

California State University, Chico  
Proposed Executive Memorandum: Online Education Policy

Prepared by  
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California State University, Chico  
Online Learning Policy

*When developing this policy the committee carefully considered the Strategic Plan of CSU, Chico. Priority 1 “Believing in the primacy of learning, we will continue to develop high-quality learning environments both inside and outside of the classroom.” This learning in and out of the classroom is part of the Chico Experience. We are a residential campus and this policy recognizes the importance of maintaining this essential element of the Chico Experience. Priority 3 “Believing in the wise use of new technologies in learning and teaching, we will continue to provide the technology, the related training, and the support needed to create high quality learning environments both inside and outside of the classroom.” This policy was created to guide and promote high quality online educational experiences for students and faculty while maintaining the Chico Experience. Nothing in this policy shall imply that online instruction is a preferred or required mode of instruction.*

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## **1. General Assumptions**

The goal of online education is to expand educational opportunities by offering courses with high quality, convenience and flexibility. CSU, Chico is dedicated to providing all students with an accessible education.

The addition of online classes, content, and activities to CSU, Chico's curriculum has been a positive contribution to CSU, Chico's academic environment and is consistent with its present mission and role as a regional, comprehensive, publically-funded educational institution.

Regardless of mode of instruction, all courses shall abide by the same academic policies and laws.

The Online White Paper from the Academic Senate of the CSU reports on best practices for faculty teaching online and asserts that policies governing online teaching should be developed by faculty on individual campuses. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

## **2. Modes of Instruction (MOIs)**

[Appendix A](#) contains the definitions of the special terms used in this document.

[Appendix B](#) contains the official Modes of Instruction matrix.

Mode of Instruction (MOI) refers to the delivery method employed in an instructional setting. As such it represents one important component of pedagogical practice. MOI can vary from face-to-face to fully online instruction, with many variants in between. It is in the collective interest of the academic community: faculty, students, staff and administration to know what MOI is in use in specific classes in order to provide appropriate supports, make efficient use of resources and have clarity regarding the extent and importance of academic technologies employed in any given class or learning environment.

The class schedule will clearly note the course Mode of Instruction so students know when registering for a class if the class is traditional, hybrid or fully online. Students have a right to know the modes of delivery and technological requirements of each course, program, and degree offered by the University. Students shall have access to this information before enrolling in a course or program.

## **3. Curricular Control**

Individual faculty members have the right to determine the specific content and instructional pedagogy in the courses they are assigned. The collective faculty has the right and responsibility to develop curricula and, within the appropriate discipline, to establish general course content and modes of instruction. This essential control has promoted diversity and the unique character of CSU, Chico.

The most appropriate mode of instruction for degrees, programs, courses and their parts is determined by the department faculty or academic unit faculty and not solely individual faculty members.

This faculty control must be exercised, whether courses are offered via state-supported venues or through self-support venues such as the Extended University.

All courses, regardless of mode of instruction, are subject to the curricular approval and review procedures as established at CSU Chico in the Academic Department Manual. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

Changing a face to face course to a hybrid (H and S) will be approved by the department curriculum committee. Because altering the mode of instruction of a course is considered a major change, switching courses to a fully online mode (J, K, I, and T) will be considered a major change as indicated in the Academic Department Manual. See [Appendix B](#) for MOI codes.

#### **4. State vs. Self Support**

Deciding whether to offer an online program through state and/or self support shall be accomplished according to state laws and campus and systemwide policies. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

#### **5. Intellectual Property**

Faculty have the same control and ownership of the substantive and intellectual content of their online course materials that they have with respect to those offered in a traditional classroom format, at the time of production, at any time during their use, and thereafter.

No one may access or use a faculty member's online course and content without written permission from that faculty member.

Refer to the current campus and CSU policies on Intellectual Property. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

#### **6. Use of Outside Contractors**

Since civic engagement, local community collaboration and stewardship of place are central to the mission of CSU Chico, the use of outside contractors for the purposes of delivering course content shall only be done with approval of individual departments or programs and the appropriate administrator.

No individual, program, or department shall agree in a contract with any private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs on behalf of the University without prior university approval. The University shall not enter into a contract with any private or public entity to deliver distance education courses or programs without the

prior approval of the relevant department or program. Approvals shall follow established university procedures and policy.

Students records and work shall be subject to the same protection and expectations of confidentiality that are in effect for traditional modes of instruction even when delivered by an outside contractor.

## **7. Syllabi**

Faculty members shall designate a primary method or methods of communication for use in each class. The syllabus shall define a reasonable response time with respect to answering student communications. The syllabus will define student expectations including, but not limited to, student learning outcomes and participation in online class activities. The course syllabus shall indicate the course's technological requirements and sources and contact information for technological support. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

## **8. Class Size and Workload**

Class size and faculty workload will be determined following university standards after consultation with the faculty member and the department chair, and must take into account the student learning outcomes and the level of interaction between faculty and students. All blended and online courses must provide for appropriate and personal interactions between faculty and students.

## **9. Credit Hours**

When existing courses are converted to online, normally the units carried are expected to be the same. The "credit hour" is defined as "the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement." A credit hour is assumed to be a 50-minute (not 60-minute) period.

In courses, such as those offered online, in which "seat time" does not apply, a credit hour may be measured by an equivalent amount of work, as demonstrated by student achievement.

Also refer to the CSU Policy on credit units for guidance on student workload.

See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

## **10. Faculty office hours and availability**

The methods and frequency of office hours, virtual or in person will be clearly communicated to students and determined by university policy and procedures. Faculty shall clearly indicate specific office hours and provide timely responses to student questions. For more guidance refer to the FPPP. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

## **11. Academic Integrity**

Online programs and courses present new challenges to ensure academic integrity that should be addressed in their design. Online programs and courses will conform to University policies on academic integrity. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

## **12. Accessibility**

Online programs and courses will conform to University policies regarding accessibility and accommodations. The Accessibility Resource Center provides links to all appropriate policies and guidelines. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.

### **Accessibility development support**

Just as in face-to-face learning environments, the university and its faculty are committed to creating and making available accessible instructional materials. The university provides, and faculty should seek, assistance and guidance in ensuring accessible learning environments.

## **13. Faculty Support**

The University recognizes that not all faculty and students are prepared for the challenges and opportunities that teaching and learning in an online environment can present. To assist faculty in creating high quality learning environments online, the Technology and Learning Program (TLP) provides education, training, technology support, and instructional design services. Faculty should access these resources before moving wholly or in part into teaching online. Tutorials and FAQs can be found at the TLP website. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced documents or policy.

## **14. Student Support**

### **Student training in the use of course technology**

Each student in an online class, course or program shall be informed of available instructional support, student services, library resources, and support services for students

with disabilities. Faculty should work closely with the library and student services staff to ensure adequate access and training for online instruction.

### **Technology support**

Students enrolled in courses will have adequate levels of technology support. The University provides technology support to online students via IT Support Services help desk (calls or email) and web site

### **Instructional support**

Students enrolled in courses will have adequate levels of instructional support. The University Library offers online books and journals as well as online interlibrary loan and reference services to assist students in their research.

See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced documents or policy.

## **15. Evaluation and Assessment**

### **Course and Program Assessment**

Courses and programs should be held to the same standard regardless of the mode of instruction. Assessment of online and blended courses should be a regular part of the department's assessment plan. Assessment should be focused on student outcomes not on the delivery technology.

### **Faculty Assessment**

Department guidelines establish faculty observation and evaluation. The faculty of a given academic program assume responsibility and exercise oversight of courses and their curriculum ensuring the quality, rigor, and integrity of instruction. Instruction online whether fully online or hybrid should match the quality, rigor and integrity of face-to-face courses. Campus and department RTP performance evaluation processes should recognize online and face-to-face instructional activities as equally meritorious and important.

Access to online course content is governed by the same procedures and restrictions that determine evaluator access to face to face courses. This includes the responsibility to notify the faculty member of plans to visit their course. The faculty member shall maintain reasonable control over the extent of this access to their course materials and content.

### **Student Assessment**

Criteria for student success in online instruction courses and programs shall be as rigorous and comprehensive as those used in classroom-based courses and these criteria shall be clearly communicated to students.

### **Student Evaluations of Faculty**

The university currently provides online Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET). These will be used in online courses. Administration will follow university policy in the FPPP and the current CBA. See [Appendix C](#) for links to the referenced document or policy.



## **Appendix A - Definitions**

Definitions of online learning terminology differentiating traditional and online classrooms as well as synchronous (content accessed at specific and predetermined times) and asynchronous (content delivered within a specific time frame) distance learning.

Synchronous Instruction:	Instructional activities where both the students and instructor are present and engaged in activities at the same time. For example a classroom setting.
Asynchronous Instruction:	Instructional activities where the instructor and/or some or all of the students engage in activities that are not necessarily occurring simultaneously.
Traditional Instruction:	Synchronous instruction that occurs inside the classroom. Students and the instructor are physically present. Twenty percent or less of class meeting time can be taught in an online fashion. Sometimes called face-to-face instruction
Hybrid Instruction:	Courses offered using a blend of traditional and online methods. Typically these courses are a mixture of online and traditional class sessions. These courses can include a variety of synchronous and asynchronous activities. Hybrid courses will have more than 20% but less than 80% of class meeting time taught online.
Online Instruction:	Courses in which more than 80% of course meeting time occurs in an online environment. These courses can include a variety of synchronous and asynchronous activities.
Other Mode of Instruction:	A course that uses some other delivery method.
Learning Management System:	Software designed to deliver and manage instruction in an online environment. Examples are Blackboard and Moodle.
Class Meeting Time:	For traditional instruction this is a specific time and room where the instructor meets with all the students. For example a three unit lecture course would meet for 150 minutes per week. For online technologies this refers to the equivalent online meeting time or online activities. A three unit lecture could meet on-line synchronously for 150 minutes per week. A three unit lecture class could deliver 150 minutes of asynchronous video. A three unit lecture class could contain the media equivalent of 150 minutes of lecture material.

**Appendix B: Modes of Instruction**

Courses are designated by Mode of Instruction (MOI).

Category	Code	MOI	Description	3 Unit Course Examples
Traditional	P*	In Person	Course meets on a regular schedule in person.	Course meets MWF 9:00-9:50 PLMS 203
	O*	Optional Internet Use	Optional course materials are provided online (limited LMS).	Course meets MWF 9:00-9:50 PLMS 203
	E*	Required Internet Use	Course meets in person with some required course materials and/or activities online. Most commonly the use of the LMS is required.	Course meets MWF 9:00-9:50 PLMS 203
Blended	H	Hybrid, Asynchronous Online	Course meets regularly in person with portions of the course conducted online in lieu of in person meeting.	Course meets MW 9:00-9:50 + 1 hour TBA PLMS 203
	S	Hybrid, Synchronous Online	Course meets regularly in person with portions of the course conducted online at specific times. See class schedule for online meeting times.	Course meets MW 9:00-9:50 PLMS 203, Course meets online Friday 9:00-9:50 for online chat.
Online	K*	Online with additional meetings	Course is Internet based with infrequent in person meetings. See class schedule for meeting times. The majority of the course is online.	Course conducted online with required webcasts or synchronous online activities (times listed). Course may have an on-campus orientation and on-campus final. TBA hours to be listed as appropriate
	J*	Online, Synchronous	Some or the entire course will meet at specific times online. See Class Schedule notes for meeting times.	Course conducted online with 3 required webcasts with chat (times listed).
	I*	Online, Asynchronous	Course is entirely asynchronous Internet based.	Course conducted online. TBA hours to be listed as appropriate.

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Category	Code	MOI	Description	3 Unit Course Examples
	T	Two-way video	Course meets on a regular schedule and is delivered via two-way video to a specified remote location. May include a face-to-face component.	Courses shared via two-way video with other campuses and/or at other specified on- and off-campus locations. e.g. MWF 9:00 to 9:50
Other	C*	Other	Instruction via other means	

\* Existing Codes

## **Appendix C: Links Referenced in the Policy**

### Section 1

Online Education White Paper from the California State University Statewide Academic Senate

[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)

### Section 3

Academic Department Manual

<http://www.csuchico.edu/curriculum/AcademicDepartmentManual/index.shtml>

### Section 4

EO 1047 <http://www.calstate.edu/EO/EO-1047.pdf>

### Section 5

CSU Chico Intellectual Property Policy

[http://www.csuchico.edu/lcmt/sitedocs/97\\_07.pdf](http://www.csuchico.edu/lcmt/sitedocs/97_07.pdf)

### Section 7

Accessible Syllabus Information

[www.csuchico.edu/tlp/accessibility/syllabus/index.shtml](http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp/accessibility/syllabus/index.shtml)

### Section 9

CSU Policy on Credit Units

<http://www.calstate.edu/AcadAff/codedmemos/AA-2011-14.pdf>

### Section 10

Faculty Office Hours

FPPP 1.1.e Instructional Faculty – Responsibilities and Ethical requirements Please see

<http://www.csuchico.edu/faaf/fppp.shtml>

### Section 11

EM 04-326 The Policy on Academic Integrity and the Establishment of the Academic Integrity Council

<http://www.csuchico.edu/prs/EMs/2004/04-036.shtml>

### Section 12

The Accessibility Resource Center

<http://www.csuchico.edu/arc/policy-guidelines/index.shtml>

### Section 13

Technology and Learning Program

<http://www.csuchico.edu/tlp>

Section 14

Student IT Support Services

<http://www.csuchico.edu/itss/>

<https://wiki.csuchico.edu/confluence/display/help/Blackboard+Learn>

Student Instructional Support

<http://library.csuchico.edu>

Section 15

Student Evaluations of Faculty

FPPP sections 4 and 8.1.b

<http://www.csuchico.edu/faaf/fppp.shtml>