

*Approved by the Faculty Senate, October 3, 2013*

**FS 13/14-16/CPC/EX e-Learning Policy, Amendment of PM 95-01; FS 01-23; FS 09-78 (FSD00010.htm)**

The Faculty Senate recommends the following revisions to the e-Learning policy PM 95-01; FS 01-23; FS 09-78 ([FSD00010.htm](#)):

- 1) Add sections related to credit hours in e-Learning courses, student accessibility to technological resources, and student privacy protection;
- 2) Add language within sections related to the introduction to the policy, program approval guidelines, online course approval, evaluation and approval of eLearning courses established prior to the approval of this policy, and copyright, patent, and ownership policy;
- 3) Strike through out-of-date language within sections related to the introduction of the policy and to the evaluation and approval of eLearning courses established prior to the approval of this policy.

### **Introduction**

This policy shall apply to all matriculated e-Learning courses and degree/certificate programs offered by California State University, Sacramento. It is not the intent of this policy to supplant any existing policies set forth by the University, but where necessary, to define new or to expand existing policies and procedures to ensure the most effective implementation and support of hybrid and online courses and programs.

...[next paragraph unchanged]

For purposes of this policy, e-Learning is defined as a formal educational process in which instruction takes place in its entirety or partially when the professor and students are not in the same place at the same time. Instead, the interaction between professor and students is mediated using audio, video and/or computer technologies.

Web-based courses typically use a variety of technologies to deliver instruction and engage students.

e-Learning formats: online and hybrid. An online course is a course with no regular face-to-face meetings in a physical classroom. However, at the discretion of the instructor, an online course is permitted to have an occasional orientation, organizational or assessment-related meeting in a classroom. A hybrid course is a course in which one unit or more of the course, including class meetings, activities, discussion, and assignments, are delivered electronically thus reducing use of physical classroom space. A hybrid course must have two components; the first component is face-to-face and the second is an online component. The face-to-face instruction hours per week must be less than the total number of credit hours for the course. Physical classroom usage is limited to face-to-face instruction time and no physical classroom space must be assigned or used for the online component for the semester.

Courses that are delivered in a hybrid or online format must be identified in the course schedule during the registration period for semesters in which they are to be offered. e-Learning technology and pedagogy continue to evolve. In addition, each new student cohort brings a stronger set of information technology skills to the campus and has the expectation that information technology will inform and enrich their educational experience. This policy allows the University to meet the demands of student expectations as well as continue to provide broad based high quality educational opportunity to all its students.

## **1. General Guidelines**

1.1 Through their respective departments or divisions, the faculty are responsible for deciding which courses as well as which degree/certificate programs will be offered in an e-Learning format. Programs in which less than 50% of the major course requirements consist of online courses require no special approvals. Any department or faculty group proposing e-Learning programs in which 50% or more of the major course requirements are “online courses” (as defined below in Section 4) should follow the approval process described in Section 2 below.

...[1.2-1.3 unchanged]

1.4 Each semester Academic Technology and Creative Services (ATCS) will compile a list of all courses that are designated in the course schedule as either hybrid or online courses. This list will be sent to Academic Affairs and department chairs for any corrections, additions, or deletions. After review and/or revision, this list will be posted on the ATCS web site.

## **2. Program Approval Guidelines**

2.1 Departments or colleges that wish to offer an e-Learning degree/certificate program shall designate a faculty e-Learning curriculum group who will develop a plan that includes the items described in 2.1.1 - 2.1.4. Colleges, Departments, or Divisions shall include a statement in their policy manual regarding any additional guidelines specific to hybrid and online learning that will be incorporated in the course approval process.

[2.1.1 – 2.1.4 unchanged]

2.2 Once the program plan is developed it needs to be approved by both the department/division and the college dean in consultation with the appropriate curriculum committees employing the "Procedures for Submitting Substantive Program Change Proposals" and utilizing Form B. Colleges, Departments, or Divisions should consider including faculty with e-learning expertise in the course and/or program approval review process.

[2.3 unchanged]

## **3. Hybrid Course Approval**

3.1 Courses in which one unit or more of face-to-face instruction scheduled for a traditional section of the same course is replaced by instruction that takes place online when the professor and students are not in the same physical location and no physical classroom space is utilized are termed “hybrid” courses.

3.2 An existing course that is re-designed as a hybrid so that half or less than half of the instruction takes place when the professor and students are not in the same place and no physical classroom space is utilized shall require no additional approvals.

3.3 Hybrid courses in which more than half of the face-to-face instruction scheduled for a traditional section of the same course is replaced by instruction that takes place when the professor and students are not in the same physical location and no physical classroom space is utilized require approval as described below.

3.4 An existing course that is re-designed so that it falls into the hybrid range specified in 3.3 needs to be approved through the curricular process of the department or division offering the course. As part of this process the faculty member will submit a syllabus that includes the items described in 3.4.1 - 3.4.2.

3.4.1 Student learning outcomes for the course and the plan for assessing these outcomes. While a course formatted for e-Learning often offers students a different experience from traditional face-to-face instruction, an existing course adapted for e-Learning must be equivalent in terms of learning outcomes to the course offered on campus. The syllabus must include a description of course activities that indicate how course objectives will be met.

3.4.2 The methodologies/strategies for providing interaction between faculty and students as well as interaction between students. This would include the types and forms of interaction expected.

#### **4. Online Course Approval**

4.1 An online course is defined as a course in which the entire face-to-face instruction scheduled for a traditional section of the same course is replaced by instruction that takes place when the professor and students are not in the same physical location and no physical classroom space is utilized.

[added after 4.2.]

Many times, faculty must serve as the de facto front-line support resource for online courses. It is because of this that technology-enhanced learning along with its technology-driven delivery more often than not requires an increased skill set to contend with the multitude of challenges that arise. Technological readiness is extremely important to the success of any online course. Inadequate technological readiness disrupts student learning and e-learning efforts and generally manifests itself in course evaluations. It is therefore highly recommended that Colleges, Departments, or Divisions who are interested in pursuing online education become familiar with the standards and best practices associated with e-learning. The Sacramento State approved standards are listed below.

- A. California State University E-Learning Standards developed by Academic Technology and Creative Services (ATCS).
- B. Quality Matters Program Rubric:

The Quality Matters Program created a list of eight broad standards, comprising a total of 40 specific elements that can be used to evaluate the design of online and hybrid courses. The web-based, fully interactive rubric includes annotations that explain the application of the standards and the relationships among them.

[Add section 5]

#### **5. Credit Hour**

Because of the nature of online education, it is often difficult to associate a specific length of online e-learning time to its face-to-face classroom counterpart. Additionally, both hybrid and online learning typically do not separate out the traditional homework-related activities that are a part of the face-to-face learning experience.

Although "seat-time" is still the federal standard for measurement with regard to the credit-hour, built into this standard is an effort to align "time" with "the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes that is verified through evidence of student achievement." Therefore, since some sort of alignment is necessary the following guidelines should be used:

An online or hybrid course must provide the minimum time (hours) necessary through its synchronous and asynchronous presentations, activities, assignments, and assessments to meet its learning outcomes.

The estimated weekly and semester student workload of synchronous and asynchronous activities, assignments, and assessments should be consistent with equivalent face-to-face courses.

## **6. Faculty Training and Development** [text remains unchanged in section 6]

[Add section 7]

## **7. Accessibility**

"The California State University system, pursuant to Executive Order 926, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs, services, and activities are accessible to students, faculty, staff, and the general public. This extends to all information resources and services including web sites and electronic documents. The CSU is further committed to conforming with all legal requirements set forth in California Government Code 11135, Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1996, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act." *California State University Accessible Technology Initiative.*

Faculty shall make every effort to know and make known to students the technological resources needed to be successful in online and hybrid courses including resources targeted to disadvantaged and underrepresented groups.

"It is the policy of the CSU to make information technology resources and services accessible to all CSU students, faculty, staff and the general public regardless of disability." *California State University Accessible Technology Initiative.*

[Add section 8]

## **8. Student Privacy Protection**

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulates what student information can and cannot be released by universities without their consent. It is also the policy of the CSU to recognize the right to privacy, a right protected under the California Constitution. Faculty shall ensure the privacy of a student's protected information in courses that use external web-based "social" software where a student's identification is required and shared.

## **9. Evaluation and Approval of e-Learning Courses Established Prior to the Approval of this Policy**

The Program Review process will be used to review and evaluate courses established prior to the implementation date of this policy. The course and program approval guidelines specified in this policy will be used to verify compliance commencing with Academic Program Reviews conducted after Fall 2013.

For the purposes of providing technology and pedagogical support, Academic Technology & Creative Services will periodically conduct institutional level eLearning interactivity and satisfaction surveys of courses designated as online and hybrid. This information will be in aggregative form and used for planning and programmatic consultation, not faculty evaluation. The survey will focus on the students' and instructors'

practices associated with the online tools themselves (e.g. online discussions with SacCT) as well as their satisfaction and usage level of the tools (e.g. how often students interact with the online tools)

## **10. Institutional Support**

10.1 Basic Student Support Services. All regularly matriculated University students receiving instruction through e-Learning shall be provided equivalent access to the basic student support services offered on this campus. These shall include admission, course registration services, academic advising and orientation, textbook purchasing, financial aid, career development and other special program accommodations as applicable (for example, EOP, Veteran, and Reentry students). For departments or colleges that are proposing to offer an existing degree/certificate programs in an e-Learning format in which more than half of the major course requirements are offered online, the University shall provide support so that the following programmatic services are available before the program is implemented.

[remainder of section 10 remains unchanged except that numbering changes from 7 to 10]

## **11. Copyright, Patent and Ownership Policy**

Ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the utilization of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products shall be agreed upon by the faculty and the University in accordance with the University's Copyright and Patent Policy and guidelines (UMC02750).

"As a university system and creators of intellectual property, the California State University system has a significant interest in ensuring that all copyrighted material is protected and that the rights of copyright holders and creators of intellectual property are respected and maintained." *Introduction CSU Executive Order 999*

It is the policy of the CSU to use any and all information technologies in a manner consistent with the federal laws governing copyright protection as outlines in California State University Executive Order 999.

[12. Review Process was formerly section 9. Only numbering is changed. Text remains unchanged]