

Penn State Online
Guidelines for Selecting an Online Program's Lead Faculty

A lead faculty member is the individual who serves as a program's liaison between the sponsoring academic unit and the learning design team. This individual is responsible for collaborating effectively with their unit head and instructional design department and must demonstrate the ability to work with them on an administrative and instructional level as needed. The lead faculty member is expected to be highly qualified in their academic discipline and also to demonstrate the ability to serve in the capacity described below.

Lead faculty should demonstrate mastery of the following:

- Partner effectively with the learning design team in the development of the online program
- Oversee day-to-day program operations
- Serve as an advocate for the program with both internal and external audiences
- Collaborate closely with the learning design unit to ensure program goals are being addressed in all course development efforts
- Work with department head and learning design unit to suggest and adjust program and course enrollments as needed
- Assist with preparation of program budgets and provision of annual financial reports (if applicable)
- Monitor program retention and respond to related concerns
- Oversee a regular revision process for the program's courses
- Coordinate professional development and mentoring program faculty as needed
- Assist online instructors with locating the resources they need to support their teaching
- Supervise online instructors within the program as appropriate
- Support the learning design unit in the enforcement of course-level adherence to the Penn State Quality Assurance e-Learning Design Standards
- Coordinate the program's faculty peer review process
- Coordinate student course and program review process
- Communicate effectively and in a timely manner with administrators, faculty, staff, and students
- Assist with seeking internal and external funding and partnerships to support program operation
- Be eager to share ideas and collaborate with others
- Possess excellent written and verbal skills (requesting writing samples is highly recommended)
- Possess excellent organizational skills
- Work within a schedule and meet agreed upon deadlines

As part of the hiring process, one may want to consider requesting a portfolio of an individual's work to provide evidence of the above competencies. These items could also serve well as the basis for interview questions. In addition, it may be helpful to the interviewee to see copies of any contractual agreements that would ultimately govern the position.