

New Certification Tracks for Distance Learning Instructors

This document contains a description and agreement regarding the reorganized certification training for Distance Learning instructors. Please read the information carefully before selecting the desired certification track and signing on the last page.

Instructors face many challenges when teaching completely online or hybrid courses for the first time. Differences between the distance learning (DL) and face-to-face (F2F) environments are often compounded by the lack of familiarity with technology used to deliver the courses. This is especially true when staffing concerns require instructors to develop and/or modify course content in addition to instructing students.

The Center for Instructional Innovation and Technology Services (**CI²TS**) at Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) has addressed these concerns by requiring new DL instructors to teach at least one web-assist course prior to teaching their first DL course. A web-assist course is a traditional F2F course supplemented with web-based content, continues to meet according to the published university schedule and incorporates the following types of tools in their course from the University Learning Management System (LMS): communication, assignment, and document posting.

The reason for the web-assist requirement is to give new online instructors practical experience with the University LMS while working in the traditional F2F environment to assist with a better understanding of teaching with technology. The previously stated challenges with staffing needs have caused the **CI²TS** to develop the following alternative tracks to expedite certification for new DL instructors: Non-Experienced Facilitator, Experienced Facilitator, and Facilitator/Developer.

Track 1 – Non-Experienced Facilitator

For instructors with no prior experience teaching in a DL environment and have not had the opportunity to teach a web-assist course prior to the semester they are assigned to teach an online or hybrid course at PVAMU.

1. Instructors are **required** to complete certification training (including an exam) designed specifically for instructors who will *TEACH ONLY*, not develop or modify existing content.
2. Instructors **require a mentor** assigned by the academic unit during the first semester they teach DL courses. The mentor must be a certified DL instructor in good standing and will be responsible for providing guidance to the new instructor. The **CI²TS** will be available for technical assistance, but the mentor should be the first point of contact for instruction-related issues. The mentor will automatically be given development access to that instructor's course.
3. Instructors are **given non-editing teacher access** to online or hybrid courses. Non-editing teachers can communicate with students, view student work and grade student activities; however, they cannot modify course content. Any changes to content must be approved by the mentor in coordination with the Department Head and/or Program Coordinator. Once approval is received, the mentor completes the requested changes.

Track 2 – Experienced Facilitator

For instructors who have taught at least one DL course at another institution but have not used the LMS currently used by PVAMU and have not taught a web-assist course at PVAMU.

1. Instructors are **required** to complete certification training (including an exam) designed specifically for instructors who will *TEACH ONLY*, not develop or modify existing content.
2. Instructors **DO NOT require a mentor**. The **CI²TS** will be available for technical assistance, but the instructor addresses all instruction-related issues.
3. Instructors are **given non-editing teacher access** to online or hybrid courses. Non-editing teachers can communicate with students, view student work and grade student activities; however, they cannot modify course content. Any changes to content have to be approved by the Department Head and/or Program Coordinator. Once approval is received, the designated course developer completes the requested changes.

Track 3 – Facilitator/Developer (Full Certification)

For instructors who have taught at least one DL course at another institution using the LMS currently used at PVAMU. It is also for resident PVAMU instructors who have taught at least one web-assist course using PVAMU's current LMS.

1. Instructors are **required** to complete certification training designed for instructors who are responsible for the design, development, modification and delivery of content within the LMS.
2. Instructors **DO NOT require a mentor**. The **CI²TS** will be available for technical assistance, but the instructor addresses all instruction-related issues.
3. Instructors are **given full teacher access** to their DL courses. Even though instructors have the ability to design and modify content, the **CI²TS** recommends that the Department Head or the Program Coordinator be made aware of significant changes to content.

Please Note: The definition of the Facilitator/Developer (Full Certification) track is provided here for your convenience. However, participants in this track do not have to submit this form. For Facilitator/Developer (Full Certification) training, simply contact the **CI²TS** at ciits@pvamu.edu for the training schedule.

Certification Agreement

Instructor Name:

Please check the desired Certification Track below. Be sure to review the descriptions of each track on the previous pages to pick the appropriate track.

Non-Experienced Facilitator

Experienced Facilitator

If the Non-Experienced Facilitator track is selected, please fill in the name of the instructor who will be serving as mentor.

By signing below, I certify that I have read and understand the requirements of the certification tracks and agree to adhere to the procedures as described.

Participant Signature (instructor seeking certification)

Mentor Signature (If applicable)

Department Head / Program Coordinator

If there are any questions, please contact the **CI²TS** at ciits@pvamu.edu.