22-SCTP-03-14

Online/Blended learning in courses: Terminology and Approvals/Notifications

The following definitions are proposed for Approval at the University, via the Academic Policy Committee's Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP).

- **Asynchronous**: teaching and learning materials/activities prepared in advance that students can access at a time of their choosing, which in some cases, may be within a designated time frame.
- **Blended learning** (or blended course): teaching and learning activities made up of a combination of online and in-person course activities, both of which are necessary for students to achieve the learning outcomes of the course; it results in a reduction in the number of in-person hours scheduled for a course.
- **Distance learning** (or distance education): refers to students learning at a distance from their instructor, which assumes students are physically located off campus. This is often used interchangeably with online learning but may also apply to other situations.
- **Hybrid learning** (or hyflex): teaching activities in which some students are physically present and others attend online at the same time, with all students having the same learning opportunities to participate and engage with the learning activities.
- **In-person learning** (or in-person course): the default modality of course delivery, in which students are expected to physically attend the course activities in person to achieve the learning outcomes.
- **Online learning** (or online course): teaching and learning activities that have been designed so that all learning outcomes can be achieved using online tools; therefore a student's physical presence on campus is not necessary to achieve the learning outcomes
- **Remote delivery** (or remote instruction): a situational need to deliver a course online that would normally be delivered in person (as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic), sometimes requiring the implementation of additional technologies on an *ad-hoc* basis.
- **Synchronous**: refers to scheduled teaching activities that involve active or live teaching and learning, whether online or in person.

Approval and Notifications, Blended/Hybrid courses

The following approval and notification pathways are proposed for Approval at the University, via the Academic Policy Committee's Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP).

- Blended learning where more than 15% but less that 50% of scheduled activities are online is to be implemented only with Faculty approval.
- It is recommended that each Faculties establish their own guidelines and approval process for developing blended learning in courses and such approvals be considered an implemented at a Programmatic or Unit/Faculty level.
- It is recommended that the Academic Policy Committee's Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP) be notified when (1) any course whose modality of delivery is modified to be blended in this way; or (2) a course is to be modified to be hybrid.

Notes:

- If necessary, Faculties may establish stricter guidelines than what is presented due to accreditation or for reasons related to learning outcomes or competencies that are not possible to complete online.
- Barring stricter guidelines, anything below the 15% threshold is therefore at the discretion of the instructor. For a standard three-credit Lecture based course at McGill, this means about six scheduled hours (i.e., two weeks in a course with three lecture hours per week) could be done online.
- If more than 50% of a course is designed online, or if a course is to be developed as hybrid, this is considered a complete re-design of a course, with relevant approvals and oversight at the program or Unit/Faculty level, followed by notification to SCTP.

<u>**Definitions of Program Types**</u>

The following definitions are hereby proposed for Approval at the University, via the Academic Policy Committee's Subcommittee on Courses and Teaching Programs (SCTP).

<u>For-Credit Programs</u>

Blended program: An academic program that offers a combination of University-approved online or in-person, or blended courses necessary for students to achieve the learning outcomes of the program.

Modular degree: A non-thesis (i.e., course-based or project-based) graduate degree consisting of at least 45 credits, generally completed over a one-year period and divided into three modules: a first module designed to deepen disciplinary knowledge; a second module designed to complement the student's disciplinary knowledge through a set of University courses to broaden their skill set in complementary areas—for instance, a coherent package of courses from another discipline; and a third module that emphasizes experiential learning or similar opportunities to apply acquired knowledge and skills.

Online program: An academic program that has been expressly designed for online delivery through the intentional implementation of instructional activities and selected technologies that support the achievement of program learning outcomes. In this program, all University-approved courses and course activities are completed online.

Program (or **Academic program**): A University-approved, structured selection of official courses within an area of study or a discipline.

Short program: A unit of achievement smaller than a degree that is credited, credentialled, and transcripted, such as a graduate certificate. A short program may also be condensed or delivered over a short period of time.

Stackable degree: A degree formed by "stacking" (i.e., combining) short-program credentials that are in themselves recognized as units of achievement (e.g., certificates). A stackable degree is flexible in terms of completion time, and the student is granted a credential for each recognized unit of achievement before obtaining the full stackable degree.

<u>Non-Credit Activities</u>

Micro-credential: A short unit of validated learning focused on the acquisition of industry-relevant competencies. The successful completion of a micro-credential is generally recognized and recorded through alternative digital credentials (ADCs), often called "digital badges."

Workshop: An activity that focuses on the acquisition of specific competencies that are often technical in nature. Workshops are not subject to central approval, do not carry university credit or Continuing Education Units, and do not appear on official university transcripts.

Other Definitions

Experiential Learning: The general application of academic content to applied situations, be it within the classroom, the community, or the workplace, followed by deliberate reflection on this application. Experiential learning advances and complements program- or course-based learning outcomes and sometimes focuses on employability skills.

Approved by SCTP: March 13, 2023

Approved by APC: March 20, 2023 [e-vote]

Approved by Senate: April 19, 2023