



Online Teaching Characteristics

The Online Teaching Characteristics are observable, research-based practices that define effective online course design that help faculty create meaningful, engaging, and well-structured learning experiences. Both foundational and aspirational, these characteristics create a shared language for what high-quality online education looks like at Augusta University. The Characteristics have been grouped into eight categories.

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*Shared with the Online Course Design Characteristics

1. Communication

This category describes professional and responsive instructor communication both within and external to the learning management system (D2L/Brightspace) to support the students' learning experience.

	<i>Characteristic</i>
1	Responds to student communications and inquiries in a timely manner.
2	Publishes clear response time standards for all communication modes (email, Q&A forum, grading, office hours).
3	Notifies students and supervisor if unavailable more than three days.
4	Clearly states plan for regular and substantive interaction with learners during the course.
5	Posts regular (weekly or bi-weekly minimum) relevant announcements in the D2L course to guide, remind, and encourage, remaining visible throughout the term.
6	Communicates clearly using professional tone and supportive language.
7	Listens actively to student concerns.

2. Community Building

This category is focused on establishing and maintaining a welcoming learning community of respect, empathy, and visibility by the instructor.

Characteristic

1	Demonstrates respect for all students in all interactions.
2	Demonstrates listening, empathy, and helpfulness.
3	Refers to students by name in discussion forums and feedback.
4	Creates and makes available a welcoming self-introduction.
5	Sends a welcome message explaining expectations and how to get started

3. Feedback

This category describes instructors' provision of timely feedback through the use of assessment instructions, rubrics, and grades.

Characteristic

1	Provides individual feedback, whole class feedback, and grades on assignments in a timely manner.
2	Uses rubrics to grade assignments and provide specific comments.
3	Shares rubrics that clarify grading expectations in advance of assessment deadline.

4. Organization and Management

This category addresses aspects of the learning experience (e.g., syllabus, policies, content, calendar, grading, data-informed continuous improvement) that promote continuous quality improvement.

Characteristic

1	Releases modules and content in the course site in a timely manner.
2	Maintains an accurate course calendar with all due dates and posts updates promptly.
3	Grades and records assignments in a timely manner.
4	Submits final grades by the required deadline.
5	Handles basic administrative tasks (gradebook, attendance, etc.) efficiently.
6	Publishes the syllabus, through Simple Syllabus, which meets Augusta University standards.
7	Enforces course policies consistently, fairly, and empathetically.
8	Summarizes weekly takeaways and sets up what comes next.
9	Reviews data and feedback, notes improvements, and updates materials for next term.

5. Faculty Presence

This category describes strategies an instructor can employ to maintain presence throughout the course.

Characteristic

1	Contributes meaningfully to online activities and discussions.
2	Posts discussion replies that probe, connect, and summarize ideas.
3	Holds consistent office hours—live and by appointment—for real-time questions and connection.
4	Regular and substantive interaction is provided throughout the course.
5	Learning activities promote active learning and engagement for students and faculty.
6	Is visibly active in the course for the course contact hours per week (e.g., announcements, discussion replies, and synchronous sessions)

6. Progress Monitoring

This category focuses on identifying struggling students and making the necessary instructional adjustments to best support them.

Characteristic

1	Submits early-alert reports or flags on schedule as required.
2	Actively engages with learners who show signs of struggle in the course.
3	Monitors analytics to spot inactive or struggling students and reach out
4	Adjusts content, assignments, and dates in response to learner needs.

7. Supports Adult Learning

This category reinforces that AU students are adult learners who seek your practical and theoretical knowledge, as well as opportunities for reflection.

Characteristic

1	Demonstrates practical and theoretical knowledge.
2	Encourages students to be reflective about their learning.

8. Technology Use/Integration

This category emphasizes the use, support, and guidance of technology in the learning experience.

Characteristic

1	Develops comfort with essential technology tools.
2	Uses multimedia resources skillfully and purposefully.
3	Offers initial guidance and troubleshooting when students have questions or technical difficulties, and refers them to support services when additional help is needed