U. ONLINE AND BLENDED/HYBRID TEACHING AND LEARNING AT LONGWOOD

I.   *Purpose*

In keeping with its mission and goals, Longwood University is committed to promoting outreach, collaboration, and innovation in teaching and learning by providing consistent and high quality content and instruction regardless of location or delivery format. Delivery formats include online and blended/hybrid.

Core Values: Longwood views online, blended/hybrid, and off-campus instruction as natural extensions of its face-to-face, campus-based instruction. The expectations for online, blended/hybrid, and off-campus courses are to:
- utilize research-based, best practices,
- meet the same standards of quality as face-to-face, campus-based courses,
- distinctly represent the character and quality of the Longwood students' experience in these environments.

The University supports policies, procedures and organizational systems to ensure the creation, distribution, and evaluation of all online and blended/hybrid teaching and learning opportunities.

II.   *Definitions*

A. Online: 100% online instructor-student contact *(12.5 online contact hours per credit hour)*

For the purposes of this document, *online* is defined as total replacement of physical class meetings with electronic interaction* through distance learning technologies. An online course is one in which 100% of the instructor-student and student-student interaction takes place synchronously or asynchronously through regular and substantive electronic interaction.

B. Blended/Hybrid: at least 50% , but less than 100%, online instructor-student contact *(more than 6.25 but less than 12.5 online contact hours per credit hour)*

For the purposes of this document, *blended/hybrid* is defined as partial replacement of physical class meetings with electronic interaction* through distance learning technologies. A hybrid or blended/hybrid course is one in which some of the course's regular in-class meetings are converted to electronic format through distance learning technologies. The instructor(s) and the learner share the same physical space less than 50% of the time. As a replacement for in-class instruction, interaction between the instructor and students takes place

synchronously or asynchronously through regular and substantive electronic interaction. The dates, times, and location for face-to-face meetings must be clearly stated in the Schedule of Classes and in the Syllabus.

C. <u>Distance Education:</u> a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place.

D. <u>*Electronic interaction:</u> through distance learning technologies includes, but is not limited to, the internet, one-way and two-way transmissions through open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, or wireless communications devices; audio conferencing; or video cassettes, DVDs, and CD-ROMs if used as part of the distance learning course or program.

Using the definitions above, Longwood University will adhere to the designations outlined by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) for reporting courses, programs and certificates as on-campus or off-campus, synchronous or asynchronous, and face-to-face or distance/hybrid.

E. <u>Digital Education Collaborative (DEC):</u> The DEC is a unit housed in the College of Graduate & Professional Studies (CGPS) as an extension of the previously established Longwood Online Technology Institute (2003-2012). The roles of the DEC are to support instructional technology (the design and delivery of courses through distance learning technologies), to ensure blended/hybrid and online teaching and learning at Longwood is of the highest quality, to facilitate institution-wide collaboration specific to distance learning, and to monitor and respond to internal and external regulatory issues related to blended/hybrid and online teaching and learning.

F. <u>LOTI:</u> The Longwood Online Training Institute (LOTI) is a faculty professional development program intended to provide faculty with the skills and technical support necessary to develop and/or teach high quality blended/hybrid and/or online courses. LOTI seeks to ensure consistent and high quality content and instructional experience that adheres to Quality Matters http://www.qmprogram.org standards for online and blended/hybrid courses. The Quality Matters standards are research-supported, best practice-based, quality assurance standards that focus on optimal course design.

G. <u>Online Faculty Advisory Committee:</u> This committee works with the DEC to address all faculty ideas, concerns, questions and needs regarding online and blended/hybrid instruction. The committee is composed of two faculty representatives with LOTI training and blended/hybrid or online teaching experience from each College.

III. *Applicability*

The *Faculty Policy and Procedures Manual* applies to all faculty of the University, regardless of their teaching location or the format of instruction used. Policies pertaining to academic load, compensation, syllabi, grading, copyright, and evaluation are documented in the *FPPM*. Faculty teaching online, blended/hybrid, and off-campus courses must meet the same credential requirements as faculty engaged in face-to-face, campus-based courses. Expectations for high quality instruction consistent with the mission and vision of Longwood University apply to all levels of faculty from full-time to adjunct status.

IV.   *Responsibility*

Dean, College of Graduate & Professional Studies: The Dean of CGPS is responsible for the oversight and facilitation of online and blended/hybrid instruction including training, management of the online fee budget, assessment, administration of related policy, and the submission of reports and/or data required by SACS, SCHEV, the institution, or other agencies.

Digital Education Collaborative: The DEC is responsible for the roles described under the definitions section. The DEC works with the Online & Blended/hybrid Faculty Advisory Committee, department chairs, program coordinators, IITS, the Greenwood Library, CAFÉ, Longwood students and other groups or individuals involved with instructional technology. The Digital Education Collaborative reports to the Dean of CGPS.

College Deans and Department Chairs: maintain responsibility for online and blended/hybrid course and program delivery including course scheduling, selection of LOTI trained faculty, enrollment caps, and all other responsibilities associated with face-to-face instruction.

Online Faculty Advisory Committee: This committee will meet regularly with the DEC directors and is responsible for representing faculty regarding online and blended/hybrid instruction, making recommendations, and serving as a liaison with the colleges, departments, and/or programs offering online and blended/hybrid instruction. This committee reports to Faculty Senate.

V.   *Policy*

A. Approval of Online & Blended/Hybrid Faculty
Online faculty are subject to all Longwood academic policies and procedures. Following are some additions to these policies that are specific to online education.

Before teaching an online class, all Longwood faculty, including adjunct faculty, must complete the required LOTI training. LOTI training will be provided every fall, spring and summer term. Faculty may test out of portions of the LOTI training.

Faculty members who have had online or blended/hybrid instruction training *external* to Longwood may be approved to teach online or blended/hybrid for one academic term, during which they must complete LOTI. Evidence of training and/or experience in teaching online must be provided to their department chair who will work with the Dean of the CGPS.

Details and information about LOTI training can be found at www.longwood.edu/dec.

Faculty members may teach any course in blended/hybrid or online format once they have completed the LOTI training. Course delivery decisions should be made at the program and departmental level.

Faculty members teaching courses with at least 25% but less than 50% online instructor-student contact are strongly encouraged to participate in LOTI training due to the high level of online content required.

B. Approval of Online & Blended/Hybrid Programs or Certificates
For SACS Substantive Change reporting purposes (SACSCOC, 2011), departments planning to offer one or more of their **programs** or **certificates** that meet the following criteria must notify the DEC prior to advertising and offering the program or certificate:

1. the majority of instruction occurs through distance education (when students and instructors are not in the same place[7])
2. over 25% of the required courses are delivered using blended/hybrid and/or online format (substantive change reporting to SACS).

C. **Course Review** *(see also under Procedure)*
Due to the unique nature of blended/hybrid and online delivery formats, the demands of accrediting bodies such as SACS and the close scrutiny given to delivery formats that differ from traditional, face-to-face methods, Longwood University will conduct regular reviews of all blended/hybrid and online courses and programs.

D. Faculty Support
Longwood University provides full support for faculty teaching online, blended/hybrid, and off-campus courses including the training, resources, and technical support necessary to provide effective instruction regardless of delivery time and location.

E. Student Support
Longwood University ensures that all forms of student support, including academic support, technical support, and student services are available to all Longwood students regardless of their location. Refer to *Section IV* of the *FPPM* and the *Student*

Support Website for online and off-campus learning.
http://www.longwood.edu/online

F. Student Identity Verification
In compliance with the reauthorization of the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act, the Commission on Colleges' Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requires that member colleges and universities verify student identification for online courses. Students enrolled in online courses at Longwood are required to use a secure login and pass code to access course content including assignments and assessments. Faculty members may also require students in online courses to use a webcam or online test proctoring service to verify a student's identity for certain assignments or assessments.

G. Information and Instructional Technology Services (IITS)
In collaboration with the DEC, Longwood's IITS unit will provide and support the necessary hardware and software for online and blended/hybrid teaching and learning.

H. **Assessment** *(see also under Procedure)*
Longwood conducts sustained, evidence-based and participatory inquiry to determine the effectiveness and quality of online, blended/hybrid, and other distance courses and programs. This inquiry is guided by the Distance Education Policy Statement endorsed by SACS.

I. **Online Enrollment Caps**
Maximum registration in a blended/hybrid or online course is determined by the dean and the chair, with consultation from the faculty teaching the course. Maintaining the quality of the course and the student experience must be the primary factors when considering enrollment caps.

However, Longwood University recommends online enrollments of 15-30 students maximum for blended/hybrid or online courses during the regular terms and 15-20 students maximum in compressed terms. Most blended/hybrid or online courses require more time than face-to-face classes for instructor-student interaction, consistent and timely feedback, and monitoring of student activities to ensure quality of student learning. Additional factors that should be taken into consideration in setting enrollment ranges for blended/hybrid and online courses are the type and level of the course, the degree of interaction required in the course, existing enrollment ranges for the same on-campus course, recommendations from the faculty member teaching the course regarding impact of class size on teaching and learning effectiveness, and the faculty member's previous experience.

J. Student Assessment of Instruction
Student Assessment of Instruction, as conducted by the institution, will occur in all courses, regardless of the location or delivery format. Additional questions related to specific aspects of the blended/hybrid or online learning experience may be added to the SAI.

K. Copyright
Faculty and students are expected to comply with Title 17, United States Code regarding copyright laws and the Technology, Education, and Copyright Harmonization Act as it pertains to the creation and use of online content.

L. Intellectual Property
The ownership of materials created by faculty members for online courses is treated in the same fashion as materials created by faculty members for traditional courses as outlined in Section *Q* of the *FPPM*. If a faculty member receives compensation for developing course materials, content artifacts, etc., he or she has the right to use the material as he or she sees fit, as does the University.

VI.   Procedure

Course Review

Course Design: Blended/hybrid and online courses will be reviewed using the Quality Matters Rubric by trained peer reviewers on a regular basis. Reviews will be facilitated by the DEC in collaboration with the academic departments. The Rubric provides objective, consistent, proactive and positive feedback to blended/hybrid and online faculty regarding the course design.

Course Delivery: To ensure course delivery that is consistent with the university expectations for face-to-face delivery, the following guidelines serve as minimum standards for all online and blended/hybrid courses. Each academic department can customize these guidelines if additional standards are desired.

> **Contain sufficient content** (material, student-instructor interaction, student-student interaction, independent work, assessments) to ensure credit hours are being met (FPPM credit policy). This should be clearly outlined in the course syllabus and visible in the course delivery system. Blended/hybrid courses clearly include face-to-face meeting times on the syllabus and demonstrate how the remaining contact hours are being met.

> **Maintain instructor-student contact hours**: Demonstrate instructor-student contact comparable in time, regularity and substance with face-to-face instruction of the same credit hours.

> **Compressed Terms**: Courses taught during compressed schedules (e.g. winter intersession, summer) should be of identical quality and meet the same learning objectives as those taught during full terms.

Blended/hybrid & Online at Longwood Overall Assessment
In collaboration with department chairs, program coordinators, faculty and students, the DEC will ensure that the components below as they pertain to online and blended/hybrid

courses and programs will be monitored for reporting purposes through a variety of methods will ensure that the components below, as they pertain to online and blended/hybrid courses and programs, will be monitored for reporting purposes through a variety of methods. Assessment methods for online and blended instruction include, but are not limited to, regular review of course design and delivery, surveys, student data, and comparative studies:

- Curriculum and Instruction
- Faculty
- Institutional Effectiveness
- Library and Learning Resources
- Student Services
- Facilities and Finance

The DEC will maintain a *Handbook for Online and Blended/Hybrid Teaching and Learning* with additional procedures, resources and information available at www.longwood.edu/dec.