

Responsibilities of the Faculty and the Wilmette Institute

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1. Lead Faculty Responsibilities

All courses have a lead faculty person who is responsible for overall coordination of the course. This involves the following responsibilities:

A. Make sure the faculty are active in the course and are actively mentoring their learners. This means emailing the faculty during the course (weeks 2, 5, and 7 for a 10-week course; weeks 2 and 5, for a 7-week course; week 2 for a 4-week course) asking them to contact their mentees to ask them how they are doing. Specifically, faculty should follow the Activity and Course completion protocols outlined on the Assessment page to encourage student engagement.

B. Make sure learners' questions are answered promptly (sometimes this requires the lead faculty to ask someone to respond).

C. Monitor traffic on the forums and determine whether it needs stimulation, perhaps in consultation with the Director of the Institute.

D. Handle emergencies, such as discourteous behavior, preferably in coordination with the Institute's Director or Department Chair. All emergencies should be reported to the Director by email or telephone immediately.

E. Remind learners when each unit is beginning and summarizing its content briefly.

F. Delegate to a faculty, a teaching assistant, or student(s) to summarize the learning of each unit when it ends.

G. Remind all learners at the beginning of the last unit to complete the learning self-assessment form and any other final course work they've agreed to do.

H. Lead faculty is responsible for implementing the Guide for Course Developers, including consistency in style.

I. Assign mentors effectively. Monitor their functioning and make changes during the course if necessary.

J. Contact learners who have not logged in the last week.

NOTE: All lead faculty also serve as regular faculty and are bound by the responsibilities listed in the next section.

2. Support Faculty Responsibilities

Not all courses have support faculty. If a course has more than 20 learners, we prefer that a course have a second faculty member or a teaching assistant.

A. Read and follow the Guide for Course Developers.

B. Participate in any email exchanges or (occasionally) conference calls with fellow faculty for planning the course and/or for managing it after it has started.

C. Help the Wilmette Institute finalize the structure and contents of the course up to six months before it starts. The course's content should be complete one month in advance of the course start date. (Note the publicity schedule under "Wilmette Institute Responsibilities," section A.)

D. Carefully review the Moodle Classroom (main) page, all the Activity Pages for the units, assigned readings, and videos of the course.

E. Introduce yourself to the students on the first day of the course, welcoming them to the course, and inviting them to be in contact with you. This may best be done by posting to the course lounge.

F. Visit the course main page at least twice a week to check what unit is being studied, gauge the traffic the unit is receiving, and when participants are moving to the next unit.

G. Review postings to the course Forums promptly (you will receive them by email unless you change your Forum settings) from the beginning of the course through the grace period (one month long in 2021, two weeks in 2022). While you should pay particular attention to postings by the learners you are mentoring, please answer questions or comment about postings made by anyone in the course.

H. Produce lectures (in the form of slideshows or videos) for the various units of the course. The faculty can decide among themselves who will produce which ones, and how many. The Wilmette Institute hopes eventually to have a video lecture for every unit, but producing two each time the course is offered is minimally sufficient.

I. Provide live video discussion in the course. Learners often are not available to attend, but those who can enjoy them, and those who missed the session can watch the recording later. More information about video conferences can be found on the Methodology page.

J. Post substantial comments, questions, ideas, or other content to the Forum at least twice a week, preferably more often (most student postings need some sort of reply). If you are unable to make at least twice as many postings as the course has weeks (for example, 14 postings in a 7-week course), your stipend may be pro-rated based on the percentage of postings made.

K. Mentor your share of the total number of learners who have registered (i.e., total learners in the course divided by the total faculty in the course, more or less; please let us know immediately if you cannot mentor your fair share; otherwise, we will assume you can).

“Mentoring” means encouraging student engagement, emailing or otherwise being in contact with the learner once every three weeks during the course, answering the learner’s private questions, helping them develop and refine their Personal Learning Plan, and being as encouraging as possible. See the Methodology page on the Guide for Course Developers and Instructors for details.

L. If the course has students taking it for credit, grade their weekly assignments and their final paper or project.

M. Assess the learning self-assessments and learning projects of non-credit learners at the end of the course. To do this, faculty must read the students’ PLPs (personal learning plans) to see what s/he agreed to do, and comment positively by email about the results of the effort. The first question of the learning self-assessment asks about the PLP and what was done. See the Faculty Manual for details.

N. Participate in the Post-Course Faculty Meeting after the Grace Period is over, if one is held. The Director and other members of the course evaluation team will meet with the faculty by phone or via video conference to talk about how the course went and how it can be improved before it is offered again, and what additional support and training the faculty want.

O. To the extent possible, inform people in your area about the Wilmette Institute, its purpose, and courses. Faculty are encouraged to assist in the formation of local study groups in their area, whether they are faculty for that particular Wilmette Institute course or not.

NOTE: If the number of learners registered for the course fails to reach at least eight, we reserve the right to cancel or postpone the course. If the course is postponed, we will contact you to find out when you could serve as faculty at a later time. We try to postpone courses no more than one week, to give time for further publicity.

3. General Responsibilities for Faculty

Upon receipt and review of this Memorandum of Understanding, please complete the following.

A. By return email, respond, "I acknowledge receipt of this memorandum of understanding and agree to abide by its provisions."

B. Confirm whether or not you want to receive the honorarium for the course. If you want to receive the honorarium, Federal law requires us to have a completed tax form. If you are a United States resident or citizen, you need to send us a [W-9 form](#). If you are not a U.S. citizen or resident, we need a [W-8BEN form](#) on file. [Instructions for the W-8BEN](#). If you have submitted these to us previously, you do not need to resubmit them.

C. Check and update the bio and photo the Institute has for you at the [Wilmette Institute Faculty Page](#) on the public website.

NOTE: All courses created for the Wilmette Institute are copyrighted (all rights reserved) and are the property of the Wilmette Institute. The Institute gives the instructor the right to use in other venues any materials he or she has located or created for the course. If the instructor does not specify any restrictions on the Institute, the Wilmette Institute assumes that any materials created by the instructor and placed on the Wilmette Institute's course site can be used without reserve by the Institute in future courses and can be modified by the Institute as it sees fit. Any restrictions of materials use desired by the Instructor must be stated in writing and approved by the Wilmette Institute Director or Associate Director.

4. Wilmette Institute Responsibilities

A. The Wilmette Institute will promote the course. Courses become available for registration at least 5 ½ months in advance, are listed in our electronic newsletter 5 months in advance, begin to receive detailed coverage 2 months in advance, and an invitation to register is sent to some 40,000 email addresses 5-6 weeks in advance. This necessitates completion of the course site at least a month before the course begins.

C. The Institute will monitor student engagement in the course both qualitatively and quantitatively through statistics (such as numbers of postings) and will report the results to the faculty periodically. If student engagement is lagging, the Institute will help the faculty take steps to strengthen the course. Ideas to increase student engagement are outlined on the Assessment page.

D. The Institute will remind everyone (or the lead faculty, if that is preferred) when each new study unit begins.

E. The Institute will remind faculty when they are recommended to contact their learners to promote their engagement in the course and will provide instructions.

F. The Institute will remind everyone when the course has ended and when the two-week grace period has ended. It will send all students an evaluation form at the end of the grace period and

provide the responses or a summary of them to the faculty. It will send a certificate of completion to all learners who have completed the course requirements.

G. The Wilmette Institute will add all faculty to its list of faculty (published on its website and occasionally elsewhere) for the next four years, unless you request otherwise.

5. Some Bahá'í Texts on the Importance of Education

“Make every effort to acquire the advanced knowledge of the day, and strain every nerve to carry forward the divine civilization. Establish schools that are well organized, and promote the fundamentals of instruction in the various branches of knowledge through teachers who are pure and sanctified, distinguished for their high standards of conduct and general excellence, and strong in faith; scholars and educators with a thorough knowledge of sciences and arts.”
(From a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Compilation on Bahá'í Education)

“Definite courses should be given along the different phases of the Bahá'í Faith and in a manner that will stimulate the students to proceed in their studies privately once they return home, for the period of a few days is not sufficient to learn everything. They have to be taught the habit of studying the Cause constantly, for the more we read the Words the more will the truth they contain be revealed to us.” (From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Compilation on Deepening)

“What a more sacred privilege, and also what a weightier responsibility than the task of rearing up the new generation of believers, and of inculcating into their youthful and receptive minds the principles and teachings of the Cause, and of thus preparing them to fully assume, and properly discharge the weighty responsibilities and obligations of their future life in the Bahá'í Community.” (From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Compilation on Bahá'í Education)