

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Steering Committee

**FROM:** Committee on Academic Programs (CAP)

**RE:** Final Recommendation on Policy on Development and approval of Online/Blended Courses

**DATE:** May 14, 2018

### **Background and Charge:**

In Spring 2017, Steering asked the Teaching and Learning Council (TLC) to review the approval process for blended and online format courses, which has been in use on an interim basis since 2016, and to develop a recommendation regarding this process. After gathering testimony from deans, department chairs, and faculty who have been trained to deliver these types of courses, TLC determined that the course approval process is sufficiently meeting the needs of our institution. TLC therefore recommended sending the existing approval process for blended and online courses through the governance process. In Spring 2018, Steering charged CAP with considering the preliminary recommendation made by TLC regarding an approval process for blended and online courses.

### **Method:**

As a first step, CAP decided that the College policy should state required components of developing and approving blended/online courses, rather than step-by-step procedures (which may change over time, whereas the required components should not change). Thus, the policy CAP created aligns with the procedural document approved by TLC (specifically, Appendix B: Step-by-Step Instructions and Course Approval Form) but adds the roles and responsibilities of entities involved in developing these types of courses. CAP solicited Tier 3 faculty testimony on the preliminary recommendation. The final recommendation was unanimously approved by CAP.

### **Final Recommendation:**

The new policy includes the following points:

- 1) Roles and responsibilities of OID, faculty members wanting to teach a blended/online course, department chairs, and deans.
- 2) Of note, OID is responsible for creating and publishing the required process for approving, developing, and assessing online/blended courses that is consistent with this policy, as well as an accompanying request form.
- 3) Essential requirements that the procedure published by OID must follow, including:
  - a. The course must be approved through the governing School Curriculum Committee per the Course Approval policy.
  - b. Faculty requesting to offer blended/online courses for the first time must participate in training, offered by OID.
  - c. Faculty members submit a request form, signed by the chair and dean.
  - d. Faculty members work with OID to develop the course and engage in a self-review course assessment.

This policy can be implemented as soon as Fall 2018. Once approved, Steering should share the new policy with OID, so that OID can make sure the published process aligns with the policy.

**NOTE:** CAP has not yet decided whether to fold this policy into the Course Approval Policy it has been asked to revise. If CAP does decide that this policy belongs as part of the Course Approval Policy, this new policy may become unnecessary. Even if that happens, CAP anticipates that the points made in this policy will remain.



<b>Section:</b>		
<b>Title:</b>	Development and approval of Online or Blended Courses	
<b>Effective Date:</b>		
<b>Approved By:</b>		
<b>Responsible Unit:</b>	Academic Affairs (academic@tcnj.edu, 609-771-3080)	
<b>Related Documents:</b>	Course Approval Policy Cross Listing Courses Policy	
<b>History:</b>		
Version	Date	Notes
1.0		New policy; initial release

**I. INTRODUCTION**

This document defines the roles, responsibilities, and procedural components for developing and approving online or blended courses.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

Traditional course - a course wherein the dominant instructional mode is face-to-face instruction

Blended course – a course wherein web-based online learning is used to replace at least 25% of face-to-face instruction. Blended learning interaction may be either Asynchronous wherein online class activity is not at a common time or Synchronous wherein online class activity requires some or all instruction to occur at a common time.

Online course - a course wherein the instructional mode is 100% web-based, online learning rather than face-to-face instruction. Online interaction may be either Asynchronous wherein online class activity is not at a common time or Synchronous wherein online class activity requires some or all instruction to occur at a common time.

**III. POLICY**

This document defines the policies governing development and approval for offering blended and online courses at The College of New Jersey. The roles and responsibilities pertaining to development of such courses are:

1. Responsibilities

- a. Office of Instructional Design (OID) – OID is responsible for coordinating and overseeing development and quality of online and blended courses. Note that

OID's responsibilities are at the implementation level, not the curricular level. OID shall:

- i. Maintain a website defining the requirements and process for approving, developing, and assessing online and blended courses that are consistent with this policy
  - ii. Maintain a form to be used for online/blended course approval that is available through the above website
  - iii. Establish and publish timelines for the development and approval process of online and blended courses
  - iv. Provide training for faculty in best practices for online and blended courses
  - v. Define and provide nationally accepted quality standards and rubrics against which online and blended courses will be evaluated
- b. Course faculty - All faculty proposing to offer an online or blended course shall:
- i. Present and discuss the course, delivery mode, and proposed schedule with the Department Chair and faculty
  - ii. Complete training provided by OID
  - iii. Develop the course to meet the approved course learning outcomes
  - iv. Propose the dates and times of face-to-face meetings necessary for the course to run as designed. Verify these dates are correct in PAWS for each occurrence of the course and, if incorrect, notify Records and Registration or appropriate School/Department individual with corrected dates. This verification is necessary to ensure students know meeting expectations and ensure optimum resource (e.g. classrooms) utility.
  - v. Develop the course to meet quality standards set by OID
  - vi. Assess the course using the quality rubric provided by OID
- c. Department Chair – Based on input from the course faculty, the Chair (or designee) shall approve that the course and blended or online delivery mode aligns with the department's curriculum and course planning goals, and that it has been discussed and is supported by the department's faculty. This approval shall be made by signature per the process defined by OID.
- d. School Dean – Based on input from the course faculty and department Chair, the Dean shall approve that the course and blended or online delivery mode aligns with the School's curriculum and course planning goals. This approval shall be made by signature per the process defined by OID.
2. Essential Requirements and Process Components - The process published by OID shall ensure and document the following:
- a. The course must be previously vetted for learning outcomes and approved through the governing School Curriculum Committee per the Course Approval policy. Such approval may be independent of the delivery mode. Ideally, the course will have been taught as a traditional delivery mode course prior to developing as an online/blended course, but this sequence is not required.

- b. The course faculty will consult with their department faculty, Chair, and Dean such that they can execute their responsibilities defined in section 1, above.
- c. In the case of cross-listed classes, both sponsoring departments must agree to the proposed delivery mode. This agreement shall be documented during the process published by OID.
- d. The course faculty must participate in training. Training may be expedited or waived for faculty who have previously completed training or offered blended/online courses.
- e. The course faculty must complete and submit an Online/Blended Course Request form, signed by the department chair and dean, which is available from OID through the website mandated herein.
- f. The course faculty will develop the course, meeting with and utilizing OID and the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, as needed. The course shall be developed to meet nationally accepted quality standards, as identified by OID through the website mandated herein.
- g. The course faculty will complete a self-review course assessment using a rubric provided by OID consistent with the nationally accepted quality standards.
- h. The course faculty will meet with OID for a final review of the developed course and the faculty's self-review.