UCSD Blended Learning Principles 2022/23

For academic and professional services staff

The blended learning principles have been developed via consultation of recent sectoral guidance from the QAA, JISC and the OfS, and with UCSD staff and students. This aligns to the Teaching and Learning Policy, with specific focus on the Ambitious and Inclusive Curriculum.

Student feedback on blended learning throughout 2020/2021 identified themes around curriculum delivery, independent learning, academic community, digital literacy, and support which is reflected in these principles.

The principles harness the key positive experiences in these areas and mitigate the challenges students face and should be used in conjunction with relevant policies. These principles serve as an addendum to the Assessment Strategy and Teaching and Learning Strategy. Curriculum areas are asked to interpret the principles at local level to best suit local context. Support for the principles can be provided by Higher Education Coordinators and via the UCSD Blended Learning site.

Key terms

Blended learning	Formal approach to education that creates an integrated learning environment where in-person and online teaching and learning become complementary, with the purpose of giving students a more diverse and engaging learning experience. Blended Learning.docx (sharepoint.com)		
QAA Taxonomy blendedlearning to aid local interpretation	**Spectrum of blended learning**		
	QAA Supportive	**QAA Augmented**	**QAA Interactive**
	On-campus delivery withsome digital resources insupport.	A blend of on-campus and digital learning experiences.	Digital learning experiences are the main delivery with some on-campus provision.
Distance learning	Where students are recruited and enrolled online and study independently using a virtual learning environment. In the case of South Devon College, the majority of distance learning is delivered via the Online Learning (Moodle) platform. In some instances, distance learning is also delivered by posted resources and telephone support.		
In Person/On-campus delivery	Describes an approach where the delivery of a programme happens onsite, at the College, with a staff member delivering teaching and learning directly to students.		
Hybrid delivery	Hybrid delivery is a subset of blended learning and is when teaching is delivered simultaneously on campus and via a digital platform.		
Asynchronous	Enables students to learn at their own pace in their own time. Students can access resources and communicate at any time and are not restricted to accessing this learning at any specific time.		
Synchronous	Takes place with participants all engaging with material in real time, although not necessarily in the same place (for example, some students may participate onsite while others may participate remotely, both at the same time)		

Overall proposition

1. Regardless of mode of delivery, programme leads should develop activities designed to stimulate, engage, support, and educate students within an inclusive academic community.

2. Programme leads should only employ blended learning appropriate to the pedagogic and disciplinary context.

3. Distance learning should be implemented only where the programme has been developed specifically as a distance learning offer.

4. Hybrid delivery can be used to bring together specific cohorts of students (i.e., on campus and distance learning students who are studying the same module) but should not be used to offer students a choice of attendance mode. If using hybrid delivery, please refer to guidance [here](#).

5. Content Capture will continue to be undertaken in line with the Content Capture Policy, requiring almost all sessions to be recorded[1] for future access, recap, for referral support and as part of our universal offer to students in recognition that over 95% of students in UCSD have a characteristic of widening participation.

Curriculum design

1. Programme leads should be familiar with current sectoral understanding of blended learning; the opportunities it affords curriculum development, scalability, and impact on the student learning experience. The following publications are useful to inform curricula design:
   - [QAA (2020) Building a Taxonomy for Digital Learning;](#)
   - [Jisc (2021) Student digital experience insights survey 2020/21;](#)
   - [Jisc (2020) Learning and Teaching Reimagined: a new dawn for higher education;](#)
   - [OfS (2021) Gravity Assist: propelling higher education towards a brighter future.](#)

2. When developing blended curricula Programme leads should be aware that new students will respond best to the '[QAA 'supportive'](#) model in which students have mostly on-campus learning with digital support, whilst students in later stages are better equipped to succeed across a range of blended learning scenarios.

3. Where programmes are delivered by multiple stakeholders respective delivery teams should work collaboratively to ensure a coherent student experience, across components of the programme and delivery platforms.

4. Programme leads to ensure best practice of liaising with Professional Services (specifically Support Hub) areas where curriculum design may be different to what would be considered standard programme structures.

5. Programme leads should ensure that changes made to embed blended learning adhere to quality assurance process and to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) regulations.

Teaching and Learning

1. All blended learning activities should be appropriate to the pedagogic and disciplinary context and designed to be [inclusive](#), supporting academic progression and performance for students.

2. When developing blended learning, it can be useful to use flipped learning. This recognises that acquisition and inquiry suit asynchronous activities and experiential, collaborative, making, and practice activities to synchronous, on-campus activities. The University of Plymouth (UoP) have developed use [flipped learning](#) resources.

3. Hybrid delivery can be used to bring together specific cohorts of students (i.e., on campus and

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[1] It may not be possible for practical sessions to be recorded. The Curriculum Head should inform the decision, alongside the HE Hub if an exception to this principle is being sought

distance learning students who are studying the same module) but should not be used to offer students a choice of attendance mode. If using hybrid delivery, please refer to guidance here.

Assessment

1. All assessments (formative and summative) should be accessible, inclusive, authentic, engaging, flexible and appropriatelytimed, to meet the needs of all students and support learning. Refer to UoP 7 steps guides on Online summativeassessments and formative feedback as well as to the guidance on UoP open book assessments.
2. Curriculum will have flexibility to continue with assessment formats developed in response to COVID adhering to the principles of the Assessment Policy.
3. Students should be given detailed support in how to access and engage in both digital and on-campus located assessment.

Student transitions

1. Communication with students about the support available for blended learning should be integrated intoprogrammes, providing clear guidance and signposting to central services.
2. Students will be provided with a mix of on-campus events plus digital activities to transition them into and throughtheir programme.
3. All students will be offered support and advice about effective and safe digital learning, and use of the requiredsystems, technologies, and software in advance of them needing this guidance.
4. UCSD will offer access to digital resources and tools, online self-help resources, and blended delivery of wellbeing and academic support

Building belonging and community

1. A strong sense of belonging will be built into module and programme design. This will include opportunities to develop significant relationships with staff and students, and student to student peer relationships.
2. Programme leads can utilise tutor presence and inclusive practice to develop academic communities which fosterstudent satisfaction and academic success within blended and hybrid offers.
3. Explore the 7 steps guide via UoP resource Online learning communities.

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Support and Wellbeing Policy 2021
- The Assessment Policy 2021
- Content Capture Policy 2021
- Inclusive Learning Practices Policy 2020