



Policy on Digital Learning (Distance/Blended and Online Learning)

Author: Vice-Principal with responsibility for the Curriculum
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Harlow College Policy on Digital Learning (distance/blended and online learning)

1. Policy Statement

This policy establishes the expectations for digital learning delivered by Harlow College and Stansted Airport College.

2. Audience

This policy is to inform prospective students, current students, parent/carers or employers of expectations for all relevant parties when studying either online, blended or distance learning courses.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 To ensure a high-quality learning experience for Distance Learning, Blended Learning or Online learning students; and
- 3.2 To make clear the responsibilities of various parties in the design, development and delivery of Distance/Blended/Online Learning courses.

4. Definitions

4.1 Distance Learning

- 4.1.1 Students are not required to meet tutors or other students; studying autonomously.
- 4.1.2 Students are engaged in academic study through structured activities defined by the college.
- 4.1.3 Students' access to support (academic, administrative and technical) is ordinarily conducted without attending the College.

4.2 Blended Learning

- 4.2.1 Students are required for some of the time to meet tutors or other students either virtually or onsite to engage in work either individually or collaboratively or a combination.
- 4.2.2 Students are engaged in academic study through structured activities defined by the college.
- 4.2.3 Students' access to support (academic, administrative and technical) can be conducted with or without attending the College.

4.3 Online Learning

- 4.3.1 Students are required to meet tutors or other students for each session through a combination of online session or face to face engagement.
- 4.3.2 Students are engaged in academic study through structured activities defined by the college through live sessions either delivered virtually or face to face, recorded live sessions or pre-recorded sessions.

- 4.3.3 Students' access to support (academic, administrative and technical) is ordinarily conducted through attending the College.

5. Ensuring the Quality of Digital Learning

- 5.1 The College is committed to providing a high-quality experience to our students in the online/distance learning environment. The course structure and content, as defined in the course handbook (long courses) or course information guide (short courses) will endeavour to ensure:
- 5.1.1 Learning material is accessible, inclusive, relevant and current.
 - 5.1.2 Learning materials relate to the intended learning outcomes of the course/unit and to the needs of distance learners and this is clearly signposted to students.
 - 5.1.3 Learning materials are of a high standard, presented in a structured and easily navigable manner and encourage student engagement.
 - 5.1.4 Learning materials adhere to copyright restrictions.
 - 5.1.5 Complex ideas are presented in multiple supporting formats and a multi-media approach is adopted which engages students and supports different approaches to learning.
 - 5.1.6 Activities promote enquiry, collaboration, enterprise and contextualisation.
 - 5.1.7 Activities prompt critical reflection and review, consolidate learning and contribute to students' wider skills' development.
 - 5.1.8 Activities create opportunities for students to link theory and practice.
 - 5.1.9 Further relevant reading and development opportunities are signposted.
- 5.2 The College will provide a safe online learning environment where ground rules will be set for both face to face and online delivery, safeguarding both staff and students at all times. Delivery staff have full control of a digital classroom in order to manage the online class. Abuse of staff or peers for either face to face or online is not tolerated and the college will implement its disciplinary policy where needed
- 5.3 Full time students will be provided with a device in order to study online. Part time students are expected to provide their own device. Help may be available for students through Student Services.
- 5.4 A full digital induction will be provided for students to ensure safe use and competency of digital resources.
- 5.5 Standardisation, internal and external verification will take place to ensure awarding body standards are met. This can take place remotely or via digital means if face to face is not possible to ensure deadlines are met.

6. Monitoring of Progress

- 6.1 Regular formative assessment will take place that will be tracked by the college to show progress.
- 6.2 Formative assessment will provide both feedback and feedforward, awarding body permitting.
- 6.3 Formative assessment will occur in a variety of timescales e.g. each session, every 2 weeks or half termly.
- 6.4 Formative assessment will occur in a variety of ways e.g. topic test, verbal or digital presentation, discussion, practical task..
- 6.5 Formative assessment will be tracked on shared portals assessable to both staff and students.
- 6.6 For most courses work will be uploaded onto online portals e.g. Showbie, Moodle or Onefile. Work will be assessed electronically and feedback/feedforward given via digital means directly through online marking or voice notes.
- 6.7 All work will be time and date stamped through these digital means to ensure compliance with deadlines.
- 6.8 The curriculum delivery team are responsible for communicating and adhering to any specific awarding body rules around submission of work, resubmissions, retakes or re-sits.

7. Assessment

- 7.1 Summative assessment will take place in accordance with the awarding body regulations/requirements and will be tracked electronically on shared platforms.
- 7.2 Summative assessment will be in line with the awarding body timescales.
- 7.3 Summative assessment can be either, but not exclusively, a formal written exam, online exam, verbal exam, practical assessment of portfolio of evidence.
- 7.4 In the case of a formal exam, either written or online, the Exams team will communicate the arrangements for the assessment.
- 7.5 The Exams team are responsible for ensuring that where exam access arrangements are required, the College has the correct documentation in order to process the request in a timely manner for the expected exam and to put necessary arrangements in place.
- 7.6 It is the responsibility of a student to provide the requested documentation in order to process an examination access arrangement request.
- 7.7 Summative assessment will be communicated to students by the Exams team following confirmation of grading from awarding bodies.

- 7.8 Where summative assessment is in the form of practical assessment or portfolio the learners home team will be responsible for the assessment arrangements and reporting the outcome subject to internal and external verification.
- 7.9 Students will be guided to opportunities to use AI thorough out their course for formative work. AI is not permitted for any summative assessment and is treated as Academic Misconduct.

8. Student Voice

- 8.1 The college seeks to gain students' views to ensure quality of service. These views are collected using various methods across the academic year and are reported to the Curriculum and Standards Governors Committee for consideration. These methods include:
 - 8.1.1 Regular termly engagement through online surveys
 - 8.1.2 Course rep meetings – face to face or virtual at Team level
 - 8.1.3 Student Ambassador meetings - face to face or virtual
 - 8.1.4 Student Governors - face to face or virtual
 - 8.1.5 Through the College's Complaints Policy Statement and Procedure.

9. Student Welfare and Support

- 9.1 All students will be allocated a Personal Development Coach (PDC) to oversee their studies and welfare.
- 9.2 Students can expect regular touch points to check on their learning, progress and their welfare.
- 9.3 The Personal Development Coach (PDC) is the main link for the student to report any problem of any kind, there after students will be directed to best service to support them.
- 9.4 Student learning support needs are considered at enrolment and implemented, where local authority funding permits, through the SEND team.
- 9.5 Eligible students who experience hardship, digital or otherwise, can be supported by the college through the college bursary, Student Hardship Fund or other external agencies that the college can advise students to apply for.
- 9.6 Students can be supported by the College where accessibility issues relating to online learning exist e.g. poor internet connection.

10. Digital Conduct

- 10.1 Where learning is wholly or partly online there is no reduction in the College's expectations on students' behaviour. Students should remain polite and courteous at all times. Behaviour online should be legal, honest and decent at all times.

- 10.2 Failure to behave in accordance with the College's Student Success Code during online sessions or whilst using a college device will be administered and managed through the College's Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.
- 10.3 Digital platforms or applications used for teaching, learning and assessment are tested rigorously by the College and only used where appropriate safeguarding measures are in place to protect all users.
- 10.4 As with face to face delivery the college has a zero policy on any digital harassment, abuse, racism or discrimination.

11. Mitigation of Risk of College Closure – Student Protection Measures

- 11.1 All full-time students are allocated a college email, and students are responsible for setting their own password. This enables students to access the correct online portals following GDPR legislation. Where students are not allocated a college email account, students are allocated a unique user name and then can select and/or re-set their own password to maintain security.
- 11.2 All learning portals or e-portfolios are cloud based and can be accessed both on and off site.
- 11.3 All students will be given a storage site on the cloud to safely store work, or will be given access to a secure e-portfolio system.
- 11.4 The College regularly backs up all its systems. Students are responsible for saving their work in accordance to the college system. This is to avoid work being lost as back-up processes occur at intervals during the day and are not continuous.
- 11.5 In the case that face to face sessions can't be delivered, sessions will move automatically to online sessions.
- 11.6 Where practical work is required the College will provide simulations where possible, in line with awarding body guidance.
- 11.7 Where summative exams are required the College will deliver these off site, if awarding bodies allow.
- 11.8 IQA and EQA activities will be carried out remotely where awarding bodies permit. In circumstances where this is not permissible the College will follow awarding body processes to ensure requirements are met.
- 11.9 The College will ensure all college systems and processes required to maintain the online learning environment, quality systems and processes and claims, can operate off site to ensure no significant reduction in service

TRACKING and REFERENCE INFORMATION
Date Approved: 8 October 2024
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Author/Responsibility: Executive Team Member with responsibility for the Curriculum
Equality Impact Assessment: TBA
List of related policies, procedures and other documents:
Complaints Procedure
Equality & Diversity Policy
Data Protection Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Student Success Code
Student Disciplinary Policy
HE/FE Student Academic Misconduct Policy
Complaints: If you wish to submit a complaint about the application of this policy or the procedure of it, please send your request in accordance with the provisions of the Grievance Procedure.
Monitoring: The application of this policy and associated procedure will be monitored by Vice-Principal with Responsibility for the Curriculum.
Easy reading: To receive this policy/procedure in a different format, please contact: HR Services.