Online Facilitator Process

What are facilitators and why does my course need them?

Online classes should foster a student–instructor relationship that surpasses the minimal level of interaction afforded by a face-to-face lecture class that enrolls hundreds of students. Research into the optimum online “learning community” recommends that the ratio between students and an instructor should be no greater than 25:1. To achieve this, sections of courses larger than 25 should be supported by additional teaching resources, such as graduate assistants, graders, discussion leaders, etc. At Ohio University we refer to these teaching assistants as course facilitators.

Facilitator = a teaching assistant for online courses with more than 25 students

Facilitators work with faculty much like graduate students assist in a campus-based class. Primarily, facilitators assist faculty with grading, managing discussion board use, responding to email questions, and other duties as assigned by the instructor.

A large section can be effectively divided into smaller, interactive “learning community” groups with the addition of facilitators

The recommended process is that each facilitator is assigned a group of 25 students and manages the entire group, under the supervision of the instructor of record. The instructor, however, determines the facilitator’s role and supervises facilitator performance as best suited to the course.


How do I find a facilitator?

eLearning OHIO manages a process to help you identify possible facilitators, provide facilitator training, and process pay for their facilitation work.

When should I add a facilitator?

- **25 students**: a facilitator **may** be added, following the OHIO process, when an ECAM online course has more than 25 students, at the discretion of the college originating the course.
  - For example: a course with 40 students **may include the instructor of record and one facilitator.**
- **50-student option**: a facilitator **MUST** be added to any online course that enrolls more than 50 students.
For example: a course of 60 students must include one facilitator in addition to the instructor of record.

- **20 students:** In alignment with UCC guidelines, certain writing courses require a facilitator be added after 20 students are enrolled.
  - For example: a course of 35 students must include one facilitator, assigned 15 students, in addition to the faculty of record.

**How many facilitators will I need for my course?**

- **First 25 students:** The first 25 students are always considered to be “assigned” to the instructor of record without the addition of a facilitator.
- **After the first 25:** The optimum recommendation is that a facilitator is assigned to each group of no more than 25 students beyond the initial group of 25. This process is used for most ECAM courses offered to OHIO’s online-degree-seeking students.
  - For example: a course with 75 students would have two facilitators. The instructor of record would be assigned the first 25 students, and each facilitator would be assigned 25 students.
- **50-student option:** A facilitator is assigned to each group of no more than 25 students beyond the initial group of 50. This option applies to Athens online courses and may apply to ECAM courses per the college’s policies.
- **50-student max—single course:** A facilitator cannot be assigned more than 50 students—or two groups of 25—in a single course.
- **100-student max—per term:** A facilitator cannot be assigned more than 100 students across multiple courses in any single term.

**Who can be a facilitator?**

- All facilitators must complete the OHIO Online Facilitator Training prior to serving as a facilitator. Facilitators beginning work for the first time after January 1, 2014 will be paid only if they have completed training successfully. This training, held online, will be offered at least once each semester. Contact eLearning OHIO for details.
- Other required qualifications are determined by the instructor of record and the specific facilitator must be approved by the faculty member, the department chair or school director, and eLearning OHIO (to assure training has been completed). A minimum of a master’s degree in a field related to the assigned course is recommended.
- Many departments find this to be an opportunity for graduate students to gain online teaching experience while earning some money. Some departments have assigned facilitation as the work to be completed for their assistanceship.
- The individual must be eligible for employment by Ohio University.
- The facilitator must have access to a high speed Internet connection and computer with appropriate software and browser configurations for the duration of the course.
• The facilitator must agree to secure copies of textbooks and other instructional materials at no cost to eLearning OHIO.
• The facilitator must agree that s/he will not modify, abstract, reuse, or repurpose course content. The intellectual property rights of the course shall be treated as described in the Ohio University Policy and Procedure 15.015: Copyright and, for University-Sponsored Educational Materials, Ohio University Policy and Procedure 15.006.

What will the facilitator earn?

• The facilitator will earn a stipend of $94 for each student assigned, within the max limits listed above, unless the college in which facilitation occurs determines another rate to be paid.
• Payment will be calculated based on the assignment of students on day three of the course.
• Payment will be made following standard OHIO payroll processes and procedures.
• eLearning OHIO will process the contract for payment for facilitators in ECAM courses.
  o If a facilitator is being contracted for an Athens online course, the approval paperwork must include an account number to which the stipend will be charged or the department must process the contract.

What if I don’t know of anyone qualified to be a facilitator in my course?

• eLearning OHIO maintains a list of individuals who have facilitated online courses in the past, or those who are trained to do so. If you need help identifying a facilitator, email facilitators@ohio.edu.

When do I get started to add a facilitator(s) for my course next term?

To Get Started (instructor of record)

• Identify your facilitator(s) or contact eLearning OHIO for help to do so.
• Complete the facilitator approval form (online.ohio.edu/facilitators) and deliver to Haning Hall 102, ATTN: Facilitator Process.

Upon Email Notification Of Approval From eLearning OHIO (facilitator)

• Have your facilitator check online.ohio.edu/facilitators for scheduled training dates and register per instructions on the site.
• Complete the facilitator training successfully before the beginning of the term in which facilitation services will be provided.

No Later Than Week Before Class Starts (instructor of record)
• Contact facilitator(s) with information about what you expect, expected method and frequency of communication, etc. YOU are the instructor of record and your responsibility includes supervision of facilitators and continued communication with them throughout the term.

**By First Day Of Class** (instructor of record)

• Provide a list of your facilitators and the number of students each will be assigned by sending a note to onlinefacilitator@ohio.edu. Any changes in enrollment between day one and day three will be evenly distributed between all facilitators unless otherwise designated.