

UCLA Undergraduate Fully Online Course Approval Policy

Introduction

The use of technology for instruction has been growing and innovative uses of online interaction have become more common. UCLA undergraduate students have responded well to these new learning approaches and faculty are encouraged to use online instruction to enhance their courses.

One hallmark of the high standards of the educational experience offered to UCLA students is regular and pedagogically significant interactions between instructor and students. Fully online classes with no or very limited student/instructor contact represent a distinct approach from hybrid courses that combine online technology with lecture time or discussion sessions. Thus fully online classes need scrutiny and monitoring in its early stages until proven to provide students with a quality learning experience.

Fully Online Courses

All courses offered at UCLA should meet the same high standards in terms of the educational experience offered to students regardless of the mode of instruction. Hallmarks of these standards include active engagement of a qualified instructor who has significant expertise in the subject of the course, regular and pedagogically significant interactions between that instructor and students, and a means for students to periodically assess their progress towards achievement of course learning goals.

Online courses may be offered at UCLA that meet these standards by employing (primarily or exclusively) online modes of instruction. For the purposes of this policy, fully online courses are defined as a course section that uses online contact hours (e.g. online lectures or discussion sections, without the option for classroom attendance) and offers less than 1 hour of pedagogically significant in-person contact each week (excepting Special Studies courses and courses focusing on fieldwork taking place off campus). An in-person contact hour is defined to be a lecture or discussion session taught by Senate faculty (unless an exception has been granted, as in policy A.1 below) which a student can attend in a setting that the instructor is physically present, even if the session is simultaneously podcasted. In-person hours do not include office hours or time spent in exams. Furthermore, appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities will be provided for fully online classes.

A. POLICIES FOR DEPARTMENTAL APPROVAL OF FULLY ONLINE INSTRUCTION COURSES

1. Fully online courses satisfying requirements for B.A. and B.S. degrees must be proposed and taught by Senate faculty. Exceptions to this restriction can be made on a case-by-case basis by departments that believe they have an exceptionally well-qualified instructor who is not a Senate faculty member.
2. Fully online courses will be approved initially for up to three offerings of the course or for three years after initial offering of the course, whichever is shorter. Continuation of the course beyond the initial period will require submission of a proposal to the Undergraduate Council for

permanent approval, which must be accompanied by the results of an assessment of the course's effectiveness. Guidelines for assessment are available upon request from the Office of Instructional Development or the Office of Undergraduate Education.

3. Required core courses for majors and minors cannot be offered exclusively in fully online format. When a fully online version of a gateway or required course exists, students must also be given the option to take the course in person during the same academic year. Over the academic year, the fully online version of the required course can only offer up to half of the total seats in the course.

4. Conversion of existing (non-online) courses to fully online courses triggers the need for similar approval as for newly proposed courses. Converting an existing course to fully online instruction does not change course numbering. If the existing course will be offered both in fully online and non-online formats, the sections should be distinguished through the section numbers or by course location (i.e. fully online).

5. All campus policies and regulations for courses and instruction (registration deadlines, academic integrity, grading, etc.) that apply to non-online courses also apply to fully online courses.

6. The initial approval process of a fully online course will follow the standard Course Inventory Management System (CIMS) procedure and will be approved by the appropriate Department and Faculty Executive Committee. However, proposed fully online classes must respond to additional questions as part of the CIMS approval process (listed below).

B. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FOR FULLY ONLINE COURSE PROPOSALS

Instructors requesting to teach a fully online course will respond to the following questions for the three-year (or three course offerings) initial approval:

- (A) What is the rationale for delivering this course fully online? Please provide specific justification for not offering the course in person.
- (B) What is the projected enrollment of the fully online course? Students must have the opportunity to interact regularly with their instructor, teaching assistants (if applicable), and other students, e.g. to ask questions and exchange ideas. How will this be achieved? Please be specific in regards to the number of hours of each mode of communication that will be utilized to teach the course.
- (C) Please describe the features of your fully online course that ensure equal access to students with disabilities.

Please include in your answer to points A, B, and C above an explanation of the technologies to be employed and include a statement from the responsible campus organization, ensuring the availability of this technology or committing the resources to obtain it. Also, explain how you will ensure that all students understand and have access to the technology needed for full participation in the course, including students with disabilities.

- (D) How does a fully online version of this course fit into the overall program for the major/minor?
- (E) How will TAs and instructors receive support/training to deliver the course in a fully online format? Please assess whether your fully online course keeps within the nominal UCLA TA workload limits and provide a description of the anticipated TA workload associated with the course: through a pragmatic work grid, or records of time sheets, or semester hours typically worked by historical TAs of this course (or similar courses). If the course requires TAs to be on online call for a wider breadth of time than the usual 8 hour working day, please indicate accommodations that will keep the workload within reasonable parameters.
- (F) State how midterms and final exams will be administered. Note that there will be a strong preference for courses that use in-person examinations, supervised by the instructor and/or TAs. To avoid the potential problem of cheating, the final examination should be given simultaneously at all examination locations, unless by exception as approved by the instructor.
- (H) Please explain how students will be able to assess their progress in the course as it proceeds.

Fully online courses seeking permanent approval will update their responses to questions A-H and in addition respond to the questions I-J listed below.

- (I) Provide data from assessment of student learning and from student evaluations that demonstrate that fully online instruction is effective. If the course was previously offered in-person, describe advantages and disadvantages of fully online instruction.
- (J) Describe changes, if any, to the methods of fully online course instruction used that were made as a result of assessment and course evaluations. Discuss the “lessons learned” from delivering this fully online course.

This Policy for Fully Online Courses will take effect with the 2014-2015 Academic year. The Undergraduate Council will re-evaluate this policy in 2019-2020.

Frequently asked Questions

Do ILTI courses require the same level of compliance to the policy? An ILTI fully online course created by a UCLA faculty member is regarded as any UCLA course and must obtain approval from their respective departments and comply with the 3-year initial offering period

How do I identify a fully online class in CIMS? We suggest that requests for fully online courses or requests for conversions use the Supplemental data box on the CIMS form to indicate online delivery mode and give information about the course.

How do I respond to the questions listed for fully online classes? We suggest that the supplementary information requested be appended to the syllabus and uploaded to CIMS in the usual way.

Can advanced graduate students teach fully online courses in the summer? Departmental policy should be followed including allowing graduate students to teach during summer session.

Will fully online course evaluations need to be different from other courses? Yes and No. Student evaluations can be the same but instructors should take advantage of individualized evaluation for online courses. However, assessment is a distinct process. The Office of Instructional Development has developed assessment instruments and can provide assistance in administering these tools.

Who will pay for fully online assessments? Initially, OID will provide support for these efforts.

Must my fully online course conform to universal design for disability from the beginning? Ideally, this would be desirable but OSD has limited capacity to attend to all courses. Some courses may be initially taught without universal design for disability but the goal is to provide the same accessibility for all UCLA courses.

Who will cover the cost of meeting ADA requirements for fully online courses? The cost will be covered by OSD.

Who will monitor the 3-year initial period? The Undergraduate Council will monitor the initial 3-year period and inform a department when they must submit an approval to continue to offer the fully online course.

Does this policy apply to fully online graduate courses? No.

Can a department request responses to questions for hybrid online classes such as those required for fully online courses? The Undergraduate Council believes that providing responses to these questions gathers valuable information. Departments can determine whether to apply the same or similar questions for online courses that are not fully online.

Should a cap be placed on enrollment for fully online classes? Departmental policies on TA support per enrollment should determine the optimal size of a fully online class.

May students be charged for taking final exams associated with a fully online course? No.

What must a department do for a fully online course that was offered before Fall 2014? All fully online UCLA courses that were offered in Fall 2014 and before (including summer session) are grandfathered in as having “initial approval” under the policy. Regardless of how many offerings they have had, these courses can continue to be offered, as desired by the relevant department, through Fall 2015 without any additional action (including summer 2015). If a department wishes to offer the course in Winter 2016 and beyond, they must submit the course and an assessment of the course’s effectiveness to UgC by October 15, 2015.