

# SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT (SME) HANDBOOK

CENTER FOR ONLINE AND EXTENDED LEARNING



VERSION 2024\_1.2



## PURPOSE

### WHAT WE ARE ABOUT

Transforming lives through education.

## MISSION

### WHAT WE DO

Educate students by linking knowledge to professional practice.

## VISION

### WHAT WE WANT TO BE

A premier university for challenging students to enhance their global competencies and 21st century skills, for success in a diverse world.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

### WHERE WE WILL FOCUS

- Create an environment focused on student success. (Students)
- Grow innovative academic programs. (Academics)
- Optimize our organizational capacity. (People)
- Strengthen and increase institutional financial sustainability. (Finances)
- Enhance our critical infrastructure. (Facilities and Technology)

## VALUES

### HOW WE BEHAVE—ICARE

#### *INTERDEPENDENCE*

We are an inclusive and caring community that emphasizes service as a foundation of success.

#### *COMMUNICATION*

We engage in authentic dialogue, timely exchanges of information, and fact-driven discussion, civil debate, and decision-making.

#### *ACCOUNTABILITY*

We make ethical, responsible decisions that have a high degree of integrity, are data informed, and are results-oriented.

#### *RESPECT*

As a portal of equal access to education and information, we model civility and compassion; we embrace diversity as an essential component of creating a rich university experience for everyone.

#### *ENTREPRENEURSHIP*

We prize innovation and creative thinking as hallmarks of successful participation in the global marketplace.

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# QUALITY



## ALIGNMENT

Our courses are fully (and transparently) internally aligned so that all student activities and assignments contribute to the attainment of the stated course learning outcomes.

Courses are aligned with learning outcomes which have been developed and by department faculty and approved by our accrediting body. The SME has great latitude in determining weekly goals and topics, but *the Course Learning Outcomes cannot be changed during the build cycle.*

## INSTRUCTOR PRESENCE

Our courses utilize elements of actual, virtual, and meta-instructional faculty voice to create a sense that our instructors are “with” students as they navigate the course.

SMEs help create this “presence” through original, first-person narrative. At a minimum, this includes:

- Course introduction
- Weekly sections covering Overview, Significance, and What’s Next
- Activities – Introductions and Tips for Success

SMEs are also encouraged to create presence through supporting videos, examples, topic notes and other aligned materials.

## AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT

Assessments and activities in our courses are tailored to provide opportunities for authentic, real-world, integrated learning that supports the course learning outcomes and reinforces the TU Core Competencies.

SMEs are expected to draw on their expertise in identifying opportunities for students to demonstrate their grasp of concepts and mastery of goals through engaging activities.

Employers indicate higher education graduates lack basic job skills, such as problem solving, critical thinking, communication and teamwork. According to Villarroel et al (2018), authentic assessments provide students the opportunity to practice skills and competences that are valued in work. In undertaking the assessment they have to deploy skills and complete tasks that simulate the activities they will have to conduct in their future jobs. This increases employability of

graduates by giving them experience in coping with uncertainty, critical thinking, communications, and the ability to apply disciplinary content and skills.

Review the course learning outcomes to determine appropriate authentic assessments. Perhaps it indicates specific types of artifacts students are expected to create in the course, such as a marketing plan or proposal. Next, consider how the knowledge and skills students are learning in your class might apply in the real world. Perhaps they would write policies, provide feedback, communicate decisions, lead meetings, forecast business growth, write a business plan, write emails to different audiences, analyze a cybersecurity plan, etcetera.

Keep in mind that outside of higher education, there are very few fields which expect professionals to write reports, email, etcetera, in APA style or demonstrate their competencies through multiple-choice quizzes.

## GAI-Assisted Content Quality

Based on SME insights and faculty-written and approved course learning outcomes (CLOs), our learning designers use generative artificial intelligence (GAI) technology to create draft content for our online courses. They then work to ensure course alignment with learning goals and adherence to quality standards. *It is essential this content be reviewed by subject matter experts for accuracy and relevancy, and by program chairs to ensure alignment with program goals.*

# POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES OF NEXTGEN

## “RHYTHM”

Text: Our students have come to expect (and have learned to maximize) the “Wednesday-Saturday-Sunday” rhythm utilized in most courses. This might be seen as somewhat limiting to course design flexibility; however, this can be beneficial for our many online students who are adults balancing their coursework with career and family responsibilities.

While some flexibility is permitted regarding when activities are due, our weeks begin on Mondays and generally proceed as follows:

Read/review assigned materials (textbook, articles, videos, etc.) by Wednesday.

Make an initial post to a discussion prompt (if a course has discussions) by Wednesday, 11:55 p.m.

Respond to peers, self, and/or instructor in discussion by Saturday, 11:55 p.m.

Written assignments and other activities due by Sunday, 11:55 p.m.

## USABILITY

The NG5 course design maximizes usability, and is designed to provide a consistent, intuitive user experience.

## ACCESSIBILITY

All materials created in and for NG5 courses are WCAG 2.1 compliant (per the A11y tool).

## STUDENT VOICE

Our courses are designed to empower students with a voice and a stake in their learning. NG5 provides avenues for student feedback to provide actionable data to inform our revision and improvement efforts.

# OTHER PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

## FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Assessments should be designed to be evaluated by faculty in a substantive, timely, and constructive manner.

## TRANSPARENCY/OWNERSHIP OF OUR MODE OF DELIVERY

Our courses should be fully transparent as to the facilitation role that our teaching faculty play. That is, our courses are designed by Subject Matter Experts, reviewed by academic leadership, and delivered by qualified professional faculty.

## DIVERSITY AND RELEVANCE OF COURSE MATERIALS

Whenever practicable, courses should utilize a collection of Open Educational Resource, library articles and web-based materials that embrace diversity, broaden perspectives, increase relevance and currency, and mitigate student cost.

# COURSE BUILD PROCESS

## Timeline

8-week build cycle

### MILESTONE 1

1-2 week duration

Contract signed

Subject Matter Expert (SME) and Program Chair complete Insights document

Learning Designer (LD) creates draft Course Build Plan (CBP)

Kick-off call (SME, Program Chair, Library Director)

LD works with SME to complete final CBP (weekly goals, topics, and activity descriptions)

CBP sent to Program Chair for review/approval

### MILESTONE 2

2-3 week duration

LD uses generative AI (GAI) to create draft content

LD works with SME to refine and finalize content

SME reviews all content for accuracy and relevancy

SME completes Milestone 2 form, certifying content

### MILESTONE 3

2-3 week duration

LD places all content in Moodle

Program Chair reviews/approves course in Moodle

COEL issues SME payment; sends Course Build Survey to ID and SME

Ed Tech Team performs QA check

### MILESTONE 4

Pilot term

Program Chair reviews SME and student input and determines final revisions

## DUE DATES

While there is some flexibility regarding when content is due and SMEs are welcome to work ahead, it is important to ensure all activities are completed by the final due date. Should an unforeseen circumstance occur which will make it impossible to complete all activities by the specified date, please inform your learning designer (LD) as soon as possible. Missed due dates may make it necessary to delay course availability until after the originally scheduled pilot term.

In addition to workload interruptions, a delay in course development may create issues with textbook availability or result in students purchasing an incorrect textbook.

## PAYMENT

Once Milestone 3 is approved and the ID performs a final check, SME payment is processed and the course is sent for a comprehensive Quality Assurance (QA) check.

## COURSE BUILD SURVEY

Upon Milestone 3 completion, the LD and SME complete a survey describing their course build experience. This information allows the COEL to most effectively pair LDs with SMEs based on experience and working styles.

# SME EXPECTATIONS

## CREATE A COURSE BUILD PLAN (CBP)

The CBP forms a blueprint for the course and aids in ensuring alignment with the CLOs. For the CBP, the SME...

### Reviews and revises, as needed:

- Weekly Learning Goals
- Activities – type of activity, description, points
- Weekly topics

**Identifies resources** (e.g., chapter readings, library articles, web sources, videos, and SME-created materials, such as additional narrative, videos, presentations, examples and templates)

The LD provides consultation and assistance in generating draft content using GAI, aligning the course, and determining appropriate activities.

## CONTENT

Once the final Course Build Plan is approved, the LD creates a Design Document with draft content for the Start Here section and each of the seven weeks in the course.

The SME then carefully reviews all content for accuracy, relevancy, clarity, and currency.

*While Generative AI can create engaging content and reduce the time needed to create a quality online course, it is a known issue that GAI may fabricate information or present biased information. This is why careful consideration of course content by a qualified expert is essential.*



## USE OF EXISTING COURSE MATERIALS

Whether existing course materials may be used is ultimately up to the Program Chair. In general:

- You may use materials you have authored.
- PowerPoints used to illustrate lectures for face-to-face courses are not suitable for use in an online course UNLESS: The SME provides a script; ID edits script and presentation; ID or SME records narration; ID converts presentation to video
- The SME is expected to review and edit existing materials prior to providing to ID. Review for:
  - » Typos/grammar
  - » Currency (is the material still current and relevant?)

## PILOT TERM

Often, the SME is the instructor the first time the new course is offered – the pilot term.

If teaching the pilot\*, and an urgent situation occurs which is inhibiting students' ability to complete the course, immediately contact [moodlesupport@tiffin.edu](mailto:moodlesupport@tiffin.edu). For other issues, note these concerns. In Week 6 of the term, the instructor is sent a survey to complete and is asked to provide recommendations for changes. You can wait until the courses has ended to complete this.

The Program Chair reviews recommended changes and comments students may have submitted regarding course design, and informs the COEL what changes are necessary. Once changes are complete, the course is used as a master version for 3 to 4 years. In rare cases, it may be necessary to redesign a course more often.

\*Check with your program chair to see if you will be teaching the pilot.

## WRITING STYLE/GRAMMAR

**Second-person:** Content should be written in second person style. For example, “You may find this topic to be...” rather than “Students may find this topic to be...”

The course narrative should NOT be written as if the SME is going to be teaching the course. All links, materials, sources, videos, and content should be written and produced so as to create a course that could be taught by different instructors. With that in mind, the course activities and instructions can be written in a way that instructors have some freedom to modify or include their own content (grading guides, rubrics, writing or discussion requirements etc.).

While instructional designers will attempt to correct spelling and grammatical errors as they review the content, it is up to the SME and Program Chair to ensure content is accurate.

# NEXTGEN

## INTRODUCTION

Tiffin University uses the Moodle learning management system (LMS). At its most basic, it is a reliable means of providing content to students as well as communication tools and a way to upload assignments. Since 2018, Tiffin's Center for Online and Extended Learning (COEL) has worked to improve how we offer this content to make it more user friendly and to add teaching presence to the online learning environment.

## NEXTGEN ELEMENTS

The COEL has taken the basic Moodle LMS course page and modified it in order to improve navigation and clarity for students and to promote teaching presence. We call this new version the Next Generation, or *NextGen*.

The next few pages provide descriptions and examples of the following required course elements.

Shaded items are those provided by the SME.

### Start Here

- Course Welcome
- Essentials
- Orientation
- Quick Links

### Weekly Pages

- Overview
- Explore the Content
- Significance
- What's Next

### Activities

- Introduction
- Instructions
- Tips for Success
- Submission Requirements

### Communication Center

- Announcements
- Course Documents

### Instructor Resources

- Course-Specific Instructions\*
- Tutorials

\*These are only required if there is something unusual the instructor will need to do to deliver the course. Typically the ID will assist in preparing these instructions.

## Welcome

Welcome to LDR610!

Throughout this course, you will dive into what it means to be a leader and the influence leaders have on change dynamics in any organization. Effective Leadership and progressive change are two consistent things that any organization needs to stay relevant in an ever-changing world. Change allows organizations to continue to thrive over time giving the organization and its stakeholders a chance at longevity. Effective leadership helps the organization frame and roll out change in a manner that is least disruptive to everyday organizational practices and creates stakeholder buy-in. Be prepared to apply and take your knowledge of leadership and change dynamics to the next level in this course.



### Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

1. Define organizational theory and the impact of the individual and group behavior
2. Analyze the necessity for change in an organization using one of the diagnostic frameworks
3. Develop the ability to understand stakeholders
4. Identify processes for organizational transformation
5. Create action planning and communication documents to lead change efforts
6. Understand the roles of the change igniter, change agent, and others involved in change processes

## Essentials

[Back to Top](#)

Before beginning the course, be sure to review the following documents:

1. [Syllabus](#)
2. [Meet Your Instructor](#)
3. [LDR610 Library Page](#)
4. [Course Documents](#)



## START HERE

The Start Here section is the first page students see when they first access the course. It's important to welcome the student and introduce the course. You are invited to share your insights and excitement regarding the course topics and provide background information and direction to set students up for success.

In addition to written narrative, some SMEs choose to create introductory videos or link to quality external videos. If you create a video, you are welcome to establish your credibility and relate your relationship to Tiffin University, just please do not indicate you are teaching the course, as others may be assigned to teach it at some point.

The Start Here section also includes essential elements, such as the Syllabus.

## COURSE WELCOME EXAMPLES

### *HCA541*

The cliché that we do not know where we are going without knowing where we have been definitely applies to the healthcare industry and the management of its many facets and regulations. The main goal of healthcare management in the past, today, and into the future is to balance the three main components of quality, cost, and access to care. These three components are equally balanced in a community to maximize care delivery with access to services at the best result and the best/competitive price. The equilibrium must exist between these three components so that a given population receives the best care while using the least amount of resources. Establishing the appropriate care delivery sites and managing these locations effectively and efficiently require forethought and managerial skills so that a given population is not under or over served.

The delivery models for care, the staff required to provide services, as well as the physical building(s) needed to provide care are identified as the “Healthcare System”, and these three components and their efficient and effective management apply to any care delivery model; from rural America to large metropolitan cities. This is the main premise behind HCA541. Throughout this term, you will learn key managerial concepts of how to create appropriate systems with all the regulatory and reduced reimbursement stressors while identifying key operational and process management techniques to manage these systems.

### *ENG525*



This course introduces research skills that will be used in conjunction with the graduate level writing skills you learned in ENG505. From writing past academic papers, you're probably used to working with secondary sources – sources that other scholars have written about topics, artifacts, or texts. However, as a junior scholar, you can start working with primary sources and contributing your own ideas to what we call “the scholarly conversation” within a field of study. This course will introduce you to working with these primary sources as well as other kinds of research done at the graduate level.

We will also learn how academic publishing works. As a junior scholar who will be adding your knowledge to the rest of your field, you need to know how to join the conversation. Knowing how peer reviewed journals publish their articles, what expectations they have for submissions, and what citation styles are used in your field will give you the ability to better analyze the sources you use in your research and also help you understand the process when the time comes for you to publish your own work.

Lastly, this course will teach you how to use research tools like annotated bibliographies, critical histories, and so on. These tools can be incredibly useful as you seek to add your own voice and ideas to your chosen field of research. They give you a way of keeping track of what others have said so that you don't enter the conversation uninformed.

Sharing your ideas with others in your field and adding to the body of knowledge is one of the most important tasks of a scholar. The course will end by exploring conferences, including how to find appropriate conferences and effectively presenting your research at them.

So by the end of this course, you will have tools you can use not only in your future graduate classes, but also in your new role of a junior scholar. The benefits of this course (as well as the other core courses in this program) are that they will help you shift your self-perception from “student” to “professional.” So let's take the first step in learning these new skills!

## WEEKLY PAGES

Weekly pages include all materials and instructions to guide student through each week. Each week includes:

Overview

Explore the Content (materials to be read/reviewed that week and a link to the Question and Answer Forum)

Activities (links to each activity, organized by due day)

Wrap-up (includes Significance, What's Next, as well as a checklist for the week and an opportunity for students to provide feedback)

## OVERVIEW

### *MINIMUM TWO PARAGRAPHS ORIGINAL NARRATIVE*

This section represents the SME's voice or "spin" concerning the coming week. This includes a brief summary of the week and introduction to any new concepts or terms to be covered this week. SME's may opt to present this narrative in written, audio, video, or multiple media format. SMEs may also consider posting short examples or visuals that paint the big picture for the week.

## OVERVIEW EXAMPLES

### *CST201*

There are many things users need to input into a program that is repeating, such as monthly sales data, customer information, and ordering multiple items. There is also processing, which is repeating, such as amortization of a loan or depreciation of a capital asset over a period of years. Output is similar, such as student grades for a term. If we wanted to enter sales data and calculate commission sales of three salespeople, it would take three input statements to accomplish this. Repetition structures, or loops, are a common method in programming languages to accomplish this task and reduce code.

Loops can also be used to help ensure correct input of data by the user. Without the correct data for a program, the calculations and output are meaningless. Loops can be nested, just like decision structures. Nested loops are utilized often when searching data, such as a list or file. This can be difficult to understand, and so you may want to pay close attention to this section in the textbook on nested loops

### *JUS515*

Welcome to Week 5. This week we will begin first steps in creating, organizing, collecting, coding, and compiling data. First, you will create a consent form using the TU IRB template, a questionnaire (if needed for your research), and any other plan for your study. This process is also known as 'running data.' We will develop a plan for this, and choose the best ways to analyze the data statistically. Once we have completed this, we will begin to interpret and apply the findings.

Here are videos that give a very simple overview on how and why we organize and collect data. We will do something along these lines, (basic format) but more advanced and specific to your project.

### *JUS618*

Coming up with a comprehensive budget is only half of the battle; this week you will learn how to "sell" your budget to decision makers. It's important to convey the benefit your budget will give back to the community and the fact you considered reasonable alternatives as well.

This week you will learn different methods to effectively and efficiently present your data. A good approach to take would be to use the "BLUF" principle, which means "Bottom Line Upfront". Decision makers are often juggling numerous budgets. You want to hit them early and clearly on what you're asking for. The more you make them hunt for information, the less likely your budget will be approved as asked for. A good practice is to have someone outside your organization review your budget and see if it conveys your intent or if it's too technical.

## EXPLORE THE CONTENT

The SME and Program Chair determine if a textbook is required for a course. A textbook is not recommended for courses with topics that change often. *The textbook MUST be available as an etext via DragonACCESS.*

This section includes a diverse collection of resources, media or technologies that support weekly goals.

**Textual examples:** book chapters; journal articles; web documents, and study guides

**Technology examples:** videos, podcasts, and screencasts; web apps or tutorials; PowerPoints, with or without narration; web sites, databases, social media; simulations; virtual field trips; recorded performances; blogs; wikis; games; etc.

## SIGNIFICANCE

This section provides a brief summary (at least one full paragraph) of key concepts and closing thoughts. The text should encourage students to reflect on how they are progressing toward achievement of course outcomes and how they might apply the week's concepts to their future careers or lives outside of school. The Significance section is arguably the most important part of the week. Here, students should be guided toward thinking about the big ideas, highlights, or career-enhancing skills they will draw upon throughout their careers. In addition, learners can be challenged to reflect on how they have progressed toward achievement of learning outcomes and how they might apply the weekly outcomes and experiences to their lives outside of TU.

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### SIGNIFICANCE EXAMPLES

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#### *CDS622*

This week, we discussed business continuity management to include cyber-physical interdependencies (CPI) and service continuity planning. Developing a business continuity management (BCM) plan requires strategizing among all departments in an organization. Included in a service plan should not only be how each department in the organization works together, but how any cyber-physical interdependencies that might exist outside the organization based on the organization's sector and the sectors it depends on. Having a well-developed BCM might be the difference between the organization no longer in existence and the business surviving a disaster. If you intend on a job in cyber, you are likely to be involved with developing or assisting in the development of at least a portion of a business continuity plan at some point in your career.

#### *HCA541*

We have finished our coverage of a system's ability to evaluate a community's population, what health needs are required, and how these services will be provided. If a community is aging and young families are not moving into a community, the local healthcare system is not going to invest in hiring a new pediatrician, right? Top managers must communicate with peers and have a great management team to implement a system's think approach, to implement best practices, and to ensure quality care is provided.

#### *MKT526*

This week, we focused on the key role that marketing plays in helping organizations achieve strategic objectives and the different types of value that organizations offer their current and prospective customers. We learned that the best data in the world can be rendered irrelevant in times of crisis or natural disaster.

Key questions for senior leaders to consider include: What is the critical data needed to assist in strategic decision making? What is the most efficient way to collect key data? In addition to offering desirable products and services, what other ways can an organization provide value to attract and retain customers? In what ways does marketing interact with other departments in the development and implementation of strategic plans?

If you are currently gainfully employed, assess your own organization's response in a time of crisis. Did the decision making rely primarily on data or primarily on the gut instinct of senior leaders? What information would have been beneficial to help inform critical decisions? Could that information have been collected in a timely and efficient manner?

## WHAT'S NEXT

Each week, the SME provides a transition to the next week. How did this week prepare them for next week? What's coming up next week? In Week 7, this is optional, however, it can include how they can use what they've learned in this course in the rest of the program or in their future work.

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### WHAT'S NEXT EXAMPLES

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#### *MGT614*

The key concepts covered this week were related to different cultures around the world and why it is essential to embrace different cultural values in multinational companies for successful management. We also learnt how communication processes vary among different cultures.

During next week, we will focus on cross-cultural negotiation. Cultural differences are an important factor in international negotiations. In addition to language differences, different cultures have differing values, perceptions and philosophies. As a result, certain ideas may have very different connotations in different cultures.

#### *DAX631*

In Week 5, we move to another regression model: Logistic Regression. Logistic regression is a statistical method for analyzing a dataset in which there are one or more independent variables that determine an outcome. The outcome is measured with a dichotomous variable (in which there are only two possible outcomes). The goal of logistic regression is to find the best fitting (yet biologically reasonable) model to describe the relationship between the dichotomous characteristic of interest (dependent variable = response or outcome variable) and a set of independent (predictor or explanatory) variables.

It sounds much harder than it truly is - actually, logistic regression is quite similar to multiple linear regression, with the exception that the response variable is binomial. The result is the impact of each variable on the odds ratio of the observed event of interest. The main advantage of logistic regression is to avoid confounding effects by analyzing the association of all variables together.

#### *PHI110*

At this point you should be wrapping up your research and polishing your outline for Activity 6.2: Argumentative Paper - Final Product that is due next week. Next week's subject matter is important - but is more light-hearted than this week's Doomsday intimations! The subjects are Fake News and Advertising, and you'll notice the workload has been kept somewhat light - just a discussion and an assessment - to free up time for you to perfect your argumentative paper.

## ACTIVITIES

Each activity includes details to prepare the student for the activity, clarification for completing the activity, and tips on how to effectively approach the activity. Activities include:

- **Introduction** - Original narrative introducing the activity, addressing why it is important and how it fits into the course.
- **Instructions** - Detailed information on how to successfully complete the activity. This may include activities or questions adapted from a required textbook. Discussions require clear information regarding what's expected for initial and subsequent posts.
- **Tips for Success** - Original narrative sharing insights on what students can do to successfully approach this assignment; not just “follow the directions”, but what, specifically, will help them do well on this particular assignment. This should be unique for EVERY activity.
- **Submission Requirements** - this includes specific activity submission requirements, This may include:
  - » Recommended length
  - » Writing style and format (APA formatting cannot be required for forum posts)
  - » Grading guidelines
  - » File type
  - » Templates

## ACTIVITY EXAMPLES

[NEEDS UPDATE]

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Are discussions required every week?**

No. In fact, discussions are not required at all. What's important is that the activities align to the Course Learning Outcomes. While discussions can be engaging, valuable learning experiences, and promote the perception of presence in an online course, there are other ways to encourage such student-student and student-instructor communications. Your Instructional Designer (ID) can help guide you to activity types suitable for your course.

## **When will I be paid?**

Payment will be processed for the next pay period once the ID sends the course for a quality assurance (QA) review. This takes place following Program Chair approval of Milestone 3.

## **I really liked working with a particular instructional designer.**

### **Can I request to work with that person again?**

You may ask your Program Chair to request a specific ID when the course is added to the production queue. While we will make every effort to accommodate requests, due to limited ID availability, we cannot guarantee such requests.

## **I have built online courses before, and I greatly prefer how I structure my courses over the NextGen format. I also prefer my own process for building courses. How much say do I have in deciding how the course is designed?**

You have a great deal of leeway in determining the content for the course you are building. If you have ideas for a different design or process, please discuss this with your ID. We have put a great deal of time and effort into the course build process and the NextGen course design to ensure we can produce quality courses in a reasonable amount of time; however, we are always open to improving the instructor and student experience.

