

Proposed Hybrid Course Policy

Background

At SUNY Oswego, it has been a long standing practice to integrate instructional technology into our classes and the curriculum. We have offered a range of courses from fully online to hybrid courses to web enhanced courses. Technology continues to evolve as does the needs of our students. It is also important to insure the highest quality learning opportunities for our students.

In 2006, SUNY Oswego formulated a hybrid policy task force to discuss the emerging learning mode. The group outlined an approval process but did not formally adopt a policy. So that the college may more formally integrate hybrid courses into our regular scheduling, course planning, and faculty governance processes it is necessary to clarify policies and procedures. The purpose of this document is to clarify what constitutes a hybrid course, provide a statement that articulates Oswego's policy, and list the implications of implementing the policy.

Our academic community offers courses in many formats. At SUNY Oswego, we offer three types of technology based courses: fully online, hybrid, and web-enhanced. The following definitions reflect Oswego's technology based formats.

Fully online class

An online class is a class that is offered 100% through the Internet. Asynchronous courses require no time in a classroom. All assignments, exams, and communication are delivered using a learning management system (LMS). At Oswego, the campus is transitioning from ANGEL to Blackboard, which will be completed by the Fall 2015 semester. Fully online courses may be also be synchronous. Synchronous online courses require student participation at a specified time using audio/visual software such as Blackboard Collaborate along with the LMS.

Hybrid courses

Although many definitions of hybrid and blended learning exist, there is a convergence upon three key points: (1) Web-based learning activities are introduced to complement face-to-face work; (2) "seat time" is reduced, though not eliminated altogether; (3) the Web-based and face-to-face components of the course are designed to interact pedagogically to take advantage of the best features of each.

The amount of in class time varies in hybrids from school to school. Some require more than 50% must be in class, others say more than 50% must be online. Others indicate that 20% - 80% must be in class (or online). There is consensus that generally the time is split 50-50, but it depends on the best pedagogy for what the instructor wants to achieve.

Web enhanced courses

Web enhanced learning occurs in a traditional face-to-face (f2f) course when the instructor incorporates web resources into the design and delivery of the course to support student learning. The key difference

between Web Enhanced Learning versus other forms of e-learning (online or hybrid courses) is that the internet is used to supplement and support the instruction occurring in the classroom rather than replace it. Web Enhanced Learning may include activities such as: accessing course materials, submitting assignments, participating in discussions, taking quizzes and exams, and/or accessing grades and feedback.

Delivering Hybrid Courses

Hybrid or blended learning courses offer students and faculty an opportunity to integrate a variety of experiences with traditional classroom learning. They can be especially valuable for students engaged in a practica or senior seminar, courses that are heavily research based, or work shop oriented courses. Emphasis should be on the learning outcomes as opposed to a regulated amount of seat time. Faculty consultation with an instructional designer will take into consideration the expected outcomes, discipline, assignments, and methods of evaluation to determine what proportion of the class should be face-to-face versus online activities. Scheduling a meeting the first and last class face-to-face does not constitute a hybrid course.

A process for requesting approval for teaching a course as a hybrid should be developed. Digital signature software would expedite the approval process. CTS is currently developing a process for change of major forms that may be then applied to this process. The dean and department chair must approve the course as a hybrid before it can be submitted to the Registrar's Office. The Registrar has already put in place a notation using HY# as the section number to indicate it is a hybrid course. The delivery format of the hybrid course will be described in the section notes in course availability including the meetings days and times, and an indication that attendance is required.

Faculty responsibilities such as office hours, student contact access, advisement, and departmental or college committees continue regardless of course delivery mode or teaching assignment.

Policies and best practices at other colleges and universities have been reviewed. Major sources included James Madison, the Sloan-C group (now called the Online Learning Consortium), The University of Wisconsin- various campus' documents, and the Blended Learning Toolkit. Consultation with the SUNY Deans and Directors of Continuing Education also occurred.

Hybrid Course Policy Statement

SUNY Oswego encourages faculty to explore and implement the use of new technologies and teaching methods in their courses. Instructional technology has evolved and affords students and faculty the opportunity to connect using both face-to-face and online systems. At SUNY Oswego, a hybrid course is one which combines face-to-face instruction and interaction in a reduced class meeting schedule with replacement online activities that may include: mini-lectures, discussions, blogs, evaluations, case studies, etc.

Hybrid or blended learning opportunities are encouraged at SUNY Oswego with the following guidelines. Faculty must first have the approval of their department chair and dean to develop a hybrid course. Once development is approved, the course may be offered as a hybrid course in any academic term with department chair approval. Having secured development approval, faculty are required to meet with one of the college's instructional designers and attend a workshop (from CELT or Extended Learning) to develop appropriate learning outcomes and gain familiarity with the learning management system at least six months in advance.

Approval for hybrid course delivery will come from the instructional designer. Determination of the proportion of class meeting times which are face-to-face meetings vs. work using the learning management system (or other technology based experience) will be determined by the faculty member based on learning objectives and discipline.

Faculty are required to specify all face-to-face class meeting times and exam information (if applicable) when the course is submitted to the Registrar so that students may plan their workload and time accordingly.

Teaching hybrid courses does not relieve the faculty member of departmental and college obligations such as office hours, student advisement, or committee work. Offering a hybrid course in subsequent semesters requires that the faculty discuss their intentions and schedule with the department chair.

Administrative access for the Director of Online Learning, the respective chair and Dean will be available as needed for resolving student problems, promotion, reappointment, and tenure. Student surveys should be administered by the department at the end of term to gather feedback on the effectiveness of the hybrid format.

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SUNY Oswego

Approval to Develop Hybrid Course

Course Number _____ Course Name _____

Instructor's Name _____

First Academic Term and Year Course will be Offered _____

Briefly describe the rationale for offering the course as a hybrid?

Briefly discuss the expected outcomes for the student's experience?

Do you have any experience in teaching other hybrid or on-line courses? Briefly describe.

Note: Offering a hybrid course in subsequent semesters requires that the faculty discuss their intentions and schedule with the department chair.

Approval for Hybrid Course Development

Instructor _____ Date _____

Department Chair _____ Date _____

Associate Dean _____ Date _____

Approval for Hybrid Course Delivery

Instructional Designer _____ Date _____

Workshop attendance _____