

**School *of* the Professions**

**TITLE OF POLICY:** Online/Hybrid Course Offering

**Category**: Curriculum **Date Established**: 9/19/2018

**Responsible Office:** SOP Dean’s Office **Date Last Revised**: Click here to enter text.

**Policy Statement**

The School *of* the Professions (SOP) at SUNY Buffalo State is committed to providing quality graduate and undergraduate courses. This policy shall apply to all academic credit-bearing courses, course sections, and degree programs offered partially (hybrid) or fully online by SUNY Buffalo State.

This policy document provides guidelines for faculty engaged in teaching online and hybrid courses in SOP to ensure quality of all online/hybrid course delivery, namely course structure, online instructional approaches, associated support services, assessment, use and distribution of course content, and delineating rights and responsibilities of parties associated with online/hybrid learning within SOP.

This policy is also designed to assist SOP in the fulfillment of its educational mission and role in accordance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations of the State University of New York and Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

**Instruction Modalities Definitions** (See DOPS IV:07:03)

1. **Hybrid:** Online course activity is mixed with classroom meetings, replacing at least twenty (20%) percent, but not all, required on-site meetings
2. **Hybrid-Plus:** courses that are mostly online-eighty percent (80%) but require a number of scheduled classroom or on-site gatherings
3. **Online Asynchronous:** All course activity is completed online; there are no required on-site sessions
4. **Online Synchronous:** All course activity is completed online but requires some or all scheduled interactive online sessions in which direct instruction occurs in real time, without time delay.

See also OPEN SUNY online Learning Data Definitions -(https://commons.suny.edu/opensuny/files/2018/06/SUNY-and-IPEDS-Online-Learning-Definitions.pdf)

**Approval Process for Online and Hybrid Courses**

1. Both full-time and part-time faculty will be able to teach one section of an approved online/hybrid course per semester (Spring and Fall) upon approval of the Chair. This limit may be raised with appropriate justification and approval of the Associate Dean. The one course limit does not apply to J-term, Summer Session or to fully online programs.
2. Intent to teach an existing course as an online or hybrid course is to be communicated to the Department Chair at least one year before the course is taught. The proposal is to be submitted by the instructor who will offer the class in its inaugural semester. Discussion should begin with the chair and proceed to the Associate Dean. Parallel discussions with the RITE instructional design staff should also occur regarding the structure of the course, not the content, in order to ensure sound online course development strategies. The instructor will submit a justification to the department chair that includes a description of how online instruction will provide a direct benefit to students and/or how it will provide an alternative mechanism for reaching a population of students who would not be able to attend class meetings on campus. The instructor will submit a syllabus and other course-related information to the Department Chair as stated in the departmental bylaws or by the departmental curriculum committee. Faculty teaching an online/hybrid course need to demonstrate proficiency in this delivery method (i.e. completion of an Online/Hybrid Course Development Certificate).
3. The Department Chair, in consultation with the associate dean, will approve the online or hybrid course delivery. Regardless of the method of course delivery, the course should reference an outline, which has been approved by the curriculum committee. If a new course is developed or revised, faculty should consult and follow DOPS IV: 02:00 - New and Revised course proposals.

**Training Opportunities**

1. Faculty will complete adequate training as per the Online Course Development Guidelines provided by RITE (https://rite.buffalostate.edu/online-course-dev.html) to prepare them for teaching using the hybrid/online delivery format prior to teaching the course. Development must be completed during the semester prior to the semester in which the course will be implemented (i.e. end of spring for a fall offering). Faculty are encouraged to take advantage of additional training, workshops, and certifications to continue to ensure high quality course delivery (i.e. Blackboard training, accessibility training, etc). Any faculty member who teaches online or hybrid courses shall have the opportunity to receive training in online instruction and be encouraged to make use of college resources and training for online/hybrid courses. Faculty/staff that have not had prior training and those with prior training but have not taught an online/hybrid course within five years, will participate in the online course development program offered through RITE. If the faculty/staff has participated in the online course development process either at BSC or another institution and has taught an online/hybrid course within the past five years, an OSCQR review is the only training requirement for teaching the online/hybrid course. (https://rite.buffalostate.edu/course-design-review.html).
2. Faculty teaching online/hybrid courses using Blackboard must meet the standards provided by the Departmental Curriculum Committee, department faculty, and Department Chair.
3. For hybrid courses, faculty must include in their syllabus the number of times the class will meet face-to-face throughout the semester and its duration. Faculty must also provide a description of the types of course activities that will take place in online and face-to-face environments.

**Quality Review Process**

The Course Design Review focuses on how instructional design and pedagogical best practices can be applied to online or blended/hybrid courses.

1. **OSCQR Rubric**: The Open SUNY Course Quality Review Rubric (OSCQR) was created by a team of Open SUNY Center for Online Teaching Excellence (COTE) staff and campus stakeholders. The OSCQR Rubric includes 50 standards that address course design, accessibility, and learner-centeredness. The rubric incorporates best practices in terms of navigability, course structure, format clarity, and the use of technology. The OSCQR Rubric is intended to be used for assessing course design rather than the actual course delivery. As such, it is not a tool to evaluate the instructor or the course content. The rubric can be viewed in its entirety at: <http://commons.suny.edu/cote/course-supports/oscqr-rubric/>
   * 1. **Peer Observation**: Peer class visits of online/hybrid course content should take place as part of the performance or periodic review process including reviews for tenure, appointment or reappointment, or post-tenure review. The same standards established by the Curriculum Committee and the Department for face-to-face courses should be used for online courses.
     2. For hybrid classes the peer review can be a blended peer review. For example, the peer reviewer can attend a class when it meets face-to-face and when the class meets online. This will provide the peer reviewer with information about how the face-to-face portion connects with the online portion of the class. The blended peer review also enables the peer reviewer to see the instructor’s pedagogy, delivery, engagement of and interaction with students as it is done in a physical classroom visitation.
     3. Online classes must be peer-reviewed using the same standards established by the Curriculum Committee and the Department for face-to-face courses.
2. **Continuous Learning**: Faculty are expected to engage in continuous learning by attending workshops and/or participating in learning cohorts to further develop their online/hybrid teaching strategies.
3. **Assessment**: Assessment of online and blended courses should follow the same processes as set by the Department and School for face-to-face and should be a regular part of the department’s assessment plan. Assessment should be focused on student outcomes.
4. **Evaluation Considerations**: School and department faculty performance evaluation processes should recognize online/hybrid and face-to-face instructional activities as equally meritorious and important.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

The rights and responsibilities of faculty are the same regardless of whether the instruction is face-to-face, hybrid/hybrid plus, or online. Faculty teaching online or hybrid courses will be subject to the same responsibilities, and will enjoy the same rights, as faculty teaching traditional courses. According to the Directory of Policy Statements (DOPS) Distance Education Policy (Number: IV:07:00, May 2016). “No fundamental distinction exists between the review and approval processes for traditional and distance education courses. All courses offered through distance education will be determined in the same manner as on-campus courses.” See the Distance Education Policy in DOPS IV:07:00 for a complete list of rights and responsibilities.

1. Course approval and enrollment.
   1. All courses offered through distance education formats must meet the academic quality standards set by SUNY Buffalo State. *No fundamental distinction exists between the review and approval processes for traditional and distance education courses.*
   2. *All courses offered through distance education will be determined in the same manner as on-campus courses*.
   3. Course enrollments for distance education classes will be determined and approved in the same manner as enrollments in on-campus classes.
2. Academic and professional employees will be provided with opportunities to learn the technology necessary to conduct any distance education courses they are asked to teach.
3. Course-related materials containing personally identifiable student information for distance education classes should be as confidential as the medium allows consistent with appropriate student access and SUNY and state policy.
   1. Designated course platforms, such as Blackboard, should be used to maintain sensitive information such as grades to ensure privacy.
4. It is understood that faculty members will continue to create traditionally expected course-related materials, such as syllabi, assignments, and tests, for students in their program or department regardless of the method of dissemination and use of such materials in classroom/instruction will be without the expectation of royalty payments (refer to the section dealing with intellectual property right).
5. Courses and course materials will meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Please refer to resources section in Section III.
6. If a specific technology is needed for a course, faculty must inform students of hardware and software requirements in addition to any prerequisite level of computer expertise.
7. Faculty will provide adequate, individualized, and timely interaction with students.
8. Faculty who teach online will provide synchronous office hours online.
9. Notify students of technology requirements for online office hours (i.e. using Blackboard Collaborate).
10. The college will provide students with online access to appropriate library resources, administrative processes, technological assistance, and student support services.

**Intellectual Property**

In general, it is understood that the intellectual property created by a faculty member or professional employee will remain the property of that faculty member or professional employee for perpetuity or so long as the law allows. See DOPS IV:07:00 for additional information on intellectual property.

**Additional Considerations**

1. Academic integrity: Academic program faculty assume the responsibility to oversee the quality, rigor, and integrity of instruction. Both face-to-face and online instruction, whether fully online or hybrid, should demonstrate quality, rigor and integrity.
2. Using intellectual property and copyrighted material: Same rules apply as face-to-face. Every instructor of an online course is responsible for obtaining permission to use copyrighted material as appropriate for the situation.
3. Course evaluations: student evaluations of the hybrid/online courses will be in accordance to the department’s established practices.
4. Both online courses and face-to-face courses must follow the same departmental and school policies.

**Related information/Resources**

1. http://academicaffairs.buffalostate.edu/iv-curriculum-dops
2. <http://facultyhandbook.buffalostate.edu/technology-instructional-design>
3. Online Course Development Certification: <https://rite.buffalostate.edu/online-course-dev.html>
4. Microsoft Office accessibility information: <https://rite.buffalostate.edu/microsoft-office.html>
5. PDF accessibility information: <https://rite.buffalostate.edu/pdf.html>
6. Web page accessibility information: <http://collegerelations.buffalostate.edu/accessibility>
7. OPEN SUNY Online Learning Data Definitions - https://commons.suny.edu/opensuny/files/2018/06/SUNY-and-IPEDS-Online-Learning-Definitions.pdf

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