own. Let us consider the pros and cons of each from the perspective of both the professor and the student. For more information see: <https://teachingresources.stanford.edu/resources/what-is-synchronous-and-asynchronous-learning/>; <https://online.osu.edu/resources/learn/whats-difference-between-asynchronous-and-synchronous-learning>; <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.657234>

<b>Students</b>	Self-Paced	Scheduled
Asynchronous	<i>In this scenario, the course would be fully completed before the</i>	<i>In this scenario, the course would be either released on a weekly basis or</i>

	<p><i>beginning of the semester and the students would not have regular/weekly due dates for assignments. Everything would be due at the end of the semester.</i></p> <p><i>Pros: lets students work at a pace that is comfortable for them; does not require a set schedule to coordinate with their other courses and work;</i></p> <p><i>Cons: Easy to forget about until the end of the semester; can get behind the other students, making discussion boards and group work challenging.</i></p>	<p><i>would just have due dates on a regular schedule. There would still not be "class periods," but the students would have to work at the same rate as their colleagues.</i></p> <p><i>Pros: lets students work at their own rate while still within a set framework to keep them on track; enables a weekly flexibility while not letting them have free rein.</i></p> <p><i>Cons: students will have more trouble finding the time to get their work done;</i></p>
Synchronous	<p><i>This scenario is not one that is as clear cut as the others, but in theory could exist if a professor had multiple "optional" synchronous sessions that students in an asynchronous/self-paced course could choose to attend if they felt it would benefit their learning.</i></p> <p><i>Pros: get face-to-face session on an as-needed basis, rather than being a requirement; time can be demarcated as "class time" if a student feels that they need more structure</i></p> <p><i>Cons: Students are not likely to take advantage of "optional" class periods until the end of the semester; without having regular class periods, students would not know what to expect or how to engage with these optional periods.</i></p>	<p><i>In this scenario, there are regular, virtual class meetings. These sessions are utilized to have scheduled time with professors and learn the material in a more traditional format.</i></p> <p><i>Pros: get the face-to-face (albeit virtual) time that students often require for learning the materials; time is clearly set aside for this course; actually meet and interact with other students</i></p> <p><i>Cons: without a university scheduled block of time, coordinating schedules can be very difficult; students rarely engage with virtual lectures/discussion</i></p>

<b>Professors</b>	Self-Paced	Scheduled
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<p>Asynchronous</p>	<p><i>In this scenario, the course would be fully completed before the beginning of the semester and the students would not have regular/weekly due dates for assignments. Everything would be due at the end of the semester.</i></p> <p><i>Pros:</i> During the semester, instead of preparing lectures and instructional materials or grading, the instructor can concentrate on helping students who need and ask for help.</p> <p><i>Cons:</i> Arranging student interaction (e.g. group work) is more difficult in asynchronous classes than it is in classes where all the students are together at the same time. Additionally, you will have students who rush to do everything in the last week of the semester, so none of their work is any good.</p> <p><i>The instructor will have to do most, if not all, of the grading after the end of the semester, and will probably not be able to give any meaningful “midterm grades” to the student or anyone else who requires such assessments. (To combat this con and to encourage students to seek help during the semester, the instructor may want to consider bonuses or other incentives for early submission or the submission of preliminary drafts of major work.)</i></p>	<p><i>In this scenario, the course would be either released on a weekly basis or would just have due dates on a regular schedule. There would still not be “class periods,” but the students would have to work at the same rate as their colleagues.</i></p> <p><i>Pros:</i> On a regular basis throughout the semester, the instructor gets some feedback on how well the students are doing, although not as much as in a synchronous scheduled class.</p> <p><i>Cons:</i> Arranging student interaction (e.g. group work) is more difficult in asynchronous classes than it is in classes where all the students are together at the same time. Additionally, with the regular schedule, you will have students who beg for flexible due dates.</p>
<p>Synchronous</p>	<p><i>This scenario is not one that is as clear cut as the others, but in theory could exist if a professor had multiple “optional” synchronous sessions that students in an asynchronous/self-paced course</i></p>	<p><i>In this scenario, there are regular, virtual class meetings. These sessions are utilized to have scheduled time with professors and learn the material in a more traditional format.</i></p>

	<p><i>could choose to attend if they felt it would benefit their learning.</i></p> <p><i>Pros:</i> get to see students on a regular, “as needed” basis, thereby connecting with them and being able to help them with troublesome spots in the course</p> <p><i>Cons:</i> Scheduling this would be terrible and students would likely not attend unless required to, and even then would probably struggle to fit it into their schedule. Unless these times were very clearly describe, students would have trouble assessing what might occur in them.</p>	<p><i>Pros:</i> This is basically a face-to-face course, with all the advantages that seeing students on a regular basis brings to the classroom.</p> <p><i>Cons:</i> This would need to be scheduled through the university, because otherwise coordinating schedules would be nearly impossible; students are much less engaged when in a virtual space than they are in a classroom.</p>
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**Flexibility and Understanding:**

When students sign up for an online class, they have certain expectations. We, as their professors, have no idea what those expectations are or why they chose an online class. Stone et al. (2019) suggest that many people take online classes because they have other responsibilities that take up most of their time. This research was conducted before the Covid 19 pandemic, so does not take into account students who have become used to online education and prefer it. Mahmood (2021) observes that sometimes students don’t have the physically ability to regularly be online, because of a lack of technology and/or access to the internet. Both of these articles suggest that one important element of online education is flexibility. We as professors must make sure that we are not privileging those students who don’t have to work full time to make it through school; who can afford to live on-campus with easy access to technology and internet; who are single, without children and have time to devote to you class; etc. The easiest way to do this is to be understanding. Both in the classroom and in online settings, students have lives outside our classes; we need to make sure that our class expectations are not overrunning their outside lives. In online settings, this can translate to flexible due dates, not requiring attendance at set times, having multiple options depending on a student’s preferred learning style. For more information on this, see: <https://search.informit.org/doi/abs/10.3316/informit.639619709196818> and <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/hbe2.218>

## Accessibility

Very soon, MSU will be launching Blackboard Ally across the institution. This tool helps us make our Blackboard sites accessible to everyone, not just the neurotypical students. Utilizing this tool is very helpful, because we want all students to have equal access to our materials. But there are things we can do besides the tips that Ally suggests. Even students who identify as neurotypical may not learn the same way as other people in the class. Also, quite often, students are reluctant to admit they need help or an alternative way of understanding information, simply because they are stubborn. Some options include:

- Having multiple iterations of an assignment that has the same outcomes but requires different work. For instance, if you want a student to interview another person, consider also having an option for the student to watch a filmed interview to reach similar conclusions. This would help students who have anxiety issues.
- Present the content in a variety of ways. If you choose to have lectures in class, make sure you provide the PowerPoint or presentation you use as a separate document. You also might provide an audio-only version of the lecture video. You also might consider having short lectures, rather than long ones. People with ADHD and similar concentration issue may struggle to pay attention to a video for more than a few minutes.
- Find a variety of ways for students to talk to you. They may not all have the time to come to your office hours, are there ways for them to contact you without doing so? They may also have misconceptions about office hours (like they are only for people who are seriously struggling) or have anxiety about coming to talk to you. Can you hold standing office hours for one class, where anyone from that class can pop in at any time, without having any anxiety?

## Timeliness

When a student comes to a physical classroom and sees their professor every week, there is a definite sense that they “matter” to that professor. And everyone wants to be remembered. In online courses, it is easy to feel like this class doesn’t matter as much and that your professor has no idea who you are. Thus, as professors, we need to make sure that we are committing as much attention to our online students as we would for the in-person ones. Part of this is convey through the regular communications discussed above. But a secondary element of it is making sure we are keeping up with grading, giving feedback, and responding to any issues. Online classes often have more graded work than in-person classes. Do not let that online grading fall by the wayside. In many respects, the online class grading is more important than it is in the in-person courses, because it is one of the few times you have to communicate with your students on an individual basis and reassure them that they are doing well. If a student never hears from their professor, they will have no idea how well they are doing in the course and may not feel compelled to participate. Set a firm timeline for grading – minor

assignments will be graded within a week of being due and major ones two weeks. Find a day that is devoted to grading a particular class. If you get behind, make sure to keep the students updated – don't make them feel like second-class citizens, just because they took an online class.

## Blackboard Tips

In this section, we will suggest elements of Blackboard that can be useful for online classrooms, as well as the basics on how to use such elements.

### Menu Customization

You can change the links/names in the Left-Hand Menu. There are multiple ways to do this. You can also rearrange anything in the menu, by using the small button with arrows at the top of the menu.

- The most straightforward is to click the (very tiny) + at the top of the menu. You can then select from the following options: **Content Area, Module Page, Blank Page, Tool Link, Web Link, Course Link, Subheader, or Divider**. Note: don't forget to click the "Available to Users" box, or the students won't be able to see it.
  - A **Content Area** is probably the most straightforward one of these options. It will create a blank page where you can add any part of the blackboard page. You can add assignments, links to other areas, files, items, etc.
  - A **Module Page** is another blank page, but this one can only be filled with "module" which include a set number of blocks. This is most familiar as the default "home page" of a new Blackboard page.
  - A **Blank Page** will take you to a dialog box labeled "content" and you can put anything you want in that box. Students will only be able to see what you've written there. So, you could have text or links in the box.
  - **Tool Link** will let you link to any of the tools available in Blackboard. These are wikis, discussion boards, journals, blogs, etc. This link will go directly to them.
  - **Web Link** will link directly to anything outside of Blackboard and will take students directly there.
  - **Course Link** can link to any other point in the Blackboard site. So, if you want students to have easy access to somewhere you've already set up within the Blackboard site, you can use this link.
  - **Subheader** would create a label for anything below it. So, you could have a header that said "Assignments" and then **Course** and/or **Tool** links listed below it.
  - **Divider** is a line that can separate different sections of the menu.
  - **You can also delete areas from the menu by clicking the down arrow beside the word and selecting "delete."**

- The next way you can change the menu is by going down to the bottom of the menu and choosing Customization. Then choose either “Quick Setup Guide” or “Teaching Style.” In both of these areas, you’ll see a box that says “Course Structure” and gives a series of options (this is the same in both of these areas). You can click through those options and see examples of how they look. Once you choose one closest to what you want, choose it and then click “apply changes” or “submit.” Note: you can also change the color of the menu and buttons on the “teaching style” screen. Also, if you add a course structure, you can change it at any time and can add or delete any of the menu options using the above explanation.

### Clear Set Up – the “Home Screen”

One thing that students often get confused on is finding what they need for each week of class. Thus, it is important to be very clear about where things are located. The above directions about the menu can help, but another important helper for students is to have a home screen that clearly directs them where they need to be. The home screen is the first thing that appears when they come to your Blackboard Site. The home screen can be chosen if you go to **Menu – Customization – Teaching Style – Entry Point**. At the Entry Point block, you can choose any of the links from your menu. Choose whichever you think is the best one to begin each session with or create a special **Content Area** page that is your home screen. Some options for this would be: a “Start Here” page that has links to all the other folders they might need; a page that has folders for every week of the semester; a “current week” folder that rotates (easily by just using the “**Course Link**” option and changing the location each week).

### “Send Reminder”

In the “Full Grade Center” screen, for each column of the grading table, in the drop-down menu accessed by clicking the grey arrow beside the column name, you can find a “send reminder” option. This sends an email to every student who has *not yet submitted anything* for that assignment. It clearly identifies what assignment is missing and lets the student know it has not been submitted. Doing this on the assignment’s due date is a quick strategy for getting the last stragglers to submit.

### Embedding images/videos

Blackboard pages do not have to only include words. You can include images and videos on any page. In any content page, under “Build Content” you can see listed audio, image, and video. You can use these options to upload any such files off your computer. *Note: for audio and video, you can choose to have them autostart and loop. I would not advise doing so, because they will continuously play every single time a student opens the page. You can also upload a transcript, which should be done for accessibility purposes.*

Images and videos can also be embedded within textboxes on Blackboard. This is particularly useful for including gifs or YouTube videos. To do so, open a text box

(probably through the “build content” button and then choose “item.” Make sure that the entire toolbar is open (if it isn’t, click on the 3 dots at the very end of the first row). The very last thing in the toolbar is a +. If you click this, you will see “Insert Local Files.” By choosing this, and then selecting a file off the computer, you can embed an image within the text of the box – that is, the image itself will appear alongside the text. If you want to embed a video or a gif, go to the <> button on the toolbar. This will bring up the HTML code for the text box. You can then simply copy and paste an embed code from a YouTube video or a gif. These codes can be found on the websites where the video/gif originates, usually under “share” and “embed.” After pasting the embed code, choose save and you will return to the textbox. The video/gif should now appear. Choose submit at the bottom of the page and you should be good to go!

### Course Calendar

Every Blackboard site has a built in Course Calendar. You can find it under “Course Tools.” Any assignment you give a due date to will appear in the calendar. But so does every assignment from every other course the student has. Each course is a different color and can be selected in the left hand side menu of the calendar. If you feel that this calendar is extremely necessary to keep your students on task (which is absolutely can be), you can link to it in the Left Hand Menu screen using the [Menu Customization](#) tools listed above – it is a “tool” in the menu. You can even make this the home screen of your course, if you so choose.

### Tasks

Another great resource that Blackboard provides is the ability to make a To Do list for your students. This is a “Course Tool” called “Tasks.” You can create a task, describe what the task involves, give it a due date, and label it with a priority – high, low, or normal.” When the students check off items from their to do list, you can see that they did so. *You are able to see how many students completed the task, not which ones.* The downside to Tasks is that you cannot link from a Task to the assignment page for that Task. To combat this issue, you might include in the description an explanation of where the student can easily find the assignment page. Again, if you want to make your students have easy access to the To Do List, you can link to it in your Left-Hand Menu. You can also create a “module” page in the Menu and add the “My Tasks” Course Module to the page. I find linking to the actual To Do List (or making it the home screen) to be a more useful way of navigating Blackboard.

### Achievements

A fun tool on Blackboard is called “Achievements” and lets you give awards to students. These Achievements do not have points associated with them, they are more like Badges or Stickers. But can add a level of enjoyment to the class. Find Achievements under “Course Tools.” There are three different kinds of Achievement: Course Completion, Milestone, and Custom. Each of these Achievements are set up in the same

basic way. You do three things: Describe the Achievement, label “Triggers” for the Achievement, then create a Reward for the Achievement.

**Describe:** After selecting “Create Achievement” and choosing one of the three options, you will be taken to an “About” screen. At the top, you need to name the Achievement. Consider labelling it something fun, like “You finished the Class!” You then need to choose where it will live in the course. The “Browse” menu will show you all the folders embedded in your course – select one to put the achievement in (you could have a folder labeled “Achievement” to put them all in, or you could put them in the folder that corresponds with where the Achievement occurs in the course). Next you can, but do not have to, describe what goes into getting the Achievement. *You can also choose whether or not the students will know the Achievement is coming.* After you’ve done these, select “Define Triggers” at the bottom of the screen.

**Triggers:** Each Achievement has to have at least one “Trigger” or Rule. These are basically telling Blackboard what things the student has to do to get the reward. There are four different parts that could contribute to the rule. Each part is an either/or. You can include all of them, one, two, or three of them. However, each rule *must include “membership.”* That is, select *at least* the group in the “membership” list that includes your entire class. If you do not do this, no one will be eligible. The other three elements are: Date, Grade, and Review Status. Date is simply that, a date after which the Achievement is available. If you do not input a date, the Achievement is always available. Grade focuses on specific assignments. You can choose here to have the Achievement trigger after the student submits an assignment, or after they get a specific grade or grade range on an assignment. Finally, you can choose to have a student trigger an Achievement after they look at a specific assignment. After you have situated all your Triggers, click “Choose Rewards.”

**Rewards:** You get to choose what kind of sticker/badge your students get as a reward in the class. Blackboard has several options, but you can also upload any picture you want (they have to be very small though). I use pictures of my cat. You need to put your own name in as the “Issuer” (or, any name, I suppose) and you can add a date for the badge to expire. Have fun with this part! Make the badges things the students will want to collect! You could possibly even make it more game like by giving them an extra credit reward if they collect so many badges!

## Rubrics

Blackboard Rubrics are the easiest way to grade assignments using rubrics. However, to make use of Rubrics, *students must submit something for that assignment.* If there is no submission, the rubric will not be accessible to you. There are two ways to create a rubric. First, you can create an assignment and then under “Associate Rubrics” click “Add Rubric” and then “Create New Rubric.” This will take you to the “Create Rubric” screen. The other option is to go to “Course Tools” and then “Rubrics.” Then you can select “Create Rubric” at the top. It will take you to the same “Create Rubric” screen. To create a rubric, you will need to name the rubric, but do not *have to* describe it. You can customize the rubric in a variety of ways. You can choose the **type** of rubric you want to use: No points, points, points range, percent, or percent range. These are all named

exactly as they act. No points awards no points to each section of the rubric. Points awards a set number of points to each section; points range gives each section a range of points. Percent and percent range are the same for percents. You can also add or take away columns and rows. You can add columns/rows by clicking the “add row” or “add column” buttons along the top. You can delete rows/columns by clicking on the grey arrow next to the name of the row/column and choosing “delete.” You can also change the names of each row/column. Again, by clicking the grey arrow, select “edit” and the name will be able to be changed. In the dialogue box under the title and points/percent/range you can include any parameters that the assignment needs to fulfill to meet that category.

Once you’ve created the rubric, you need to associate it with an assignment. If you chose to make the rubric through the assignment page, skip the next sentence. If you did not, you need to click “select rubric” from the “add rubric” menu on the assignment page. Once you’ve chosen a rubric in this spot, it will ask if you want to assign the maximum number of points in the rubric as the points possible for the assignment. Click ok, if this is what you want. You then have several options as to how you and your students will use the rubric. There are several small, difficult to decipher buttons at the beginning of the rubric box. The first one is a red X. This will remove the rubric from the assignment. The next is two white rectangles, one in front of the other; this will let you view the rubric. The next is a small pencil in front of a white rectangle. This button will let you edit the rubric. The next important section here is the “type” column. You can choose “used for grading” or “used for secondary evaluation.” If you have multiple ways of grading or evaluating, or multiple rubrics for one assignment, you can choose these options. Finally, the last column says “show rubric to student” and gives three options: no, yes (with rubric scores), or yes (without rubric scores). You will need to choose how much of your rubric you want your students to see. You will also be able to give feedback in the rubric – do you want your students to see that (then choose with rubric scores).

When it comes time to grade assignments using the rubric, you can find the rubric in the grading screen when you open the drop screen under the score (this should automatically open if you click in the score box or you can click on the small arrow below the score box, if it doesn’t). You will see the rubric listed and can click on the small button with two white rectangles in it to display it. Input the rubric scores and any feedback you want the students to see, then click save. You can also adjust the score from what the rubric assigned it, if necessary.

## Dealing with Academic Dishonesty

One of the biggest concerns with online courses is the ease with which students are able to cheat on assignments. There are several ways to combat such plagiarism and other academic dishonesty problems.

## SafeAssign

Obviously, the most basic way to combat plagiarism is to run assignments through the built-in plagiarism checker. For MSU, that is SafeAssign. For any assignment, make sure to check the “Check submissions for plagiarism using SafeAssign” box under “submission details.” However, this is only an option for assignments; for tests/quizzes, you cannot use SafeAssign. Additionally, do not assume that just because SafeAssign has detected plagiarism that the student has cheated. Often, the things SafeAssign has flagged as plagiarism are commonly used phrases and poorly formulated citations. Your eyes are the safest option for gauging whether what SafeAssign has flagged is actually plagiarism.

## On Tests

When using online tests, you cannot run the answers through SafeAssign, so checking for plagiarism is more difficult. There are some ways to format your tests to discourage cheating in all forms. First, you can have Blackboard randomize your test questions so each student gets different questions. You can create a large test bank and have Blackboard select different questions from it for each student. Find out how to do that here: [https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Original/Tests\\_Pools\\_Surveys/Orig\\_Reuse\\_Questions/Random\\_Block](https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Original/Tests_Pools_Surveys/Orig_Reuse_Questions/Random_Block)

You can also ask questions that are formatted in ways that are more difficult to cheat on. Essay questions, especially if you’ve read other samples of your students writing, are more difficult for students to cheat on and easier for you, as their professor, to notice when they have cheated. Asking questions that involve “higher order thinking” – consider the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. Making your students think about the course content in a way that isn’t just regurgitating information prevents them from cheating, simply because google can’t answer analysis questions.

You could also utilize a tool like Respondus Lockdown Browser, which will monitor the students’ learning environment and prevent them from googling. However, there are lots of concerns about the ethics of using such a tool. Be very careful if you choose to use this.

## Types of Assignments

Make use of paper and explanation-based assignments, instead of quizzes and tests. If anything, you can better monitor the student’s progress over the course of the semester. That way, you can tell when something has changed. These papers also tend to be those higher order thinking questions previously discussed that discourage cheating.

## Talk to the Students

One of the most useful ways of combatting plagiarism is to talk to your students about it. Have them sign an academic honesty agreement, but also discuss with students what plagiarism actually means and why it is bad. Regular check ins with students on this

subject have been shown to decrease the likelihood that student will cheat (see [Wagner, Enders, Pirie, & Thomas, 2016](#))

Sources/More Information

<https://iteachu.uaf.edu/preventing-academic-dishonesty-in-online-courses/>

<https://www.mheducation.ca/blog/4-ways-to-address-academic-dishonesty-in-online-learning>

<https://teaching.pitt.edu/resources/strategies-to-address-cheating-in-online-courses/>

<https://teaching.resources.osu.edu/teaching-topics/strategies-tools-academic-integrity>

## Useful Applications

In this section, we will list several applications that are available and have proven useful for online classroom activities. We will include the prices and a brief description of what activities each application work for.

### Microsoft Apps

All of the following Microsoft Apps are available for us to use, free of charge through the University. You can access them all if you go to a browser version of your email (through MyMSU; you cannot achieve this through the app) and click on the nine small dots in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. A drop-down menu will provide you with a list of other applications.

**Teams** is an application that has video conferencing and file sharing options. It essentially creates an area where your class can easily come together to communicate. You can easily share files and websites with whoever you choose to be on your Team. You can also have meetings where *only the people on that team* are able to attend. These meetings can be scheduled and repeat regularly. Teams also has a messaging function that works more like text messaging than email (so may be more comfortable for the students). The below apps all integrate within Teams.

**OneDrive** is a cloud storage system provided to us for free through the University that provides us with 1TB of storage. This cloud can be accessed both through a desktop app (where you can easily just save things to the cloud, while working from your computer) or through your MyMSU from any browser. You can also share the files with anyone else who has access to the OneDrive (like your students or other faculty members).

**Sway** is a document creator that allows for interactive documents in ways that Word does not. You can start from scratch on Sway or upload a Word or Powerpoint document that already exists, and Sway can transform it. The advantage to Sway over Word or Powerpoint is twofold. First, it is easier to include images, gifs, and videos within the Sway. Second, Sways can easily be

shared to other people – it exists online, you just need the website address to let someone else see it. This includes *embedding within Blackboard sites* or your Team.

**Stream** lets you upload and share videos amongst your students. In many respects, it can act like a class-only version of YouTube. If you have a video to show your students, you can upload it to Stream to easily share it with anyone. You can also create a Group on Stream and have anyone in that group view the videos (without them being available to any random person). As with Sway, you can also embed any videos from Stream to your Blackboard site, or Team.

**Yammer** is Microsoft's answer to social media. You can create a Yammer group and add anyone you want to it (say, your students) and then can make posts in much the same way as Twitter. It is a fun way to communicate with your students and let them talk to each other. Again, Yammer can embed in your Blackboard or Teams site.

## Other Apps

**Canva:** Free for a basic account; \$119.99/year for a professional account  
Canva is a design application. It has lots of free templates that can be used as starting points to create any number of designs. These designs can be as basic as worksheets or as complicated as scholarly posters. This application does not require any art skills; there are lots of graphics and images that can be used (and are often suggested) to enhance your designs. You just drag and drop what you want around the document. For more information, go to <https://www.canva.com/>

**Flip:** This is a Microsoft app *that MSU does not seem to have free access to*. You can sign up for a personal account using a non-MSU email account.  
**Flip** (formerly FlipGrid) is a video discussion application. In this app, students can create videos to submit, instead of basic discussion responses. You can create a group and add all your students to it. You can then create threads with specific topics that the students need to respond to. Each thread can be responded to with different media (that you can choose) – just not textboxes! As the leader of the group, you can choose whether or not the other people in the groups can see all the videos. The video creation and editing tools are very user friendly and easy to use by all levels of technological literacy. For more information, go to: <https://info.flip.com/>

**Kahoot:** pricing ranges from \$7.99-\$19.99/month.

Kahoot is a learning game application. You can create your own games for use in your classroom (online or in-person). These are mostly in quiz form, but you can adapt how the quizzes work. You can use questions from Kahoot's bank or create your own questions. You can add in images or videos. There are different types of quiz questions to choose from, including quiz, poll, puzzle, type answer, word

cloud, open-ended question (although, some of these options are only available at higher tiered levels). Students can work together or on teams, and these games can be played synchronously or assigned to be done asynchronously. For more information, go to: <https://kahoot.com/>

## Online Course Assessment Suggestions

In this section, we have suggested a rubric for ways that supervisors could assess the functionality of an online course. We want to stress that online courses should be regularly assessed by supervisors and/or colleagues. Online courses should be held to the same standards that In-Person courses are.

Category:	Includes:
Course page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the page easy to navigate? Can the students find what they need in the course through clear markers either on the Home Page or using the Menu (or both)?</li> <li>• Are the course materials accessible for all student needs? Has the professor made use of Blackboard Ally and other tools to ensure that all course materials are able to be viewed and used by students of all types?</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the students know how to communicate difficulties to their professor?</li> <li>• Does the faculty member regularly communicate with students?</li> <li>• Does the faculty member provide timely and easily accessible feedback on assignments?</li> <li>• Are students able to communicate/interact with each other and are they taking advantage of this ability?</li> </ul>
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the knowledge conveyed on the page demonstrating expertise in the field?</li> <li>• Are the course objectives clearly marked and attached to assignments?</li> <li>• Are students able to find the syllabus information?</li> </ul>

We feel that these three areas of assessment ensure that the online course fulfills the basic needs of all students. You are welcome to make use of this rubric in any way you see fit. You could turn it into a quantitative measure, by adding numerical values and a likert scale rating system to the categories. Alternatively, these could be qualitative measures by including comments for each category. Each department functions differently. This rubric can be tailored to what your department uses as its standard measures.

## Additional Information

Links to other sites (including from the university)

[https://moreheadstateedu28844-my.sharepoint.com/:o/g/person/m0418434\\_moreheadstate\\_edu/EnppRLJFJ2lJsZPh4Z7b-OQBcp4r2VqWhoTakuuMf8k\\_9g?e=wHVfXT](https://moreheadstateedu28844-my.sharepoint.com/:o/g/person/m0418434_moreheadstate_edu/EnppRLJFJ2lJsZPh4Z7b-OQBcp4r2VqWhoTakuuMf8k_9g?e=wHVfXT)  
<https://www.educationcorner.com/35-incredible-classroom-apps/>  
<https://research.com/software/the-best-apps-for-teachers-and-educators>  
<https://www.digitaltrends.com/mobile/best-apps-for-teachers-education/>