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ONLINE EDUCATION POLICY

Rationale

SF State recognizes that most university classes use the Internet to some degree and some university courses (or classes) are conducted entirely online. This policy has been created to promote the continuation of a high-quality educational experience for students, faculty members, and the SF State community through the use of online resources.

Key Words: *fully online, hybrid, learning mode*

Author/Source

Academic Policies Committee

Responsible Unit

Online Education Committee, Academic Technology

History

Version Approved Revisions(s)

Version	Approved	Revisions(s)
		S19-264
3	2/19/2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modifying definitions including updating the name of the Romberg Tiburon center, combining the definitions of face-to-face and technology enhanced classes, clarifying that fully online courses can be asynchronous or synchronous, and updating DUEAP name.• Clarify that it is a department committee that approves learning modes for course sections offered by a department.• Provide greater flexibility for faculty to allow a limited change in class meetings from face-to-face to online in order to accommodate unexpected circumstances or provide the equivalent of a minimum of 15 weeks of instruction.
2	4/8/2016	S16-264: Revision of definitions
1	2012	Original

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General Assumptions

- The goal of online education is to expand educational opportunities for SF State students by offering courses with high quality and convenience and flexibility. SF State is dedicated to providing all students with an accessible education.
- The addition of online classes, content, and activities to SF State's curriculum has been a positive contribution to SF State's academic environment and is consistent with its present mission and role as a public educational institution.
- Regardless of mode of instruction, all courses shall abide by the same academic policies and laws.

Definitions

- In a **Face-to-Face course**, with the exception of field trips, all class sessions and other meetings are physically held on SF State campuses; including, but not limited to, the main campus, downtown campus, and Romberg Tiburon Campus. Face-to-Face courses, in which students attend all class sessions in an assigned face-to-face environment, may be technology-enhanced, with online technology primarily used to engage the students with the curriculum and learning process.
- **Hybrid courses** are a mixture of online and face-to-face class sessions. The university course schedule specifies the number and location of face-to-face or synchronous classes, or other meetings. The online sessions may be asynchronous, synchronous, or both.
- **HyFlex courses** are class sessions that allow students to choose whether to attend classes face-to-face or online, synchronously or asynchronously.
- In a **Fully Online course**, instructors provide instructional support and students complete course requirements through a variety of modalities that are unrestricted by physical place. The online sessions may be asynchronous, synchronous, or both.

Quality and Educational Effectiveness

- All online education programs and courses shall be consistent with the educational mission of the University.
- Tenured / tenure-track faculty are essential to the integrity of any academic program.
- Faculty members shall use teaching practices that are appropriate to the mode of instruction. The selection of course material is the purview of the faculty member teaching the course. Faculty are expected to seek the professional development and support necessary to ensure a successful educational experience for their students. Departments shall ensure that faculty assigned to teach online courses are appropriately prepared.
- Courses with the same course prefix, number and title shall adhere to the same learning outcomes.

Communication & Support

- Faculty members shall designate a primary method or methods of communication for use in each class.
- Faculty members shall define a reasonable response time with respect to answering student communications through the designated method and provide adequate and appropriate opportunities for timely interaction between the faculty member and students.
- Faculty members shall make clear the standards of conduct that are expected in all class and university environments, such as classroom or Internet etiquette. Students shall abide by the official Student Code of Conduct.

- Faculty members shall define student expectations including, but not limited to, participation in online class activities, access to specialized hardware, software, or virtual environments, or technical skills required to succeed.
- The course syllabus shall indicate the course's technological requirements and sources and contact information for technological support.
- Support details and user expectations shall be defined by the responsible university administrative unit(s) in service level agreements or similar public documents.
- Opportunities should be provided for faculty to offer input on major changes in course technologies.

Student Assessment

- Assessment strategies will be consistent with course goals and objectives and clearly stated for students.
- Students are expected to follow the academic integrity policy that SF State has in place at the time the work is created. This is a rapidly changing field; the University and faculty shall work together to provide and implement tools and processes to ensure academic integrity.

Course and Program Approval

- A department's faculty, in consultation with college councils, are responsible for deciding which courses (or sections) as well as which degree or certificate programs will be offered in a face-to-face, hybrid or fully online format. Although courses must be delivered using the learning mode approved by the department, an instructor teaching a face-to-face course may adapt to unforeseen circumstances by teaching a maximum of 15% of the class sessions during the semester using an online learning mode. Similarly, an instructor teaching a synchronous online course may choose to teach a maximum of 15% of the class sessions during the semester as asynchronous online sessions. Department chairs and students must be notified of the change in learning mode in either event. Conversion of greater than 15% of class sessions requires department approval and should only be done in extreme cases.
- Faculty members teaching online courses have the same control and ownership of the substantive and intellectual content of their courses that faculty have with any other course.
- Colleges are responsible for communicating to Academic Affairs the degree to which their courses are online so that the course may be properly described in the Class Schedule.
- Any degree, certificate, or credential program, new or existing, in which 50% or more of the course delivery occurs through an online course format must consult with the Division of Undergraduate Education and Academic Planning to obtain WASC approval.
- No individual, program, or department shall agree in a contract with any private or public entity to deliver courses or programs on behalf of SF State without prior university approval.

Recognition

- All classes are subject to the same principles of peer review and student evaluation for purposes of the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion processes. All courses shall be equally recognized and rewarded when considering curriculum and professional development.

Scheduling

- A degree, certificate, or credential program with online courses must indicate the technological requirements in the SF State Bulletin.
- The official Class Schedule shall clearly indicate the mode of instruction, technological requirements and schedule for each class offered by SF State. Departments are responsible for reporting this information to Academic Resources in a timely fashion.
- The SF State Bulletin and official Class Schedule shall provide guidelines for students considering taking online courses.
- It is the responsibility of the student to take into account the instructional mode, to review the guidelines on online courses, and to have access to required technological resources.

Workload

Refer to the CSU policy on credit units (Coded Memorandum AA-2011-14 CSU Definition of Credit Hour) for guidance on student workload.

As is the case with face to face mode, class size and corresponding faculty workload will be determined by the department chair and faculty member, taking into account the level of interaction between faculty and students in the course environment, as well as the physical class sizes common on the campus.

Accessibility

- All classes shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, and with California Government Code 11135.
- All students shall have access to the course evaluation process.

Intellectual Property and Copyright

Intellectual property created during the development of online courses shall follow the Intellectual Property Policy that SF State has in place at the time the materials are created.

- In the event that a faculty member is not able to complete a course due to unforeseen causes, such as sickness or relocation, the university administration may grant another faculty member access to the class roster, class syllabus, and points or grades earned by students up to the time the original faculty member stopped teaching, and any other class materials available to the administration. While the new instructor may use this material to complete the class for that semester, the new instructor must honor the intellectual property rights of the original instructor.

This policy should be reviewed every five years.
