

ONLINE FACULTY HANDBOOK

The Online Faculty Handbook acts as a beginner's guide to the processes, language, and nuances with working in an unfamiliar environment.

*Online Faculty
Support Guide*



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Center for Instructional Excellence (CIE)

The CIE department provides instructional based support for faculty who teach at Brazosport College (whether on-campus or online) through certifications, programs, trainings, and consultations with our instructional designers and technical support staff.

We are in A.200; phone 979-230-3494 or email CIE@brazosport.edu for assistance. **NOTE:** software and online course tools discussed in handbook are fully supported by our staff. Training is offered each fall and spring.

About Distance Learning

Distance learning at Brazosport College offers educational opportunities for those in need of flexible hours and convenient access to a wide range of quality courses from the comfort of their own home. With availability of online technical and academic support services and resources with a click of a button, our “Virtual Campus” provides an excellent opportunity to achieve educational and career goals online.

Brazosport Official Policies

Online Student Privacy Statement

Brazosport College has written policies and procedures for protecting the privacy of all enrolled students, including distance education. These policies incorporate the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA) and are published in the [Student Guide and Calendar](#) under Access to Student Records, [Course Catalog](#) under Academic Services and Enrollment Policies, Student Records Board Policy [FJ-\(Local\)](#) - Student Records.

In addition to the above stated policies, both faculty and students also have a responsibility for protecting privacy as described below.

Faculty Responsibility

Faculty and staff understand and carry out a commitment to confidentiality, integrity, and security to protect the privacy of students who participate in distance learning activities. Students’ records are kept private by the instructor, except in cases where academic staff or administration access the course, with legitimate educational interest under FERPA guidelines and college board policies pertaining to Student Records.

Faculty training focusing on FERPA compliance is provided during convocation week, community education training. FERPA workshop topics include definitions, protected information, timeline for protected information, components of educational records, minors versus adult records, consent and directory information and effects all areas of instruction whether it campus based or online.

Student Responsibility

In order to maintain confidentiality, BCNET student account passwords are generated by the student and any password reset is completed through the [Self-Service Password Reset](#) web site

or thru webmail.brazosport.edu. The student can also change their password using a college owned computer if they are on campus or by visiting the Information Technology helpdesk. It is the student's responsibility to keep their password confidential. The BCNET student account provides access to hardware, software, and networked services on and off campus.

Within online courses, work submitted to an open discussion forum or team-based assignment can be accessed by other students within the course, yet any other assignments, grades and email correspondence are not viewable by other students.

Because information technology is a very important factor in protecting student privacy, the Information Technology department also employs several tools and processes for protecting student data which include:

- Software, Hardware and IT service acquisitions
- Firewalls
- Secure Data Centers
- Information security audits

Identity Verification in Distance Learning Courses

Brazosport College ensures that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by the use of Secure login and passcodes.

Brazosport College uses the Brightspace learning management system by Desire2Learn (D2L) for creating, hosting and delivering online courses. Student access to Brightspace is achieved through entering the students BCNET student account and password. The Student BCNET account is automatically created at the time the student completes an application thru the Admissions office. Each student is given a unique ID with a temporary password which includes their personal identification number (PIN). The student must change their temporary password before they are allowed to log into Brightspace.

A Student ID and password provides access to many different services on and off campus, including logging into the integrated learning platform and accessing registered online classes. Passwords can be reset by the student online using the secured [Account Reset Assistant](#) system as mentioned earlier or by showing the appropriate identification to an Information Technology, Help Desk staff member on campus.

The unique ID and PIN is assigned at the time of registration to Brazosport College. Students can obtain their ID and PIN, plus password through two separate emails sent to their personal email account, which the student provides on their registration application or by showing appropriate identification to an enrollment specialist in the Registrar's office or Information Technology department on campus.

Copyright

The Intellectual Property Policy for Brazosport College sets forth guidelines and rules which apply to ownership, distribution, and commercial rights to Intellectual Property including Patentable Products, Trade Secrets, and Copyrightable Works including but not limited to inventions, software, audio/video media, and academic material as developed by Brazosport College administrators, faculty, staff, or students.

All Intellectual Property created by a Creator(s) (includes, but not limited to college, employees and students), during the term of employment or while a student of College, is the sole property of the College, except as limited in the [College Intellectual Property Policy](#) (CE-Intellectual Property (Local)).

The above is not an exhaustive list of Academic policies, for a full listing please consult the [Course Catalog](#), online [Board Policy Manual](#), and the employee share drive.

Learn more about Copyright as well as accessing alternative legal sources by visiting CopyRight@BC.

Last Day of Attendance

The U.S. Department of Education indicates a school must demonstrate a student participated in class or was otherwise engaged in an “academically” related activity at a certain time during the semester, such as the 12th class day. Roster certification date at Brazosport is sent out via your department AOS or Division Chair.

It is important to remember in an online course, “attendance” is more than logging into the course; it must be measured by engagement with course content, tools, the instructor, and other students. The following are acceptable evidence of academically related activities:

- Student submission of an academic assignment or an exam.
- Posting by the student in a discussion about academic matters.
- Email from a student or other documentation show the student-initiated contact with instructor to ask a question about a subject studied in the course.

Certifying Rosters

You will be notified by your division chair and/or Dean of Instruction as to when to certify your rosters (referred to as official reporting day or ORD). Dates change due to length of semester, but for a full semester it typically is towards the end of the second week. Certified is done through [MyBC NEXT](#) and indicates if students have been active (attending, submitting work, participating). If you need help in certifying your rosters contact [IT Helpdesk](#).

Online Course Modalities

There are several types of online courses, each are based on what format it is to be run under. Course modalities are assigned by the Division Chair and Dean of Instruction.

Modality	Instructional Contact Hours	Course
Online	All instructional contact hours delivered online.	Online without live interaction.
Online Live	All instructional contact hours delivered online.	Online with schedule live interaction. Students log in at the designated class time.
Hybrid	At least half of instructional contact hours delivered online.	Hybrid with majority of instruction delivered online. Students are required to attend on-campus sessions on the days and times indicated.
Blended	Less than half of instructional contact hours delivered online.	Hybrid with majority of instruction delivered on campus. Students are required to complete some course work online.
Face-to-Face	All instructional contact hours delivered in person.	Fully face-to-face class on campus with online support.

Attendance

If teaching a Hybrid, Blended, or Face-to-Face course attendance needs to be tracked. It is advised to use the online course tool You-Attend for setting up and managing attendance. If you are teaching a Dual Credit course attendance is mandatory and use of the attendance tool online is required which enables registrars to pull attendance reports and submit to highschools.

Terms & Definitions

Term types and definitions change and are added over time, so the following is not an all-inclusive list.

Academic Terms

Online courses, no matter if modality (on-campus or online) follow the same term length.

- Fall Semester (15 weeks)
- Fall 1 and Fall 2 (each run 8 weeks)
- Winter Mini-Mester (3 weeks)
- Spring Semester (15 weeks)
- Spring 1 and Spring 2 (each run 8 weeks)
- May Intersession (3 weeks)
- Summer Semester (11 weeks)
- Summer 1 and Summer 2 (each run 6 weeks)

Definitions

Instructors and staff who have been using online courses for a while pick up certain verbiage associated with that environment. The following are some terms often used when preparing, developing, and running courses from semester to semester.

“D2L” is used to refer to our online learning management system (LMS) and stands for Desire2Learn. You will also hear it referred to as our Virtual Campus or Brightspace.

“zstudent” is used to view your online course as a real student. Faculty use their zstudent to check for links and make sure what they see as an instructor is indeed what students see. Each course has your zstudent added to it automatically. Contact Agela.Elder@brazosport.edu for login information for your zstudent.

“Online Course” is often used as a descriptor for all online course types. Term usage: What type of “online course” do you teach?

“Course Shell” is used to describe an empty online course (one that is devoid of containing course materials or students). Term usage: I can create a “course shell” for you so you can begin developing your fall hybrid course.

“Semester-based” course is a “course shell” that will eventually have students added to it and are used to teach during the semester. Semester-based courses usually are not added until a month or so before a semester begins. Term Usage: I need help with setting up my gradebook in my spring “semester-based course”.

“Master” course is a “course shell” used to develop materials and then copy into a semester-based course. Master courses will never have students added to it. You can request master courses at any time to develop materials for a course. Term Usage: I need help with copying materials over from my ENGL1201 “Master Course” into my spring “semester-based course”.

“Processing courses” is a term used to describe the loading of semester-based courses into D2L which occurs 60 days prior to course start date. Each department AOS processes courses through MyBC Next. Term Usage: Have the courses been “processed” for D2L yet?

“Student load” is used to describe the automated process of loading registered students into a semester-based course. Student loads are automatically done about 2 days prior to the start of a semester. Term usage: We have completed the “student load” for fall.

“Copying a course” is the process of copying materials from one course to another. Term usage: Can you copy my ENGL1234 hybrid course from last semester into the new semester course shell?

“Uploading” or **“Upload”** is a process of moving files from your computer or other device into

your course online. Term Usage: Have you “uploaded” your syllabus?

“**Downloading**” or “**Download**” is a process of moving files from a course online to your computer or other device. Term Usage: You can “download” your hybrid syllabus at any time.

“**Southern Association of Colleges and Schools**” or “**SACS**” is one of six regional accreditation organizations recognized by the United States Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. The SACS Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC) accredits universities and colleges in Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, Tennessee, **Texas**, Virginia, and Latin America.

“**Digital Higher Education Consortium**” or “**DigiTex**” is a collaborative of Texas community and technical colleges which share online courses through the state of Texas for students who are unable to take a course on their home campus. We offer several total online courses via DigiTex and will notify you when there is a DigiTex student registered for a course.

Preparing to Teach Online

The Center for Instructional Excellence provides instructional based support for faculty who teach at Brazosport College through certifications, trainings, and consultations with our instructional designers and technical support staff.

At the writing of this version of the handbook (fall 22) we are developing an instructional onboarding program which will be required for all new faculty. The program will introduce instructional and class managerial concepts with check-ins and reviews throughout the first year of teaching.

Till instructional onboarding is launched we have several other programs available to get you up and running. If you would like additional information on any of the following, please contact us at CIE@brazosport.edu.

- **Consultations:** Meet with our instructional designers or technical support staff for assistance in developing your course and learning about D2L course tools.
- **Four-Phase Course Design Program:** Courses are selected to go through our design program to integrate early connect intervention strategies, incorporate active learning activities to foster engagement and collaboration, and adhere to accessibility standards to promote usability for all students.
- **Online Teaching Certification:** Introduces faculty to not only online pedagogy, methodology, and quality design standards, but also the technical mechanics behind managing and developing a course online.
- **Moving to Online Teaching:** An online quick start course and companion to the Online Teaching Certification. Used as a visual resource for designing a course and provides tips on how to get started using online tools!
- **Training & Resources:** We offer both individual and group training on demand as well as

semester based technical training during fall and spring semester.

- **Virtual Campus Support:** Our current [Distance Learning website](#) provides access to a variety of resources for both online faculty and students, including videos, articles, and manuals on how to work with D2L.
- **CIE Fall & Spring News:** At the start of each semester CIE sends out a news email to all faculty containing department announcements and updated information. The email also provides important semester tips for preparing for the new term and getting students off on the right track after course start date.

Requesting a Master

As described in the Terms & Definitions section, semester-based courses are automatically loaded about a month prior to the start of each semester. These courses are assigned to you by your division chair.

Since it takes longer to create a course than just a month, you can request a “Master” which is a shell used to develop your course structure and materials. Once the semester starts you will then copy the Master into the semester-based course. We can assist with the copy or you can attend one of our many workshops that describe the process.

You can [request a master](#) at any time during the semester, typically you will only need one master per course. In the email specify what course the master is to be used for (example: MATH1201 master).

Requesting a Course Copy

Each semester you are responsible for copying materials from either a master or past semester-based course. If you need help in making a copy you can [request assistance](#). It is best to ask for the copy no later than 2 weeks prior to course start date which will ensure it gets completed in a timely manner. In the request email indicate the following:

- Title of the course which you want materials copied from (example: Last spring’s ENGL1201 Hybrid).
- Title of the course which you want the materials copied into (example: This fall’s ENGL1201 Hybrid).

Semester-based Course Missing

What if you can’t see your semester-based course, although rare, it could be due to a variety of things such as:

- Course wasn’t flagged to be online
- You have yet to “pinned” the course so it stands out from all your other courses
- Course may have been cancelled

Check with your department AOS to confirm the course was “flagged” for D2L. If so, you can

check to see if it may need to be pinned by following the “[How to pin and unpin courses](#)” guide. IF you are still unable to locate your course, contact our [IT Helpdesk](#).

Designing & Developing Quality Courses

The Center for Instructional Excellence is here to support you through the course development and design process. We offer one-on-one as well as group training and consultations with our designers and technical support staff and offer on-going workshops each semester. We are dedicated to the continuous assurance that all our courses incorporate up-to-date instructional design strategies and techniques proven to promote student engagement and success such as:

- Using early connect intervention strategies to identify struggling students.
- Incorporating active learning activities to foster student engagement and collaboration.
- Adhering to accessibility standard to promote course usability for all students.

In addition, Brazosport College has adopted the [Higher Ed Quality Matters Rubric](#) which is comprised of a variety of design standards to promote student learning and encourage continuous quality course improvement. Our E-Learning Certification and Moving to Online Teaching course, which all new online faculty are required to take, cover these standards in detail. If you have yet had access to either of these courses email CIE@brazosport.edu.

Instructor Response Times

Faculty teaching a course online need to communicate with students just as they would in an on-campus classroom. Offering feedback frequently and in a timely manner can have an impact on student success. Online best practices indicate responses should adhere to a 24–48-hour time frame, yet **research shows a shorter turnaround time is most desired** by students to decrease anxiety.

In an online course there are a variety of tools used for interaction and communication such as News, Email, Discussion, Dropbox, and Grades. Going through our E-Learning Certification and attending workshops will cover additional interactive/communication practices as well as how to set up and manage these tools.

Testing Online

Testing is done using the Quiz tool in an online course. For high stake exams such as a midterm or final you can apply Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor for a more secure testing environment.

Respondus LockDown Browser prevents students from printing, copying, or accessing other applications/browsers during an exam. Students are locked into the test until it is submitted for grading. Students access the LockDown Browser during the startup sequence of the exam, there is no PRIOR download needed.

Respondus Monitor is an additional setting which adds a video monitoring component to the LockDown Browser and requires students to use a webcam. The monitor feature walks students

through a set up and verification process prior to accessing questions and then monitors activity till the end of the exam.

Zoom, a virtual meeting tool, can also be employed as an additional proctoring method for live proctoring with the Respondus LockDown Browser. When used, the instructor watches students remotely during the online exam.

Lecture Videos

MyMediasite is used for uploading, storing, and managing videos for online courses. All course related videos created by the instructor needs to be stored in their MyMediasite account. Once stored they can then be captioned by our department.

Screencast-O-Matic (SOM) is used to create and edit your videos.

For additional information on how to proctor exams, use Mymediasite and access Screencast-O-matic contact Angela.Elder@brazosport.edu or Brandon.Lam@brazosport.edu.

Technical Support

IT helpdesk is typically the main funnel for all support, but faculty who are experiencing technical issues with working in their online course or need help with an online course tool can request assistance from us directly using the following contact: Phone-979-230-3494 | Email- CIE@brazosport.edu.

Student Support

Students have access to a variety of resources for working with D2L, including:

- Manuals
- Videos
- Online Course Tools Tour

Manuals, videos and more are available on the [Distance Learning website](#). Inside D2L there are support access links on the login page, My Home page, and on each course home page.

The Online Course Tools Tour (OCTT) is available to students 1 week prior and up to 3 weeks after each semester. Students must RSVP. Sessions are an hour long and introduce navigational and support features of D2L as well as how to work with course tools such as posting to Discussions, submitting a Dropbox assignment, taking a Quiz and viewing Grades.

Faculty can offer a participation grade for attending the tour. If you would like to have your students participate as a graded activity contact Angela.Elder@brazosport.edu or Brandon.Lam@brazosport.edu for additional information.

Technical support is provided by the IT helpdesk who will reach out to us if they are not able to resolve the issue students might have with D2L.

End of Handbook