ODL Guidelines for Lecturers

✓ **Code of Conduct**

As online courses limit face-to-face interaction, you should aim to engage students as much as possible. Active and effective communication and collaboration among students should be fostered to maximise learning. The following netiquette guidelines help you be a more effective lecturer when communicating online with your students.

- Acknowledge students' first posts or responses immediately. This forms a good first impression and will help create a dynamic online community.
- Adopt a friendly, conversational tone to help build good rapport with students. Address students by their names and do not be afraid to let your personality show. This will establish a warm environment that will make your students feel relaxed.
- Ensure that you respond to posts that have not received any feedback from other students. Doing this will help develop the discussion as you can post further questions for other students to consider. It is important to ensure that all contributions are acknowledged.
- Students look up to you to set the tone and pace of your online discussion. Set the example of how to be a productive participant. Be the first to post and provide probing questions to get the discussion going. Here are examples of probing questions:
    - How are you defining the term….?
    - What do you think are the reasons for that point?
    - What are the evidence for …?
    - Why do you agree/disagree with that point?
    - Could you clarify your comment?
    - What other possible ways/explanations …?
    - What are possible opposing arguments for this statement?
- Demonstrate the best way of giving feedback online. Provide a positive comment first before moving on with suggestions for improvement.
- Make your presence felt by posting at least three times a week. Encourage your students to be participative. Connect students' ideas and sum up the discussion.
- If there are students who are very reluctant to participate, connect with them privately and find out why. They may show lack of interest in participating online due to technical issues, lack of interest or simply lack of confidence. Encourage their participation and support them by acknowledging and praising their contribution.
- There will be students who are very enthusiastic and will dominate discussions. Acknowledge their outstanding contributions but pose questions that require them to reflect longer before responding. They could also be assigned as moderators or mentors for the more passive students.
- Emphasise quality rather than quantity of responses. Encourage comments that spark further thinking and discussion.
- Do not leave discussion session without proper closure. Provide a summary of the discussion by connecting students' comments and interpreting their points of view. Giving students a general summary of the discussion will provide a good sense of closure.

- ✓ **General Guidelines**

  - Student Engagement

  This CODL guidelines for lecturers is developed to assist you in your online teaching and learning processes. Teaching online requires more focus on student engagement compared to the face-to-face conventional teaching. Highlighting student engagement in your teaching ensures that your online courses will not become mere electronic correspondence courses. To engage online learners, your courses should include a combination of discussions, collaborative activities, video and audio clips, hands-on exercises and brief video lectures. A blend of online teaching and learning tools would come in handy for your lessons.

  In order to keep your students engaged, lessons should be presented in shorter "chunks" instead of in a long lecture. Incorporate colours and pictures into texts to facilitate students' learning and keep them interested at the same time. If you have a large group of students, break them into smaller groups for online discussions. This will encourage a more active participation as communicating with a smaller group of peers is less intimidating.

  - Building Good Rapport with Students

  Though your courses are online, make your presence felt by the students. Communicate with them often, not only with regards to their learning content but also on a friendly basis. Make an effort to build a good rapport with your students just as you would in a conventional face-to-face classroom.

  - Time Management

  Online courses can be really time-consuming. Manage your time well. You need not be "around" 24/7. Be selective as to when you reply or post your comments. Students are supposed to discuss with each other and not with you alone. However, do be aware of queries by students and respond to them appropriately. Responding in a timely manner, participating in online discussions and giving students regular feedback on their work and their comments make your presence known.

  - Communication

  Clearly communicate what is expected of your students. Provide clear and concise feedback to them so that they are aware of their performance all the time. Record and communicate student progress information such as assignment and quiz grades. It is important that all communications with students are recorded.