

FORWARD-FOCUSED: **ACCELERATED COURSE CONVERSIONS ROADMAP**

1. INTRODUCTION & COURSE INVENTORY (SOURCE OF TRUTH)

Strategic Vision and Institutional Alignment

ODU is standardizing online course offerings to an eight-week, asynchronous format to modernize the digital learning experience and align with national enrollment trends while safeguarding academic rigor. ODUGlobal provides centralized support, pairing faculty with dedicated instructional design resources so that courses maintain disciplinary integrity while benefiting from consistent quality and student-centered design.

What Faculty Can Expect

Faculty are contacted by their assigned ID during the course's notification window—typically four to six weeks before active development—to schedule a kickoff and request materials. Together, the faculty member and ID agree on scope in a Tier Agreement, create an Accelerated Course Design Plan (ACDP), and progress through rolling reviews as the build proceeds. Before scheduling, the course passes a Quality Assurance (QA) review that checks accessibility, alignment, navigation, links, and the gradebook; the faculty member then provides Final Academic Confirmation, after which the ID issues the Ready-for-Students signal to ODUGlobal Academic Planning.

Course Inventory and “Source of Truth”

A comprehensive Course Inventory serves as the single Source of Truth for the project. The inventory tracks more than one thousand online courses on a multi-layered project board (Monday.com) and integrates department corrections, Academic Planning audits, and development status so that all stakeholders operate from consistent, current data. Academic Planning performs routine audits against upcoming schedules and registrar timelines, reconciling updates back to the board so development and scheduling remain aligned.

Fields captured in the inventory include: course identifiers and titles; program/department; instructor/owner; modality; last offered and last build/revision date; prerequisites and sequencing (including gateway status); indicators of asset gaps (e.g., content missing or outdated; media needs); accessibility flags (e.g., captioning or alt-text requirements); assigned ID; internal versus external build path; target term; development block; and the notification window.

Department Spreadsheet Review Loop (End-to-End)

Programs received filtered spreadsheets showing current inventory data for their courses. Departments verified titles, ownership, prerequisites, and sequencing; flagged inaccuracies; and added notes for special cases. ODUGlobal's academic planning team consolidated changes, resolved straightforward corrections, and flagged conflicts. Verified edits were merged into Monday.com with change history preserved for traceability. Items requiring judgment—such as sequencing impacts or cross-listings—were routed to Program Chairs, and complex cases escalated with Academic Affairs. Programs received confirmation of merges and a list of any open items for the next update cycle.

How the Inventory Feeds Downstream Processes

Inventory data and department feedback inform prioritization (E.S.F.A.S.). Development block composition draws from prioritization and readiness signals while respecting capacity across IDs, Academic Departments, and Academic Planning. ID assignments can be made early, but outreach timing follows each block's notification window so that work begins precisely when a course is queued for development.

2. PRIORITIZATION (E.S.F.A.S.) + OVERRIDES & EXEMPTIONS

2.1 OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIZATION

ODUGlobal used a structured approach to determine the order in which courses were converted. Academic Planning used the Monday.com Source of Truth to audit and synchronize course data with registrar scheduling requirements, and departments contributed essential corrections through spreadsheet reviews.

The Academic Planning (AP) unit participated in the prioritization of needed courses for the Fall 2026 launch by utilizing a scaffolding process to build upon existing information to obtain a comprehensive list of needed courses. This process integrated existing online program management infrastructure with cross-functional collaboration, ensuring that outreach to academic departments and program leads resulted in an accurate and holistic curriculum strategy.

Data-Driven Infrastructure

The AP unit leverages Monday.com as a centralized repository and strategic project management interface. This platform functions as more than a catalog; it serves as a funnel for the course development lifecycle. To support the online conversion component of the Forward Focused Initiative, the unit utilized this infrastructure in the following ways:

- The initial effort towards prioritization included constructing an online pathway for each online program in our project management tool, mapping the exact course sequence required for student matriculation and completion in the online environment.
- These pathways were developed through consultation of university catalogs and historical scheduling data to identify the most relevant courses.
- By centralizing this data within the PM tool, academic planning generated program-specific requirements that also provided an overview of the university's online academic portfolio.

Collaboration with Online Scheduling

To build upon the online pathway for programs, the AP unit engaged in high-level consultation with the Director of Online Scheduling. This collaboration allowed for an audit of semester-over-semester course rollovers, identifying potential oversight of any courses that may have existed outside of traditional program pathways. These refined course lists provided the essential data foundation for subsequent engagement with academic partners.

Outreach to Departments and Programs

Under the guidance of FFDT senior leadership, the AP unit transformed technical data into collaborative action. By utilizing the PM tool, the unit organized comprehensive course lists exported into accessible formats for program chairs and leads to collaborate, edit, and provide validation and buy-in for the prioritized development list. The AP unit has been meeting and communicating with academic units continuously to ensure a consensus understanding of needs. This strategic approach represents a scaffolded effort to prioritize needed courses for the Forward Focused initiative.

2.2 THE E.S.F.A.S. MODEL

Courses were scored across five pillars, each rated from 0 to 3:

- Enrollment (anticipated reach),
- Sequencing (role as a prerequisite or gateway),
- Frequency (how often the course runs),
- Asset Gap (volume of content to build or update), and
- Strategic Priority (accreditation, compliance, or strategic plan alignment).

The scores were used to inform—rather than dictate—the development order.

2.3 FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT INPUT VIA THE SPREADSHEET LOOP

Departments reviewed inventories, verified titles and offerings, clarified prerequisite chains, and provided corrections. IDs triaged and logged these inputs. Approved updates were merged into Monday.com, keeping the inventory accurate for prioritization and block assignment. Conflicts were resolved with Program Chairs and Academic Planning.

This process of academic program input into development prioritization continues as programs make necessary changes.

2.4 STRATEGIC OVERRIDES AND EXEMPTIONS

To reflect realities that data alone could not capture,

- Strategic Overrides were requested—typically by program chairs or deans—when accreditation cycles, licensure requirements, cohort timing, or curriculum dependencies warranted moving a course.
- Exemption Requests were also considered when a course was not pedagogically suited for an eight-week asynchronous format. Both overrides and exemptions, when approved, influenced final development block placement.

2.5 INTEGRATION WITH BLOCK ASSIGNMENT

Final block composition resulted from E.S.F.A.S. scores, department corrections, and any approved Overrides or Exemptions. This integration ensured each block reflected institutional priorities, development readiness, and balanced capacity across Instructional Designers, SRM production teams, and Academic Planning.

2.6 INTERNAL VS. EXTERNAL (VENDOR) DEVELOPMENT

In many cases, an existing 16-week online course already contains all the asynchronous materials necessary. Such courses constitute the work completed in collaboration with our external partner, Six Red Marbles (SRM). SRM is a full-service online design company selected by ODU to complement the services of the internal instructional design team. As SRM works within the parameters of ODU's standards, the processes described within this document apply to all courses. However, a few additional process items have been developed to facilitate communication between both ODU and SRM design teams.

Using feedback received from academic departments, courses were prioritized and sequenced for the development schedule. Courses already built fully asynchronously are initially assigned to SRM. To ensure high-quality oversight of the full accelerated conversion project, each faculty member is assigned an ODU instructional designer (ID). This includes courses developed with support by SRM. For these 'vendor' courses, the internal ID serves as the primary point of contact and interacts with SRM staff.

ODU sends a copy of the updated course syllabus and existing Canvas course shell to SRM for their initial conversion development. Due to the large volume of courses, ODU delivers courses in blocks or "batches", each consisting of courses grouped together based on their placement during the prioritization process. SRM then conducts the initial conversion development according to the ODU provided course accelerated development plan and provides their prototype for review. The prototype is received by the ODU ID assigned to the course and discussed with the faculty SME for their feedback. The faculty member may request modifications/revisions as necessary. Based on feedback, SRM works to build the final version of the course in Canvas. The faculty SME and ID then review the final product.

3. DEVELOPMENT BLOCKS

3.1 PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE BLOCK MODEL

Development blocks coordinate resources and establish predictable starts so that many courses can progress in parallel without overloading design, review, or scheduling capacity. The model clarifies outreach timing, expected workload rhythm, and readiness requirements for all participants.

3.2 COMPOSITION, CADENCE, AND CAPACITY

Blocks use staggered starts—twice per month on the first and middle Tuesdays—to keep work flowing continuously. On average, a block contains roughly eighty-nine (89) courses. The precise size of each block reflects the readiness of incoming courses and the capacity of IDs, the external production partner (Six Red Marbles, SRM), and Academic Planning.

BLOCK	START DATE (TUES)	DYOC WINDOW (2 WEEKS)	END DATE	FULL DEVELOPMENT WINDOW
A	Tue, Dec 2, 2025	Dec 4 – Dec 18	Mar 31, 2026	Dec --> March
B	Tue, Jan 6, 2026	Jan 8 – Jan 22	May 5, 2026	Jan --> May
C	Tue, Jan 20, 2026	Jan 22 – Feb 5	May 19, 2026	Jan --> May
D	Tue, Feb 3, 2026	Feb 5 – Feb 19	Jun 2, 2026	Feb --> June
E	Tue Feb 17, 2026	Feb 19 – Mar 5	Jun 16, 2026	Feb --> June
F	Tue, Mar 3, 2026	Mar 5 – Mar 19	Jun 30, 2026	Mar --> June
G	Tue, Mar 17, 2026	Mar 19 – Apr 2	Jul 14, 2026	Mar --> July

3.3 ENTRY AND EXIT CRITERIA

A course enters a block when foundational conditions are met: the inventory record is validated; program corrections and decisions are complete; materials and dependencies are sufficiently assembled; and, where applicable, any overrides or exemptions have been adjudicated. A course exits its block after it passes the QA review and the faculty member records Final Academic Confirmation.

3.4 COMMUNICATIONS, GOVERNANCE, AND TRANSPARENCY

To ensure visibility and momentum, communication spans multiple layers: weekly touchpoints at the course level; biweekly program updates that surface sequence issues; and monthly oversight for deans and chairs. Decision, change, and risk logs are maintained so that stakeholders can trace decisions and anticipate impacts. If a course cannot meet its slot—for example, key materials are incomplete—it may move to a later block and a ready course take its place. This keeps the pipeline moving while preserving quality.

3.5 HANDOFFS WITHIN AND BEYOND EACH BLOCK

Within a block, handoffs follow a consistent sequence:

Kickoff --> Tier Agreement --> ACDP (Design Plan) --> Build --> QA --> Final Academic Confirmation --> Ready-for-Students signal to Academic Planning.

This sequence ensures that design intent is captured early, quality is verified before scheduling, and students experience a finished, coherent course on day one.

FALL 2026 AND SPRING/SUMMER 2027 SCOPE AND DEVELOPMENT STATUS

At this time, **639 courses are scheduled for Fall 2026** development, with an additional **223 courses planned for Spring and Summer 2027**. An additional **278 courses are currently pending**, as updated information from programs is still being finalized. This brings the **current total number of courses in scope to approximately 1,140**. This number remains fluid, as programs continue to add or remove courses from the initiative as part of ongoing academic planning and sequencing.

4. FACULTY ENGAGEMENT LIFECYCLE

4.1 PRIMARY CONTACT AND SUPPORT MODEL

Each course is paired with a dedicated Instructional Designer (ID) who serves as the faculty member's primary point of contact and project lead. The ID manages the overall workflow, helps translate disciplinary goals into effective online design, and ensures that accessibility and quality standards are met without overburdening faculty.

4.2 NOTIFICATION WINDOW AND PRE-LAUNCH

Faculty outreach occurs during the notification window—about four to six weeks before a course's active development. During Pre-Launch, the ID schedules the kickoff, requests and organizes materials (syllabi, assessments, existing Canvas exports, media assets, and related documents), provisions the development shell, and shares checklists so the work starts smoothly.

4.3 TIER AGREEMENT (SCOPE) AND COMPENSATION TRIGGER

The ID and faculty member collaboratively review materials and confirm a realistic scope of work in a Tier Agreement. This agreement documents required tasks and deliverables, clarifies roles and expectations, and, where applicable, serves as the formal compensation trigger so that effort and scope are aligned from the outset.

4.4 DESIGN: THE ACCELERATED COURSE DESIGN PLAN (ACDP)

The ACDP is the blueprint for the eight-week course. It maps Course Learning Objectives (CLOs) to Module Learning Objectives (MLOs), defines the weekly/module rhythm, establishes assessment alignment and rubrics, addresses workload balance and time-on-task, and incorporates accessibility planning from the start. Approval of the ACDP ensures both partners share the same vision before production.

4.5 COURSE BUILD AND REVIEWS

Course build follows the ACDP. IDs manage timelines, quality, and accessibility tasks (captions, transcripts, alt text, document structure, and contrast). Some technical construction may be executed by the external production partner, SRM, under ID supervision, while academic decisions remain with the faculty member. Rolling module reviews enable timely decisions and minimize rework.

4.6 RESPONSIBILITIES, QA, AND FINAL ACADEMIC CONFIRMATION

Faculty review modules, clarify assessments, provide missing materials, and approve the academic placement of content. Before scheduling, the course completes a comprehensive QA review to verify alignment, navigation, assessment clarity, link integrity, accessibility, and gradebook configuration. The faculty member then provides Final Academic Confirmation, signaling that the course is academically ready for students.

4.7 COMMUNICATION CADENCE AND ESCALATION

A predictable cadence underpins the partnership: weekly ID-SME check-ins, biweekly program coordination to resolve sequence issues, and monthly updates to Academic Affairs. Risks or delays are documented in a risk log and escalated to program leadership or Academic Planning as needed.

4.8 IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN CONTACTED YET

If you have not yet been contacted, this does not indicate an issue with the development schedule for your course(s). Outreach is aligned to the timing of the development blocks. It is normal for faculty who teach in the same term to be contacted at different times, because blocks open in sequence. Chairs and deans receive regular updates on sequencing and development status.

5. DETAILED ROADMAP (PHASES 1–5)

PHASE 1 — LAUNCH AND MATERIAL HANDOVER

The conversion journey begins when the ID schedules the kickoff meeting. Together, the ID and faculty member discuss learning objectives and the conversion strategy. The faculty member submits core materials—including syllabi and assessments—and the ID provisions a new Canvas development shell, transferring any viable content to establish structure early.

PHASE 2 — COMPLEXITY REVIEW AND FORMAL AGREEMENT

Next, the ID reviews the submitted materials to determine redesign complexity, consulting internal resources where helpful. A formal agreement (the Tier Agreement) documents the scope—tasks, deliverables, timelines, accessibility tasks, and expectations—and is routed for faculty review and signature so that all parties share a clear plan before production work begins.

PHASE 3 — DESIGN AND BLUEPRINTING

In the foundational design phase, the ID and faculty member co-create the Accelerated Course Design Plan. This blueprint translates legacy materials into an eight-week structure, aligns CLOs with MLOs, specifies assessment sequences and rubrics, defines interaction and media plans, and addresses workload balance and accessibility. Approval of the ACDP ensures a shared, testable design before building.

PHASE 4 — DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, AND BUILD

The course is constructed in Canvas according to the plan. The ID serves as the primary project manager, coordinating weekly development check-ins, ensuring accessibility and quality standards, and managing rolling reviews. When scale is needed, SRM functions strictly as a production partner—building modules and assets according to the ID's plan—while academic decisions remain with the faculty SME. A prototype can be reviewed and refined before full production proceeds, reducing downstream rework.

PHASE 5 — EVALUATION AND ACADEMIC CONFIRMATION

After the initial build is complete, the ID and faculty member conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the course experience. Any required refinements are made. The faculty member then provides Final Academic Confirmation that the course meets disciplinary standards and is approved for delivery. With this confirmation in place, the ID issues the Ready-for-Students signal to Academic Planning so term shells, sections, and publishing preparation can proceed in alignment with the academic calendar.

SECTION 6. QUALITY ASSURANCE (QA), ACCESSIBILITY, FINAL READINESS, AND SCHEDULING

6.1 QA STANDARDS AND RUBRIC OVERVIEW

Before a course appears in the schedule, the ID verifies that the design meets institutional expectations for academic integrity, alignment, accessibility, and usability. Using a standardized rubric, the QA Gate examines CLO MLO alignment; consistency of module navigation; assessment clarity and rubric fidelity; functional links and current resources; and overall course flow.

6.2 ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND MEDIA READINESS

Accessibility is integral, not an afterthought. Media assets require captions or transcripts, images include accurate alt text, documents are readable and properly structured, and color contrast is sufficient to support diverse learners. These tasks are planned during design and verified during build and QA.

6.3 FINAL READINESS WORKFLOWS

Final readiness checks include link validation, a gradebook audit (categories, weighting, groupings, and final calculation), consistent due-date patterns across modules, and publication settings review so that students encounter a coherent, predictable course experience from day one.

6.4 READY-FOR-STUDENTS SIGNAL AND SCHEDULING INTEGRATION

After QA is complete and the faculty member provides Final Academic Confirmation, the ID issues the Ready-for-Students signal. Academic Planning then prepares term shells, creates sections, and aligns registrar timelines so the course is available to students on schedule. Leadership receives regular updates and an established escalation path ensures risks are resolved promptly.

7. OVERSIGHT, TRANSPARENCY, AND ESCALATION

ODUGlobal provides the structure that keeps the eight-week conversion on schedule and ensures every course benefits from consistent support. **ODUGlobal** supplies centralized oversight so academic departments receive coordinated instructional-design resources and experience a predictable process from first contact through scheduling.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

A single, multi-layered project board in Monday.com functions as the source of truth for more than 1,000 online courses. ODUGlobal's academic planning team audits updates and verifies alignment with upcoming schedules through daily synchronization, keeping development and scheduling in lockstep. Departments supply corrections via a structured spreadsheet loop; spreadsheets are outputs from the Monday.com boards; approved changes are merged with change history preserved, so prioritization, development blocks, and status always reflect the current institutional record.

TRANSPARENCY CADENCE

Governance relies on a deliberate communication rhythm across three layers:

- **Weekly** at the course level (**ID <--> Faculty**) to surface decisions, track progress, and address risks early.
- **Monthly** for college deans and chairs to provide portfolio-level visibility and confirm the initiative remains on track.

ESCALATION PATH

When an issue exceeds the course or program working level, the formal path routes concerns from ID → Director → Dean to remove blockers such as technical delays or communication gaps. The aim is to resolve issues quickly while keeping faculty work focused on disciplinary decisions, not process navigation.

EXCEPTIONS (STRATEGIC OVERRIDES AND EXEMPTIONS)

ODUGlobal balances project management with academic realities through formal exception handling:

- **Strategic Overrides** are reviewed by Leadership in Academic Affairs and DTT when a course must move for reasons such as accreditation cycles, licensure requirements, cohort timing, **or** curriculum dependencies.
- **Exemption Requests** are considered when the eight-week asynchronous model is not pedagogically appropriate. Approved exemptions and overrides are recorded in the inventory and reflected in final block placement.

FACULTY SUPPORT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Governance also encourages and recognizes faculty engagement in Design Your Own Course (DYOC) training and requires accessible media workflows, so the converted course is inclusive, navigable, and consistent with institutional standards. These expectations are integrated into design and validated during build and QA.

Additionally, professional development opportunities have been made available specifically for supporting the design and development of accelerated courses.

FORWARD-FOCUSED: COURSE DESIGN AND TEACHING IN ACCELERATED LEARNING SERIES

- **Building the Accelerated Course Framework from Scratch**
 - Focuses on using backward design to create syllabi and schedules optimized for accelerated formats while leveraging AI for Canvas organization.
- **Adapting Content for Accelerated Delivery**
 - Covers practical strategies for converting existing course materials, redesigning assessments for efficiency, and using AI to refine rubrics and quizzes.
- **Tools and Strategies for Accelerated Teaching**
 - Explores essential Canvas tools like Discussion Boards, SpeedGrader, and Analytics to streamline grading and support engagement in compressed timelines.
- **Designing Rigorous Assessments for Accelerated Learning Environments**
 - Provides a framework for creating authentic and equitable assessments that maintain rigor within 8-week timelines while reducing cognitive load.

- **Managing Cognitive Load & Workload Distribution in 8-Week Courses**

- Examines how cognitive load impacts student success and introduces strategies for module pacing, scaffolding, and workload estimation.

- **College of Education Collaboration Sessions**

- A series of collaborative workshops focusing on accelerated course design for educator preparation, evidence-based instructional design, and student engagement.

- **Creating Learning Assessments for an AI-Influenced Academic Landscape**

- Explores how to redesign assessments to acknowledge and incorporate student access to AI tools while maintaining academic

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ONLINE COURSE ACCESSIBILITY

Old Dominion University is advancing targeted professional development initiatives to support faculty compliance with upcoming changes to federal accessibility regulations expected to take effect in 2026. New professional development opportunities are currently in design and development to ensure faculty are prepared to meet evolving regulatory requirements related to online and digital course accessibility.

These initiatives focus on equipping faculty with the knowledge and skills necessary to design, develop, and deliver online courses that align with updated federal standards. Emphasis is placed on incorporating accessibility requirements during course development to minimize compliance risks, reduce the need for post-implementation remediation, and support consistent application of accessibility standards across academic programs. Through these efforts, ODU is proactively positioning the institution to maintain compliance with federal regulations while strengthening accountability and sustainability in online course delivery.

BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

This road map brings the entire eight-week conversion initiative into clear view by explaining the shared data backbone that keeps the work synchronized, the governance that safeguards academic integrity, and the operational rhythms that carry a course from kickoff to scheduling. It traces how programs, IDs, and Academic Planning rely on a single Source of Truth in Monday.com—kept current through routine audits and daily synchronization—to coordinate scope, timing, and readiness across more than a thousand online courses. It also documents how courses were prioritized using the E.S.F.A.S. model, strengthened by the department spreadsheet loop and, when warranted, formal Strategic Overrides and Exemptions that ensured data-driven plans remained responsive to accreditation, licensure, and curricular realities. From there, development blocks provide predictable starts and capacity balance, while the faculty-ID partnership confirms scope in a Tier Agreement, translates it into an Accelerated Course Design Plan, and advances the build through rolling reviews—drawing on SRM for technical production under ID direction while academic decisions remain with the faculty SME. Finally, quality is formalized through the QA Gate, Final Academic Confirmation, and the Ready-for-Students signal to Academic Planning, so that every converted course reaches students on schedule and in a form that is aligned, accessible, and coherent.

Accelerated Courses



Strategic Vision

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Development Blocks

Development blocks coordinate resources and establish predictable starts so that many courses can progress in parallel without overloading design, review, or scheduling capacity. The model clarifies outreach timing, expected workload rhythm, and readiness requirements for all participants.



Prioritization (E.S.F.A.S.) + Overrides & Exemptions

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Faculty Engagement Lifecycle

Each course is paired with a dedicated Instructional Designer (ID) who serves as the faculty member's primary point of contact and project lead. The ID manages the overall workflow, helps translate disciplinary goals into effective online design, and ensures that accessibility and quality standards are met without overburdening faculty.

Accelerated Course Lifecycle

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