

DISTANCE AND BLENDED LEARNING POLICY

Introduction

1. The University offers multiple modes of learning and is committed to providing high-quality distance and blended learning programmes to further its educational mission and reaching a diverse population of learners with a wide range of needs.
2. To maintain the quality of Distance and Blended Learning, in line with MSCHE Standards of Accreditation and Office for Students Conditions of Registration, all Distance and Blended Learning programmes must be approved by the Academic Board and University Board and must meet the requirements outlined in this policy.

Scope

3. This policy applies to all students enrolled on Distance and Blended Learning programmes across the University. The policy will inform students of the expectations for all parties when studying on Distance Learning or Blended Learning programmes.
4. Students are responsible for participating in Distance and Blended Learning programmes and adhering to the policies and procedures outlined in this policy.
5. For the avoidance of doubt, Service Learning and Internship courses on in-person programmes are not considered to be part of Distance and/or Blended Learning provision and as such are not subject to the policies and procedures outlined in this policy.

Definitions

6. **Distance Learning:** The University considers both Online Delivery and Hybrid Delivery to fall under the umbrella of Distance Learning.
 - a) **Online Delivery:**
 - (1) A mode of study where all participants engage virtually with course materials either synchronously or asynchronously without a face-to-face meeting.
 - (2) Students are not required to attend in-person classes or events at particular times and locations.
 - (3) Students may be required to attend online sessions and assessments at particular times.

- (4) Registered students will have access to the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Subject to country-specific laws on internet access, students can access the VLE from any global location of their choosing; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- (5) Students will be allocated an academic advisor for online support as required.
- b) **Hybrid Delivery:**
 - (1) A mode of study where some participants are face-to-face while others are engaging virtually.
 - (2) All delivery is synchronous and as such, students are required to attend online or in-person sessions and assessments at particular times.
 - (3) Registered students will have access to the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Subject to country-specific laws on internet access, students can access the VLE from any global location of their choosing; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - (4) Students will be allocated an academic advisor for online support as required.

7. **Blended Learning:**

- a) A mode of study that combines online learning with traditional classroom methods. Students attend the University's physical teaching spaces for face-to-face engagement and, in addition, access course materials and interact with instructors and peers through the VLE. Support is provided through attendance in the physical classroom.

General Principles

- 8. The teaching modality of a programme will be explicitly stated in the relevant Programme Specification Document. Similarly, the teaching modality of a course will be explicitly stated in the Course Specification Document.
- 9. All Programmes and Courses at the University, whether Distance, Blended or Face-to-Face must provide consistent academic rigor, quality, and assessment of student learning objectives and hold students to consistent academic standards.
- 10. To maintain consistent academic quality across the University, the Course Specification Documents, learning outcomes, programme assessment maps and annual review are approved and scrutinised by the Academic Board.
- 11. Regardless of study mode, all students will have access to the equivalent learning resources and additional support from Library Services, IT, Registry Services, Student Affairs and the Academic Departments and Schools.
- 12. The University must authenticate the identity of all online students. Distance Education students are required to use a unique username and password, facilitated by the University as part of the standard enrolment process, to access all aspects of

the programme and/or courses. If students are required to attend a real-time online examination or assessment, the University will use verification methods ahead of the assessment window.

13. The University reserves the right to implement additional verification methods throughout the duration of a Distance Learning programme, utilising a combination of in-person and technological solutions. No administration fees will be charged to students, but students should plan for reasonable expenses for an in-country verification check in their domiciled country or another appropriate country, should this be required.
14. Students' work must be properly attributed to them. Any mechanisms, such as web-based methods or correspondence, must be secure and reliable, and there must be a means of proving or confirming the safe receipt of their work.
15. All assessment and internal verification documentation should be stored securely in accordance with the University's Data Retention Guidance and Data Protection Policy.

VERSION MANAGEMENT

Responsible Department: RAQA			
Approving Body: Academic Board			
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