

## **California State University, Stanislaus Policy for Online and Technology Mediated Courses and Programs**

### **Introduction:**

Online and Technology Mediated (OTM – also known as “Distance Education” by WASC<sup>1</sup>) courses and programs will broaden the University’s accessibility to qualified students who will benefit from the degree programs offered at CSU Stanislaus. Instruction in OTM courses shall be consistent with the educational mission of the college and university. This document will give structure to the growth of online/hybrid/technology-mediated instruction and will provide common ground for courses and programs in all disciplines.

Policies, guidelines, and standards applying to those courses taught in a classroom setting (direct instruction or “face-to-face”), shall apply equally to those which are fully online or mediated with technology, including courses which are partially taught online (hybrid), synchronous or asynchronous, courses taught through television, streaming video, and other delivery methods not yet conceived.

### **1) Definitions:**

- 1.1** Instruction via OTM courses shall be defined as a formal educational process in which the primary instructional interaction occurs when student and instructor are *not* in the same physical location. Such instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. OTM may include audio, video and/or computer technologies used singly or in combination.
- 1.2** Asynchronous/Synchronous – Activities that take place within a scheduled timeframe rather than requiring students and/or faculty to be online at the same time are *asynchronous*. Timeframe is understood here to encompass any single range of several hours to several weeks. *Synchronous* refers to course activities that take place at a single scheduled time.
- 1.3** Technology-enhanced course – Essentially a “traditional” course in which 1%-29% of the course activities take place online. These courses typically use web-based technology to extend what is in essence a face-to-face course. In these courses, the online component primarily consists of hosting learning materials (syllabus, reserve materials, assignments, etc.) that are accessed asynchronously. Occasional synchronous activities can also take place online.
- 1.4** Hybrid Course – A course in which 30%-99% of the course activities take place online (either synchronously or asynchronously). It follows that a hybrid program is a program of study that combines online, hybrid, and traditional face to face courses.
- 1.5** Online Course – A course in which 100% of the course activities take place online. Instructional contact hours take place either synchronously or asynchronously and students in online courses are not required to attend a class session or office hours on campus.
- 1.6** Televised Courses – Courses delivered via television, video conferencing, and/or streaming video. Typically 100% of all course meetings are conducted through this medium.
- 1.7** Distance Education Program – a WASC Substantive Change Committee approved program of study in which 50% or more of the degree program hours<sup>2</sup> can be completed through technology delivery.

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<sup>1</sup> Western Association of Schools and Colleges

<sup>2</sup> Note that for undergraduate programs the 50% rule applies only to program hours in the major, not the total hours it takes to graduate with a degree.

## **2) Institutional Context & Commitment**

Adapted from CSU Stanislaus Strategic Plan "Framing the Future"

AS (4/24/07) President approved 5/22/07)

<http://www.csustan.edu/StrategicPlanning/documents/StrategicPlan.pdf>

- 2.1** In accordance with the CSU Stanislaus Strategic Plan *Framing the Future*, "We are one University with a commitment to access and excellence at multiple sites: our main Turlock campus, the Stockton Center, the Merced Tri-College Center, and the expanded service area made possible by distance education and e-learning initiatives."
- 2.2** The University will honor its commitment of service to the region by providing excellent, innovative, academic degree programs that serve particular needs of the region, student demand, the institutional mission, and which draw students from the state, nation, and world, and that distinguish the University as a center for learning.

## **3) Curriculum & Instruction**

- 3.1** OTM courses and Distance Education Programs shall be consistent with the mission and goals of the department, college, and university. Further, they shall be consistent in terms of purpose, scope, instructional design, quality, assessment, accessibility, and expected learning outcomes with other classes bearing the same department code, number, and course title. Courses offered via OTM shall meet all the standards set forth by existing Federal, State, and CSU policies, including the Accessibility Technology Initiative and Universal Design for Learning, as well as WASC requirements as noted in 1.7 above.
- 3.2** OTM courses may be offered or modified only with the approval of the department following consultation with other relevant college and university bodies. Proposals for OTM course offerings shall follow standard department and University policies and procedures.
- 3.3** Because OTM teaching may involve the use of technologies and pedagogical methods that require specialized training, the faculty member engaged in online and technology-mediated learning is responsible for making use of the University-provided resources and training as appropriate.
- 3.4** Hybrid and fully online classes shall be clearly identified in the official schedule of classes, which shall notify students of any requirements for participation in any synchronous class activities. Student expectations and a statement on academic honesty and integrity shall be provided in the syllabus as is standard for all courses.
- 3.5** The Class Schedule shall notify students of any software and hardware requirements or technical competencies required for participation in OTM classes and activities. No changes in delivery method of the course should be made after publication in the Class Schedule.
- 3.6** In the event of a dispute regarding the delivery mode of any course, the department chair and/or college dean shall conduct a review that follows University procedures.
- 3.7** Class size must take into account the level of expected interaction between faculty and students.
- 3.8** A single section of an OTM course shall deliver uniform and consistent instruction to all students enrolled in that section. However, different sections of the same course may utilize different delivery methods.

3.9 Faculty workload will be consistent with the current CSU CFA Contract, Article 20, Workload.

#### **4) Faculty Support**

- 4.1 A rich environment of technologies, consultation, training, and pedagogical support shall be provided for faculty by the combined efforts of the Office of Information Technology, the University Library, and the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
- 4.2 Technology support, consultation, and training for faculty are provided for the official campus Learning Management System. The University encourages experimentation with new technologies and open source software for technology-mediated courses in secure environments.
- 4.3 Resolution of questions concerning ownership of intellectual property, course materials, copyright, and Fair Use issues stemming from the creation and production of hybrid and fully online courses, including software, or other media products shall be in accordance with the University Policy on Intellectual Property.
- 4.4 Departments should examine RPT elaborations to recognize the work involved in developing technologic innovations as appropriate to the department.
- 4.5 Digital archives of student coursework in OTM courses will be retained for three years.
- 4.6 The University will take all reasonable and appropriate measures to verify student identification in OTM courses.

#### **5) Student Support**

- 5.1 The University will provide opportunities and resources for student orientation and training on the official campus LMS.
- 5.2 The Office of Information Technology will provide Help Desk assistance and access to resources such as an LMS Knowledge Base to students.
- 5.3 Student Services specifically for online and off-campus students will be made available.
- 5.4 Students enrolled in OTM courses shall not be denied access to advising, the grievance process, or other key academic rights and services, nor shall they be excused from the academic responsibilities and integrity expected of all students.
- 5.5 The University Library offers resources, services, and instruction for research in OTM courses.

#### **6) Assessment & Evaluation**

- 6.1 The evaluation of OTM courses shall not vary from established University Policy.
- 6.2 OTM courses shall be considered in the department's academic program review and processes for assessing student learning.

## 7) Policy Review

7.1 The University Educational Policies Committee and Administration shall jointly review the effectiveness of this policy periodically. At its own discretion the UEPC can delegate the review to the Technology and Learning Subcommittee.

### Appendix: Links to Pertinent Policies & Guidelines

Americans with Disabilities Act

<http://www.ada.gov/pubs/ada.htm>

Accessibility Section 508

<http://www.calstate.edu/accessibility/section508/>

CSU Accessible Technology Initiative

<http://www.calstate.edu/accessibility/>

CSU Stanislaus Intellectual Property FAQ

<http://www.csustan.edu/ORSP/researchguidelines/intellectualpropertyFAQs.html>

Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

<http://www.csustan.edu/FacultyCenter/>

Office of Information Technology

<http://www.csustan.edu/oit/>

University Library

<http://library.csustan.edu/>

University Library Instruction

<http://library.csustan.edu/instruction/>

University Mission & Vision

<http://www.csustan.edu/aboutus/visionmission.html>

*WASC Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education*

[www.wascenior.org/.../C\\_RAC\\_Distance\\_ed\\_guidelines\\_7\\_31\\_2009.doc](http://www.wascenior.org/.../C_RAC_Distance_ed_guidelines_7_31_2009.doc)

*WCET Best Practice Strategies to Promote Academic Integrity in Online Education*

[http://www.wiche.edu/attachment\\_library/Student\\_Authentication/BestPractices.pdf](http://www.wiche.edu/attachment_library/Student_Authentication/BestPractices.pdf)

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