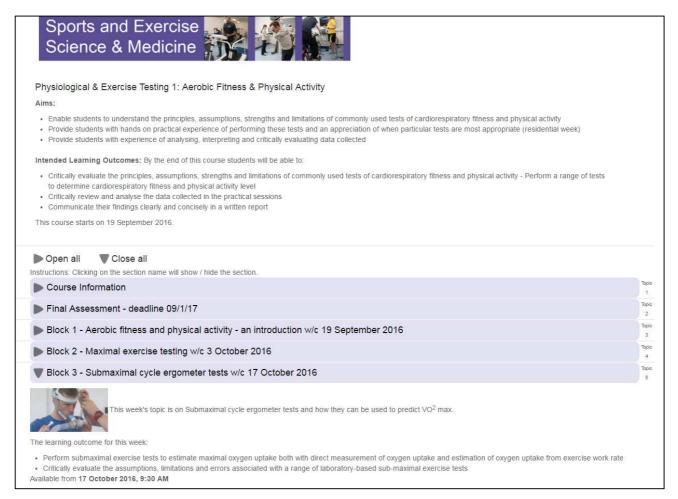


University Online distance learning case study: of Glasgow MSc Sport & Exercise Science & Medicine



| Course code | Core courses MED5356, MED5357, MED5358, MED5359, MED5365 | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Title of course | Sport & Exercise Science & Medicine | | |
| Course lead contact | Dr Stuart Gray (stuart.gray@glasgow.ac.uk) | | |
| No of credits | 180 (60 credits per year) | | |
| Level of course (UG/P | MSc (36 months part-time) | | |
| & year | | | |
| No. of students | 30 | 30 | |
| Platforms used | Moodle | Moodle | |
| | | | |
| Multimedia content | | Learning activities | |
| Video – Camtasia screen recordings or | | • Forums | |
| mini-lectures | | • Wikis | |
| SCORM packages e.g. Storyline Articulate | | • Quizzes | |
| | | | |
| Describe your online | This is an online distant | This is an online distance MSc programme, running over the course of 3 years. | |
| learning approach. | The first year comprises 5 core courses, the second year students choose 3 out | | |
| · | 7 | of 9 possible optional courses, and the third year is dedicated to a dissertation | |
| | project. | , | |
| | The teaching itself is pr | The teaching itself is provided by weekly lectures (2-4 hours/week), recorded via | |
| | Camtasia. Compared with a traditional lecture, the Camtasia recordings are | | |
| | - | organised around smaller chunks of information. These recordings are | |
| | complemented by online lab courses, which are essentially videos of | | |
| | | experimental techniques in the lab e.g. for testing somebody's fitness and | |

strength. Students are then given data (generated by the on-campus students) which they are required to analyse for whatever purpose the measurements are made. There is also a week-long residential week at the end of the first year, where the students get a hands-on experience of carrying out these tests themselves.

Students are also able to discuss the lecture material or raise queries pertaining to administrative or technological issues through a Moodle forum, which is moderated by staff.

Why was this online approach taken? i.e. what issue was it trying to solve?

The programme was developed as an online version of an existing on-campus MSc degree programme in order to open it up to people who could not give up a year of work. The online students are mostly professionals who benefit from the information presented in the courses, but would not otherwise give up their career for a full-time year-long Master's degree. It also potentially opens up the programme to foreign markets, although the majority of the current students are based in the UK.

What advice would you give to other teachers taking this approach for the first time?

In the development stage, first of all, discuss your plans with the Digital Education Unit to make sure you have access to technologies and you know how to use them. Get advice on how to best approach recording a lecture, whether it is to break it up into smaller chunks, etc. Also, allow for sufficient time to do it, because it is easy to underestimate how much time it actually takes.

In the delivery stage, the major piece of advice would be to not just put the material online, but also manage it. Online presence is crucial, so make sure you are available on discussion boards – stimulating discussion or answering in response to a discussion.

What student support needs should be taken into account? i.e. how did you support their transition into this way of learning?

The Digital Education Unit within MVLS has put together a site ensuring that the students are digitally literate, i.e. showing them how to work within the online environment and making sure that the devices they use are at the correct specifications.

Attention has to be given to the fact that the students have varied schedules. Some of the students asked for the videos to be downloadable, as they were only available for streaming at first. After this request we made sure that they could access the material offline (e.g. in transit).

What are the lessons for the institution and the sector from this work?

Overall, the programme has been a success – we have seen an upward trend in enrolment since the first year and students are largely satisfied with the course and its availability online. This serves as an evidence that online environment can work well for the right student group.

With regards to teaching practice, it is valuable to realize that the materials developed for online purposes can be used to enhance the on-campus instruction as well. Developing online courses gives the lecturer a bank of resources that are available to use with their on-campus students — perhaps in a more flipped classroom approach — and thus benefit from the increased opportunity for discussion in face-to-face sessions.

Nonetheless, the development of a course such as this takes a lot of time and effort and it is not something that can be done on the side. It needs a dedicated group of people who have a definite goal and put proper effort into reaching it. Even though the time investment decreases after the first cohort, it still stays significantly high because of discussion monitoring and assessment. Hence, from the viewpoint of the institution, it is important to ensure there is appropriate staff available at all stages of development and delivery of the course.