



---

## **Policy AC003: Faculty Training for Online Delivery**

**Recommended for Approval by:** Scott E. Miller, Senior VP for Academic Affairs and Provost

**Approved by:** Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson, President

**Effective Date:** 07/01/2022

---

### **A. Intent**

To define training requisites for Pennsylvania Western University faculty who teach online courses.

### **B. Definition(s)**

**Online Course:** A course making use of one or more technologies to deliver 80% or more of the instruction for the course via web-based delivery of instruction, synchronously or asynchronously.

### **C. Policy**

The Teaching Online Master Class (TOMC) is a fully online course that is offered to faculty teaching online courses for PennWest. TOMC, or equivalent training approved by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, is required of all PennWest faculty teaching online. Similar training completed at another PASSHE institution will satisfy this requirement.

The master class is an asynchronous online workshop based on Quality Matters and other best practices in designing and teaching online courses. Participants will complete activities using pedagogy and technologies designed to enhance online learning. The course also aims to facilitate peer sharing of strategies and expose instructors to the student perspective of a learning experience to help inform how they teach online. The TOMC supports PennWest's compliance with Middle States' Accreditation Standard III - Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience.

Faculty members are required to complete the TOMC, or equivalent training as indicated above, prior to teaching an online course for PennWest. Should circumstance arise whereby, due to a late hire, or other unforeseen situation, a faculty member is unable to complete the TOMC prior to teaching online, the faculty member is responsible for scheduling a consultation with the PennWest Global Online (GO) Center for Innovation/Instructional Design, and completing any subsequent customized trainings determined by the Center in order to ensure that the course material and faculty are adequately prepared. Additionally, the faculty member will be automatically enrolled into the next available TOMC.

Faculty are also strongly encouraged to participate in additional training opportunities available from PennWest Learning Technology Services and the Center for Faculty Excellence as part of continuing professional development.

Policy requirements will be effective with the Fall 2023 semester.

#### **D. Procedure(s)**

##### **Exemption from TOMC Training**

Consistent with the APSCUF-PASSHE Collective Bargaining Agreement, similar training completed at another PASSHE institution will satisfy this requirement. Evidence of completion of such training will be provided to the GO office and preclude the need for the exemption process outlined below. However, additional training expectation may be relevant for faculty teaching in a Global Online partnership program.

A faculty member wishing to attain exemption from the TOMC must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of appropriate university officials, that they have completed training that is current and consistent with the scope of the TOMC. The faculty member is encouraged to suggest appropriate alternative distance education training in consultation with their academic department and the PennWest GO Center for Innovation/Instructional Design.

Prior training should include, but not be limited to, Learning Management System (LMS)-specific training and online pedagogy best practices. Optimally, the faculty member would have obtained experiences that allow understanding of the online student perspective.

1. A faculty member wishing to request an exemption must submit an electronic portfolio to the PennWest Global Online Vice President that includes the following information:
  - Evidence of prior LMS training, including a description of topics covered
  - A list of online courses previously taught by the faculty member
  - Evidence [including narrative] that the online course(s) meet the essential elements as provided in the current PennWest GO *'Online Instructor Best Practices and Expectations'* document.
  - Other information the faculty member feels is relevant for the evaluation.

Upon request of the faculty member, a consultation may be scheduled to further explore prior training and supporting materials with the Vice President for Global Online.

2. An Exemption Committee will be appointed by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, or their designee, to review the faculty member's portfolio. The committee will be comprised of the following:
  - PennWest Global Online Vice President or Associate Vice President
  - One or more faculty members approved for online teaching, with preference for individuals who have successfully completed the TOMC
  - PennWest GO Center for Innovation/Instructional Design Director
  - A designee from the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
3. The Exemption Committee will inform the faculty member, department chair, and academic dean of the exemption decision no later than three weeks after receipt of the completed portfolio.

**E. Related policies**

None.

**F. Contact Information**

For additional information, please contact the Director of the Global Online Center for Innovation/  
Instructional Design.

**G. Policy Review Schedule**

All policies will be reviewed every two years or on an as needed basis if a change in BOG, PASSHE or Pennsylvania law would create the need for an immediate change.