Distance Learning Policy

Approved by UW Tacoma's Academic Policy & Curriculum Committee: 1/27/16
Approved by UW Tacoma's Executive Council: 3/2/16

Policy for DL course designations:

Campus Course - Courses where up to 39% of scheduled in-person class time may be replaced with online learning tools and content. (Synchronous online content counts as campus time.)

Hybrid Course - Courses where between 40-99% of scheduled in-person class time is replaced with asynchronous online learning tools. Also, there must be at least one in-person class meeting. In other words, synchronous online time cannot entirely substitute for in-person class time.

Distance Learning Course - Courses where in-person interaction between students and professors is entirely replaced with online learning tools and content, that *do not* require a synchronous online presence of all students.

Rationale: This policy takes into consideration the problems that the DL course designation pose for international students and veterans, by restricting the number of courses given that label to those with 100% online content. It also creates a second designation, "Hybrid", to indicate courses with substantial but not total, online content (40-99%). This policy is also more precise than previous ones, and excludes flipped courses, service learning courses, field courses and study abroad courses from the DL or Hybrid categories. The idea here is to reduce confusion amid the many types of courses that depart from the traditional classroom format, and clarify the nature of those in the "Distance Learning" and the proposed new "Hybrid" designations. It is also intended to be very clear to students that DL – means all online, and Hybrid means something more than 40% online and some campus time.

Further Recommendations

1) That the Time Schedule have (as it does for online courses) a designation for Hybrid courses, as defined above, and **that all Hybrid courses include details of the time required to be on campus in the comments section of the Time Schedule**.

2) That teaching of DL or Hybrid courses be either voluntary on the part of the faculty, or included in the written expectations or possibilities of the position at hiring.

DL & Hybrid Review Policy

Approved by UW Tacoma's Academic Policy & Curriculum Committee: 1/27/16
Approved by UW Tacoma's Executive Council: 4/6/16

In the past at UW Tacoma, DL courses were reviewed using the Quality Matters tool through the Office of Academic Technology. Once a course was reviewed and approved as a DL course, it could be taught by any instructor. In the process of creating a new DL and Hybrid policy, it was decided that a better quality control policy would be one where the review was shifted from the course to the instructors.

Toward this, APCC recommends that every instructor who teaches a Distance Learning or Hybrid course be trained through iTech Fellows. Once trained, an instructor may then offer other DL or H courses without further review.

Instructors who have taught DL courses under the old policy will need to complete iTech Fellows unless they have: A) already done so, or B) have passed a QM review with a course. Instructors falling into groups A & B will be considered credentialed to teach DL and Hybrid courses under the new policy. Instructors falling into Group A will continue to be qualified to peer review the online courses developed in iTech Fellows.