



Online Teaching Essentials FAQs

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What is Online Teaching Essentials?

Online Teaching Essentials (OTE) is a three-week, fully online, asynchronous professional development requirement for all faculty who are new to teaching fully online or hybrid courses at Colorado Mesa University (CMU).

OTE is facilitated by instructional designers in the Office of Distance Education, and is not self-paced. The course emphasizes the components necessary for creating a quality online/hybrid course that will engage students, including topics like online pedagogy, course alignment, content accessibility, and the use of D2L. The course and the facilitators model what is expected of quality online teaching and course design.

Why is OTE important?

Many faculty members are very accustomed to learning and teaching in the traditional classroom environment. OTE allows them to step into the shoes of an online student, examine the online learning environment, and excel in this unique space. OTE is designed to provide faculty members with the knowledge and skills needed to design and deliver the high-quality online learning experiences that students deserve.

Who is required to complete OTE?

Beginning July 2020, all faculty who are scheduled to teach online or hybrid courses for the first time at CMU will be required to pass OTE before teaching. Those faculty who were “grandfathered” into the current system (having taught fully online for CMU prior to Fall 2013) will also be required to take OTE within the next three years. This requirement will align all online and hybrid offerings with the [online course design standards](#) agreed upon by the Academic Council in Fall 2018. For faculty who are not required to take OTE, open seats are usually available for those who elect to take it.

How are faculty notified they must complete OTE?

Once the faculty member is assigned in Banner to teach a fully online or hybrid course, an automated email is sent to their CMU email account with registration instructions for the next OTE session.

What is the overall time commitment for OTE?

OTE is three weeks long and based on survey responses, most participants spend between 4-10 hours on the course each week.

What are the assessed components of OTE?

The assessed components of OTE include three discussions, one short quiz, an alignment assignment, successful completion of D2L Essentials, and a final project. To successfully complete OTE, an overall score of 80% or better must be achieved.

What does the final project consist of?

OTE participants are required to build a "Start Here" module (syllabus, schedule, course outcomes, etc.) and the first week/module of an online course (modular outcomes, content, activities, and assessments). The content of the final project may be a fun and light-hearted about a favorite hobby, or participants can use this as an opportunity to get a head-start on an actual course they will be teaching. The final project is worth 50% of the final grade.

What about D2L?

While OTE is not a D2L how-to course, participants are taught to use D2L tools as they relate to quality design. A required component of OTE is the successful completion of the D2L Essentials training course, which provides specific instruction on navigating and using key tools in D2L. In addition, [CMU's D2L Faculty Resources page](#) contains helpful D2L guides and videos.

When is OTE scheduled?

To maximize availability, OTE is typically scheduled at least once per semester (Fall, Spring, Summer). To find out when the next course starts, email the Office of Distance Education at distanceed@coloradomesa.edu.

What if the next OTE session is offered after the start of the teaching assignment?

If a faculty member is assigned to begin teaching a fully online or hybrid course before the next OTE session starts, an instructional designer will be assigned as a mentor by the Director of Distance Education. The faculty member will work with the instructional designer for that semester and receive access to teach online/hybrid for that semester only. They will be required to take and pass OTE before the next semester.

What happens when faculty successfully complete OTE?

Upon successful completion of OTE, the faculty member, their department head, and the Director of Distance Education will be notified via email that the faculty member has completed all course requirements. In addition to a certificate of completion, OTE graduates receive individualized feedback on their final project and full access to their online or hybrid course shell(s). They will be able to teach future online or hybrid courses without restriction.

It is also important to know that the Office of Distance Education will review the online or hybrid courses of OTE graduates in the term following OTE completion. If an OTE graduate is not assigned to teach an online or hybrid course in the current term, a review will take place during a term in which they teach online or hybrid. The course will be reviewed using [CMU's Quality Course Design Rubric](#).

What happens if faculty do not successfully complete OTE?

On the rare occasion that a faculty member does not successfully complete OTE, the Director of Distance Education will assign an instructional designer to assist the faculty member with their online or hybrid course for that semester. The faculty member will be allowed to teach online or hybrid for that semester only, and will be required to retake and pass OTE before they are able to teach online or hybrid courses in subsequent semesters.