UCLA Online Course Approval Policy

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 interactions between the instructor and students, and a means for students to periodically assess their progress towards achievement of course learning goals.

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, online courses will be 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 contact hour per week in-person (excepting Special Studies courses and courses focusing on fieldwork taking place off campus). Contact hour in person is defined to be a lecture/discussion session which a student can attend in a setting that the instructor is physically present, even if the session is simultaneously podcasted. Contact hours do not include office hours or exam. Furthermore, these online courses must be available to all students, including those with disabilities.

A. POLICIES FOR ONLINE INSTRUCTION COURSES

1. Online courses satisfying requirements for B.A. and B.S. degrees must be proposed and taught by Senate faculty. However, the Undergraduate Council will consider requests for exceptions to this restriction on a case-by-case basis from departments that believe they have an exceptionally well-qualified instructor for an online instruction course who is not a Senate faculty member.

2. Online courses will be approved initially for up to three offerings of the course or for two years after initial approval. (Note: All courses proposed by non-Senate faculty may only be approved for a one year period.) Continuation of the course beyond three offerings or two years after initial approval will require submission of a proposal 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. Gateway and required courses for majors and minors cannot be offered exclusively in fully online format. When an online version of a gateway or required course exists, students must also be given the option to take the course in person. Over the academic year, the online version of the required or gateway course can only offer up to half of the total seats in the course.

4. Conversion of existing (non-online) courses to online delivery triggers the need for similar approval as for newly proposed courses. Converting an existing course to online delivery does not change course numbering. If the existing course will be offered both in online and non-online formats, the sections should be distinguished through the section numbers or by course location (i.e. online).
5. All campus policies and regulations for courses and instruction (registration deadlines, academic integrity, etc.) that apply to conventional courses also apply to online courses.

6. Approval or disapproval of the request for “online delivery” of an existing undergraduate course will come from the Undergraduate Council. In the case of new courses, this approval process will follow standard procedure and will be approved by the appropriate Faculty Executive Committee, and then, if required, will be forwarded to the Undergraduate Council for approval.

B. SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION FOR ONLINE COURSE PROPOSALS

Questions for probationary approval:

(A) What is the rationale for delivering this course fully or partially online? If this is a new course that will only be offered in a fully online environment, please provide specific justification for not offering the course in person.

(B) 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.

Please include in your answer to points A and B 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.

(C) How does an online version of this course fit into the overall program for the major/minor?

(D) How will TAs and instructors receive support/training to deliver the course in an online format?

(E) 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.

(F) Please explain how students will be able to assess their progress in the course as it proceeds.

Additional questions for permanent approval (courses seeking permanent approval should also answer the probationary questions; for courses with existing probationary approval, please provide updates to these answers after gaining experience in delivering the course):

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