State University of New York
College at Old Westbury
Distance Learning Policies
4/8/16

I. Rationale

The goal of SUNY Old Westbury's Distance Learning Program is to promote the seamless integration of online modes of content delivery and instructional interaction into the academic offerings of the College. Formats for such integration will include fully online classes, hybrid and blended classes in which some but not all classroom time is offset by online instruction, and the use of online resources to supplement classroom activities and out-of-class assignments in otherwise traditional classes.

II. Definitions

A. Distance Course: Any course in which classroom time is offset by online instruction.

1) In all cases, the combination of classroom time and online activities should, per the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's Credit Hour Policy, "reasonably approximate" 180 minutes of "classroom or direct faculty instruction" per week plus an additional 420 minutes on out of class work per week during the 15 week semester, for a total of 600 minutes, the same as traditional-format (two 90 minute meeting per week) classes.[1]

2) Time commitments in Summer and Winter sessions will be adjusted to achieve the same totals accordingly, as will time commitments for courses worth other than 4 credits.

B. Online Course: A Distance course that is conducted entirely online, with no classroom usage scheduled. Note that online courses are given a .NET, .NE#, or similar section designator with an "N" in it (exact designators are assigned by the Registrar and may include other special designations like Honors (H) and Writing

---

[1] Middle State Commission on Higher Education, "Credit Hour Policy: Effective August 23, 2012, Rev. October 30, 2012", downloaded from www.msche.org/documents/CreditHourPolicyRev112012.pdf, April 8, 2016.

Intensive (W)). Since these classes involve no classroom time, students' time commitment to them is expected to be 600 minutes per week.

C. Hybrid/Blended Courses: A Distance course in which some but not all classroom time is offset by online instruction. There are two designations for these courses, depending on their meeting schedule.

1) Hybrid Course: A Distance course that meets in the classroom for one class period a week.

a) Hybrid courses are expected to meet no less than once a week, and will have a classroom scheduled for that one class period.

b) Since Hybrid classes meet for 90 rather than 180 minutes per week in the classroom, student's time commitment to them outside of class is expected to be 510 minutes per week.

c) Hybrid courses are given a .HYB, .HY#, or similar section designator with a "Y" in it by the Registrar.

2) Blended Course: A Distance course that meets on any schedule other than that of an Online or Hybrid course.

a) If a Blended course will meet more than once a week for at least part of the semester, programs need to schedule it for two meeting days a week.

b) If a Blended course will meet less than once a week, programs need to schedule it for one class period per week.

c) Blended classes can also be scheduled to meet for less than a full class period, with the reduced class time offset by online activities.

b) Since Blended classes meeting schedules can be variable, the total time commitment of students outside of class is expected to be 600 minutes minus the amount of time in class each week.

d) Blended courses are given a .BLN, .BL#, or similar section designator with a "B" in it by the Registrar.

E. Traditional Course: A course with all instruction in the classroom, supplemented by traditional "homework," with no use of online resources. Traditional classes meet for 180 minutes per week, and students are expected to spend an additional 420 minutes on work for the course outside of class.

F. Web-enhanced Course: A traditional course that makes use of online resources without reducing class time.

G. Distance Program: a course of study leading to a Degree or Certificate in which a student can earn 50% or more of the required credits through Distance Courses.

H. Online Program: a course of study leading to a Degree or Certificate in which a student can earn 100% of the credits necessary through Online Courses.

III. Policies

A. Faculty Training and Qualifications

1) Proposals

a) Faculty members must submit a proposal to the Director of Distance Learning by the time that their program submits its schedule for the term in which they desire to teach their first Online class at Old Westbury.

b) Faculty members must submit a proposal to the Director of Distance Learning by the time that their program submits its schedule for the term in which they desire to teach their first Hybrid/Blended course at Old Westbury.

Note that Faculty member must submit separate proposals for both their first Online course and for their first Hybrid/Blended course.

2) Training for Distance Courses

a) Before teaching their first Distance course in each modality (Online and Hybrid/Blended) faculty must complete the appropriate training offered by the Distance Learning Program.

b) The training will include instruction in the modified Design and Accessibility OSCQR quality rubrics employed at SUNY Old Westbury (attached).

3) Preparation for Initial Offerings

a) Before conducting his or her first Distance course in each modality, a Faculty member must work with an Instructional Designer or Mentor to develop the course.

b) This development process will begin during the semester prior to the one in which the course will be offered, and will conclude during the January intersession (for Spring offerings) or the Summer (for Fall offerings). Training for initial Distance courses that will be offered in the Summer or Winter terms will be concluded before the beginning of those terms.

Note that Faculty member must work with an Instructional Designer or Mentor before both their first Online and their first Hybrid/Blended course.

4) Exemption from Training

Faculty members who demonstrate prior training or experience equivalent to items 2 and 3 above in their proposal can be exempted by the Director of Distance Learning from the requirements, or their training and supervision can be reduced.

5) Approval

a) At least one week prior to the beginning of the semester in which a faculty member's first Distance course in a modality will be taught, the Instructional Designer or Mentor with whom he or she worked must certify to the Director of Distance Learning that the course has been designed satisfactorily in terms of online structures and interaction (not content).

Note that both a Faculty member's first Online course and his or her first Hybrid/ Blended course must be certified as satisfactory by the Instructional Designer or Mentor.

b) This certification will be based on the rubrics used in the training mentioned in III. A. 2. b. above.

i) Items in the Design Rubric marked "Required" must be included satisfactorily; items in it marked "Best Practice" should be included unless a compelling justification for deviating from them is given by the instructor.

ii) All items in the Accessibility Rubric must be included satisfactorily.

c) In cases of disagreement, the Director of Distance Learning will examine the course and discuss it with both the instructor and the ID/mentor and decide if it is satisfactory. If the course design is deemed unsatisfactory, the faculty member must correct it before the beginning of the semester.

d) If a Faculty member is exempted from items 2 or 3 above, the Director of Distance Learning or an Instructional Designer serving as his or her designee must certify that the course has been designed satisfactorily as per item 5. In the event of a disagreement, the Instructional Designer or Director of Distance Learning, whichever did not do the initial review, will examine the course and discuss it with both the instructor and the initial reviewer. If the second reviewer also deems the course design unsatisfactory, the faculty member must correct it before the beginning of the semester.

6) Initial Observation

a) Approximately one month after the beginning of the semester in which an instructor offers their first course in a new modality (or its equivalent in Summer and Winter terms), the Instructional Designer or Mentor with whom he or she worked will conduct an observation by accessing the course database.

b) The instructor will be given at least 3 days notice before the course database is accessed.

c) The Instructional Designer or Mentor will provide the instructor written feedback based on the observation and the rubric used in the training mentioned in III.A.2.B. above.

d) If in the Instructional Designer's judgment the observation reveals severe problems requiring immediate and substantial remediation, the Instructional Designer will inform the Director of Distance Learning, who will then conduct an observation and, if he or she concurs with the Instructional Designer, will then inform the appropriate Chair or Dean.

e) If the instructor has been granted an exemption per item 4 above, the observation will be conducted as per item 5) d) above.

7) Other Restrictions on Initial Offerings

a) Faculty can only teach one Distance course in a new modality in the semester they first teach in that modality. They may not offer both their initial Online and their initial Hybrid/Blended courses in the same semester.

b) If a Faculty member fails to follow the policies above in this section III. A., the scheduled course may be reassigned or canceled.

8) Web-enhanced Courses

No proposal or training is required for Faculty to incorporate online materials into a Traditional course to create a Web-enhanced course. However, participation in campus based training and workshops and consultation with an Instructional Designer is encouraged.

9) Subsequent Offerings

Once a Faculty member has completed training for and taught his or her first Distance course in a modality, he or she may offer it in future semesters, and may develop and offer additional courses in that modality, without submitting a proposal or undergoing further training, in accordance with the policies and practices of his or her Department

or School, subject to the College policies set forth below in this document, sections B through G.

B. Course Load and Enrollment Limits

1) Faculty Course Loads

A Faculty member may offer at most one Online and two Hybrid/Blended courses *or* Two Online and one Traditional course per semester.

2) Enrollment Limits

a) The maximum enrollment in Online classes is 25 students.

b) The maximum enrollment in Hybrid classes is 35 students.

c) Lower or higher enrollment limits can be requested for specific courses by Faculty and set by Departments or Schools based on special instructional considerations.

C. Scheduling

1) Scheduling Restrictions and Guidelines

a) If a full-time instructor offers two Hybrid courses during a term, they must be offered on different days, and if possible scheduled into the same room and time period on "alternate" days (for example, if one is on Monday 9:40 –11:10, the other will be on Wednesday 9:40 –11:10 in the same room).

b) If a full-time instructor offers both a Hybrid and a Blended course, the majority of the Blended's class sessions must be scheduled on a day other than the day the Hybrid meets. The same principle applies in the case of two Blended courses.

c) Adjunct faculty teaching two Hybrid classes may schedule both to meet on the same day, and may schedule the majority of classes in Blended course to meet on the same day as a Hybrid or the majority of classes in another Blended course.

d) Whenever possible, Hybrid courses offered by Faculty teaching just one such course will be "paired" for scheduling purposes with a Hybrid course offered by another Faculty member to optimize classroom usage (for example, if one Faculty member is scheduled to use a room on Mondays at 11:20; another will be scheduled to use the room at the same time on Wednesdays if possible).

e) In cases in which a Blended course will involve only a few weeks in which there will be two meetings, a classroom may be scheduled only once a week, and alternative

arrangements for the "extra" sessions will be made (for example, scheduling them to be held in a computer lab).

2) Review

The Director of Distance Learning will review the schedule of Distance courses in consultation with the Office of Academic Affairs before schedules are finalized. Courses scheduled in violation of the policies set out in this document will have to be changed or will be canceled.

D. Quality Assurance

1) Faculty

Faculty should include the "Required Features" and are expected to implement the "Best Practices" for Distance courses in the campus version of the OSCQR rubric employed in the training and instructional design or mentorship support outlined in section III.A, above, as appropriate for their specific course. This includes faculty exempted from training at Old Westbury due to prior training or experience per item III.A.4.

2) Departments and Schools

a) Departments and/or Schools are responsible for monitoring the quality of their Distance courses, just as they are for their Traditional course offerings. The quality of a course is understood to include appropriate amounts of work for the credits awarded as well as the accuracy and appropriateness of the content.

b) The Director of Distance Learning will work with Chairs and/or Deans of Departments and Schools with Distance courses to ensure that they and their faculty are prepared to monitor the quality of their Distance courses.

c) Department Chairs will have the right to access Distance course databases, just as they have the right to observe Traditional classroom activity.

i) Observation of a faculty member's first course in a modality should be done once the Instructional Designer has conducted the Initial Observation, per III. A. 6. above, and the faculty member has had reasonable time to make adjustments in response to that.

ii) Chairs can gain access to the Distance course databases of full-time faculty by contacting the Director of Distance Learning. The terms of this access will be based on the policies that govern their supervision of traditional classes.

iii) Chairs will be automatically enrolled in the Learning Management System course shells of Online courses taught by adjuncts. Their use of this access should be based on the policies that govern their supervision of traditional classes.

3) Student Evaluations

The College student evaluation process will be used for Distance as well as Traditional courses so far as practical.

4) Assessment

a) Distance courses should be included in periodic assessments of Majors and General Education domains in proportion to their contribution to the total classes in the major or domain.

b) Distance courses as a category will be assessed once every five years.

E. Copyrights and Ownership

1) Faculty are responsible to secure permission for any copyrighted material incorporated into their course.

2) Faculty who develop a Distance course maintain ownership of their intellectual property incorporated into the course.

F. Accessibility

1) Faculty are responsible for implementing standard accessibility features as outlined in the Open SUNY OSCQR Accessibility rubric.

2) The College is responsible to disseminate the OSCQR rubric to faculty and incorporate it into training of faculty preparing to offer their first course in a new Distance modality. It will also offer workshops on accessibility to faculty, including training in implementing the OSCQR rubric, and reasonable one-on-one support with making courses accessible.

3) When items 1 and 2 here do not meet the specific needs of a student with disabilities, the College will be responsible for acting in a timely manner to make instructional materials and/or other resources used in a Distance course available to the student.

a) An exception to this is when doing so would significantly alter the nature of the instructional activity.

G. Student Preparation

1) The College will provide students with orientation materials for the instructional activities offered by its standard Learning Management System.

2) Faculty will be responsible to provide sufficient training in any other online instructional resources they employ.

Distance Course Development Proposal

I. Type of Course (X one): ___ Fully Online ___Hybrid or Blended

II. Course to be First Offered:

III. Instructor Information

Name and Rank:

Teaching Experience Overall and at Old Westbury:

Experience with online and/or hybrid/blended courses:

Experience with online supplements in classroom courses:

Other relevant information (inc. if you're a department Chair or adjunct):

IV. Class information

Department:

Course ID:

Course Name:

Approved by Department/School? (yes, no, or in process):

Special constituencies (ie, First Year linked, Honors, etc.):

V. Classroom Schedule (Hybrid or Blended only; Hybrid = 1 day/week; if Blended, describe planned meeting pattern):

VI. Equivalence (How do you envision distance elements will be used to deliver an educational experience equivalent to or better than traditional classroom format?)

SUNY College at Old Westbury – OSCQR Design Rubric

SUNY OSCQR Rubric

		QUALITY INDICATOR	Sufficiently Present	Minor *1/2 hour or less*	Moderate *1/2-2 hours*	Major *2+ hours*	Not Applicable	ACTION PLAN
1	a	Course includes Welcome and Getting Started content (welcome video, welcome message, sample assignments in course) . R						
2	a	Course includes a Course Information area that deconstructs the syllabus for learners in a clear and navigable way. R						
	b	A printable syllabus is available to learners (PDF, HTML). R						
3	a	Course includes links to relevant campus policies on plagiarism, computer use, student grievances, accommodating disabilities, etc. R						
	b	Course includes links to privacy policies for internal and external tools. R						
	c	Course provides access to campus and Open SUNY resources (technical help, orientation, tutoring). R						
4	a	Course provides contact information for instructor, department, and program. R						
5	a	Course information states whether the course is fully online, blended, or web-enhanced. R						
	b	Appropriate methods and devices for accessing and participating in the course are communicated (publisher websites, secure content, pop-ups, browser issue, microphone, webcam). R						
6	a	Requisite skills for using tools or third party software are clearly stated and supported with resources. R						
	b	Technical skills required for participation in course learning activities scaffold in a timely manner (orientation, practice, and application - where appropriate). R						
7	a	Students have an opportunity to get to know the instructor. R						
	b	Course contains resources or activities intended to build a sense of class community, support open communication, and establish trust (at least one of the following - Ice-breaker, Bulletin Board, Meet Your Classmates, Ask a Question discussion forums). R						
8	a	Grading policies, including consequences of late submissions, are clearly stated in the course information area or syllabus. R						
9	a	Expectations for timely and regular feedback from the instructor are clearly stated (questions, email, assignments, weekly messages, communications). R						
10	a	Expectations for interaction are clearly stated (netiquette, grade weighting, models/examples, and timing and frequency of contributions). R						
11	a	Course is organized in a logical way and is easy to navigate; hyperlinks used where appropriate. R						
	b	Orientation or overview is provided for the course overall as well as in each module so students know how to navigate and what tasks are due. R						
12	a	Course objectives/outcomes are clearly defined, measurable, and aligned to student learning activities and assessments. BP						
13	a	Instructions are provided and well written. R						
14	a	Course offers access to a variety of engaging internal and external resources that support course content. BP						
	b	Course uses a variety of technology tools and activities to appropriately facilitate communication and collaboration, deliver content, and support student learning and engagement. BP						
15	a	Course offers opportunities for student to student interaction and constructive collaboration. BP						
	b	Course learning activities provide students with the opportunity to share resources (Wikis, Diigo, Google Bookmarks, etc.). BP						
	c	Students are encouraged to inject knowledge from diverse sources of information in their course interactions. BP						

16	a	Course provides activities for students to develop higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills, such as critical reflection and analysis. BP					
	b	Course provides activities that emulate real world applications of the discipline, such as experiential learning, case studies, and problem-based activities. BP					

17	a	Where available, low cost or free materials (Open Education Resources) are used. BP					

18	a	Course includes appropriate methods to assess students' mastery of content. R					
	b	Criteria for assessment are clearly articulated (rubrics, exemplary work). BP					

19	a	Students have opportunities to review their performance and assess their own learning throughout the course (pre-tests, automated self-tests, reflective assignments, etc.). BP					

20	a	Students have easy access to a well designed and up-to-date grade system. R					

21	a	Students have multiple opportunities to provide descriptive feedback on course design, course content, course experience, and ease of online technology. Bp					

22	a	Basic ADA accessibility is addressed (ALT tags are present for all images in this course, videos and narrated presentations are properly transcribed or captioned to meet this standard. See Accessibility Rubric). R					

23	a	There is consistency in design to present and communicate course information to improve readability, and course is free of grammatical and spelling errors. R					

24	a	Course materials and resources include copyright and licensing status, clearly stating permission to share where applicable. R					

R= Required
BP= Best Practices

OSCQR Accessibility Rubric

	Accessibility Standard	Sufficiently Present	Minor	Moderate	Major	Not Applicable	ACTION PLAN
1. Courses should follow a simple and consistent design.							
1 a	Related content should be organized together.						
1 b	A consistent layout should be established (consistent color scheme, same icon layout, and self-evident titles)						
2. Courses should be designed for ease of use.							
2 a	The homepage should be simple and uncluttered.						
2 b	Icons should be arranged in a logical order.						
2 c	Both Icons and text should be used for homepage links.						
2 d	Text should be used as the primary method for delivering information (images and color are secondary)						
2 e	Icons, folders, links, lessons, quizzes, tests, and assignments should have unique and descriptive titles.						
3. The course menu should be organized and up-to-date.							
3 a	If available, a search tool should be located at the top of the course menu.						
3 b	Frequently used tools should be available.						
3 c	Any tools not being utilized should be removed.						
4. Overview information about the layout and functionality of the course should be available.							
4 a	The Course Information documents should describe the overall layout of the course, the types of content available, and the tools that will be used.						
4 b	An accessibility statement should be present.						
4 c	The course should provide contact information for disability services and invite suggestions on how to increase accessibility.						
5. The color scheme for the course should be simple and carefully chosen.							
5 a	Color alone should not be used to convey important information.						
5 b	Text, graphics, and images should be understandable when viewed without color.						
5 c	The page background should not overpower the text.						
6. Text content should ensure readability.							
6 a	There should be high contrast between text and the page background.						
6 b	Flashing and blinking text should be avoided, unless it has been tested and complies with section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act.						
6 c	A sans-serif font with a standard size of 12 pt should be used.						
6 d	Lists should be bulleted or numbered, rather than indented or tabbed.						
6 e	There should be ample white space around and between blocks of text.						
6 f	Large blocks of information should be divided into manageable sections.						
6 g	Semantic structure should be maintained (headings instead of bold or larger font, table descriptions, emphasis instead of italics, strong instead of bold)						
6 h	Text content should be available in more than one format. HTML is the most accessible format and should be considered the preferred document type. (i.e., Word and PDF, or Word and HTML)						
6 i	Hyperlink text should make sense out of context. Avoid using "click here" or "email me".						
7. A text equivalent for every non-text element should be provided.							
7 a	Images should have alternate text or descriptions conveying the meaning.						
7 b	Audio should have a text transcript in an accessible document.						
7 c	Video files with audio should have synchronized captions, a video description, and a text transcript.						
7 d	Audio-narrated PowerPoint presentations should have text transcripts and slide descriptions.						
8. PowerPoint presentations should be accessible to all learners.							
8 a	A standard layout and slide title should be use on each slide.						
8 b	Templates should be used. Additional text boxes should not be added.						
8 c	The Notes section should be used to provide long descriptions of images.						
8 d	Slides should have simple, non-automatic transitions.						
8 e	Any embedded video should be captioned and not cause flickering.						
8 f	Presentations should not be "Saved As Web Page".						
9. When a timed response is required, there should be a means for requesting additional time.							
9 a	Students should be alerted when a timed response is required.						
9 b	Sufficient time should be provided for the student to indicate that more time is required.						