

DRAFT

Proposed Undergraduate Distance Education Policy (8/29/22 version – CLEAN COPY)

PREAMBLE

UCLA has a long tradition of teaching excellence, cultivated through decades of experience with in-person education. As changing technology creates new forms of virtual interaction, online instruction methods offer new possibilities for making learning more effective, more meaningful and more broadly accessible. Inappropriately deployed, however, distance education methods can fail to deliver the instructor-student interaction that has long been the cornerstone of teaching excellence. The goal of this policy is to support the use of virtual methods to improve learning and to fortify UCLA's long-standing commitment to teaching excellence.

While UCLA remains a primarily in-person institution, courses may be approved to be offered in online or hybrid form when doing so will enhance the quality of education. Hallmarks of UCLA's teaching excellence include (a) active, engaged leadership by a qualified instructor with requisite subject expertise; (b) regularly, pedagogically meaningful interaction between that instructor and students; and (c) means for students to periodically assess their progress toward achieving the course's learning goals. Online and hybrid courses should be superior (or at least equivalent) in pedagogical effectiveness to the same subject matter being taught in person.

A. DEFINITIONS

These definitions are intended to clarify where special approval is needed, and to facilitate student understanding of course expectations at the time they enroll. We first define terms related to forms of instruction of individual class meetings, then separately define terms related to types of course.

Forms of instruction

- **IN-PERSON** instruction is defined as a lecture, laboratory, seminar or other learning activity in which the primary instructor is physically present. Students are also expected to be physically present, even if the session is simultaneously presented online (e.g. via Zoom) or recorded for viewing later (e.g. BruinCast or Zoom). In-person courses require a physical classroom.
- **ONLINE** instruction is intentionally designed for digital delivery, and encompasses instruction, assignments, and interactions that promote successful learning in an environment where students and instructor are not in the same physical location. Online instruction reflects intentional consideration of how student engagement, academic integrity and other aspects of learning may be different in an online environment.
- **REMOTE** instruction occurs when learning activities designed to take place in-person are transferred online in response to situational needs. In contrast to online instruction, remote instruction is not intentionally designed for digital delivery.

- **DISTANCE** instruction encompasses both online and remote, and refers to any form of instruction that is not in-person.
- **SYNCHRONOUS** instruction refers to simultaneous, real-time interaction between instructor and students with learning activities delivered via Zoom or another videoconferencing platform. Synchronous instruction necessarily involves set meeting times.
- **ASYNCHRONOUS** instruction includes lectures, engagement activities, assessments, or other course materials that take place without real-time interaction. Students may engage in course content at different times of their own choosing, but subject to an overall schedule and set of deadlines specified by the instructor.

Types of courses

While recognizing a given course may involve multiple forms of instruction, it is nonetheless useful to categorize courses in ways that reflect the amount of distance instruction.

- **IN-PERSON COURSE.** In-person course meetings will occur at the times and places specified in the Schedule of Classes, with the instructor physically present. When enrolling in the course, students should expect to be physically present at the indicated times and physically present for an in-person final exam at the assigned time. In-person courses may involve some distance instruction, but in-person instruction accounts for more than 50% of the total (see “Calculating the 50% Threshold” below.)
- **ONLINE COURSE.** Lectures, discussions, and learning activities take place virtually and do not require students to be physically present on campus for instruction. Examinations may be virtual or in-person. Online courses may be synchronous or asynchronous or a mixture. Synchronous meeting times must be indicated in the Schedule of Classes.
- **HYBRID COURSE.** In-person instruction accounts for 50% or less of the total, but students will be expected to be physically present for examinations as well as some additional class activities.

When is Special Approval Required?

Courses may be offered in Online or Hybrid form (as defined above) only if they have been granted Approved-for-Distance status through the process detailed below in Section C. That is, courses in which 50% or less of instruction is in-person must be Approved-for-Distance before being scheduled. Courses with Approved-for-Distance status may also continue to be offered In-Person. Special Studies courses (numbers 195-199) and courses focusing on off-campus fieldwork are automatically granted Approved-for-Distance status; they do not need to apply for it.

Calculating the 50% Threshold

For departments to determine whether instruction is more than 50% in-person, the denominator for “instruction” is the instructional contact time that would be scheduled for an in-person version in a typical week. Instructional contact time does not include secondary sections or other related activities such as office hours or final examinations. For example, consider a course that if offered fully in-person would meet for 150 minutes of lecture each week. A version of this class that substituted distance instruction for one of three 50-minute sessions would not require special approval under this policy. But

a version that substituted distance instruction for one of two 75-minute sessions would be considered a Hybrid and would require approval.

Our usage of the 50% threshold is intended to be consistent with [WSCUC definitions](#).

B. POLICIES REGARDING DISTANCE INSTRUCTION

1. Course modality (In-Person, Hybrid, Online) should be accurately indicated and visible to students when they register for courses. It is the department's responsibility to ensure that course modalities are listed accurately in the Schedule of Classes.
2. Any course listed as Online or Hybrid (or any course in which 50% or less of instruction is in-person as outlined in Part A above) must have received Approved-for-Distance status through the process specified in Part C below.
3. The In-Person version of an existing course which is also Approved-for-Distance may continue to be offered. A course that has been approved as Online may be offered as Hybrid without additional approval. A course that has been approved as a Hybrid must be reapproved to be offered in fully Online format.
4. Instructors do not need Approved-for-Distance status to *add* distance options to an in-person class. Approval is only required when in-person instruction is *replaced* with distance learning.
5. Approved-for-Distance status must be reauthorized if more than 20% of synchronous (virtual or in-person) instruction is replaced with asynchronous, relative to the version of the course for which approval was previously granted.
6. All courses, regardless of modality, must provide appropriate accommodations for students who are approved by the Center for Accessible Education. Approved-for-Distance status is not required for instructors to provide virtual components as part of individual student accommodations.
7. Courses required for undergraduate majors and minors, or for concentrations within majors, may not be offered exclusively in Online or Hybrid format. Required courses must be taught In-Person at least one time during any academic year in which they are offered. Over the academic year (excluding Summer Session), no more than half of the total seats in a required course can be offered in Online or Hybrid form.
8. In any academic quarter, no more than 10% of a Department's (or other unit's) undergraduate courses and no more than 10% of its undergraduate seats may be offered in Online or Hybrid formats. If a multi-listed course is offered in either of these formats, it counts towards the online limit for all departments involved. Courses offered in remote format due to emergency circumstances (see section D below) do not count toward this 10%.
9. Secondary sections for courses listed as Hybrid or Online may be virtual or in-person, as long as the modality is accurately conveyed to students at the time of registration. The modality of Secondary sections may be set by course design, by the instructor, or by departmental policy.

10. Instructors are expected to list the modality of examinations and other instructional activities accurately on the syllabus on or before the first day of instruction. In particular, students should know from the outset when they are expected to be present in-person.
11. Instructors and teaching assistants assigned to distance sections are expected to be physically present in Los Angeles and available for in-person meetings with students.
12. Departments are encouraged to establish a standard petition and evaluation procedure concerning the use of Online or Hybrid secondary sections due to emergency circumstances, and limiting such switches to online to 20% of class meetings.
13. Approved online courses are subject to periodic audit and re-review as dictated by the Undergraduate Council.
14. Concurrent classes ("C" course numbers) must be approved through both the Undergraduate and Graduate processes in order to be offered in Online or Hybrid format.

C. PROCESS FOR COURSE TO BE APPROVED-FOR-DISTANCE

In order to be scheduled as Online or Hybrid, a course must have Approved-for-Distance status, which is obtained through the process detailed here.

REQUIRED:

Proposal packets must include:

1. An approved or in progress Course Approval form
2. A course syllabus
3. A completed Virtual Course Information Sheet, with responses to supplemental questions

OPTIONAL:

Proposal packets may also include:

1. For courses requiring technological resources not currently available to all UCLA instructors: A letter from the appropriate teaching or administrative unit confirming that these resources will be available.
2. A letter of support or a formal assessment from a campus instructional design unit (CAT, CEILS, OTL) may be submitted but is not required.

Approval Process:

1. Instructor submits the complete proposal packet to the department's curriculum committee or equivalent body. If the Department (or other responsible unit) does not have a curriculum committee, a committee of no less than three Senate faculty (excluding the instructor proposing

the course) shall be appointed to review online course proposals. In the case of multiply listed courses (M numbers), all Departments must approve the proposal through this process.

2. Once the course is approved, the Department routes the proposal packet to the appropriate College or School FEC. The Department Chair should include a cover memo detailing how the proposed virtual version fits into the overall curriculum and attesting that the proposal satisfies the criteria for Engagement and Evaluation of Learning as specified in point C.4 below. The memo should also affirm the Department's commitment to offer at least as many in-person as virtual seats for any class required for a major, a minor or a concentration within a major (item B.6 above.)
3. After the course has been approved by the Faculty Executive Committee, the complete proposal packet and Department/FEC approval memos shall be submitted to the Undergraduate Council for final approval.
4. Departments, FECs and the Undergraduate Council should not approve a proposal unless it explicitly satisfies the following requirements with regard to student engagement and evaluation of learning:
 - a. Student Engagement. The proposal must clearly articulate feasible and appropriate strategies to promote student engagement. The syllabus and information sheet questions (especially number 3) should include proactive ways of encouraging students to interact with the instructor and with each other.
 - b. Evaluation of learning. The bar for ensuring academic honesty must be at least as high as for in-person classes. Measures adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic necessarily reflected emergency circumstances, and thus may not meet this bar. Proposals should explain how exams will be monitored, or explain why monitoring is not needed.

D. POLICIES GOVERNING EMERGENCY REMOTE INSTRUCTION

As defined above, "remote" includes instruction that was not specifically designed for virtual delivery but is offered in virtual format in response to emergency conditions or other circumstances.

1. Departments and other responsible units may authorize remote instruction under emergency circumstances, subject to the following limitations:
 - a. Emergency remote instruction must be synchronous and must offer students the opportunity to ask questions and otherwise interact with the instructor and each other.
 - b. Emergency remote instruction should not be authorized for the same instructor or the same course for more than a single quarter in a given academic year, unless the instructor has ADA or COVID-19 related accommodations approved through Insurance and Risk Management. If emergency conditions are expected to continue for more than a quarter, the department (or other responsible unit) should pursue Approved-for-Online status for affected courses, or offer them In-Person.

- c. Departments and other responsible units must document all cases in which emergency remote instruction was authorized as part of their Program Review Self Statement.
 - d. Multiple-listed classes may not use emergency remote format without explicit agreement of all departments/units involved.
2. For each course being taught, the hosting department may permit the instructor to switch up to one week's worth of in-person course meetings to synchronous remote if an emergency such as illness arises. Emergency remote meetings for more than one week must be authorized by the Department, as provided in point D-1 above.

E. DISTANCE INSTRUCTION IN SUMMER SESSION

Summer Session is distinct from regular academic quarters in various ways that may increase the value to students of distance learning opportunities. Students may use summers to work, travel, take internships, or engage in other valuable activities that preclude taking in-person courses. Departments are thus authorized to offer distance versions of existing classes as specified below.

Summer Session courses may be approved on a yearly basis to be offered in remote form during Summer Session only. Departments wishing to offer summer remote classes must submit the full roster of courses to their FEC for approval each year. FECs should only approve rosters that satisfy the following conditions:

1. Summer remote courses must offer the same number of synchronous contact hours as an in-person version.
2. Each summer remote class using online exams must state how the instructor will ensure that safeguards against academic dishonesty are at least as strong as for an in-person course.
3. Courses that have been Approved-for-Online during the regular academic year may be offered in the approved format during Summer Session.

F. DISTANCE INSTRUCTION BY UNIVERSITY EXTENSION (UNEX)

Similar to Summer Session, the benefits from distance learning may loom larger for UNEX students. At the same time, ongoing departmental oversight of UNEX courses is more limited, so it is important to maximize the impact of the oversight that does occur.

Credit-bearing UNEX courses (course numbers starting with X or XL) may be offered in Online or Hybrid format (as defined in Section A above) under the following conditions.

1. A fully synchronous version of an already-approved UNEX class may be offered without additional approval as long as:

- a. It involves the same number of synchronous contact hours as an in-person version of the same course.
 - b. Safeguards against academic dishonesty are at least as strong as for an in-person course.
2. UNEX courses in which 50% or more of instructional hours (relatively to a fully in-person version of the course) are replaced with asynchronous instruction may not be open to enrollment unless they have been Approved-for-Distance through the following process:
 - a. Instructor must submit a proposal packet including syllabus, CV and completed Virtual Course Information Sheet, with responses to supplemental questions.
 - b. UNEX must forward this packet to the Department. If the Department approves the proposal, it should be forwarded to the Undergraduate Council.
 - c. Undergraduate Council has final approval authority.
 - d. Classes that have been previously taught with more than 50% of asynchronous instruction must be re-approved before they can be offered. In this case, student evaluations from the last three offerings should be included in the approval packets.
3. Approved-for-Distance status must be reauthorized for UNEX courses if more than 20% of synchronous (virtual or in-person) instruction is replaced with asynchronous, relative to the version of the course for which approval was previously granted.