

Policies and Procedures

Policy Title	Distance/ Hybrid Teaching and Learning Policy	Policy Number	404
Section	Academic Affairs	Approval Date	15 November 2023
Subsection	General Academic Policies	Authorizing Entity	Board of Trustees
Responsible Office	Institutional Research & Assessment	Effective Date	2 January 2024
Distributed To	Provost Office, University Curriculum Committee, Assessment and Grade Approval Committee, Deans, Program Leads, and faculty.	Next Review Date	2 June 2028

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This Policy is to provide institutional-level standards and definitions for distance teaching and learning and to ensure both the quality of students' learning experience and the compliance of the distance/hybrid learning delivered at AUBH with the national regulatory and international accreditation requirements.
- 1.2 The policy applies to all distance learning modes at the University, whether they involve courses delivered fully online or only partially.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Distance Teaching and Learning: Teaching and learning that uses technology to deliver instruction and facilitate learning for learners who are physically separated from the instructor and from each other.
- 2.3 Synchronous Online Teaching and Learning: Instructional material delivered at a distance, where interaction between instructor and students occurs online but also in time, based on a pre-set schedule.
- 2.4 High Flex Teaching Session/ Course: A session/ course delivered on campus and simultaneously broadcasted online so that students can attend face-to-face on campus or synchronously online.
- 2.5 Blended Course: A course that is partially delivered face-to-face, on campus, and partially online synchronously or asynchronously.
- 2.6 Blended Programs: Programs integrating both face-to-face courses as well as distance teaching and learning or hybrid courses.

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3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 AUBH is dedicated to fostering an environment of continuous improvement and innovation in educational practices. For this reason, it houses a special unit- the 'Online Education Unit'- that is committed to the facilitation and ongoing evaluation and enhancement of the implementation of distance and/or blended learning courses/ programs at AUBH, to ensure they meet the evolving needs of both students and faculty.
- 3.2 The Online Education Unit reports directly to the Provost and is supported by the Educational Technology & E-learning Committee (ETEC). The Unit also works closely with the IT Department, the IR Office (Institutional Research & Assessment), the CTLE (Center for Teaching & Learning Excellence), and College Deans.
- ETEC provides support to the Online Education Unit within its scope of responsibility as outlined in the ETEC Terms of Reference.
 - The IT Department provides training for both faculty and students on the use of online technologies and tools available at the university (including but not limited to the Learning Management System, MS Teams, Power BI, and the student information system) to ensure the smooth and secure implementation of online teaching, learning, and assessment. This training typically takes place at the beginning of the academic year/semester during faculty and student orientation periods. The IT Department is also responsible for ensuring the preservation of user privacy and security as well as verifying the identity of online participants.
 - The CTLE assists by providing faculty training for any needs identified by the Online Education Unit or other relevant entities beyond the scope of the IT Department and directly related to the best pedagogical and assessment practices for online teaching, learning, and assessment.
 - The IR Office oversees and ensures the quality of online courses and programs offered at AUBH and ensures compliance with the requirements of pertinent regulating and accrediting bodies with regard to distance education.
 - College Deans ensure that the Distance/ Hybrid Teaching and Learning Policy is adhered to by the college faculty and assist in identifying training needs for faculty.
- 3.3 By leveraging advanced information and communication technologies (ICT), the Unit provides support and training to facilitate effective implementation and utilization of online courses/programs. It prioritizes the protection of intellectual property rights and the privacy of all participants, ensuring a secure and respectful learning environment. The Unit also actively engages in regular assessments and feedback collection to identify areas for improvement, adapting its strategies to incorporate the latest advancements in educational technology and pedagogical methods. Through a collaborative approach, it works closely with faculty to develop innovative teaching practices that enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. The Unit's commitment to excellence is reflected in its proactive efforts to create a dynamic and responsive educational framework that supports the academic success and personal growth of every student at AUBH.
- All distance and hybrid-mode courses are subject to the same quality assurance principles, scrutiny, and approval policies and procedures as face-to-face courses.
 - Distance and hybrid-mode courses will maintain the minimum hours through which direct instruction is delivered by instructors, in line with AUBH's credit-hour policy. Direct instruction may be delivered face-to-face or through synchronous or asynchronous online platforms.
 - Students attending distance or hybrid-mode courses are subject to the same minimum

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attendance requirement as in face-to-face courses. The attendance of both faculty and students is monitored and tracked in MS Teams, which generates tracking reports, attendance reports, and engagement summaries (including a video recording and transcript, chat activity, and interactions) for each online class session. Further, the Learning Management System provides tracking reports for the performance of students as well as the engagement of both faculty and students with online materials, assessments, and content on the LMS.

- 3.4 Courses may be delivered entirely online at a distance or through a blended format, depending on the nature of the course and the approval of the University Curriculum Committee.
- 3.5 Students may be permitted to attend a face-to-face class in a high-flex mode in accordance with AUBH policies and procedures and with the approval of the Special Circumstances Committee, if required.
- 3.6 A course is considered a blended course if less than 33% of its contact hours are delivered online synchronously or asynchronously.
- 3.7 A course is considered an online course if 33% or more of its contact hours are delivered online synchronously or asynchronously.
- 3.8 Blended programs are offered such that at least 50% of all the courses required by the program are delivered on campus face-to-face. The blended and online courses together should not exceed 50% of all the courses required by the program, with the online courses not exceeding 25%.
- 3.9 A program is labeled 'Distance Learning' if more than 25% of its courses are delivered online. Nevertheless, at least 25% of the courses should be delivered face-to-face on campus or in blended mode. In these cases, the Qualification Diploma and the Transcript should clearly state that the program is delivered using the 'Distance Learning' mode.
- 3.10 A student may transfer from a blended learning program to a distance learning program as long as the student is aware that their qualification and transcript will clearly state that the program is a 'distance learning' program.
- 3.11 A student may transfer from a distance learning program to a blended learning program as long as the percentages stated in item 3.5 are maintained.
- 3.12 In all types of programs/courses, summative proctored assessments must be conducted in face-to-face mode, unless exceptional circumstances require otherwise and regulatory bodies prescribe alternative modes of assessment.
- 3.13 All courses and programs, whether face-to-face, online, or hybrid, must adhere to the principles outlined in the AUBH Teaching and Learning Philosophy and Assessment Manual. Where e-content is to be designed, adherence to the Instructional Design Principles Template is encouraged.

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4.0 PROCEDURES

- 4.1. Before proposing an online course or program, the viability and appropriateness of the course or program must be carefully considered to ensure that the proposed course or program aligns with the College and Program plan and goals.
- 4.2. Faculty must obtain all required approvals before developing or offering an online course. Approvals must be granted at the College level, by the University Curriculum Committee, and by the relevant regulating bodies.
- 4.3. Once approvals are granted, faculty must adhere to the Distance/ Hybrid Teaching and Learning Policy and all pertinent policies related to teaching, learning, and assessment.

5.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS AND REFERENCES

- 5.1 Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement Framework
- 5.2 Program Design Policy
- 5.3 Credit Hours Policy
- 5.4 Assessment Policy
- 5.5 Artificial Intelligence Policy
- 5.6 ICT Policy
- 5.7 ETEC TORs
- 5.8 Instructional Design Template
- 5.9 Proposed 21st Century Distance Education Guidelines, Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions' (C-RAC) Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education.
- 5.10 AUBH Intellectual Property (IP) Policy

POLICY HISTORY			
Date of Last Action	Action Taken/Changes	Authorizing Entity	Effective Date
15 November 2023	The first version of the Report was approved	BoT	2 January 2024
2 June 2025	The Policy was revised to align with the HEC rules of distance learning. The following changes were introduced: - Definitions 2.4-2.6 are updated - The term ' or asynchronous' is added at the end of point 2 of 3.1 - 3.3 is added for allowing high-flux mode delivery in special circumstances. - 3.4 & 3.6 are revised to align with	BoT	1 August 2025

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	HEC regulation - 3.5 & 3.7-3.9 are added to reflect HEC regulations - 3.11 added to enforce adherence to AUBH's teaching, learning, and assessment principles.		
March 9, 2026	The policy was revised in response to HEC feedback related to the functions and responsibilities of the Online Education Unit, relevant procedures, and additional related documents (Version 2)	BoT	8 June 2026