

# Cal Poly Humboldt eLearning Policy

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## eLearning Policy

### Office of Academic Affairs

Applies to: Faculty, Staff, Administrators and Students

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## I. PREAMBLE

The university's purpose, vision, and values were considered when developing this policy. Learning in and out of the classroom is part of the university experience, and we are dedicated to providing the "highest quality and affordable college education built on the contributions of diverse students, staff, and faculty who are committed to a just and sustainable world." We are committed to "free and critical inquiry. We value academic freedom, reflexivity, and serving as a repository of accumulated knowledge that is accessible to the broader community." We believe that our primary responsibility is to provide the best possible education for today's world and that teaching excellence is of paramount importance as is learning excellence. The purpose of this policy is to further actualize Cal Poly Humboldt's values by establishing consistent academic quality and accessibility of all Cal Poly Humboldt online and hybrid courses and programs. Online and hybrid instruction will assist the university in achieving its goals while addressing three challenges: geographic accessibility; scheduling needs of a diverse student population with work, family, and travel constraints; and enrollment growth. This policy is written with the intent and spirit that Cal Poly Humboldt faculty retain the responsibility for academic quality and integrity of all courses, programs, and degrees as well as excellence in academic instruction across all modes of instruction. Moreover, it aligns with the [Online Education White Paper](#) from the Academic Senate of the CSU. This policy acknowledges the place of online instruction among the full range of evidence-

informed practices and approaches for teaching and learning and is created to guide and promote high-quality online and digital educational experiences for faculty and students consistent with the Cal Poly Humboldt experience. Online and hybrid instruction represent one mode of instruction that may be considered by an individual faculty member, a faculty group, and/or an academic program or department. Nothing in this policy shall imply that online and hybrid instruction is the preferred mode of instruction.

## II. DEFINITIONS

**Accessible Design** – The design of learning materials and experiences distributed to students within a course of study or other learning environment that attends to the needs of people with disabilities and complies with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

**Instructional Time** - A unit of time based on one hour (50 minutes) of direct instruction for every course unit/credit. Federal definitions are based on the Carnegie Credit Hour that associates two hours of studying and preparation activities to every hour of direct instruction.

**Mode of Instruction (MOI)**- refers to the delivery method employed in an instructional setting. As such it represents one important component of pedagogical practice.

**Online Asynchronous Instruction** – Term used to refer to types of computer mediated instruction that involve a time lag in participant contributions. While a cohesive dialogue may be accomplished, the participants see and contribute to that conversation in disrupted segments, meaning that student interaction is not held at the same time of day.

**Face-to-Face (F2F) Course** - Instruction is conducted in real time, with student(s) and faculty present in the same location. Scheduled in-person face-to-face class sessions are not normally replaced with online activities. Face-to-face courses may offer no more than 25 percent of instructional time online. Courses must use the university's learning management system to post the syllabus and may post assignments and link to additional web-based material.

**Hybrid Course** – Courses where over 25% but less than 100% of instructional time is online and the remaining time is spent in face-to-face instructional settings. The purpose of a hybrid course is to take advantage of F2F and online learning (e.g. a class meets physically on Monday and Wednesday and the

Friday meeting time is replaced by required online activities). Courses must use the university's learning course management system to post the syllabus and course components and assignments for the non-F2F portions of the course.

Hybrid Asynchronous: Course meets regularly in person with portions of the course conducted through unscheduled online instruction .

Hybrid Synchronous: Course meets regularly in person with portions of the course conducted online at specific times.

**Hyflex courses-** Course design model that presents the components of hybrid learning in a flexible course structure that gives students the option of attending sessions in the classroom, participating online, or doing both. Students can change their mode of attendance weekly or by topic, according to need or preference. HyFlex, presents multiple paths through course content. Courses must use the university's learning course management system to post the syllabus and may post assignments and link to additional web-based material.

**Online Course** – A course where 100% of the content is delivered online. There are no F2F meetings. Courses must use the university's learning course management system to post the syllabus and additional course resources and assignments.

OnlineAsynchronous: 100% of the instructional time is unscheduled, allowing students to access it on their own time within the parameters of the course.

OnlineSynchronous: A course that utilizes some type of computer-mediated instruction that supports an interactional mode without time lags. Some or all of the course meets at specific designated times online. For example, video conferencing and online chat sessions are two types of computer-mediated synchronous instruction.

**Self-Support** – Instruction offered through self-support mode does not receive state general fund appropriations and instead collects non-state student fees that are adequate to meet the cost of maintaining operation. Such fees shall be required pursuant to rules and regulations prescribed by the trustees, including but not limited to fee policies such as Executive Order 1054 and Education Code section 89708.

**State-Support** – Instruction offered through state-support mode receives state appropriations.

**Technologically Enhanced** – Course where the instructor uses web-based technology to supplement/support class time and assignments.

### III. BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTION

Cal Poly Humboldt values academic freedom and encourages instructional innovation to further learning excellence and student success. **Online** and **hybrid** course and program offerings shall contribute to the university goals of providing a distinctive educational experience while working to eliminate opportunity gaps and meet retention and graduation goals. Faculty have the responsibility for curricular oversight.

#### A. Modes of Instruction (MOIs)

1. MOI can vary from face-to-face to fully online instruction, with many variants in between. It is in the collective interest of the academic community — faculty, students, staff, and administration — to know what MOI is in use in specific classes in order to provide appropriate support, make efficient use of resources, and have clarity regarding the extent and importance of academic technologies employed in any given class or learning environment.
2. The class schedule will clearly note the course MOI so students know when registering for a course if the course is face-to-face, hybrid, or fully online.

#### B. Student Support, Rights, and Information

1. Students have the right to know the modes of delivery of each program and degree offered by the university prior to enrolling in a program or degree. Students shall know mode and any on-campus meeting requirements and technological requirements of course sections prior to enrolling in course sections.
2. Support consistent with that available to all other Cal Poly Humboldt 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 courses sections and programs.
3. Students have the right to timely responses from their instructors. Instructors shall respond to reasonable student inquiries within two business days.

## **C. Faculty Support, Rights, and Responsibilities**

### **1. Curricular Control**

- a) While individual faculty can express a preference for MOI, the most appropriate MOI for degrees, programs and courses is determined by the department or academic unit and not solely individual faculty members. This control must be exercised, whether courses are offered via state-supported venues or through self-support venues.
- b) When differing MOIs for an existing course results in major course changes (e.g. change in Student Learning Outcomes, c-classification, ect.), a course change must be submitted following the Integrated Curriculum Committee (ICC) process.
- c) New courses that are intended to be provided in distance learning formats, should be submitted to the Integrated Curriculum Committee (ICC) following the established curricular policies and guidelines of Cal Poly Humboldt.
- d) Faculty have the right to know modes of delivery; thus department chairs and program directors have the responsibility to inform faculty of 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.
- e) All courses, regardless of mode of instruction, are subject to the curricular approval and review policies and procedures as established at Cal Poly Humboldt and curricular policies of the CSU. Special attention should be paid at the department and programmatic levels to WSCUC Substantive Change requirements to ensure compliance.

[Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

### **2. Intellectual Property**

- a) In accordance with the CSU/CFA Collective Bargaining Agreement, faculty have the same control and ownership of the substantive and intellectual content of their online course materials as they have of course materials in a face-to-face format.
- b) Faculty shall follow the guidelines and rules for intellectual property as outlined by current Cal Poly Humboldt and CSU policies.

See [Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

**3. Confidentiality of Student Records and Work**

Student records and work shall be subject to the standards outlined in the Cal Poly Humboldt Student Records Access Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). These requirements also apply when content is delivered by an outside contractor.

**4. Class Size and Workload**

Class size and instructor workload shall be determined by the department in consultation with the college dean. Class size and the related assigned workload (WTU) shall be a factor of expected instructor time commitment: Instructor time in online and hybrid environments is a function of course learning outcomes and the related time an instructor must commit to appropriately monitor, evaluate, and participate in online interactions as well as evaluate individual assignments.

**5. Course Credit Hours**

When existing courses are converted to online or hybrid, the units carried are expected to be the same. According to the CSU Policy on Credit Units, a credit hour is defined as “the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement.” A credit hour is assumed to be a 50-minute (not 60-minute) period. In courses, such as those offered online, in which seat time does not apply, a credit hour may be measured by an equivalent amount of work, as demonstrated by student achievement. Also refer to the CSU Policy on credit units for guidance on student workload.

See [Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

**6. Criteria for Student Success**

Criteria for student success in online instruction courses and programs shall be as rigorous and comprehensive as those used in face-to-face courses, and these criteria shall be clearly communicated to students.

**7. Faculty Development, Training, and Instructional Design Support**

- a) The university recognizes that not all faculty and students are prepared for the challenges and opportunities that teaching and learning in an online environment can present. To assist faculty in creating high quality learning

environments online, various resources are available throughout the university. Cal Poly Humboldt's faculty development unit (e.g. Center for Teaching and Learning) provides education, training, technology support, and instructional design services. This includes participation in the CSU Quality Assurance Program, which focuses on academic quality and integrity in online/blended courses. The HSU Accessible Resource Center (ARC) team helps faculty and staff ensure that digital documents are compliant with the requirements of the Accessible Technology Initiative (ATI). 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 through its appropriate faculty and course development unit (Center for Teaching & Learning).

- b) Any faculty member who teaches online or hybrid courses shall have an adequate opportunity to receive training in online instruction and are encouraged to make use of any university-offered resources and training in course development and accessible design, evidence-based design and pedagogical practices, assessment, course management within the LMS (Canvas), and approaches for humanizing the online learning experience.
- c) Faculty members using university-supported resources (e.g. software and student support programs) are responsible for requesting and securing that support.

See [Appendix B](#) for lists of support mechanisms.

## **8. Accessibility**

- a) Just as in face-to-face learning environments, the university and its faculty are committed to creating and making available accessible instructional materials. In accordance with the CSU Accessible Technology Initiative, accessible design must be incorporated into the creation of all new course sections with online components. Online programs and courses will conform to university policies regarding accessibility and accommodations.
- b) The instructor is responsible for the accessibility of online and hybrid courses and their materials in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. In doing so, any new materials added during the instructional period must meet

accessibility requirements; this includes outside materials (such as those found online and from publishers).

- c) Instructors are strongly encouraged to post all curricular and instructional resources to the official university LMS.
- d) In order to fully support students, Instructors will coordinate with accessibility staff to remediate instructional materials posted to the official university LMS in a timely manner.
- e) The university provides, and faculty should seek, information, assistance, guidance, and training in ensuring accessible learning environments.

See [Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

## **9. Assessment**

Courses and programs should be held to the same standard regardless of the mode of instruction. Assessment of online and blended courses should be a regular part of the department's assessment plan and should focus on student outcomes, not on the delivery technology. Academic content is relevant to the original academic materials prepared by the instructor including the related technological architecture.

## **10. Evaluation**

### **a) Faculty Evaluations of Peers**

- (1) Department guidelines establish faculty observation and evaluation. The faculty of a given academic program assume responsibility and exercise oversight of courses and their curriculum ensuring the quality, rigor, and integrity of instruction. Instruction online whether fully online or hybrid must match the quality, rigor, and integrity of face-to-face courses. Campus and department RTP performance evaluation processes will recognize online and face-to-face instructional activities as equally meritorious and important. Access to online course content is governed by the same procedures and restrictions that determine evaluator access to face-to-face courses. This includes the responsibility to notify the faculty member of plans to visit their course. The faculty member shall maintain reasonable control over the extent of this access to their course materials and content.



(2) The California Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement requires at least five- (5-) day notice before “online observation, and/or review of online content” (CBA 15.14 2015).

(3) It is recommended that peer review of online courses be conducted according to the Quality Teaching and Learning (QLT) procedure.

b) Student Evaluations of Faculty

(1) The university currently provides online student evaluations of teaching. These will also be used in online courses. Administration will follow university guidelines outlined in the Standardized Student Evaluation Question Policy.

See [Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

### **11. Faculty Office Hours and Availability**

Instructors of online courses shall schedule office hours accessible to their online students, or as determined by department policy. The level of student interaction should be comparable to face-to-face office hours, the methods and frequency of which will be clearly communicated to students.

### **12. Academic Honesty**

Online programs and courses will conform to university policies on academic honesty.

See [Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

### **13. Hosting of Class Material**

The online components of all degree-credit courses listed in the class schedule shall be hosted on California State University servers or other servers approved by the chief information officer.

### **14. Syllabi**

All courses regardless of instructional medium and mode shall abide by Cal Poly Humboldt’s existing syllabus policy.

See [Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

### **15. State and Self-Support Hosted Courses**

Deciding whether to offer an online program through state and/or self support shall be accomplished according to state laws and campus and system-wide policies.

See definitions section for “state-support” and “self-support.”

See [Appendix A](#) or links to the referenced document or policy.

### **16. Use of Outside Contractors to Provide Course Materials**

- a) Since civic engagement, local community collaboration, and stewardship of place are central to Cal Poly Humboldt's core values and beliefs, the use of outside contractors for the purposes of delivering course content shall only occur with approval of individual departments or programs and the appropriate administrator.
- b) No individual, program, or department shall agree in a contract with any private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs on behalf of the university without prior university approval.
- c) The university shall not enter into a contract with any private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs without the prior approval of the relevant department or program. Approvals shall follow established university procedures and policy.
- d) Student records and work in online and hybrid modes of instruction shall be subject to the same protection and expectations of confidentiality as in face-to-face modes, even when delivered by an outside contractor.  
See [Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

## IV. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMS

### A. Distance Learning Programs

1. Following the Department of Education and WSCUC guidelines, programs where 50% or more of the total units a student needs to complete their degree can be taken in a distance learning format must apply for distance learning status from WSCUC.
2. Courses offered in any modality that is not fully Face to Face are considered a distance learning format.
3. Program faculty shall work with Department Chairs and Deans to monitor program offerings for compliance with distance learning requirements.
4. Current programs looking to gain distance learning status shall follow the program change procedures outlined at Cal Poly Humboldt as well as the substantive change procedures for WSCUC.
5. Online and hybrid programs of study are encouraged to establish common Canvas course templates for all courses within the program to maximize student success and manage program

consistency. The individual instances of a course will remain the intellectual property of the instructor of record per the intellectual property clause within this policy. The department and/or faculty program coordinator will be responsible for maintaining the common course curriculum within course templates and will have the ability to share course shells with instructors who will make a copy of the course within the LMS (Canvas) for their instructional purposes.

See [Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

## **B. Program Assessment**

1. Distance Learning programs will be subject to the same standards and procedures for program review established by Cal Poly Humboldt as non-distance learning programs.

See [Appendix A](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

## [APPENDIX A: Policy Index](#)

Cal Poly Humboldt, California State University, and California Faculty Association policy index.

## [APPENDIX B: Faculty and Student Support Resources](#)

Definitions of faculty and student support. Includes a list of faculty and student support resources available throughout the university.