



No. AcadAdm-05

Classification: Academic Admin

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**POLICY ON BLENDED COURSES**

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Adopted: February 1, 2023

Effective: February 1, 2023

## Policy on Blended Courses

### 1. Context

Dawson College is first and foremost an institution where instruction principally takes place in person. Nonetheless, recognizing that certain pedagogies afforded by blended courses can improve student learning and engagement, the College supports online teaching and learning that are pedagogically sound and add value to students' learning experiences. Based on the College's experience with online instruction, and consistent with research evidence, the online modality of instruction is only appropriate for developing certain learning outcomes and only when certain pedagogical and logistical conditions are met. The College must agree that these conditions have been met for a teacher-course pairing to gain access to the modality of blended courses, which combine in-person and online instruction.

The only form of online instruction approved at the college is blended courses. Only blended courses that have received approval from the College may replace any instruction time with online activities.

In keeping with the College's position that it offers instruction primarily in person, as a general rule, students should always have access to in-person courses.

### 2. Definitions

**Instruction** consists of the first two numbers of the course ponderation, that is, the time in class, labs, studios, internships and clinical placements; instruction does not include homework or office hours.

A **blended course** is a course that replaces some instruction time with online modalities of instruction. At Dawson, a blended course may have online modalities of instruction up to a maximum of 40% of the total instruction time.

**Course design** is the pedagogical plan for a course that includes the course content, course competencies and learning outcomes; the learning activities and assessments are designed to help students achieve those outcomes.

**Synchronous instruction** is any teaching and learning activity that requires the teacher and all students to be in the same online environment, actively participating at the same time.

**Asynchronous instruction** is any teaching and learning activity in which the teacher and the students actively participate at different times and that allows students to complete their work within the given timeline for the activity.

A **flipped course** is not synonymous with a blended course. It is a course design that inverts a pedagogical design in which class time is used for information transfer (e.g., lecture) while homework time is used to actively engage with course materials and competencies (e.g., assignments, exercises, practice problems, etc.). In a flipped course, information transfer takes place independently during the hours devoted to *homework*, while the practice of competencies takes place in learning

activities during the hours devoted to class, lab or studio. A flipped approach does not necessarily include an online component.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to credit courses in the Day and Evening divisions, except for courses in programs leading to an Attestation of College Studies (ACS).

### **4. Policy statement**

#### **4.1 Roles and responsibilities**

##### **1. Teacher**

Teachers who wish to replace any instruction time with online activities must submit a proposal to their discipline complying with the criteria described in article 4.1.2.

##### **2. Discipline**

The discipline assesses all proposals for blended courses and passes its recommendations, including the underlying rationales, to the sector dean.

To receive and maintain the sector dean's approval for blended course sections, a discipline ensures the following conditions:

- teachers' proposals meet the following criteria:
  - they describe the online learning activities and demonstrate the added pedagogical value of these activities;
  - they respect the course's ponderation;
  - the online component does not exceed 40% of the instruction time;
  - the first two and last two weeks of a blended course, or their equivalents for an intensive course, are fully in-person with no instruction time replaced with online instruction;
  - all assessments, such as tests, midterms, and final examinations, that would normally take place in person, must take place in person;
  - to establish coherence for students' on-line experiences, the platforms for on-line instruction are integrated into or are accessible through Moodle, Lea or Teams (the platforms supported by the College); with the permission of the sector dean, exceptions may be permitted.
- quality assurance mechanisms are in place to ensure ongoing pedagogical quality, added pedagogical value, course equity and academic integrity;
- in cases of synchronous instruction, interference with in-person courses is mitigated;
- in cases of asynchronous instruction, the ponderation for class and lab time is respected as something separate from homework;
- the online instructional methods used in the blended course meet the College's definition of instruction.

The discipline must submit evidence in its annual report to demonstrate how the conditions stated above are continuously met in all blended courses.

##### **3. Sector dean**

The sector dean approves the course-teacher pairing for a specific semester, that is, the teacher who is designated to teach a blended course for a defined number of sections of that course.

#### **4.2 Identification of blended courses**

All blended courses must be labelled as such in the official timetable for registration.

#### **5. Policy review and revision**

This policy will be reviewed annually for the first three years and every five years thereafter as part of the College's quality assurance process.

The Academic Dean is responsible for acting upon the recommendations that may arise from the review process.

#### **6. Application of the policy**

The Academic Dean is responsible for the application of this policy.

In the case of disagreements arising about access to the blended course modality, the Academic Dean will arbitrate the dispute and make a final decision.

#### **7. Effective date**

This policy will come into effect on the date it is approved by the Academic Dean.

This policy supersedes all previous policies relating to the offering of online instruction.