



University Policy Statement

UPS 411.104

POLICY ON ONLINE INSTRUCTION

I. Definition of Online Instruction

Online instruction is a formal, Internet-based or Internet-supported educational process in which instruction occurs between instructor and learner in an online environment. Online instruction courses and programs shall be consistent with the educational mission of the University.

II. Additional Terminology used in this Document

These terms were developed by review of several CSU policies, the Online Education White Paper written by a subcommittee of the statewide CSU Academic Senate and *Going the Distance: Online Education in the United States, 2011*.

- A. **Synchronous Instruction:** Instructional activities where both the students and instructor are present and engaged in activities at the same time.
- B. **Asynchronous Instruction:** Instructional activities where the instructor and/or some or all of the students engage in activities that are not necessarily occurring simultaneously.
- C. **Traditional Instruction:** Synchronous instruction that occurs inside the classroom. Students and the instructor are physically present. Twenty percent or less of class meeting time can be taught in an online fashion. UPS 411.100 contains the guidelines and procedures related to traditional instruction.
- D. **Hybrid Instruction:** Courses offered using a blend of traditional and online methods. Typically these courses are a mixture of online and traditional class sessions. These courses can include a variety of synchronous and asynchronous activities. Hybrid courses will have more than 20% but less than 80% of class meeting time taught online.
- E. **Online Instruction with Required Course Meetings:** Courses in which 80% or more of class meeting time occurs in an online setting, but where a student may need to come to campus for some course activities (e.g. tests, orientation). These courses can include a variety of synchronous and asynchronous activities.
- F. **Fully Online Instruction:** Courses in which 100% of course meeting time occurs in an online environment. These courses can include a variety of synchronous and asynchronous activities.
- G. **Technology Mediated Instruction:** A course that uses some form of technology in its delivery. This could be a fully online course, hybrid course or a traditional course that uses a learning management system.

Throughout this policy, the term “online instruction” will be used to refer to hybrid, online instruction with required course meetings, and fully online instruction courses.

III. Principles for Online Instruction

A. Student Support and Information

1. Online instruction courses and programs shall provide an opportunity for interaction between students and the faculty member responsible for the course. Students should receive prompt responses to their questions with the anticipated response time indicated in the syllabus or course outline.

2. The Class Schedule shall clearly identify hybrid, online instruction courses with required course meetings, or fully online instruction courses through the use of footnotes and symbols or in other appropriate ways so that students have access to this information before enrolling in a course or program. For hybrid and online instruction courses with required course meetings, the syllabus will indicate the dates and times of all required on campus or synchronous meeting sessions. Since students taking hybrid or online instruction courses with required course meetings will likely expect and plan for meetings to occur on the dates listed in the syllabus, alterations to class meeting dates should be done with at least two weeks notice and generally should be avoided.
3. The class schedule shall notify students of any software and hardware requirements for participation in online instruction courses.
4. Criteria for student success in online instruction courses and programs shall be as rigorous and comprehensive as those used in traditional instruction courses and shall be clearly communicated to students.
5. Students enrolled in online instruction courses are subject to the same university policies and procedures applicable to students attending courses on campus. Academic standards regarding cheating, plagiarism, and appropriate online behavior (“Netiquette”) shall be clearly communicated to students in online instruction courses. [See UPS 300.021 Academic Dishonesty]
6. Each student enrolled in an online instruction course or program shall be informed of available instructional support, student services, library resources, and disabled student support services. Faculty should work closely with the library and student services staff to ensure adequate access and training for online instruction students.
7. The University shall provide assessment tools for student use in determining student readiness for taking online instruction courses. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these tools to maximize their chance of success in online instruction classes.
8. The University shall provide technical support to students in online instruction courses which is consistent with that available to on-campus students.
9. Degrees or programs that have required courses offered only in an online instruction format will indicate this in the course catalog.

B. Faculty Support Rights and Responsibilities

1. Faculty control over and development of curriculum and instructional materials is the foundation of quality education. The use of outside contractors to provide online course instruction and materials shall only be done with approval of the department or program and appropriate administrator.
2. Faculty shall have the same control and ownership of the substantive and intellectual content of their online instruction course-related materials that faculty have with respect to classes offered in a traditional classroom format, at the time of production, at any time during their use, and thereafter. If, however, the online course has been developed under a work-for-hire relationship with the University (a contract outside of a faculty member’s normal duties), the University may, as part of the contract for such

work, exercise the ability to control and use the materials produced, including the syllabus and all course instructional elements developed under the contract, and have the right to modify the course elements and content in the future.

3. In courses in which classes are offered as online instruction and in traditional classroom settings, sections taught using online instruction shall meet all course objectives normally covered in the traditional instruction course.
4. Online instruction course enrollments shall be established by the appropriate administrator after consultation with the chair and faculty member planning to teach the course. Ordinarily, student enrollment in online instruction courses should not exceed the normal enrollment in traditional classroom-based sections of the same course.
5. In online instruction courses, the department chair is responsible for ensuring that the student evaluation of instruction forms are administered. Because of the online nature of the course, the procedures for evaluating the faculty may differ from those used by the institution for the evaluation of faculty teaching classroom-based courses, but the overall standards shall be equivalent. [Refer to UPS 210.000, Faculty Personnel Policy and Procedures]. Departments and programs shall develop specific Student Opinion Questionnaire formats for online instruction classes.
6. The University shall offer appropriate training and support services to faculty to prepare and support them in developing and teaching online instruction courses. Faculty are strongly encouraged to avail themselves of these services and training.
7. All online instruction courses listed in the Class Schedule shall normally be hosted on California State University or other computer server services approved by the College Dean and Vice President of Information Technology.
8. All syllabi for online and hybrid courses must include the information specified in UPS 300.004 (Policy on Course Outlines).
9. The Colleges, in collaboration with Information Technology (IT), shall provide technical support and coordination for the creation and delivery of online instruction courses, and shall work with appropriate campus resources (e.g., The Faculty Development Center) to promote the best in online practices, as well as appropriate pedagogical and assessment methods.
10. Materials developed for online instruction courses shall be accessible for students with disabilities. This requirement is based on federal and state laws including but not limited to Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996; and California Government Code 11135 of 2003 which applies Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act as amended in 1998 to the CSU, as well as any pertinent CSU Executive Orders or Coded Memoranda.
11. Faculty are strongly encouraged to authenticate student work by utilizing appropriate technology, proctors, testing centers, or having students come to campus for exams.

12. High quality online instruction courses require instructors with a high level of technical expertise and motivation. As such, chairs and administrators should consider a faculty member's technical training and motivation level in assigning faculty to teach online instruction courses. Prior to assigning a faculty member to teach an online course, the appropriate administrator and/or department chair shall consult with the faculty member regarding the assignment.

IV. Approval of Online Instruction Courses and Programs

A. New Online Programs or Conversion of Existing Programs to Online

Online degree programs (including majors, minors, emphases, and concentrations) shall be reviewed in accordance with UPS 410.103 (Curriculum Guidelines and Procedures: Programs) and the provisions of this document. Any department or program offering online instruction programs (those in which half or more of the units are offered through online instruction) shall be required to meet California State University (CSU) and Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) requirements.
[See <http://www.wascsenior.org>].

B. New Online Instruction Courses

Any new online course that is proposed for degree credit shall be reviewed in accordance with UPS 411.100 (Curriculum Guidelines and Procedures: Courses) and the provisions of this document.

C. Converting Existing Courses or Sections to an Online Instruction Format

1. When a course has been approved in accordance with UPS 411.100 and one or more sections of the course are redesigned to use an online instruction format, the course shall not be offered in this format without appropriate approval. The department proposing the change shall provide to the college curriculum committee a Course Change Form and a revised course syllabus indicating that the objectives and content of the course are comparable to the traditional instruction course. The college curriculum committee shall review the documentation and forward a recommendation to the dean. The dean shall forward the course change form and recommendation to the appropriate Associate Vice President.
2. When the proposed change to an online format results in a substantive change to the student learning objectives and/or course subject matter the policies outlined in UPS 411.100 shall be followed.

Source: Executive Committee

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