

# **Communication and roles of course personnel in OSCu courses**

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## Introduction

In order to get distributed OSCu courses to run smoothly, cooperation and communication between course personnel have to function well. In addition, everyone in the course personnel has to understand and perform all the tasks assigned to her/him.

The roles and the tasks of the course personnel and also the tasks of universities are introduced in the following two sections. The third section describes forms of communication in the OSCu courses.

## 1. Tasks for course personnel

### 1.1. Lecturer

#### Before the course begins

- Getting acquainted with the OSCu project and the instructions for the OSCu courses. The instructions are found in OSCu www-pages (<http://www.cs.tut.fi/~oscu/toiminta.html>).
- Recognizing the components of the course contents to make the material documentation easier.
- Informing the coursemasters and other assistants with the principles of OSCu courses.
- Guiding the coursemasters and the assistants regarding the lectures and the exercises.
- Organizing the first face-to-face meeting (opening seminar) between all the course personnel and planning the other possible meetings.
- Planning the weekly meetings.
- Designing the main www-pages of the course.

#### During the course

- Preparing the course materials.
- Communicating regularly with the coursemasters and the assistants.
- Guiding the coursemasters and the assistants regarding the lectures and the exercises.
- Organizing the weekly meetings and the face-to-face meetings during the course.
- Participating in the meetings.
- Making sure that all the meetings are being documented (someone, e.g. coursemaster takes the minutes of the meetings) and the documents are included in the course diary.

- Participating in the OSCu executive group meetings.

#### In the end of the course / after the course

- Organizing the final face-to-face meeting between all the course personnel.
- Making sure that all the course materials are documented comprehensive and according to the project guidelines.
- Ensuring that the course is completed in every universities participating in the course.
- Evaluating the course implementation and giving feedback from the OSCu project.

## **1.2. Coursemasters and assistants**

The simplest situation regarding the course arrangements would be if there was only one person taking care of all the practical issues in a university. Usually it isn't possible because of the large number of students. In this case, the tasks of assistants can be divided between several persons. In the case of several local assistants, someone must act as a coursemaster who is responsible for the local implementation of the course and communication between the lecturer and the other local assistants.

The tasks and responsibilities of assistants are listed in the following chapters. The tasks are divided between the coursemasters and the other assistants, but also one person can take care of the tasks of the several local assistants. If there is only one local assistant in a course, s/he takes care of both the coursemasters and the other assistants' tasks.

### **1.2.1. Coursemaster in the responsible university**

#### Before the course begins

- Getting acquainted with the OSCu project and the instructions for the OSCu courses. The instructions are found in OSCu www-pages (<http://www.cs.tut.fi/~oscu/toiminta.html>).
- Taking care of the local arrangements of the course in her/his own university.
- Planning the practical arrangements (technique, timing) of the weekly meetings and the face-to-face meetings.
- Updating information in the www-pages of the course.
- Arranging videoconference tests for lecture situation.

#### During the course

- Taking care of the local arrangements of the course in her/his own university.
- Archiving the course materials and ensuring the instructions of the materials.

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- Arranging the weekly meetings and the face-to-face meetings (technique, timing).
  - Participating in the meetings.
  - Taking minutes of the meetings and sending memos of them to the course personnel after the meetings.
  - Maintaining the course diary.
  - Maintaining the www-pages of the course.
  - Communicating practicality to the other universities participating in the course.
  - Acting as a contact person between the lecturer and the local assistants.
  - Taking care of the communication (e.g. the students' questions and feedback, the lecturer's answers and notices to the students) between the lecturer and the students in the course.
  - Being responsible for the feedback collection from the students during the course.
  - Making summaries of the feedback.
  - Writing regular reports of the course implementation.

#### In the end of the course / after the course

- Participating in the final meeting.
- Evaluating the course implementation and giving feedback from the OSCu project.

### **1.2.2. Coursemaster in the remote university**

#### Before the course begins

- Getting acquainted with the OSCu project and the instructions for the OSCu courses. The instructions are found in OSCu www-pages (<http://www.cs.tut.fi/~oscu/toiminta.html>).
- Taking care of the local arrangements of the course in her/his own university.
- Implementing the local www-page of the course.

#### During the course

- Taking care of the local arrangements of the course in her/his own university.
- Communicating practicality to the responsible university and taking care of the communication between the course personnel in her/his own university.
- Maintaining the local www-page of the course.
- Participating in the weekly meetings and the face-to-face meetings.
- Acting as a contact person between the lecturer and the local assistants.
- Taking care of the communication (e.g. the students' questions and feedback, the lecturer's answers and notices to the students) between the lecturer and the students in the course.
- Collecting feedback from the local students.

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- Making summaries of the feedback of the local students.
  - Writing regular reports of the course implementation.

#### In the end of the course / after the course

- Participating in the final meeting.
- Evaluating the course implementation and giving feedback from the OSCu project.

### **1.2.3. Tutoring assistants**

#### **Lectures**

##### Before the course begins

- Getting acquainted with the OSCu project and the instructions for the OSCu courses. The instructions are found in OSCu www-pages (<http://www.cs.tut.fi/~oscu/toiminta.html>).
- Learning the videoconference technics.
- Participating in the videoconference test for lecture and taking care of the lecture arrangements.

##### During the course

- Taking care of the videoconference technics during the lectures.
- Acting as a local teacher in the lecture situations.
- Taking care of the communication (e.g. the students' questions and feedback, the lecturer's answers and notices to the students) between the lecturer and the students in the course.
- Participating in the weekly meetings and the face-to-face meetings.
- Taking care of the feedback collection in the lectures and processing the feedback.

##### In the end of the course / after the course

- Participating in the final meeting.
- Evaluating the course implementation and giving feedback from the OSCu project.

#### **Exercises**

##### Before the course begins

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- Getting acquainted with the OSCu project and the instructions for the OSCu courses. The instructions are found in OSCu www-pages (<http://www.cs.tut.fi/~oscu/toiminta.html>).
  - Getting to know the exercises of the course.

### During the course

- Tutoring the local students and guiding the weekly exercises.
- Taking care of the communication (e.g. the students' questions and feedback, the lecturer's answers and notices to the students) between the lecturer and the students in the course.
- Participating in the weekly meetings and the face-to-face meetings.
- Evaluating the project works.

### In the end of the course / after the course

- Participating in the final meeting.
- Evaluating the course implementation and giving feedback from the OSCu project.

## **2. University task division**

### **2.1. Responsible university**

- planning and preparing the course
- taking care of the practical arrangements of the course and coordinating the course
- scheduling the course
- implementing the lectures via videoconference for all the universities participating in the course
- designing and updating the main www-pages of the course
- producing the course materials
- guiding and informing the course personnel
- organizing the communication system in the course (weekly meetings, face-to-face meetings etc.)
- maintaining the course diary (the diary includes the minutes of the meetings but there may also be further information of the course implementation)
- local reporting of the course
- making the final report of the course
- collecting feedback from the local students and making summaries of the feedback

- making summary of the final feedback collected from all the students participating in the course

## **2.2. Remote university**

- taking care of the local arrangements of the course
- local informing of the course
- implementing and updating the local www-page of the course (includes information of the local arrangements of the course)
- organizing the local exercises of the course
- organizing the lecture receiving via videoconference
- taking care of the local guidance for the students
- evaluating the projects and exams of the local students
- local reporting of the course
- collecting feedback from the local students and making summaries of the feedback

## **3. Communication in OSCu courses**

### **3.1. Communication between course personnel**

#### **3.1.1. Face-to-face meetings**

During the course, the course personnel meets face-to-face both in the beginning of the course and in the end of the course. The idea in the first meeting (opening seminar) is that everyone in the personnel actually sees each other and gets to know each other. In the first meeting, the course personnel have a possibility to design the implementation of the course and also set up a schedule for other meetings. In the meeting after the course, the course personnel evaluate the course implementation and design the future of the course. The personnel may also organize other face-to-face meetings during the course.

#### **3.1.2. Weekly meetings**

The most important way of communication between the course personnel are the weekly meetings. All the persons relating to the teaching or organizing the teaching in a course should participate in the meetings. The minimum requirement is that the lecturer and all the coursemasters attend to the meetings. In this case, the coursemasters informs the other assistants in their own university about the issues discussed in the meetings.

The weekly meetings have usually been implemented via videoconference or conference call or as a combination of them. The course personnel may for example share desktop

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applications with Microsoft Netmeeting and, at the same time, discuss real time via conference call.

The idea in the weekly meetings is to talk through the current practicality and teaching issues in the course. It is recommended to discuss the following issues:

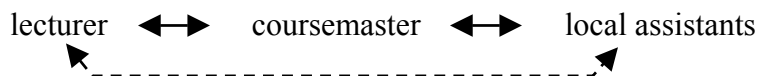
- the current situation in the course and possible problems in it
- the issues coming up in the lectures and in the exercises next week
- the progress of the exercises and project works
- the situation of the course material documentation
- students' questions, comments, feedback etc. and other communication between the students and the lecturer/course personnel
- evaluation of the course implementation and the progress of the course
- in addition, the coursemaster in the responsible university takes minutes of the meetings and sends them for example by e-mail to the course personnel after the meeting

If the weekly meetings can't be organized, the course implementation and the main events in the course still have to be documented in the course diary every week.

### 3.1.3. Other forms of communication

In addition to the weekly meetings, the course personnel communicate with each other by e-mail and phone. If there are several assistants in the same university, the coursemaster acts as a primary contact person between the local assistants and the lecturer. The lecturer and the assistants communicates with each other in the weekly meetings, where the purpose is to discuss the implementation of the course and issues relating to the teaching of the course. Other communication between the assistants and the lecturer mainly goes through the local coursemaster. If there is only one assistant in a university, s/he acts as a coursemaster in the course.

Communication between lecturer and assistants



## 3.2. Communication between course personnel and students

Communication between the lecturer and the remote students goes through the local assistant(s). The students are in contact with the assistant(s) and the assistant(s) with the

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lecturer. If there are several local assistants, the assistants and the lecturer communicate with each other through the local coursemaster or in the weekly meetings.

The coursemasters and the assistants are responsible for the local guidance for the students. They also act as a local source of information for the students and tend to answer the students questions either according to their own knowledge or finding out the answer from the lecturer. If the students have questions or comments to the lecturer, the coursemaster or the assistants communicates the questions and the comments to the lecturer. In the same way, the coursemaster and the assistants communicate the answers and other information from the lecturer to the students. The students can also be in contact with the lecturer directly, but it is recommended to contact the local coursemaster or the local assistants first.

Communication between students and course personnel

