The Online Instruction policy defines traditional, online, hybrid, and flexible courses, and delineates student, faculty, and university responsibilities with regard to online instruction.

The President of the University

This policy applies to all CSUSM credit-bearing courses, course sections, and degree programs.

Karen S. Haynes, President

Graham Oberem, Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

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I. PREAMBLE

Technology is changing quickly and influencing the development of new models of teaching and learning. At the same time, these new technologies are playing an increasingly important role in society. The purpose of this policy is to provide consistency in the quality of instruction at California State University San Marcos. Nothing in this policy shall imply that online instruction is a preferred or required mode of instruction.

II. DEFINITIONS

These course modalities and associated definitions are based upon those recommended by the Academic Senate of the California State University [AS-3169-14/AA (Rev)]:

**Face-to-Face Course, Traditional (FT)** – Instruction is conducted in real time, with student(s) and faculty present in the same location. May use a course management system or web pages to post the syllabus and assignments. Scheduled in-person face-to-face class sessions are not normally replaced with online activities. A course in which less than twenty-five percent (25%) may be taught in an online fashion.

**Face-to-Face Course, Online (FO)** – Instruction is conducted via the Internet. Some instruction occurs in real time, with student(s) and faculty in different physical locations. May use web-conferencing software to hold class meetings. A course in which 100% of the course activities take place online.

**Local Course, Online (LO)** – Instruction occurs over the Internet (asynchronously). Scheduled face-to-face meetings may be required for orientation, exams, and student evaluation. A course in which such in-person face-to-face meetings do not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the course activities.

**Remote Course, Online (RO)** – Instruction is conducted over the Internet asynchronously, with students and instructors working at separate times and in different physical locations. A course in which 100% of the course activities take place online.

**Hybrid Course (HY)** – Instruction using a blend of traditional and online methods. Typically, these courses are a mixture of online and face-to-face sessions; such sessions may or may not occur in real time. A course in which at least 25% of the course activities take place online, and which does not meet the definition of an FO, LO or RO course.

**Flexible Course (FL)** – Course allows for more than one modality; students choose the modality (or modalities) suiting their needs from instructor-identified options.
III. PRINCIPLES FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTION

A. Modes of Instruction
1) Mode of Instruction refers to the delivery method employed in an instructional setting and may vary from fully in-person to fully online instruction. The Class Schedule database shall use the official Mode of Instruction as defined in section I.

2) The Course Registration Schedule (searched by students) shall clearly indicate for LO and HY courses when and where any required meetings take place, and the times at which the real time instruction takes place for FO courses.

B. Student Support, Rights, and Information
1) Students have the right to know the modes of delivery (including any on-campus meeting requirements, and technological requirements) of each course section, program and degree offered by the University. Students will have access to this information before enrolling in a course section or program.

2) The Class Schedule shall notify students of any software and hardware requirements for participation in online courses and activities.

3) Support consistent with that available to all other CSUSM students (such as technical support, instructional support, student services/advisers, library resources, and support services for students with disabilities) shall be made available to students in online course sections and programs.

C. Faculty Support, Rights and Responsibilities
1) Curricular Control
   a. In accordance with the provisions of the CSU/CFA Collective Bargaining Agreement, faculty shall have the same control and ownership of the substantive and intellectual content of their online course-related materials that faculty have with respect to their face-to-face courses.
   b. The most appropriate mode of instruction for degrees, programs, and courses is determined through consultation between the department (or program) and the individual instructors. Only with prior approval of the department/program may more than half of the course content be delivered online.
   c. Faculty have a right to know, and department chairs and program directors have the responsibility to inform faculty, of the modes of delivery, including any on-campus meeting requirements, and technological requirements of relevant course sections, programs, or degrees offered by the department or the program. Faculty shall have access to this information before being assigned any course.
d. All courses, regardless of mode of instruction, are subject to the curricular approval and review procedures established at CSUSM. Special attention should be paid at the departmental and programmatic levels in order to comply with WASC Substantive Change requirements. See Section IV for more information.

e. Access to online course content is governed by the same procedures and restrictions that determine evaluator access to face-to-face courses.

2) Intellectual Property
   a. In accordance with the CSUSM Intellectual Property Policy, faculty shall retain control and ownership over “traditional academic copyrightable works.” This control and ownership applies equally to online course materials as it does to those offered in a traditional classroom format.
   b. In posting copyrighted material online, faculty shall follow the guidelines established by the CSU San Marcos Policy on Fair Use.

3) Confidentiality of Student Records and Work
   Student records and work shall be subject to the same protection and expectations of confidentiality that are in effect for traditional modes of instruction. These requirements also apply when content is delivered by an outside contractor.

4) Class Size and Workload
   Class size and faculty workload will be determined following university standards after consultation with the faculty member and the department chair, and must take into account the student learning outcomes and the level of interaction between faculty and students.

5) Criteria for Student Success
   Criteria for student success in course sections and programs with online components shall be as rigorous and comprehensive as those used in FT course sections, and these criteria shall be clearly communicated to students.

6) Faculty Training & Instructional Design Support
   a. Because online instruction involves the use of technologies and teaching methods that benefit from specialized training, the University shall offer training and support to faculty.
   b. When a faculty member elects to teach a course online for the first time, the faculty member is encouraged but not required to complete a training program offered by the Faculty Center and Instructional Development Services (IDS). The training program will include instruction on accessible design. If the faculty member elects to complete this training, it is recommended that this training be completed at least one month prior to the first day of the semester in which the online course will be taught.
c. Faculty members who have previously taught a course online shall also have the opportunity to receive training in online instruction from the Faculty Center and Instructional Development Services (IDS), and are encouraged also to take advantage of other university-sponsored resources and training.

d. All faculty members teaching online courses are strongly urged to have each of their courses reviewed according to the Quality Online Learning and Teaching (QOLT) procedure administered by the Quality Assurance Review team at the Faculty Center.

7) Accessibility
In accordance with the CSU Accessible Technology Initiative, accessible design must be incorporated into the creation of all new course sections with online components. Existing online course content must be made accessible as online materials are added, redesigned, or modified or when a student with a disability enrolls in the course. Any outside materials (including those found online and from publishers) must meet the appropriate accessibility standards. Faculty are encouraged to seek assistance from the Faculty Center and/or Instructional Development Services (IDS).

8) Assessment
Courses and programs are held to the same standard regardless of the mode of instruction. Assessment of student learning in courses with online components should be a regular part of the department’s assessment plan.

9) Student Evaluation of Instruction
Faculty teaching an FO or LO course section, or an HY section where more than 50% of the course activities take place online, shall be consulted to determine if they would prefer to use the Student Evaluation of Instruction Form for Online Courses or one of the other Student Evaluation Forms.

10) Faculty Office Hours and Availability
   a. The methods and frequency of office hours, virtual or in-person, will be clearly communicated to students and determined by university policy and procedures. Faculty shall clearly indicate specific office hours and provide timely responses to student questions.
   b. All course sections that are offered solely or partially through online instruction shall provide the opportunity for appropriate and timely interactions between faculty and students.
   c. Faculty teaching a fully online course section must have a regularly scheduled office hour during which they are available through an on-line technology appropriate to the course (on-line discussion group, telephone, web chat, Skype, etc.), and/or be available by appointment.
11) **Academic Integrity**
Students enrolled in online or hybrid course sections are subject to the same academic regulations applicable to students enrolled in any CSUSM course section. Academic standards regarding cheating, plagiarism, and appropriate behavior shall be clearly communicated to students in online and hybrid course sections and programs. (For example, see Academic Honesty Policy.)

12) **Hosting of Class Material**
The online components of all degree-credit courses listed in the Class Schedule shall normally be hosted on California State University servers or other servers approved by the Dean of IITS and Chief Information Officer.

13) **Syllabi**
Any course section that uses online instruction shall indicate so in the course syllabus. In keeping with the Course Syllabi Policy, the following information is required to be included in course syllabi for course sections with online components:
   a. Course format (either FT, FO, LO, RO, HY, or FL);
   b. Prerequisite technical competencies expected or required of the student;
   c. Contact information for, and links to, technical assistance;
   d. Course requirements for participation (e.g., participation in chat sessions, frequency of web access, postings, etc.);
   e. How course material will be made available (e.g., Cougar Courses, other Learning Management Systems, Library Reserves, etc.);
   f. Statement on how the course complies with the campus Credit Hour policy;
   g. Instructor contact information; and
   h. On-campus meeting requirements, if applicable.

14) **Use of Outside Contractors to Provide Course Materials**
   a. The selection of course materials is in the purview of the faculty. Only with prior approval of the department/program may more than half of the course content be delivered through outside contractors.
   b. The University shall not enter into a contract with any private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs without the prior consultation of the relevant department or program.

IV. APPROVAL OF ONLINE AND TECHNOLOGY-MEDIATED COURSES AND DEGREE PROGRAMS

A. **Online and/or Technology-Mediated (OTM) units**
The units of a course offered in modalities FO, LO, or RO are considered to be entirely Online and/or Technology-Mediated (OTM) units. For courses offered in HY and FL
modalities, fifty percent (50%) of the units are considered to be OTM units. None of the units in an FT modality course are OTM units.

B. WASC Substantive Change Requirement
1) The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) Senior College and University Commission requires programs that offer distance and technology-mediated courses to obtain Substantive Change authorization when the level of such coursework reaches fifty percent (50%) of the program requirements. Any department or program that proposes an undergraduate major or a graduate program in which it is possible for students to fulfill 50% or more of the requirements with OTM units shall be required to meet WASC substantive change requirements. Note that for undergraduate programs, the 50% rule applies only to units in the major and not units for graduation. The campus WASC Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO) shall work with such departments or programs on the Substantive Change proposal.

2) Departments and/or programs are responsible for tracking courses with OTM units (both new courses and conversions of existing courses) to ensure that no more than 50% of program requirements will be offered through OTM, unless the department is intentional about wanting to transition to an online degree program. Departments and/or programs need to consult with the campus WASC ALO to ensure that the university is in compliance with WASC reporting requirements.

C. Curriculum Approvals
New online courses with OTM units, and degree programs, majors, minors, options, certificates and subject matter preparation programs using such courses, as well as modifications to such courses and programs are to be approved through the regular curriculum review process, following the same process as any new course. There is no special curricular review or approval needed for a course with OTM units, or for a program that uses such courses.

D. Department/Program Approval for Conversion of Existing Courses or Sections to an Online Format
In the case of existing courses, approval for the use of online instruction is within the purview of the department and/or program, subject to the principles set forth in this Policy. Consultation with the department and/or program is expected to ensure programmatic learning outcomes are maintained. Departments will be encouraged to develop internal guidelines regarding the process for determining which courses or sections will be offered in FO, LO, RO and HY formats.