

Point Loma Nazarene University
Extended Learning
Online Definitions and Practices

Blended

A course will be considered a Blended course where there is a regular mix of F2F and online instruction over the length of the course. Blended courses will fall into one of three categories:

1. One-third online and two-thirds F2F;
2. One-half online and one-half F2F;
3. Two-thirds online and one third F2F.

Examples:

1. A class that is scheduled on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday only meets F2F on two days and includes online learning activities for one day is one-third online and two-thirds F2F;
2. A class that is scheduled Tuesday and Thursday meets F2F on one day and includes online learning activities for one day is one-half online and one-half F2F;
3. A class that is scheduled on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday only meets F2F on one day and includes online learning activities for two days is two-third online and one-thirds F2F.

Note: Blended courses are currently most common with classes being held at Liberty Station.

Hybrid

A course will be considered a Hybrid course where there are both Online and Face-To-Face activities that are arranged in major blocks. Hybrid courses will fall into one of three categories:

1. One-third online and two-thirds F2F;
2. One-half online and one-half F2F;
3. Two-thirds online and one third F2F.

Examples

1. A course where the first two weeks are held F2F and the last three weeks are held online is a Hybrid course with two-thirds online and one-third F2F.
2. A course where the first five weeks are held online, then there is a one week F2F intensive, which is then followed by five weeks online is a Hybrid course that is two-thirds online and one-third F2F.
3. A course where the first week is held F2F, then there are four weeks of online, and the last week is held F2F is a Hybrid course that is two-thirds online and one-third F2F.

Face-To-Face

A course will be considered Face-To-Face (F2F) where more than 67% of the instructional time is face-to-face in a class setting.

Online

A course will be considered Online where more than 67% of the instructional time is accomplished online.

Note: For WASC purposes, a course or a program that is over 50% online is considered to be an online course or program. Care must be given to make sure that specific approvals are granted by WASC for online programs.

Distance Education (WASC Substantive Change Manual)

Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in items (1) through (4) below to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor, either synchronously or asynchronously. The technologies may include:

1. The Internet.
2. One-way or two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communication devices.
3. Audio conferencing.
4. Audio cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs, if the cassettes, DVDs, or CD-ROMs are used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (1) through (3).

Synchronous

Synchronous online instruction requires students and instructors to be online at the same time. Lectures, discussions, and presentations occur at a specific hour. All students must be online at that specific hour in order to participate. (Chats, Voice, Video Conferencing, Web Conferencing)

Asynchronous

Asynchronous online instruction does not require students and instructors to be online at the same time, rather responses are intermittent. Instructors provide materials, lectures, tests, and assignments that can be accessed at any time. Students may be given a timeframe – usually a one week window – during which they need to connect a certain number of times and complete certain activities. But overall, students are free to contribute whenever they choose. (Discussion Boards, Email, Wikies, Social Networking)

Instructional Time

Instructional Time as defined by the U.S. Department of Education and WASC is time that typically corresponds to the kind of activities that occur in a F2F class session: such as: lectures, class discussion, making presentations, group work, taking a quiz or test. For each hour of credit there must be at least 750 minutes (12.5 hours) of instructional time. For blended or hybrid classes, the actual time in class will count. If using synchronous activities that will count, as will the actual run-time for required media asset assignments. Asynchronous threaded discussion participation counts and should be calculated on the bases of required responses (example for two response notes on each of five days could count for 2.5 hours based on 15 minutes to read and respond to each note).

Preparation Time

Preparation Time as defined by the U.S. Department of Education and WASC is time that typically corresponds to the kind of activities that occur outside of a F2F class session; such as: reading the textbook, articles, doing research, completing homework assignments. For each hour of credit there must be 1500 minutes (25 hours) of preparation time. Preparation time can include Instructional time activities. The total time requirement for one hour of credit must be at least 2250 minutes (37.5 hours) with at least 750 minutes (12.5) hours of instructional time.

Interaction between Students and Faculty

Timely and appropriate interactions between students and faculty and among students will be assured through specific online attendance and participation requirements, assignments designed to engage students in the discussion of topics that lead to the accomplishment of the student learning outcomes, and faculty expectations in online classes.

Attendance Policy for Online, Blended, and Hybrid Classes

In considering the Attendance Policy for online, blended, and hybrid classes the same principles in the campus policy will be used to determine the appropriate action taken.

1. Students will have a minimum attendance requirement of three days each week. This means that students will log into Canvas and will post a substantive note on at least three days in each week. Any day missed below this minimum requirement will count as an absence. Students may be dropped from the course if two such absences are recorded during the class and will be dropped if four such absences occur or if a student fails to attend any classes in any given week.

Note: Students are expected to participate by entering the online class, reading class discussion notes, and responding with discussion notes or assignments according to the requirements of the course as listed in the syllabus. A substantive note is one in which a student participates in online discussion about academic matters or initiates contact (in Canvas) with faculty members to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course. Logging into the online course without active participation or participation not related to the academic subject being studied in the course does not count as attendance.

2. For Blended and Hybrid classes, the number of days will be based on the specific designation.
 - a. A one-third online and two-thirds F2F class would have one required day of online attendance each week.
 - b. A one-half online and one-half F2F class or two-thirds online and one-third F2F class would have two days of online attendance each week.

Online Academic Participation/Interaction

In online classes academic participation or engagement between the student and other students and the instructor is not only a critical aspect of the learning experience and student satisfaction levels, but is required by the U.S. Department of Education to be classified as an online class rather than a correspondence course. While the U.S. DOE stipulates that significant interaction must take place, it does not define what "significant" means. However, best practices stipulate that it is a balance between the amount of notes and the number of days students are participating. An acceptable number of participation notes by each student each week is between six and ten. An acceptable number of days for students to be required to participate for full credit is between three and five days each week based on the length of the class and a review of what is most appropriate to accomplish the learning outcomes of the course. This can be adjusted depending on whether the course is online, hybrid, or blended. It can also be adjusted depending on the length of the class, so that a six week class might have five days of participation, but a 10-15 week class might have three. Another way to look at this is to have 12 to 20 participation notes for each credit-hour, 36 to 60 participation notes for a three credit-hour course. (Participation notes are like class discussion and do

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not include the submission of assignments.) Participation will be recognized by a substantive note posted to the class discussion forum in response to the faculty member or other students that adds value to the learning experience. Generally, at least two participation notes will be required on each of the required number of participation days.

In the course design various assignments submitted by students will require other students to respond with additional information or probing questions that will create a platform for discussion among the students. Generally, students will be required to respond to multiple students for each discussion-oriented assignment. Instructors will practice the Socratic method of instruction as they enter into the discussion with the goal of drawing all the students into a deeper understanding of the topic.

Examples:

1. Students are required to post two substantive participation notes (dialog with other students and the instructor) on five days of each week, for a three credit-hour, six week highly interactive course.
2. Students are to respond to the initial discussion (assignment) notes of at least two other students. (This would typically be stipulated for 2-3 assignments each week, so that the students are in dialog with multiple students on multiple days.)

The consideration of the number of required student participation notes in a class should include an understanding of the number of students enrolled in the class and goal of having interactivity.

Faculty Expectations

In addition to other adopted instructor expectations, these expectations specifically relate to the interaction between the students and faculty:

- A. Submit at least one note to the class daily. More frequent connections (two or more times a day) should be made during the first couple of weeks of the class to insure that students are quickly having their questions answered. The goal is to have a clear and realistic timeline for faculty to respond to students. Students should expect feedback on routine items in 1-2 days and answers to specific questions within 24 hours. Sundays are considered to be a day off from course work and assignments. Students may use Sundays for attendance, but faculty may wish to make it clear that they will not be present in the classroom on Sunday.
- B. Answer all questions or issues directed to their PLNU email box within 24 hours.
- C. Provide students with regular feedback both in the class and in their PLNU email box. Instructors should respond to at least one discussion post of each student every week.

Online Course Length

The length of an online course is the number of weeks starting on a Monday morning at 12:00 Midnight and ending on Sunday night at 11:59 PM (Pacific Time). An online course must be at least two weeks in length for each credit-hour given. Courses may be longer to best fit the pedagogical and student needs. Consideration of course length must include an awareness of the number of student engagement hours,

the number of credit-hours needed by students within a term to qualify for federal financial aid, and the length of time it will take students to complete a program.

Number of Students in a Class

The enrollment goal for online courses will be 15-25 students in each class. This assumes a requirement of six to eight participation notes in a six week class for strong interactivity. For larger classes, it might be best to break the class into groups so that each student is actively engaged with 8 to 13 students. Normally, a class should never have fewer than 8-10 students to maintain adequate class discussion. Larger classes may be possible if the length of the class is longer and the course is designed to facilitate the larger group. Special care should be given to the number of students in classes that require significant individual attention from the instructor, such as writing classes.

Incompletes

Due to the nature of online courses and the integration of completing assignments with class discussion and feedback, incompletes will not be allowed in online courses.

Student Authentication (ensuring that the student getting the grade is the student doing the work)

Point Loma uses a multi-faceted approach to authenticate students and ensure that the student getting the grade is the student doing the work. While currently username and password will satisfy the US DOE requirements, PLNU will use additional methods as follows:

A. User Name and Password

Students access the class materials by using the institution collaborative learning management system, Canvas. To gain access to Canvas, students must use a unique user name and password.

B. Academic Honesty Verification

Students are asked to submit an academic honesty verification form at the end of the course where they state:

“In submitting this form, I am verifying that all the assignments done in this class were done by me and are my own work. In taking all the quizzes and exams, I received no outside help from anyone and when instructed that I was not to use any books or notes, I followed those instructions and received no help from any sources.

I hereby affirm that I have lived up to the Academic Honesty Statement in this class as printed in the syllabus.”

C. TurnItIn

PLNU has a subscription to Turn It In, which is used for the submission of major assignments to ensure that the work submitted is original work.

D. Student Interviews

Students in online programs will be interviewed (phone/video – with photo ID) at the mid-program and end-of-program to review the student’s learning and to assess the student’s involvement in the content of the courses. Specific questions related to work done by the student will explore the understanding of the content to evaluate how familiar the student is

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with the work submitted and the content presented in the class. Students in online programs will be required to have computer camera capability.

E. Proctored Exams

Where appropriate, students will take proctored exams.