

FROM CONTENT TO COURSE

A Guide for Subject Matter Experts

Course development is a collaborative process. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) provide content expertise, while the **Onboarding & Development Services team** provides instructional design, accessibility compliance, course development, and publication support. Together, we create engaging, accessible, and effective online learning experiences.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When does the course development timeline begin?

Course development timelines begin after all required materials have been submitted and reviewed. Missing materials may delay project initiation and impact the overall timeline.

Why can't development start immediately after I submit my materials?

Projects are scheduled based on organizational priorities, regulatory requirements, project complexity, and current development workload. Once materials are received, projects enter a development queue before active development begins.

Why does course development take several weeks?

Course development involves much more than uploading content into a learning management system. The process includes content analysis, instructional design, accessibility compliance, course development, quality assurance testing, stakeholder review, revisions, and publication.

Can I just send a PowerPoint?

PowerPoint presentations may be used as source material, but they are not online courses. Most PowerPoint presentations are designed to support a live presenter and often contain only key points, visuals, or discussion prompts. Additional instructional content is required to create an effective self-paced learning experience.

Why do you need a Word document?

Online learners do not have access to a live instructor who can explain concepts, answer questions, and provide additional context. A Word document containing the complete instructional content helps ensure learners receive all of the information they need to successfully complete the training.

Why do you need original images and video files?

Images and videos embedded in PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, and PDFs often lose quality and may not be accessible for reuse. Original source files help ensure media meets quality, accessibility, and design standards.

Can audio narration be added to my course?

Yes. However, audio narration is not automatically generated in Rise 360. Narration requires a written script, audio generation, review, uploading, and testing. Audio narration may significantly increase development time and should be discussed during project planning.

Why are captions and transcripts required?

Accessibility standards require online learning content to be usable by all learners. Videos included in all UAMS courses must include closed captions and transcripts to support accessibility and compliance requirements.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Creating Effective Online Learning Is a Partnership

Subject Matter Expert (SME)	Instructional Designer (ID)
Provides content expertise	Provides learning expertise
Supplies source materials	Designs the learning experience
Verifies content accuracy	Develops learning objectives
Answers content questions	Creates learner activities and knowledge checks
Reviews course drafts	Ensures accessibility compliance
Approves final content	Builds, tests, and publishes the course
Provides timely feedback	Coordinates development and revisions

Important



Subject Matter Experts are experts in the content. Instructional Designers are experts in how people learn. Both perspectives are essential for creating effective online learning.

BEFORE SUBMITTING A COURSE REQUEST

Completing this checklist before the initial consultation helps reduce development time and minimizes project delays.

- ☐ Course content is provided in a Word document
- ☐ Learning goals have been identified
- ☐ Policies and supporting documents are attached
- ☐ Original image files are provided
- ☐ Videos are provided as separate files
- ☐ Accessibility requirements have been identified
- ☐ SME reviewer has been identified
- ☐ Desired completion date has been provided
- ☐ Regulatory, accreditation, or compliance requirements have been identified
- ☐ Audio narration needs have been discussed (if applicable)

COMMUNICATION PLAN FOR REQUIRED TRAINING

If a course is required training that will be assigned out to the campus, ensuring employees know about it ahead of time is not part of the Onboarding & Development Services build. That communication is the SME's responsibility.

WHY WE NEED MORE THAN A POWERPOINT

One of the most common misconceptions about online learning is that a PowerPoint presentation can simply be uploaded and published as a course.

While PowerPoint presentations can be excellent tools for instructor-led training, they are typically designed to support a live presenter—not to function as standalone learning experiences.

In a classroom, meeting, or training session, the presenter provides important information that may not appear on the slides, including:

- Explanations and context
- Examples and demonstrations
- Definitions of unfamiliar terms
- Answers to learner questions
- Clarification of complex concepts
- Real-world applications and best practices

Online learners do not have access to a live instructor. The course itself must provide all the information learners need to understand the content and apply what they have learned successfully.

In a classroom, the instructor fills in the gaps. In online learning, there can be no gaps.

For this reason, the Onboarding & Development Services team requires course content in a Word document or similar text-based format that includes the complete instructional language—not just slide titles, bullet points, or speaker prompts.

When developing self-paced online learning, we must anticipate learners' questions before they are asked, explain concepts clearly, provide examples, address potential points of confusion, and ensure learners can successfully complete the training without instructor assistance.

PowerPoint presentations, policy documents, and reference materials are valuable source materials, but they are not complete online courses. Additional instructional design and content development are required to transform source materials into an effective learning experience.

Face-to-Face Training vs. Online Learning

Face-to-Face Training	Self-Paced Online Learning
Instructor explains concepts	Course must explain concepts
Learners can ask questions	Course must anticipate questions
Instructor provides examples	Examples must be included in the course
Instructor clarifies confusion	Clarifications must be built into the content
Instructor guides discussion	Course must guide understanding independently
Instructor provides additional context	Context must be written into the course

WHAT HAPPENS DURING COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Course development involves much more than transferring information into an online format. The Onboarding & Development Services team may perform the following services during development:

- Content analysis and organization
- Learning objective development
- Instructional design
- Course development in Articulate Rise 360
- Knowledge checks and learner activities
- Graphic and visual design
- Accessibility compliance review
- Alternative text creation
- Closed captioning and transcript development
- Audio narration development (when requested)
- Quality assurance testing
- SME review coordination
- Workday Learning publication and assignment support



Note

Because of these activities, online course development requires planning, collaboration, and multiple review cycles.

ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

UAMS online learning must comply with accessibility standards and be usable by all learners. Accessibility compliance is incorporated into every course development project and requires additional time for development.

Accessibility requirements may include:

- Alternative text for images
- Screen-reader compatibility
- Keyboard navigation
- Plain language revisions
- Appropriate heading structure
- Color contrast verification
- Accessible downloadable documents
- Closed captions for videos
- Video transcripts

REQUIRED MATERIALS FOR COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Course Content

Please provide:

- Course content in a Word document
- Current policies and procedures
- Supporting documentation
- Regulatory or compliance requirements
- Existing job aids or reference materials

Important



PowerPoint presentations may be used as source material, but should not serve as the primary course content document.

Images and Graphics

Please provide original image files whenever possible. The Organizational Development team does not extract, recreate, or copy images from PowerPoint presentations, Word documents, PDFs, screenshots, or other embedded sources.

Preferred Image Formats	Notes
PNG	Best for graphics with transparency
JPG / JPEG	Best for photographs
SVG	Scalable vector graphics
Canva files	Export from Canva directly
Adobe source files	Illustrator, Photoshop, etc.

Videos

Videos must be provided as separate files. Videos embedded in PowerPoint presentations cannot always be extracted while maintaining quality and functionality.

Preferred Video Formats	Notes
MP4	Most widely supported format
MOV	Apple QuickTime format
WMV	Windows Media Video

AUDIO NARRATION CONSIDERATIONS

Audio narration is not included as a standard component of course development unless specifically requested and approved.

When Narration Is Requested

- A written narration script is required
- Scripts must be reviewed for accuracy and clarity
- AI-generated audio clips are limited to approximately 5,000 characters per clip
- Longer lessons may require multiple audio files
- Audio files must be individually generated, reviewed, uploaded, and tested

Important



Because of these requirements, audio narration may significantly increase development time and should be discussed during project planning.

COURSE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Phase 1 Discovery and Consultation *1–2 Weeks*

- Meet with SME(s)
- Review source materials
- Define audience and learning goals
- Identify project requirements
- Establish timeline expectations

Phase 2 Content Preparation *1–2 Weeks*

- Review and organize materials
- Identify content gaps
- Clarify technical information
- Develop learning objectives
- Determine course structure

Phase 3 Course Design and Development *2–6 Weeks*

- Build course in Rise 360
- Create learner interactions
- Develop knowledge checks
- Create visual elements
- Incorporate media assets

Phase 4 Accessibility Review <i>1 Week</i>	• Add alternative text • Review accessibility requirements • Create or verify transcripts • Verify navigation and usability • Conduct accessibility testing
Phase 5 SME Review <i>1–2 Weeks</i>	• SME reviews course draft • Content corrections identified • Feedback submitted
Phase 6 Revisions and Final Approval <i>1 Week</i>	• Feedback incorporated • Final edits completed • SME approval obtained
Phase 7 Publication <i>Up to 1 Week</i>	• Final quality assurance review • Workday Learning configuration • Testing and deployment

Note



Project timelines begin after all required materials have been received and the project has been assigned for development. Projects are scheduled based on organizational priorities, regulatory requirements, project complexity, and current development workload.

REVISION CYCLE POLICY

The Onboarding & Development Services team includes up to three rounds of revisions in the course development timeline. Additional rounds beyond three may extend the project timeline and should be discussed with the ODS team.

Important



Revisions will not begin until the Onboarding & Development Services team is notified that all revision requests have been entered as comments directly in the Rise course. Please consolidate feedback from all reviewers before submitting notification.