

Getting Started with Your MOOC

The information here is intended for faculty interested in proposing to teach a MOOC at the University of Chicago. For an overview of UChicago's Online Learning Initiative, visit online.uchicago.edu.

Talk to us about your ideas for your course!

The University of Chicago provides resources to help faculty experiment with different technologies in their teaching and research with the goal of broader reach and greater impact. In addition to the resources available to faculty within their school or division, [Academic & Scholarly Technology Services](#) (ASTS) within [Information Technology Services](#) provides assistance and support for the design and production of online courses. We are happy to chat with you on any ideas at any stage of your work. Contact Emily Joy Bembeneck at online@uchicago.edu to schedule an initial meeting.

How Do Online Courses Differ from Traditional Residential Courses?

Enrollment Size & Student Demographics

The typical enrollment size for a MOOC is between 10,000 to

50,000. Students taking MOOCs come from all over the world and have diverse backgrounds, language ability, and motivation. They may be someone listening to lecture while they cook for their family in São Paulo. They may be a professional trying to learn something new while they commute. They may be teenagers in Thailand looking for a parent-approved activity to spend their extra time online. They may be

"...I am grateful that so many people worked to put something more advanced online. It's a rarity, and very welcome."—Student forum post in [Asset Pricing](#), a PhD-level MOOC.

retired citizens in Chile learning to enrich their lives with the help of their children.

You will find many of these students are eager to learn for learning's sake and are happy to meet whatever intellectual challenges you give them. You will also find many who are happy to watch the videos without completing any of the assignments. Your learning goals must be inclusive to the diverse needs of the students and required prerequisites must be made very clear.

Interacting with Students

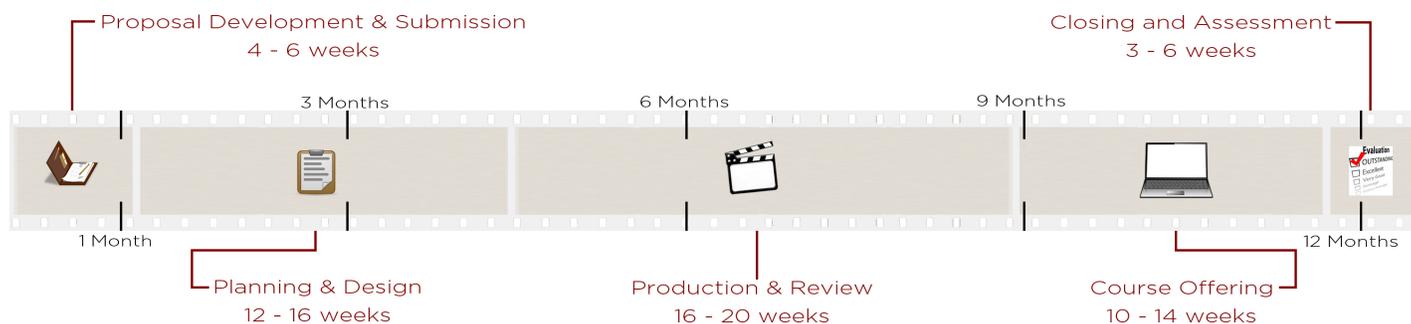
To offset the lack of instructor-student face-to-face interaction in

an online course, online instructors are expected to use weekly online forums, social media, live online sessions, and local meetups to get student feedback and answer questions. You should also plan on fostering interactions between students to encourage peer-to-peer learning and community-building through forum posts, social media, and other online tools.

Delivering Content

In an online learning environment, video is the primary content delivery tool because it allows students to engage visually and aurally simultaneously. Seeing and hearing the lecturer's face and voice also help students connect emotionally to the subject.

Research and our experience have found that successful, engaging videos are usually very succinct (approximately six to seven minutes long) with one pedagogical point each. In many cases, this implies that the instructor will have to chunk their course content in much shorter segments compared to their traditional residential course



MOOC Production Schedule

Workload

Preparing for a MOOC is very much like the process of publishing a monograph. It is a lengthy and labor intensive process, and usually takes 10-15 months. We outline some of the important steps in MOOC production to help you get an overview of the effort involved in the graphics on the right.

- Proposal Development & Submission (4-6 weeks)
 - Application/Writing Proposal
 - Test shoot (optional)
- Planning and Design (12-16 weeks)
 - Design course & assignment
 - Schedule video shooting and other resources
 - Obtain copyright to reuse material
 - Explore MOOC platform
- Production & Review (16-20 weeks)
 - Daily video shooting of class content
 - Continual review & revising of video content
- Course Offering (10-14 weeks)
 - Foster student engagement through forum & social media
 - Weekly check-ins with TAs and course producer
- Closing Assessment (3-6 weeks)
 - Debriefing and Planning of the next iteration

Support/Resources

ASTS provides assistance and support for the design and production of online courses. Our MOOC production team, which usually consists of a producer, a visualization specialist, three multimedia specialists and student assistants, will assist you every step of the way.

Producer - Teaching & Learning Consultation and Project Management

The producer is usually an Academic Technology Analyst. He or she will assume the role of project manager so that faculty can focus on the substance of the course itself. Your producer can

- Help you put together your MOOC proposal
- Give pedagogical and technological advice specific to teaching in an online environment
- Schedule resources and video shoots
- Review content and provide feedback
- Structure content for a diverse audience and asynchronous access
- Manage course logistics
- Assist with copyright and licensing
- Help you integrate your MOOC with your residential course

Visualization Specialist - Multimedia Content Development

Our visualization specialist will support your needs for multimedia content and assist you in developing ideas for interactive learning experiences. Sample projects include graphic illustrations, 2D- and 3D-animation and data visualization.

Multimedia Specialists - Video Production

Our team of audio-visual experts will help you produce professional video lectures. We will take care of the technical aspects of video recording, editing and adding post-production effects.

Graduate Student Assistants

Graduate student assistants may assume the role of Teaching Assistants and help with writing content and assessments, answering questions in online forums, and other tasks. We



Read an empirical study of how video production decisions affect student engagement in online educational videos, "How Video Production Affects Student Engagement: An Empirical Study of MOOC Videos" (pgbovine.net/publications/edX-MOOC-video-production-and-engagement_LAS-2014.pdf).



Listen to a Russ Roberts's interview of Professor John Cochrane on EconTalk podcast about his experience teaching a MOOC and thoughts on the economics of MOOCs (www.econtalk.org/archives/2014/03/cochrane_on_edu.html).

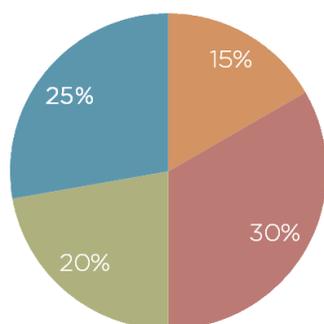
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learners enrolled in 4 UChicago MOOCs

67%

of all enrolled visited the course at least once on average

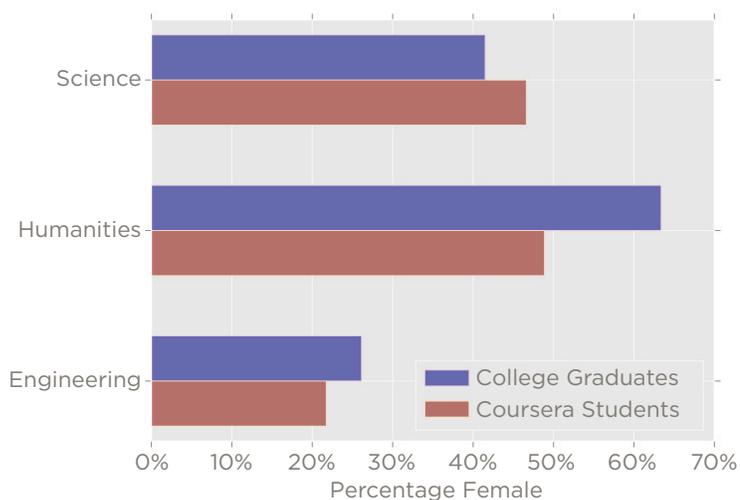
4 types of learners identified by Coursera:



- **Aspiring Students**—learners in their late teens to early 20's, who take MOOCs to supplement and/or prepare for traditional academic coursework.
- **Enrichment Learners**—learners in their mid 20's and 50's, who participate in MOOCs for the love of learning
- **Career Changers**—learners in their mid 30's, who treat MOOCs as a means for career or academic advancement.
- **Technical Skill Builders**—learners in their late 30's, who learn from MOOCs to advance their career.

Gender Ratio

Comparison of proportion of women among Coursera enrollments and college students by course category.



© For more information about copyright, visit the University of Chicago Copyright Information Center (www.lib.uchicago.edu/copyrightinfo).

The University of Pennsylvania Libraries has a very informative web page on copyright issues in MOOCs (guides.library.upenn.edu/copyright/MOOC).

See also this handy infographic from The Visual Communication Guy Blog for some general guidelines (thevisualcommunicationguy.com/2014/07/14/can-i-use-that-picture).



Read about Professor Peggy Mason's MOOC video filming experience in her blog (thebrainissocool.com/2014/03/05/filming-a-mooc).

offer support for up to two graduate students to assist with technological and pedagogical needs during both the development period prior to the course offering as well as the live course session itself.

Copyright & Other Course Material

Besides video, you can choose to supplement course material with images and readings from textbooks, journal articles, and/or other resources available on the internet.

A Note on Copyright & Fair Use

It may be helpful to think about the process of securing permissions as if you were the author of a textbook when considering the use of copyrighted materials in your MOOC. Explicit permission to reuse material must be obtained in writing, even if you have prior verbal agreement to use them. While this does not rule out fair use as an option, it is to be used with care. Note that the copyright of material published in a publication or monograph, even ones of which you are an author, are often owned by the publisher and written permission must be obtained. Your course producer will assist you in the copyright process.

Textbooks and Journal Articles

If you wish to use a textbook in your course, even if it is a textbook you authored, we will need to start negotiating with the publisher as early in the process as possible. It can take several months to arrange a contract.

If you wish to use articles available on JSTOR, you can ask students to sign up for a free account (about.jstor.org/rr) that will allow them to read up to 3 articles every 2 weeks.

Graphics, Illustrations, Visualizations and Other Supporting Material

You may include graphics, illustrations, visualizations and other supporting material for your students. Our visualization specialist can help you prepare multimedia teaching material in the appropriate format and size. Copyright issues mentioned above apply to graphics as well, and it is important to remember that publishers often own the copyrights to images, graphics, and illustrations in publications.

We encourage you to link to existing relevant materials, such as YouTube or Vimeo videos, and websites already available on the internet. They can make your course more engaging and encourage your students to explore on their own.

FAQs

Who Owns the Content of the MOOC?

For courses that are developed as a part of the Provost's **Online Learning Initiative**, the University owns the content of the course. Faculty have a great deal of freedom to adjust the content, repurpose it for residential courses, and share it, but it cannot be offered commercially.

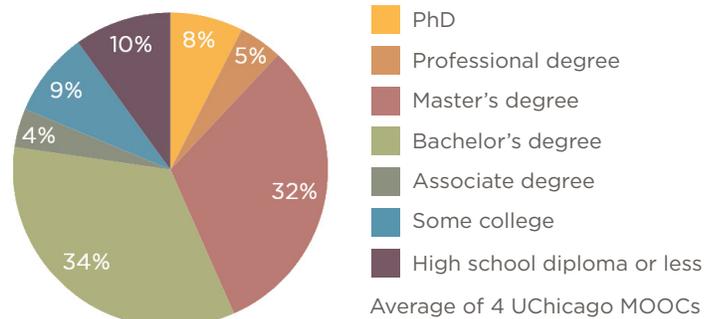
Are the MOOC Courses For-Credit?

We do not offer for-credit courses under the Provost's initiative. Some individual schools do (**The Oriental Institute, Chicago Booth School of Business, Graham School**), but this is not something we oversee. This would be a topic of discussion with your department.

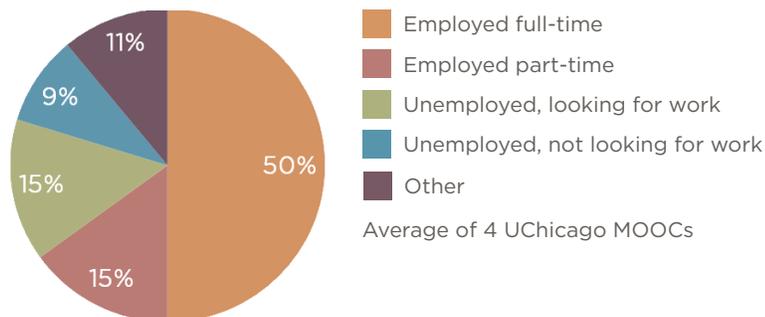
Remuneration

There is no remuneration for developing an online course under the Provost's **Online Learning Initiative**. You are encouraged to discuss with your department.

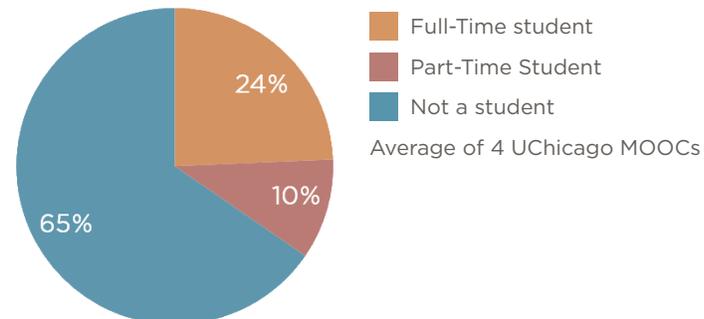
Highest Education Level



Employment Status



Education Status



Find Out More

For further information, email online@uchicago.edu.

