Faculty Guidelines for Graduate Online/Hybrid Course Development

The following document serves as an executive summary of the definitions for online and hybrid education, online course approval requirements, faculty training and preparation, and compliance and evaluation requirements. At Loyola University Maryland, online/hybrid teaching is firmly rooted in Ignatian-based pedagogy and is responsive to the contemporary needs of students who are living in an increasingly globalized and technological world. Loyola’s philosophy of online teaching is informed by the comments of the Rev. Adolfo Nicolas’s, S.J., (2010) that today we have a great opportunity to use advancements in technology and the positive dimensions of globalization to realize the potential of Jesuit higher education. For a more complete understanding of the theoretical framework for determining the extent to which technology will enhance student learning in particular courses the reader is referred to Appendix B.

Loyola Definitions for Online and Hybrid Education

On-Line Learning: Learning experiences in which the learners are in different physical spaces from the instructor for some portion of the learning experience and use online distance learning technology to transcend these spaces. This does not include “web-enhanced” courses (e.g., those with standard meeting places/times that include an electronic component to deliver homework assignments or require e-mail exchanges between the instructor and students), or traditional correspondence courses.

Hybrid course: Loyola defines a hybrid course as a course that combines online and classroom learning and in which less than 50% of the instruction is delivered online. Students and instructors assemble in the same physical space for greater than 50% of the regular scheduled class time. For a three-credit course this would be a minimum of approximately 18.75 hours of face-to-face instruction. The course integrates a blend of face-to-face, asynchronous and synchronous learning experiences to ensure student learning, engagement, and collaboration.

Online course: Loyola defines an online course as one where 50% or more of the instruction is delivered online and students and instructors are in different physical spaces 50% or more of the course. To facilitate student learning, the course may use a blend of face-to-face meetings, and synchronous and asynchronous learning experiences to encourage student engagement and collaboration.

Asynchronous online learning: A learning environment that uses online learning resources to facilitate information sharing and engagement with subject matter outside the constraints of time and place. Examples include email, online discussion forums, message boards, blogs, and podcasts.

Synchronous learning: A learning environment in which everyone takes part in the experience at the same time. Interaction may be either in an in-person or an online context.
Online/Hybrid Course Approval

Loyola University Maryland supports the development of high quality hybrid and online courses. Schools and departments may offer courses where 50% or more of the course is taught in an online environment. Processes for online course approval reside within individual schools and/or departments. For courses in which 50% or greater of the course is conducted online, faculty are required to complete a “Summary of Online Course Activity” form found at http://www.loyola.edu/department/teaching/teaching/teachonline. Loyola’s Records office and the Academic Compliance Officer will oversee acquiring and maintaining this documentation as needed. This will help ensure Loyola remains compliant with Middle States and Maryland Higher Education Commission reporting and regulatory requirements.

To ensure quality and alignment with the programs objectives, Chairs in collaboration with department curriculum committees come to consensus that the said course makes good pedagogical sense and the online/hybrid mode of delivery works within the larger program framework. When the course meets the definition for an online course (50% or more online), the faculty then completes a “Summary of Online Course Activity” form (Appendix A; and can be found on the FTC website) signed and approved by the department chair for approval of the course(s). All 3-credit Loyola courses should include approximately 127.5 hours spent on total student participation in a three-credit course per semester. Note: An equivalent amount of work is required in courses and academic activities where direct face-to-face classroom instruction is not the primary mode of learning, such as online and hybrid courses, laboratory work, independent study, internships, practica, studio work, etc. Credits will be awarded on the basis of documented learning objectives, expected learning outcomes, and student workload expectations within a specified period of academically engaged time. Chairs in consultation with the faculty member and when appropriate with their respective school’s dean (or the dean’s designee), determine if modifications need to be made to the course in order to adhere to Loyola’s credit hour policy requirements.

Faculty Training and Preparation

Loyola University ensures that faculty who teach hybrid and online courses are appropriately qualified and effectively supported. Faculty who are new or inexperienced with online/hybrid teaching may need additional preparation in hybrid/online course design, as well as in developing instructional and assessment strategies that effectively integrate new instructional technologies. For approval to teach an online or hybrid course, deans or their designee may require faculty to complete a course development process with an instructional design team from the Faculty Technology Center (FTC) as well as use other available FTC resources.

The Faculty Technology Center (FTC) offers training and preparation resources including a 7-module self-paced Moodle course on the theories and practices of hybrid and online learning, as well as an assortment of instructional videos, and a schedule of in-person training classes. For more information visit the online portal at http://www.loyola.edu/department/teaching/teaching/teachonline.
Loyola recognizes that some faculty are currently teaching in innovative, technology-enhanced ways, and/or may have taught hybrid/blended courses at Loyola or elsewhere. In addition, some faculty may have received specialized education in online/hybrid teaching through external sources. Chairs and Deans are advised to consider these alternative forms of preparation and where appropriate to be flexible and develop a personalized training plan given their faculty member’s instructional goals and prior experience.

**Online Course Development Process**

The online course development process begins with a relationship between the interested faculty member and staff from the Faculty Technology Center (FTC). This process is initiated by completing an online course intake web form housed on the FTC website. The Assistant Director, functioning as a Course Development Leader, reviews the form and meets with the faculty member. An FTC team is then assigned to collaborate with the faculty member gearing the level of training to meet the needs of the faculty member. The FTC team will typically consist of an Instructional Designer, Instructional Media Developer, and Course Development Leader, depending on the development plan.

The course development process follows two iterative stages with the Instructional Designer and Course Development Leader. In the process, faculty will develop necessary course components based on best practices in online course development. These components include a course syllabus, content, media, use of the library services, and learning activities and assessments suited to an online learning environment. Once the course has been developed, the course is Beta-tested with a student focus group. The focus group provides suggested changes to improve technical navigation and accessibility features of the course. The outcomes of the student focus group testing are analyzed and final revisions are then made to the course. Once course development is complete, the faculty member and Course Development Leader sign off on completion.

Faculty will be provided feedback on the design of their course proposals based on the Quality Matters© (QM) standards. QM provides a national benchmark for online and hybrid course design. Loyola integrates QM course review standards in the course development process described below to ensure the quality of all online courses. In the course development process, feedback and suggestions will be provided based on the QM standards to help the faculty course designer strengthen the course and ensure overall consistency with QM standards for online course design. See http://qmprogram.org/rubric.

Faculty already competent in online and hybrid education are required to complete the Summary of Course Activity form that assists in course development and will be maintained as a compliance document tracking credit hours.
Compliance and Evaluation

As noted in the previous section on online/hybrid approval, online courses require specific administrative procedures to maintain compliance with various federal, state-level, and Middle States requirements. It is therefore necessary to maintain a record of the Summary of Course Activity sheet for all courses where 50% or more of the instruction occurs online. The faculty instructor will send a copy of the Summary of Course Activity sheet to both the Records office (Nicole Mirando, Deputy Director), and the Academic Compliance Officer (Westley Forsythe). Additionally, online courses must follow Accessibility and Universal Design requirements per Loyola University policy; assistance is available from Technology Services and Disability Support Services and these components are addressed in the course development work. More information regarding these topics is available on the FTC website.

Steps in Developing an Online Course

1. Seek Course approval through department and/or school.
2. Determine with Chair and Dean what training needs to occur for online course development.
3. If previously trained, complete Summary of Course Activity sheet for Chair approval now, if working with FTC complete or modify Course Activity sheet once syllabus is developed.
4. Submit approved Summary of Course Activity Sheet to Records and Compliance Officer.
5. If working with FTC, fill out web form to begin work with a Course Development Leader. Allow six months or longer to develop a course. Then follow step (4).
Appendix A
Summary of Online Course Activity

The following “Summary of Online Course Activity” provides information about the estimated time for students to complete the various learning activities in that course. This form needs to be completed only the first time a course is offered and is kept in the Records office and in Academic Affairs with the Compliance office in the event of an audit. Please note that the times listed are considered approximations that may be adjusted during the course, as needed to meet learning objectives. As noted in Loyola’s credit hour policy, there is no “seat time” requirement implicit in the definition of a credit hour. Loyola, in determining the amount of student work expected in each online course in order to achieve the course objectives, is accountable for assigning a credit hour based on at least an equivalent amount of work to our definition of 50 minutes of faculty instruction and 120 minutes of student preparation per credit per week, to add up in the case of a 3-credit course = >127.5 hours per semester, 2 credit course = > 85 hours and for a 1 credit course = > 42.5 hours.

Department:
Course name and number:
Instructor of record:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
<th>Estimated Time per semester (calculated in hours)</th>
<th>Percent of Time in each activity</th>
<th>Examples from course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisition of Content</td>
<td>Reading text/articles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Watching or listening to instructional videos</td>
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<td>Reviewing web-based resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment Completion</td>
<td>Completing course assessments</td>
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<td>postings to discussion boards/forums</td>
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<td>written assignments</td>
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<td>research</td>
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<td>lab work</td>
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<td>internships or practica</td>
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<td>group project development</td>
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<td>computer-based games or simulations</td>
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<td>studio work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>meetings with instructor</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Other:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total time:</td>
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<td>100 percent</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(needs to meet at least 127.5 hours)</td>
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Appendix B: Loyola Philosophy of Online and Hybrid Education

An Ignatian Approach to Online Learning

At Loyola University Maryland, innovation in online teaching is firmly rooted in Ignatian-based pedagogy and is responsive to the contemporary needs of students who are living in an increasingly globalized and technological world. Loyola’s philosophy of online teaching is informed by the comments of the Rev. Adolfo Nicolas’s, S.J., (2010) that today we have a great opportunity to use advancements in technology and the positive dimensions of globalization to realize the potential of Jesuit higher education. As the Rev. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., noted in his 2005 address “Jesuit Education and Ignatian Pedagogy,” from the time of the opening of their first school in 1548, the Jesuits have not limited by the prevailing orthodoxies in education but committed to pioneering new methodologies for teaching and learning. Fr. Kolvenbach further noted that “Jesuit education has been historically successful in many cultures because it is eminently adaptable to the environment of the learner. Jesuit education is adaptable to many diverse learners—traditional age and adult, full-time and part-time, on-campus and online.”

Building on this long tradition of educational innovation, Loyola has begun a systematic process to develop online programming that deepens and extends their opportunities for learning, reflection, and engagement. As noted by Robinson (2008) “Jesuit education has a centuries-old tradition of attending to the whole person: intellectually, ethically, spiritually…such values are not left as a sidebar when the learning venue moves to cyberspace.” Online education innovation at Loyola is simultaneously grounded in principles of Ignatian pedagogy and responsive to the changing contexts of education in the 21st century.
Creating a Community of Inquiry in Online Learning

At Loyola the Community of Inquiry Model (COI) serves as a theoretical framework that guides faculty professional development in online education, the construction of high-quality online courses and programs, and the evaluation of student learning in online contexts. The Community of Inquiry model not only helps foster the development of meaningful, interactive online learning but also ensures that online experiences are grounded in tenets of Ignatian pedagogy. The COI model is widely recognized as a robust set of research-based principles for online teaching that help guide faculty in creating deep and meaningful learning experiences through the development of three principle elements critical to a successful online learning environment—social, cognitive, and teaching presence (Swan, K., Garrison, D. R. & Richardson, J. C., 2009).

Social presence relates to the establishment of a supportive learning community in online contexts, providing a venue for communication within a trusted environment where students can express individual identities and establish social relationships. When participants in an online
course help establish a community of learning by projecting their personal characteristics into the discussion, they present themselves as real people. At Loyola, online learning experiences are characterized by social presence, achieved through responsive communication, collaborative engagements among students, facilitated discussions, group projects, and social networking opportunities.

**Cognitive presence** relates to the design and development of instructional materials, enabling students to construct and confirm meaning through related reflection and discourse. Loyola’s online learning experiences are characterized by rich cognitive presence through rigorous intellectual learning experiences that engage students with content, support reflective dialogue, validate understanding, and scaffold learning—moving students from the initial learning stages of knowledge and comprehension toward the critical learning stages of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

**Teaching presence** relates to the process of design, facilitation, and direction in order to realize desired learning outcomes. Loyola’s online learning experiences are characterized by the faculty’s teaching presence—expertly guiding students through course materials, reinforcing key concepts, fostering critical thinking skills, providing formative feedback and support in a timely manner, and evaluating student progress throughout the learning experience.

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Loyola’s philosophy of online teaching and learning recognizes that establishing social, cognitive, and teaching presence is essential to supporting deep learning and collaborative engagement, and avoiding the common pitfall of disconnectedness in online contexts. Furthermore, in the design and implementation of online learning instruction and assessment,
Loyola is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic integrity for students and faculty. Loyola’s articulation of a common philosophy of online education lays the foundation for an integrated and aligned institutional approach to developing strategies, policies, and expectations for all online courses and programs. All Loyola faculty who teach online will be supported by professional development and mentoring, ensuring they have acquired expertise in theories and practices of online education. Loyola’s philosophy of online learning will provide guidance for new faculty development programs, new courses and programs, and the evaluation of student learning in ways that will ultimately position Loyola as a national exemplar of high-quality online teaching and learning.

References


