

Online Education Policy

Rationale

SF State recognizes that most university classes use the Internet to some degree and some university courses (or classes) are conducted entirely online. This policy has been created to promote the continuation of a high quality educational experience for students, faculty members, and the SF State community through the use of online resources.

1 **Policy**

2 **General Assumptions**

- 3 • The goal of online education is to expand educational opportunities for SF
4 State students by offering courses with high quality and convenience and
5 flexibility. SF State is dedicated to providing all students with an accessible
6 education.
- 7 • The addition of online classes, content, and activities to SF State's curriculum
8 has been a positive contribution to SF State's academic environment and is
9 consistent with its present mission and role as a public educational institution.
10 Regardless of mode of instruction, all courses shall abide by the same
11 academic policies and laws.
12

13 **Definitions**

- 14 • In a **Traditional Class**, students attend all class sessions and faculty member
15 office hours in an assigned face-to-face environment.
- 16 • In a **Technology Enhanced Class**, students attend all class sessions in an
17 assigned face-to-face environment. Online technology is primarily used to
18 engage the students with the curriculum and learning process.
- 19 • In a **Hybrid Class**, students attend some of the class sessions in an assigned
20 face-to-face environment, and some of the class sessions in an online
21 environment, as determined by the faculty member. Online technology is
22 primarily used to create a substitute for some classroom experiences, and
23 may be used to communicate with the faculty member inside and outside of
24 office hours.
- 25 • In a **Hybrid Flexible (HyFlex) Class**, students can choose to attend class
26 either in an assigned face-to-face environment or in an online environment,
27 synchronously or asynchronously. Online technology is primarily used to
28 provide students with flexibility in their choice of educational experience, and
29 to communicate with the faculty member inside and outside of office hours.
- 30 • In an **Online Class**, students attend all class sessions in an online
31 environment. Online technology is used to create the entire course
32 experience and to communicate with the faculty member inside and outside of
33 office hours.

34 **Quality and Educational Effectiveness**

- 35 • All online education programs and courses shall be consistent with the
36 educational mission of the University.
37 • Tenured / tenure-track faculty are essential to the integrity of any academic
38 program
39 • Faculty members shall use teaching practices that are appropriate to the
40 mode of instruction. Faculty are expected to seek the professional
41 development and support necessary to ensure a successful educational
42 experience for their students. Departments shall ensure that faculty assigned
43 to teach online courses are appropriately prepared.
44 • Courses with the same course prefix, number and title shall adhere to the
45 same learning outcomes.

46 **Communication & Support**

- 47 • Faculty members shall designate a primary method or methods of
48 communication for use in each class.
49 • Faculty members shall define a reasonable response time with respect to
50 answering student communications through the designated method and
51 provide adequate and appropriate opportunities for timely interaction between
52 the faculty member and students.
53 • Faculty members shall make clear the standards of conduct that are expected
54 in all class and university environments, such as classroom or Internet
55 etiquette. Students shall abide by the official Student Code of Conduct.
56 • Faculty members shall define student expectations including, but not limited
57 to, participation in online class activities, access to specialized hardware,
58 software, or virtual environments, or technical skills required to succeed.
59 • The course syllabus shall indicate the course's technological requirements
60 and sources and contact information for technological support.
61 • Support details and user expectations shall be defined by the responsible
62 university administrative unit(s) in service level agreements or similar public
63 documents.
64 • Opportunities should be provided for faculty to offer input on major changes in
65 course technologies.

66 **Student Assessment**

- 67 • Assessment strategies will be consistent with course goals and objectives
68 and clearly stated for students.
69 • Students are expected to follow the academic integrity policy that SF State
70 has in place at the time the work is created. This is a rapidly changing field;
71 the University and faculty shall work together to provide and implement tools
72 and processes to ensure academic integrity.

73 **Course and Program Approval**

- 74 • Departments are responsible for deciding which courses (or sections) as well
75 as which degree or certificate programs will be offered in an online format.

- 76 • Faculty members teaching online courses have the same control and
77 ownership of the substantive and intellectual content of their courses that
78 faculty have with any other course.
- 79 • Departments are responsible for communicating to Academic Affairs the
80 degree to which their courses are online so that the course may be properly
81 described in the Class Schedule.
- 82 • Any degree, certificate, or credential program, new or existing, in which 50%
83 or more of the course delivery occurs through an online course format must
84 consult with the Office of Academic Planning and Development (APD) to
85 obtain WASC approval.
- 86 • No individual, program, or department shall agree in a contract with any
87 private or public entity to deliver courses or programs on behalf of SF State
88 without prior university approval.

89 **Recognition and Compensation**

- 90 • All classes are subject to the same principles of peer review and student
91 evaluation for purposes of the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion processes.
92 All courses shall be equally recognized and rewarded when considering
93 curriculum and professional development.
- 94 • Faculty members who create and/or facilitate Hybrid, HyFlex, or Online
95 Classes shall be compensated properly for their investment of effort, as
96 determined by their department and/or college. Online course material may
97 require a greater amount of development time compared to that of traditional
98 course material, especially in the early stages of course development.

99 **Scheduling**

- 100 • A degree, certificate, or credential program with online courses must indicate
101 the technological requirements in the SF State Bulletin.
- 102 • The official Class Schedule shall clearly indicate the mode of instruction,
103 technological requirements and schedule for each class offered by SF State.
104 Departments are responsible for reporting this information to Academic
105 Resources in a timely fashion.
- 106 • The SF State Bulletin and official Class Schedule shall provide guidelines for
107 students considering taking online courses.
- 108 • It is the responsibility of the student to take into account the instructional
109 mode, to review the guidelines on online courses, and to have access to
110 required technological resources.

111 **Workload**

112 Refer to the CSU policy on credit units (Coded Memorandum AA-2011-14
113 CSU Definition of Credit Hour) for guidance on student workload.

114 Class size and corresponding faculty workload will be determined by the
115 department chair and faculty member, taking into account the level of interaction
116 between faculty and students in the course environment.

117 **Accessibility**

- 118 • All classes shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990,
119 Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, and with California Government
120 Code 11135.
121 • All students shall have access to the course evaluation process.

122 **Intellectual Property and Copyright**

- 123 • Intellectual property created during the development of online courses shall
124 follow the Intellectual Property Policy that SF State has in place at the time
125 the materials are created.
126 • In the event that a faculty member is not able to complete a course due to
127 unforeseen causes, such as sickness or relocation, the university
128 administration may grant another faculty member access to the class roster,
129 class syllabus, and points or grades earned by students up to the time the
130 original faculty member stopped teaching, and any other class materials
131 available to the administration. While the new instructor may use this material
132 to complete the class for that semester, the new instructor must honor the
133 intellectual property rights of the original instructor.