

Expectations for Facilitators

Demonstrate an expertise in the course content.

In order to become familiar with the content, assignments, and pacing of a course, PLS online facilitators must complete the course as a participant before facilitating it.

Communicate effectively through writing.

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

Establish a positive online learning environment that fosters mutual respect.

You can set the right tone in your course through your example. Use verbal skills to model openness, caring, flexibility and sincerity.

Provide individual help and support.

Log into the course daily to check for questions that may be posted in the Questions forum of Class Discussions or through Messages.

Provide basic technical assistance.

A facilitator is the first person participants will turn to if they have a problem; therefore facilitators need to be very comfortable with the Blackboard navigation system. Facilitators are expected to have intermediate computer skills and to be proficient with email, sending and receiving attachments, and basic Internet navigation. Facilitators should also be familiar with the type of information available through the Blackboard Support tab, which is part of every course.

Encourage critical thinking.

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 Blackboard and reply within 24 hours.
- Notify your class if you will be unable to access the class or respond to students for more than 24 hours.
- Contact your supervisor if you will be unable to respond to students or access the class for more than 48 hours. Your supervisor will be able to check in on your class or assign another facilitator to cover your class during longer absences.

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

- Post a private message to each participant every week.
- Post grades and overall feedback about the week 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.