

POLICIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY OF ONLINE COURSES AND PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE

Introduction

The University of La Verne strives to deliver an academic experience that is high in quality, applicability, and rigor. The La Verne Experience helps to ensure that students receive an education that reflects four themes: (1) learning communities, (2) theory to practice, (3) experiential learning, and (4) reflective practice. These themes should be infused in the pedagogy for courses and programs, regardless of their mode of delivery (face-to-face or online).

As the development of online courses and programs expands across the University, policies and procedures are needed to guide the University community toward a quality, uniform approach to the development of online education that includes the educational themes listed above. To this end, this policy will address definitions of various gradations of online courses or programs, requirements for becoming certified to teach in the online environment, and procedures related to the development and oversight of online education at the University of La Verne.

Definitions

1. *Learning Management System (LMS)*: Blackboard or other tool (e.g., Moodle, Sakai) used to create, deliver, and manage course content.
2. *Web-Supported Course*: A predominantly face-to-face course that is enhanced by online materials, but whose face-to-face schedule is not altered more than 10%*.
3. *Online Course*: A course that does not require the student to attend the class in a face-to-face classroom setting. Course delivery is 100% online. Should an online course require any synchronous online meetings, this should clearly be stated in the course schedule. *
 - a. *Synchronous Activity*: Meetings within an online course where students and faculty meet virtually at a predetermined scheduled time.
 - b. *Asynchronous Activity*: Content delivered within an online course with no scheduled interactions.
4. *Variations to Online Instruction*: Some courses may be taught in a combined online and face-to-face format. These formats can include hybrid and blended courses.
 - a. *Hybrid Course*: A course in which the number of face-to-face class sessions has been replaced significantly (10% up to a maximum of 50%) by online delivery, but still requires a predetermined schedule of face-to-face sessions.*
 - b. *Blended Course*: A course in which instruction is primarily online (51-99%), but might have an occasional face-to-face meeting.
5. *Blended Program*: A program that is a mix of face-to-face courses, online courses, hybrid courses, and/or blended courses.
6. *Online Program*: A program that does not require the student to attend courses in a classroom setting, face-to-face. Online programs must be approved by Deans and submitted to the University's accreditation liaison officer who will submit to WASC for consideration.

* All Credit Hour policy requirements should be met, regardless of course delivery mode. In alignment with Department of Education guidelines for financial aid and VA guidelines for veteran housing, faculty must document contact-hour equivalency between face-to-face and online instruction.

Certification to Teach Online

To ensure appropriate preparation of faculty and instructors for quality online course instruction, all such instructors must complete the online certification offered through the Center for the Advancement of Faculty Excellence (CAFÉ). The main purpose of the online certification process is to ensure effective course design, provide faculty with best practices, provide instructional design and support, build quality assurance, and provide the resources to create high-quality online courses.

College academic leaders (department chairs, associate deans, assistant deans, and/or deans) send a list to the CAFÉ of approved candidates for completion of such certification. The certification instruction and evaluation process is managed by the CAFÉ. The standards of quality are represented by a rubric that is an amalgam of several industry standards of quality online instruction (contact the CAFÉ for most current rubric). A list of those who successfully complete the certification program is sent to college academic leaders. While this initial quality assurance measure is within the purview of the CAFÉ, the ongoing quality assurance effort, including adherence to the credit hour policy, is within the purview of college academic leaders (see Quality Control section below).

University of La Verne faculty who have been teaching online courses without certification (prior to the implementation of this policy), and/or faculty who believe they already possess the technical and pedagogical skills needed for online instruction can apply to waive the certification program. For those who wish to waive the certification program, samples of a self-designed online course must be presented to the CAFÉ for evaluation using the established standards. Waivers are issued, as warranted, by the CAFÉ, in conjunction with the appropriate academic dean's office.

Online Course Development & Implementation

Once a faculty member has been certified to teach online, he/she is eligible to either teach an already designed course or to develop a new online course. Development of an online course is based on needs of the college and/or program, and initial development will follow guidelines outlined in the Faculty Handbook regarding new course development.

Quality Control: Online courses at the University should be developed and delivered according to standards outlined in the online certification course offered through the CAFÉ. Deans and/or department chairs will oversee the ongoing quality of course content and delivery of online courses. Issues of quality control will be addressed according to college, department, and/or program guidelines. The academic dean or his/her designee will have access to any online course for the purpose of review, evaluation, quality assurance and/or compliance for all relevant accreditation standards. Academic units will reinforce that the use of technology facilitates interaction between class participants (student-student, faculty-student), in order to maintain the personalized instructional experience characteristic to the University of La Verne. All quality assurance systems regarding online instruction apply to online courses, as they do for traditional classroom courses (e.g., course evaluations, peer evaluations).

La Verne Online: La Verne Online is the administrative unit responsible for the scheduling and delivery of online courses and programs for the University's regional campuses. La Verne Online will work in conjunction with academic deans and/or designees to ensure quality control of online courses and programs at regional campuses. Specifically, this quality control will include ensuring faculty are certified to teach online courses. Ongoing quality of course content and delivery of online courses at the regional campuses will fall within the purview of academic deans and/or designees.

Ownership: In the event that a faculty member develops an online course for first-time delivery, the faculty developer(s) will maintain ownership of the course content and material as intellectual property and retain all rights for publication and syndication online and in books, scholarly journals, publications, and for use in teaching in the classroom or online with other educational institutions. All references to University of La Verne must be removed for any use outside of the University of La Verne community. University of La Verne is granted rights through continued license to use the developed course and course materials in future course offerings.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Faculty members will be required to design their online courses in accordance with ADA requirements for accessibility of content.