



Title: E Learning and Distance Education Procedures

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of the Distance Education Policy

1. Purpose

This document describes the procedures for implementing the Distance Education Policy and provides guidelines for planning, designing, and implementing distance teaching, learning, and assessment practices consistently across academic programs, achieving the intended learning outcomes.

2. Scope

This document applies to all types of distance teaching, learning and assessment activities in all academic programs.

3. Acronyms

BQA	Education and Training Quality Authority
CILOS	Course Intended Learning Outcomes
HOD	Head of Department
HEC	Higher Education Council
GU	Gulf University
PILOS	Program Intended Learning Outcomes
IT	Information Technology
BQA	Education and Training Quality Authority
C-QAC	College Quality Assurance Committee
C-TLAC	College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

4. Definitions

Academic Program: The academic program is a combination of courses and related activities organized to achieve specific learning outcomes, as defined by the university.

Program Intended Learning Outcomes: Program Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) describe the knowledge, skills, and attributes envisioned to be achievable by students who have followed a program of study. Demonstration of achievement of PILOs is a necessary requirement for awarding a qualification associated with a program.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes: Course-intended learning Outcomes (CILOs) describe the knowledge, skills, and attributes envisioned to be achievable by students who have been enrolled in a course. CILOs, therefore, contribute to PILOs. A learning outcome states what students should be able to

do by the time they have completed the course or program for which the outcome is set. Outcomes can include knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The attainment of an outcome is determined through the assessment process.

Lectures: The course instructor introduces specific topics to develop students' knowledge and understanding through presentations, handouts, video material, and other tools. Additionally, the instructors are keen to encourage the students' participation in class discussions, raise questions, and take an active role in enhancing their learning.

Guest Speaker: A guest speaker is an individual from the professional community invited by the university to deliver a lecture on specific topics relevant to a course.

Case Studies: This teaching method introduces real-life scenarios and situations driven by typical and everyday cases that the student might face in general and specialized work environments. Individuals or groups use active participation and involvement in case studies to develop the student's analytical, critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity skills.

Independent Self-Learning: The student is expected to take responsibility for their own learning. Self-learning does not necessarily mean studying alone because there are plenty of opportunities to study in groups, and many courses promote interactive activity with peer guidance.

Project-Based Learning (PBL): a teaching method where students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects. Students work on a project over an extended period – from a week up to a semester – that engages them in a real situation. They demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a media product or presentation for a real audience.

Role-playing: In this educational method, the student expresses himself or others in a specific situation that corresponds to what may happen in the profession. This activity develops the students' abilities to express and interact with others and gives them leadership abilities and communication skills in different situations.

Discussion Forum: Collective creativity is the method in which a group tries to find a solution to a problem by compiling a list of ideas and solutions that the group members contribute to interactively.

Analytical Thinking: Analytical thinking refers to a set of cognitive skills that involves breaking down the whole into components to identify and solve problems. It also allows for reassembling those components into a 'new' whole to innovate and develop. Analytical thinking involves the use of deductive reasoning.

Deductive Reasoning: Deductive reasoning is the ability to use evidence to reach a conclusion.

Instructor: An instructor is an individual appointed by Gulf University to teach

its courses.

Learning: Learning is understood to encompass the knowledge and skills that result from engagement with the teaching activities planned and designed for a program of study. Learning is cumulative and can manifest itself in many forms, and assessment needs to consider this. New learning builds on and expands existing learning.

The Learning Management System: The Learning Management System (LMS) is a Web-based technology (i.e., software application) used by instructors to plan, implement, and assess the learning process. LMS allows instructors to generate and deliver content, observe students' participation, and assess their performance. Moreover, LMS provides students with a friendly, creative, and learning environment to enhance their knowledge.

Learning Resources: Learning resources comprise all aspects of the learning environments in which students are immersed as they engage with programs of study. They, therefore, comprise equipped classrooms, studios, laboratories, libraries, an online learning platform (LMS, such as Moodle), and learning materials produced by instructors.

Student: A student is an individual who has completed the formal procedures necessary to register in a program offered by Gulf University.

Teaching: Teaching refers to activities planned and designed to ensure that students can achieve the learning outcomes set for courses in a program. Teaching may be face-to-face and take the form of lectures or more informal discussions and tutorial sessions. It can also encompass various online activities designed and selected as part of an overall teaching approach or distance education. In addition, teaching encompasses formative feedback provided to students on assessment tasks. Teaching is enhanced by *reflection on teaching*, a process involving instructors using feedback from students and peers and assessing students' learning to consider how they may re-plan and re-design the overall approach to teaching. Therefore, quality teaching results from reflection on practice to ensure that it allows students to meet program

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is copying ideas and content from another source without appropriate reference. This can include copying work from another student. Where plagiarism has been detected in any assessment, the Plagiarism Policy and Procedures must be implemented.

Distance Education: Distance education is a form of education in which the main elements include the physical separation of teachers and students during instruction and the use of various technologies to facilitate student-teacher and student-student communication. The program will not exceed 25% of study plan courses delivered as distance education.

Synchronous Distance Learning: This learning mode refers to instructors and students gathering simultaneously. Students must also log in and participate in class activities and discussions at a specific time each week.

Asynchronous Distance Learning: Asynchronous distance learning means that the instructor and the students in the course all engage with the course content at different times (and from different locations). The instructor provides students with a sequence of units, which the students move through as their schedules permit. Each unit might use assigned readings or uploaded media, online quizzes, discussion boards, and more. The instructor guides the students, provides feedback, and assesses them as needed.

Hybrid or Blended: Mode of distance education where 30% to 79% of the instruction is conducted online via a university learning management system. The remainder of the instruction is provided in a traditional face-to-face modality. Although the online component is typically asynchronous, it may be synchronous. The program will not exceed 25% of study plan courses delivered in hybrid education mode.

Dual Mode Course: A co-synchronous course in which students learn together, in real-time, with some students located together in an in-person classroom and some students participating in the live class session via web conferencing technology physically separated from the instructor. Students are required to register either for the in-person or remote participation sections and to participate in the modality for which they register for the whole term.

E-Learning and Instructional Design Unit: The E-learning Unit is an online application where the student and instructor interact with each other using an assigned course on a common platform, especially Moodle. This unit shall comprise an E-Learning facilitator whose IT specialized collaborated with his/her team.

5. General Guidelines on E-learning & Distance Education

- 5.1 Gulf university shall manage and retain all data at academic and administrative level while implementing distance learning.
- 5.2 Academic staff shall be equipped with required skill in delivering online lecture and conducting online assessment with adequate support and training from IT department.
- 5.3 GU shall maintain transparency in publishing online education related information in websites and published reports.
- 5.4 GU shall implement distance education to be aligned with GU Teaching Learning Policy and Procedures in case of need and face to face communication is not possible.
- 5.5 GU shall follow appropriate monitoring and supervision of the distance education system to ensure effective completion of tasks.

- 5.6 Distance education shall promote student self-learning and expose them to multiple learning options. Students shall actively participate in collaborative tasks similar to traditional face-to-face learning experiences.
- 5.7 Distance teaching, learning, and assessment practices shall not make it difficult for special needs students to obtain similar learning experiences.
- 5.8 Online assessment practices shall follow regular verification and moderation procedures, and students shall have the opportunity to apply for a deferred exam or assessment appeal.
- 5.9 Course instructors shall provide constructive feedback to students during coursework to assess their progress and achievement. Interaction between the instructor and student is regular and substantive.
- 5.10 GU shall ensure confidentiality and data protection once assessments are submitted online while ensuring that the plagiarism policy is applied to student work.
- 5.11 Distance Education or hybrid will be implemented at the course level according to this percentage:
- **In distance education**, the distance activity percentage will be 33% and more of total course credit hours.
 - **In hybrid mode**, the distance activity percentage will be less than 33% of total course credit hours.
 - The implementation of these two models is limited to the academic courses that the nature of the study allows.
 - GU will provide all the required virtual labs and studio requirements when delivering distance or hybrid applied and practical courses.
 - GU adhered to keeping at least 75% of courses delivered in synchronized mode.
 - All Assessments will be conducted physically through Moodle and Lockdown Browser under proctoring in GU labs. To ensure the effectiveness of course design, delivery, and student outcomes. Students are not allowed to take the exam from outside campus.
 - The viva panel for the postgraduate thesis will be held online if an external examiner from outside Bahrain.
- 5.12 GU will implement distance education in postgraduate programs only, with these conditions:
- The nature of the program is applicable to delivered in distance education mode.

- At least one batch has graduated from the academic program.
- The program is listed by the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- The application form for the academic program approved by the student, academic transcript, graduation certificate, and all relevant documents must include a statement indicating that the program is in distance education mode.
- GU will apply the same regulations of traditional education to the students studying in the distance education system, including attendance and absence, evaluation mechanisms, and examinations.
- GU adhered to HEC regulations regarding the ratio of students to faculty members in all programs delivered in traditional education.

6. Procedure Details

6.1 Planning Stage:

- 6.1.1 Before the beginning of the semester, the Admission & Registration Unit shall enable and support the staff to create online courses for each instructor in the Learning Management System. The instructor shall upload the course specification, lecture materials, and lesson plan and complete the mapping of CILOs to PILOs for the specific course. The instructor shall design and prepare the course content and online lectures appropriate for distance learning. Admission & Registration Unit shall assign the students to the Learning Management System so that the enrolled students can access the course materials and assignments and chat with the instructor. Instructors and students shall access the Learning Management System with the unique user ID and password assigned by IT.
- 6.1.2 For the purposes of distance teaching, learning, and assessment, each instructor shall create his/her own class in an online application (Microsoft Teams). The instructor shall receive the list of registered students for each course from the Admission & Registration Unit and assign each student to the class.
- 6.1.3 IT shall provide instructors and students with training/workshops on using the available e-resources and accessing distance learning. IT shall also conduct group and individual training sessions for students on e-learning and distance learning platforms, in addition to Training Video Tutorials accessible through the Gulf University Video Channel.
- 6.1.4 IT shall provide technical support for students and staff through the Helpdesk System, Instagram, IT Helpdesk Email, and IT Helpdesk Phone.

- 6.1.5 IT shall provide information about the security and safety of personal data of the users of e-learning and distance learning platforms.
- 6.1.6 Staff Professional Development Unit, in collaboration with the Teaching Excellence and Technology Center, shall arrange training and workshop sessions on distance education and how to enhance the capability of course instructors to design course content and assess while delivering the course.

6.2 Implementation Stage:

- 6.2.1 During the implementation stage, the course instructor shall deliver the online lecture strictly following the schedule of the courses. The instructor shall consistently follow the course management plan and lesson plan to deliver the online lecture and conduct the online assessment following the assessment scheme. This shall be implemented when face-to-face learning is not possible and as a complementary mode of teaching and learning in normal situations.
- 6.2.2 Students shall regularly attend the session and remotely engage in individual and group tasks. Students shall communicate with the instructors during the class and after class hours through live discussion, chat, posts, email, and social media. Students shall communicate with their classmates in the above-mentioned channels.
- 6.2.3 The instructor shall regularly communicate with students regarding the tasks and assessments (quizzes, online tests, assignments, case studies, projects, essays, research, oral presentations, reports, etc.) to be conducted. Guidelines for each assessment and class activity shall be communicated to the students in the distance learning platform.
- 6.2.4 The course instructor shall follow the formal dress code while delivering an online lecture and interacting with the students via webcam.
- 6.2.5 Online classes shall be recorded, and instructors shall mark students' attendance daily to be updated in the Learning Management System. Students shall follow the university's attendance requirements, and inability to meet them shall lead to actions, namely a warning letter and assigning (W) or (WF) grades for the course as per the regulations.
- 6.2.6 IT shall prepare the list of classes conducted online daily and shall share the list with the Admission & Registration Unit. The Admission & Registration Unit shall track the regularity of online lectures and report to the concerned HOD weekly in case of any irregularity in providing distance education. The admission & registration unit shall also report to the college deans. It shall communicate the cases of concern with the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the university level. University Teaching Learning and Assessment Committee shall receive monthly reports from each instructor,

regarding student attendance, the percentage of topics covered, and the percentage of assessments completed so far. The University Quality Assurance Committee shall be updated about the smooth conduct of online teaching, learning, and assessment.

- 6.2.7 The course instructor shall design assessment tasks/questions that fit the nature of online assessments, focusing on creative thinking skills, problem-solving, presentation of examples, and practical application, project-based learning while ensuring the mapping of the assessment to the learning outcomes. The instructor shall specify a specific time for each question/task while monitoring students via webcam and sharing the screen with the instructor to avoid cheating and plagiarism.
- 6.2.8 The College Teaching, Learning, and Assessment committee shall conduct internal verification to ensure the validity, reliability, and consistency of the assessment and the suitability of time to complete the task/question. Once the college teaching, learning, and assessment committee has verified the assessment, the midterm and final assessments shall be sent for external verification.
- 6.2.9 Students shall receive adequate training and practice tests before appearing for online tests with grades. Students shall undertake their full responsibility to arrange technical requirements, namely, a laptop or desktop, a good internet connection, and a peaceful environment to appear for the online test. Students should allow the instructor to monitor the identity and movement of the student during the test through a webcam and sharing screen.
- 6.2.10 Course instructors shall provide formative feedback to the students, support them in becoming familiar with the online quiz, assignment, case study, project, etc., and prepare them for the final assessment.
- 6.2.11 The course instructor shall prepare the assessment grading pattern in the Learning Management System. Once the assessment is conducted, the instructor shall enter the grades for each assessment linked to measured CILOs for each student to generate the final grade for each student for the course.
- 6.2.12 The course instructor shall provide students with online office hours devoted to supporting them through tutorials, doubt-clearing sessions, or any other academic guidance. The faculty profile in the online learning platform shall specify the online office hours for each faculty member dedicated to providing support to the students.
- 6.2.13 Academic advisors shall create a class in the distance learning platform and add all the advisees to communicate with them. Academic advisors shall meet the students online, discuss their requirements, and suggest courses for the next semester considering the progression and the study plan. Students shall communicate with the advisors as required or be notified online.

6.2.14 Students and instructors shall receive technical support from IT in implementing distance learning across the programs.

6.3 Review Stage:

6.3.1 The Institutional Performance Measurement Office shall collect and arrange data and statistics related to distance teaching, learning, and assessment in collaboration with IT.

6.3.2 The Institutional Performance Measurement Office shall prepare a utilization report of e-resources, online teaching, learning, and assessment.

6.3.3 The University Teaching Learning Assessment Committee shall monitor the effective utilization of distance education to provide quality education.

6.3.4 The University Quality Assurance and Development Center shall prepare a comprehensive report on the effectiveness of e-learning and distance education through audit, discussion in meetings, and utilization report of distance education.

7. Responsibilities

University Council is responsible for:

- discussed and approved the procedures.
- allocate resources to support distance education programs' development, implementation, and evaluation.

The University Policy Development and Review Committee is responsible for:

- systematic review of the effectiveness of this procedure.

E-Learning and Instructional Design Unit is responsible for:

- monitor compliance with quality assurance standards and recommend improvements.
- facilitate communication and collaboration among faculty, staff, and administration regarding distance education initiatives.

Teaching Excellence and Technology Center is responsible for:

- collaborate with faculty to develop effective online courses and instructional materials.
- ensure that courses are designed with accessibility and inclusivity in mind.
- stay informed about the latest technologies and instructional strategies in distance education.

Heads of Departments and Program Leaders are responsible for:

- ensuring that all faculty members are fully informed of this procedure.

- appropriate implementation of this procedure.

Academic Advisors and Instructors are responsible for:

- appropriate implementation of this document.
- design and deliver distance education courses that meet established academic standards and best practices.
- engage with students actively, providing timely feedback and support to enhance learning.
- participate in professional development opportunities related to distance education.

Students and Applicants with disability are responsible for:

- following this document appropriately.
- take responsibility for their learning by engaging actively with course materials and participating in online discussions and activities.
- seek assistance from faculty and support services when needed.
- adhere to academic integrity procedures and guidelines.

Unit of Admission and Registration is responsible for:

- ensuring that all students and applicants are fully informed of this policy.
- appropriate implementation of this procedure.

The Examination Committee is responsible for:

- appropriate implementation of this document.

The unit of Student Services is responsible for:

- provide resources and support to students enrolled in distance education programs, including tutoring, technical assistance, and counseling services.
- ensure that support services are easily accessible and responsive to the needs of distance learners.

The IT department is responsible for:

- maintain and support the technological infrastructure required for distance education, including learning management systems and communication tools.
- provide training and support for faculty and students in using technology effectively for distance learning.
- provide an effective security system to verify user identity, protect privacy, ensure service security, information confidentiality, academic integrity, and academic plagiarism

Staff Professional Development Office is responsible for:

- appropriate implementation of this document.

Quality Assurance and Development Center is responsible for:

- appropriate implementation of this document.

- monitor and evaluate distance education programs to ensure they meet established quality standards.
- collect and analyze data on student outcomes to inform decision-making and continuous improvement efforts.

8. Related Policies

- Assessment Policy
- Disability Policy
- Distance Education Policy
- Mapping Programs to National Qualifications Policy
- Program Design, Development, and Approval Policy
- Program Review and Development Policy

9. Related Procedures

- Assessment Procedures
- Assessment Verification and Moderation Procedures
- Deferred and Late Assessments Procedures
- Mapping Programs to National Qualifications Procedures
- Program Design, Development, and Approval Procedures
- Program Review and Development Procedures
- Teaching and Learning Procedures

10. Related References and Standards

BQA	Institutional Reviews Handbook 2023
BQA	National Qualifications Framework Handbook
BQA	Programs-within-College Reviews Handbook 2020
HEC	Regulations and Resolutions