

## Online and Technology Mediated Courses and Programs

### 1) Introduction

- 1.1** Online and Technology Mediated (OTM – also known as “Distance Education” by WASC) courses and programs 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 online/hybrid/technology-mediated instruction and will provide common ground for courses and programs in all disciplines as instructional conditions evolve; this document should also evolve as these conditions evolve.

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.

The definitions and constraints enunciated in this policy are explicitly framed for our work in “normal” times. In “emergency” situations we expect that our campus community will react in the most effective manner possible in pursuit of the joint goals of keeping members of our community safe while faculty continue to provide the quality education our students deserve. It may be the case that external events require **faculty to make** temporary changes to **their** mode of instruction. Emergency changes to modes of instruction will be done in consultation with the appropriate faculty governance, e.g., SEC and Faculty Departments. We emphasize that temporary changes to modes of instruction, in response to an emergency situation, will not invalidate the course classification [face-to-face, hybrid, fully synchronous online, fully asynchronous online, Hy-Flex] nor will it require petition to curriculum committees to change mode of instruction.

### 2) Institutional Context & Commitment

- 2.1** Adapted from the CSU Strategic Plan 2017-2025: California State University, Stanislaus: A Sense of Place, Inclusion, Transformation, and Future  
[https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Strategic%20Planning/documents/strategic\\_plan\\_final\\_.pdf](https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Strategic%20Planning/documents/strategic_plan_final_.pdf)

California State University Stanislaus upholds the CSU System’s mission of providing access as one of only six campuses in the system that celebrate our un-impacted status by accepting all qualified students. Reaffirming this mission translates into academic and

co-curricular programming commitments, and deeply held values and practices on campus sustain the commitment of resources and energy to this mission.

One such value on our campus is that we meet our students wherever they are in their academic and personal development and help them fulfill their dreams. We are committed to ensuring equitable outcomes for students whose circumstances are such that their access to technology and other resources does not diminish their ability to fully engage in their coursework and does not impact their grades. A student's living conditions, nor their financial status, nor their access to technological infrastructure, should not have any impact on their ability to participate in a course and should not have any bearing on their participation, exam, quiz, presentation, group work, projects, etc. scores, nor on their final grade.

### **3) Instructional Technology Definitions**

#### **3.1 Online Technology Mediated (OTM) Modalities (also known as Distance Education) -**

OTM courses consist of:

(1) Education that uses one or more of the technologies listed in paragraphs (2)(i) through (iv) of this definition to deliver instruction to students who are separated from the instructor or instructors and to support regular and substantive interaction between the students and the instructor or instructors, either synchronously or asynchronously.

(2) The technologies that may be used to offer distance education include—

(i) The internet;

(ii) One-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices;

(iii) Audio conference; or

(iv) Other media used in a course in conjunction with any of the technologies listed in paragraphs (2)(i) through (iii) of this definition.

(3) For purposes of this definition, an instructor is an individual responsible for delivering course content and who meets the qualifications for instruction established by an institution's accrediting agency.

(4) For purposes of this definition, substantive interaction is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following—

(i) Providing direct instruction;

(ii) Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;

(iii) Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;

(iv) Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or

(v) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's or program's accrediting agency.

(5) An institution ensures regular interaction between a student and an instructor or instructors by, prior to the student's completion of a course or competency -

(i) Providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and scheduled basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and

(ii) Monitoring the student's academic engagement and success and ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

*(OTM/Distance education definition adopted from Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR § 600.2)*

**3.2 Academic Engagement** requires active participation by a student in an instructional activity related to the student's course of study that –

(1) Is defined by the institution in accordance with any applicable requirements of its State or accrediting agency;

(2) Includes, but is not limited to -

(i) Attending a synchronous class, lecture, recitation, or field or laboratory activity, physically or online, where there is an opportunity for interaction between the instructor and students;

(ii) Submitting an academic assignment;

(iii) Taking an assessment or an exam;

(iv) Watching a prerecorded lecture or participating in an interactive tutorial, webinar, or other interactive computer-assisted instruction;

(v) Participating in a study group, group project, or an online discussion that is assigned by the institution; or

(vi) Interacting with an instructor about academic matters

**3.3 Asynchronous** - Asynchronous instruction refers to instructional activities when the instructor and the students engage in activities that are not occurring simultaneously.

**3.4 Synchronous** - Synchronous instruction refers to instructional activities when both the instructor and the students are engaging in activities simultaneously with the instructor present at a defined time either online or face-to-face.

**3.5 Bisynchronous** - Bisynchronous instruction refers to instructional activities offered with a mixture of synchronous and asynchronous modalities.

**3.6 Asynchronous Online Course** - Courses in which 100% of the instruction and interaction take place asynchronously via the internet. Students in these courses are not required to attend a scheduled class session or complete course activities on campus. Instructors of these courses may offer scheduled office hours via the Internet at a date and time established by the instructor.

**3.7 Synchronous Online Course** - Courses in which 100% of the instruction and interaction take place synchronously via the internet. Students in these courses are required to attend a scheduled class session. The synchronous class meeting sessions will be specified in the class schedule. Instructors of these courses may offer scheduled office hours via the Internet at a date and time established by the instructor. A synchronous online class is a type of online learning where students participate in live, scheduled classes with their instructor and classmates. In synchronous classes, students and instructors interact in real-time through a variety of online tools, such as video conferencing software, chat rooms, instant messaging platforms, etc.

**3.8 Hybrid Courses** - Courses offered with a mixture of asynchronous or synchronous online and synchronous physical class (in-person) sessions. Asynchronous/Synchronous online and synchronous in-person class sessions will be specified in the class schedule.

**3.9 In-Person/Face-to-Face Course Definition** - In-person courses may offer no more than 30% of the instruction online. In person courses have at least 70% of the instruction in person.

**3.10 HyFlex Course Definition** - Courses in which an instructor is simultaneously teaching both to students in person and online, via remote technology (e.g., Zoom).

**3.11 Distance Education Program** - A program of study (e.g., a hybrid program) approved by a WASC Substantive Change Committee in which 50% or more of the degree program hours can be completed through online courses. 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.

## **4 Curriculum & Instruction**

- 4.1 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, as well as WASC requirements.
- 4.1 Student expectations and a statement on academic honesty and integrity shall be provided in the syllabus as is standard for all courses.
- 4.2 Instructional materials may be hosted by non-university sites. No student work, student identifying information, or student grades can be stored on unauthorized systems. Third-party systems that have been officially reviewed, through the Technology Acquisition Review (TAR) process, are considered authorized for the purpose of this policy. A current list of officially approved software is available from OIT.
- 4.3 A course may be offered through OTM modalities (as defined in Attachment A) 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, subject to curricular approval and review processes as established at the campus offering the course.
- 4.4 Each academic department and, where applicable, academic program will develop a consistent OTM Modality Protocol for determining the modalities of their courses that is reviewed by the college curriculum committee. Academic Programs should implement the OTM Modality Protocol within one academic year of the policy being adopted. To develop an OTM Modality Protocol, the department/program faculty should specify how the modality meets the pedagogical and essential elements of their courses. The College Curriculum Committee review would provide guidance on curricular questions, if needed. The OTM Modality Protocol shall be published on the Academic Affairs website.
- 4.5 When developing course schedules, Department Chairs, Program Directors, and Deans will create a class schedule that adheres to the approved department/program OTM Modality Protocol (See 3.5). Faculty shall adhere to the specific mode of instruction as listed in the course schedule. Exceptions may be made to the OTM Modality Protocol if agreed by faculty and chairs/directors.

- 4.6 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 Department/Program OTM Modality Protocol and University procedures.
- 4.7 OTM teaching may involve the use of technologies and pedagogical methods that require specialized training. Instructors teaching online and hybrid courses should successfully complete training (such as FCETL workshop(s) or similar professional development activity) or demonstrate proficiency in teaching online or hybrid courses. The department is likewise responsible for ensuring any instructor engaged in online and technology-mediated instruction has appropriate prior experience or has engaged with university-provided resources and training.
- 4.8 Hybrid and fully online classes (asynchronous or synchronous) shall be clearly identified in the official schedule of classes, which shall also notify students of any requirements for participation in any synchronous online or in-person class activities.
- 4.9 The Class Schedule shall notify students of any software and hardware requirements, or technical competencies required for participation in OTM classes and activities. A separate policy concerning Web Camera use provides guidance on requiring use of cameras in the instructional environment (See Appendix B).
- 4.10 Courses shall not change modalities except in extreme circumstances such as public health emergencies, natural disasters, or any other events that are disruptive to the course delivery method listed in the Class Schedule.
- 4.11 Each 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 modalities. Faculty autonomy over their curriculum is to always have priority.
- 4.12 Faculty teaching asynchronous online courses or participating in online programs should offer “virtual” office hours as part of their instructional responsibilities. This access shall be clearly communicated in the course syllabus.
- 4.13 Except in the case of last-minute personnel changes, faculty teaching asynchronous online courses must contact their students at least two working days before the course begins, to introduce the course and communicate how to start the course. They should distribute their syllabus by the first day of classes.
- 4.14 Faculty should be clear when students can expect regular and substantive contact.
- 4.15 As with traditional courses, instructors of record shall retain digital copies of student work for a period of at least one year and grade rosters and gradebooks for 7 years as

required by the [California State University Records/Information Retention and Disposition Schedule](#).

- 4.16 Faculty workload in OTM courses will be consistent with the current [CSU CFA Contract, Article 20, Workload](#).
- 4.17 Enrollment caps for OTM courses must consider the level of expected interaction between faculty and individual students in a course while maintaining a high-quality learning experience [with guidance from [EP&R 76-36](#)]. Programs and departments are encouraged to observe the recommended maximum class size based on the modality of the course.

## **5 Faculty Support**

- 5.1 A rich environment of technologies, consultation, training, and pedagogical support shall be provided for faculty by the combined efforts of the academic departments, college dean's offices, Office of Academic Technology, the Office of Information Technology, the University Library, and the Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
- 5.2 Technology support, consultation, and training for faculty are provided for the official Learning Management System(s). The University encourages experimentation with new technologies and open-source software for technology-mediated courses in secure environments, although formal technical support cannot be guaranteed in all cases. Faculty should work with the Disability Resource Services Office, FCETL, and OIT when considering adopting new digital tools to ensure equitable access for all students.
- 5.3 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 17/AS/07/FAC--Intellectual Property Rights Policy California State University, Stanislaus.
- 5.4 The instructor of record holds the intellectual property rights to the courses posted on the LMS. Even if the Chairs and/or Deans access the material, the instructor of record maintains the intellectual property rights to the courses posted on the LMS.
- 5.5 The ratio of tenure track to contingent faculty teaching OTM online courses shall be commensurate with that ratio for traditional F2F courses.

## **6 Student Support**

- 6.1 The University will provide opportunities and resources for student orientation and training on the official campus LMS.
- 6.2 Service Desk assistance will be provided via phone and /or email as well as access to resources such as an LMS Knowledge Base to students.
- 6.3 Students enrolled in OTM courses shall have full right to academic resources including the grievance process, access to advising, and other key academic rights and services.
- 6.4 Students taking a fully online course or participating in a fully online program should have access to virtual office hours, and this access shall be clearly communicated in the course syllabus.
- 6.5 The University Library offers resources and instruction for research in OTM courses.
- 6.6 Students enrolled in OTM course shall be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities to the best of their capacity as communicated and discussed with the professor.
- 6.7 Students enrolled in OTM courses are expected to adhere to the university standards of academic integrity.
- 6.8 Students can assess their own readiness for online, asynchronous learning by taking the Online Readiness Self-Assessment - <https://www.csustan.edu/academics/online-programs/online-readiness-self-assessment>

## **7 Assessment & Evaluation**

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

## **8 Policy Review**

- 8.1 The Academic Technology and Learning Committee and Administration shall jointly review the effectiveness of this policy periodically.



## **Appendix A: 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-CFA Contract, Article 20, Workload

<https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/faculty-staff/labor-and-employee-relations/Documents/unit3-cfa/article20.pdf>

CSU Records/Information Retention and Disposition Schedule

[https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/records-retention-disposition/Documents/curriculum-accreditation/Curriculum\\_Accreditation.pdf](https://www.calstate.edu/csu-system/records-retention-disposition/Documents/curriculum-accreditation/Curriculum_Accreditation.pdf)

CSU Stanislaus Online and Technology Mediated Courses and Programs Policy

<https://catalog.csustan.edu/mime/media/25/1336/AA+3-AS-11-SEC-UEPC+-+Online+and+Technology+Mediated+Courses+and+Programs.pdf>

CSU Stanislaus Intellectual Property Rights Policy

<https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/2022-05/rscapc-intellectual-property-rights-policy.pdf>

CSU Strategic Plan 2017-2025: California State University, Stanislaus: A Sense of Place, Inclusion, Transformation, and Future

[https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Strategic%20Planning/documents/strategic\\_plan\\_final\\_.pdf](https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Strategic%20Planning/documents/strategic_plan_final_.pdf)

Federal Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education. Distance Education and Innovation <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-600/subpart->

[A/section-600.2](#)

EP&R 76-36 Faculty Workload: Policies and Procedures

[https://www.calfac.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/epr\\_76-36-1.pdf](https://www.calfac.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/epr_76-36-1.pdf)

Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning

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

Office of Academic Technology

<https://www.csustan.edu/office-academic-technology>

Remote Technical and Instructional Support

<https://www.csustan.edu/office-academic-technology>

Office of Information Technology

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

Online Education White Paper 2012

[http://www.calstate.edu/acadsen/records/reports/documents/Online Education White Paper.pdf](http://www.calstate.edu/acadsen/records/reports/documents/Online_Education_White_Paper.pdf)

University Library

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

University Mission & Vision

<https://www.csustan.edu/about/mission-vision-values>

WASC Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education

<https://www.wscuc.org/documents/interregional-guidelines-evaluation-distance-education/>

WASC Substantive Change page under FAQs

<https://www.csustan.edu/accreditation/wasc-accreditation/wasc-substantive-change-review>

### **Appendix B – Web Camera Policy**

For guidance on the use of web cameras for instructions, please see the 16-AS-22-ATLC Web Conferencing Camera Policy

<https://catalog.csustan.edu/mime/media/25/2598/16-AS-22+ATLC+Web+Conferencing+Camera+Policy.pdf>

**Approved by the Academic Senate on May 14, 2024**

**Approved by Interim President Susan E. Borrego on June 11, 2024**