

Expectations for Facilitators

Demonstrate an expertise in both course content and facilitation skills.

In order to become familiar with the content, assignments, and pacing of a course, PLS online facilitators must successfully complete the course as a participant with an experienced course trainer. Facilitators also complete the five-week Developing Online Facilitation Skills course, which includes online communication, collaboration, and community-building skills development, Sakai training, and assessment techniques..

Communicate effectively through writing.

Course interactions occur exclusively online, and facilitators must demonstrate excellent writing skills. Facilitators carefully craft comments, considering the tone as well as the content of all communication.

Establish a positive online learning environment that fosters mutual respect.

PLS facilitators set the right tone in their courses through their example. The use of excellent verbal skills models openness, caring, flexibility and sincerity.

Provide individual help and support.

Facilitators log into their course daily to check for questions that may be posted in the Questions topic in Forums or through Messages.

Provide basic technical assistance.

A facilitator is the first person participants will turn to if they have a problem; therefore PLS facilitators must be very comfortable with the Sakai Learning Management System. Facilitators are expected to have intermediate computer skills and to be proficient with email, sending and receiving attachments, and basic Internet navigation. Facilitators must be familiar with the type of information available through the Help link, which is part of every course.

Encourage critical thinking.

PLS facilitators ask questions, offer alternate perspectives, and provide additional information to encourage participants to expand their thinking about a topic.

Maintain a daily presence in the class:

- Log into the class daily.
- Guide and monitor class discussions daily.
- Check messages through Sakai and reply within 24 hours.
- Notify participants if unable to access the class or respond to students for more than 24 hours.
- Contact supervisor if unable to respond to students or access the class for more than 48 hours. The facilitator supervisor will be able to check in on the class or assign another facilitator to cover the class during longer absences.

Respond to participants in a timely manner, providing support and feedback:

- Post grades and specific feedback for all assignments within 72 hours of due date.
- Contact (by phone, message, or email) any participant who has not completed an assignment within 48 hours after assignment due date.