The purpose of the Online Learning Consortium is to help learning organizations continually improve the quality, scale, and breadth of their online programs according to their own distinctive missions, so that education will become a part of everyday life, accessible and affordable for anyone, anywhere, at any time, in a wide variety of disciplines.

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The Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs has many indicators that are very similar to the Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Learning. As such, the reader will notice that descriptions for many indicators in this Handbook and accompanying rubric are identical or highly similar to those found in the Quality Scorecard 2014 Handbook: Criteria for Excellence in the Administration of Online Programs. As both are published by the Online Learning Consortium, the editors have been granted permission to reuse appropriate content in the Quality Scorecard Handbook: Criteria for Excellence in Blended Learning Programs revising as needed to maintain relevance to blended learning.
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Expert Panelists

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The Online Learning Consortium Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Blended Learning Programs is the result of a Delphi research study conducted by Dr. Kaye Shelton in 2015. Thank you to the following blended learning educators who willingly participated in the study and contributed their expertise:

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About the Editors

Jennifer Mathes - Dr. Jennifer Mathes is the Director of Strategic Partnerships at the Online Learning Consortium (OLC). In this role, she provides leadership in researching, scoping, managing, and evaluating key projects, programs, and customized solutions that are aligned with OLC’s Advisory Services domestically and internationally. Dr. Mathes has 20 years of experience in both public and private higher education where she has supported online learning initiatives since she taught her first online course in 1997. She has been instrumental in working with start-up online initiatives as well as leading growth in institutions with an existing online program. She holds a doctor of philosophy degree in education from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign where she wrote her dissertation on “Predictors for Student Success in Online Education.” She also has earned a master of science degree in business education and a bachelor of science degree in mass communications from Illinois State University.

Karen Pedersen - Dr. Karen Pedersen is currently the Chief Knowledge Officer for the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) where she serves as a thought leader and presenter on the topics of quality, learner success, military education programs, institutional transformation, and excellence. Prior to joining OLC, Pedersen served as a senior leader in various administrative positions for both public and private higher education institutions. She led award-winning academic operations, marketing units, technology teams, and student support services divisions. During her career, she has envisioned and built a successful online operation from the ground up and launched over 25 innovative online degree programs. Other experiences include leading a system-wide enrollment management transformation, serving on the launch team for a competency-based education initiative, and building academic partnerships domestically and internationally including in Brazil, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Even before coming to OLC, her interest in academic quality led her to deploy the OLC Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs at two institutions where she also served as a “Lean champion” to realize business process improvements across key operational areas such as recruitment, advising, and retention. Prior to starting her administrative career, Pedersen served as a full-time faculty member and currently serves as a faculty member for the OLC/Penn State Institute for Emerging Leadership in Online Learning (IELOL). She holds bachelor of science and master of science degrees from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a doctor of philosophy degree from Oklahoma State University.
In 2011, the Online Learning Consortium (OLC) began sharing our first comprehensive framework used to evaluate online programs. Developed by Dr. Kaye Shelton as part of her doctoral dissertation, the Quality Scorecard for the Administration of Online Programs has been used by many higher education institutions to validate the quality of their program for a variety of stakeholders. Recognizing that the time had come to meet the need for a similar tool to evaluate blended learning programs, the OLC introduced the Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs in 2015.

This handbook was developed to accompany the Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs and provide blended learning program administrators with a resource based on the best practices identified by our panel of experts in blended learning. In this handbook, descriptions have been provided for all 70 indicators along with recommendations for meeting each standard. A special thanks to Dr. Shelton who led the research to develop the Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs and continues to identify new ways to support faculty, staff and administrators in their quest to create quality learning experiences in online, blended and digital learning as a whole.

We would also like to thank the 54 experienced blended program administrators that served as our expert panel for the Delphi study. The Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs, and this handbook, would not be possible without their willingness to share their knowledge of blended learning program administration and participate in the study.

As we find new ways to meet student needs and technology is increasingly relied on to deliver course content, we anticipate continued growth in blended learning. With this growth, it is highly imperative that institutions create an effective learning environment that supports student success. With the Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs, institutions now have a way to validate their blended learning program which includes the option for a formal review provided by the OLC which could lead to an official OLC endorsement.

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Karen Pedersen, Ph.D.
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The Online Learning Consortium's Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs (QSC-BL) is an easy to use process for measuring and quantifying elements of quality within blended learning programs in higher education. By evaluating each of the respective quality indicators within the established eight categories, an administrator of blended learning programs can determine strengths and areas of improvement within their program. The results of this tool can be used to support program improvement and strategic planning initiatives. The Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs could also be used to demonstrate to accrediting bodies, elements of quality within the program as well as an overall level of quality.

The Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs contains 70 unique quality indicators each indicator is worth up to three points. The 70 quality indicators are within eight different categories: Institutional Support; Technology Support; Course Development and Instructional Design; Course Structure; Teaching and Learning; Faculty Support; Student Support; and Evaluation and Assessment.

The administrator will first determine at what level their program meets the intent of each of the quality indicators after examining all procedures and processes. The next step is to determine how that score can be substantiated or demonstrated to others. Each point value is described below.

0 points = Deficient. The administrator does not observe any indications of the quality standard in place.

1 point = Developing. The administrator has found a slight existence of the quality standard but difficult to substantiate. Much improvement is still needed in this area.

2 points = Accomplished. The administrator has found there to be moderate use and can substantiate the quality standard. Some improvement is still needed in this area.

3 points = Exemplary. The administrator has found that the quality standard is being fully implemented, can be fully substantiated, and there is little to no need for improvement in this area.

The Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs is versatile enough to be used to demonstrate the overall quality of blended learning programs, no matter what size or type of institution. Using the Delphi research methodology, a panel of 54 experts came to consensus concerning which of the possible indicators should be included in the scorecard. The indicators were derived from the research literature on blended in 2015. The following range of scores should be applied after scoring, developing justifications, and providing artifacts for substantiation:

90-100% (189—210 points) = Exemplary
80-89% (168—188 points) = Acceptable
70-79% (147—167 points) = Marginal
60-69% (126—146 points) = Inadequate
< 59% (< 125 points) = Unacceptable
Contact the Online Learning Consortium at (617) 716-1414 if interested in a formal program review of blended learning programs.

Note: The Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs contains adaptations of the 24 quality standards identified by the Institute for Higher Education Policy report, *Quality on the Line: Benchmarks for Success in Internet based Distance Education* (2000).
1. The institution has a governance structure to enable systematic and continuous improvement related to the administration of blended education.

2. The institution has a governance structure to enable clear, timely, effective, and comprehensive decision making related to blended learning courses/programs.

3. The blended learning program's strategic plan is reviewed for its continuing relevance, compliance with accreditation objectives, and is periodically improved and updated.

4. The institution has defined the strategic value of blended learning to its enterprise and stakeholders (students, faculty, parents, etc.).

5. The organizational structure of the blended learning program supports the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.

6. The institution has a process for planning and resource allocation for the blended learning program, including financial resources, in accordance with strategic planning.

7. The institution demonstrates sufficient resource allocation, including technology and financial resources, in order to effectively support the mission of blended education.

8. The institution has policy and guidelines that confirm a student who registers in a blended course or blended learning program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. This is done by verifying the identity of a student by using methods such as (a) a secure login and pass code, (b) proctored examinations, or (c) other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

9. A process is followed that ensures that permissions (Creative Commons, Copyright, Fair Use, Public Domain, etc.) are in place for appropriate use of all course materials.
1. **The institution has a governance structure to enable clear systematic and continuous improvement related to the administration of blended education.**

This quality indicator examines the assessment of blended education within the governance structure to ensure continuous improvement. Quality of the blended education program should be evaluated annually, and not just with a one-time examination. Working towards continuous improvement should be a focus throughout all areas of the blended education program. Within this conceptual framework, it is understood that the leadership of any institution is based on applying management techniques to implement its activities and achieve its objectives. Program administration requires a strong commitment by all those involved (faculty, staff, technicians, and students) guaranteeing the efficacy and efficiency of actions implemented for program development are effective. Because goals and objectives are part of the overall institutional strategic plan, these activities and strategies for achieving those goals should be measured within the institutional governance structure on a periodic basis. The Online Learning Consortium (formerly Sloan-C) Pillars of learning effectiveness, access, cost effectiveness, student satisfaction and faculty satisfaction can be used to develop an evaluation framework as they closely align with three primary motivations for adopting blended learning of: enhanced learning effectiveness, enhances access and flexibility to learning and enhanced cost effectiveness (Laumakis, Graham, & Dziuban, 2009).

Use of both face to face and online learning necessitates more careful consideration of appropriate methods of assessment. When using blended learning, the use of face to face classroom observations can be combined with learner tracking tools within course management systems to provide a core complex assessment view (Laumakis et al., 2009). Data capture possibilities within online learning facilitates the ability to not only assess student learning through assignments, test, etc., but also student engagement through analysis of student transactions (Picciano, 2015). Those same data capture possibilities would also apply to those online components of a blended course. For goals not being met, an improvement plan should be developed in order to meet the goal the next time measurement will occur. The systematic evaluation plan should provide valuable feedback that will inform and support blended learning, as well as identify areas to improve (Laumakis et al., 2009).

**Recommendations**

- Establish senior positions to guide strategic and operational objectives and create accountability measures for all designated staff to ensure the organization’s ability to achieve objectives for blended programs.
- Commit to developing and offering necessary services and resources in support of the myriad of technical, social, and learning issues (both internal and external) encountered by students, faculty, and staff engaged in blended education.
- Distinguish how program goals and objectives are part of the overall strategic plan and develop strategies for measuring those goals within the institutional governance structure. Keep accurate records of when goals are met; if they are not achieved, develop an improvement strategy in order to reach the goals for the next measurement period.
- Data from surveys should be made available to faculty as well as instructional designers.
- Develop a reporting cycle that identifies measured goals and improvement strategies for meeting those goals annually.
- Choose one area of the program and focus on its improvement for a one-year period. Once the goals are achieved, select another area to improve the next year.
2. The institution has a governance structure to enable clear, timely, effective, and comprehensive decision making related to blended learning courses/programs.

Academic governance is a regulatory term that clarifies how institutions are organized and how responsibilities are divided and assessed. Common across both public and private institutions, governance structures ensure orderly and continuous operation. This quality indicator examines the governance of blended learning education to ensure its orderly and continuous operation and clear decision making process.

During the emergence of blended learning education in higher education, institutions often structured blended learning education as an auxiliary service or temporary entity. These early programs were often seen as tangential, rather than as integral parts of the institution’s mission and strategic plan. As a result, governance structures for blended learning education were haphazard and institutional decision making regarding blended learning education was neither effective nor comprehensive. However, with rapid growth and acceptance, blended learning education quickly became a core educational service. Continued growth over the past two decades has demonstrated that blended learning education has entered the mainstream (Graham, Woodfield, & Harrison, 2013). Consequently, blended learning programs require attentive planning and structuring that reflects the core educational role online education now plays in higher education.

This quality indicator makes no prescription about the nature of the governance structure. Institutions enjoy the liberty to organize blended education governance structures differently based on size, mission, and role; however, an institution must demonstrate that strategic decision making regarding blended education is appropriately made at the institution level.

Recommendations

- Adopt an institutional approach toward the governance and organization of online and blended education programs.
- Include all institutional divisions that are likely to be involved in and/or affected by the decision making process for blended education in the governance framework.
- Clarify responsibilities for all authorities over blended education programs and communicate that clearly to stakeholders.
- Develop policies and practices for governance via a steering committee with representatives from all divisions impacted by the delivery of blended education.
3. The blended learning program’s strategic plan is reviewed for its continuing relevance, compliance with accreditation objectives, and is periodically improved and updated.

To provide a rigorous blended learning program, an institution must begin with a strategic plan that demonstrates that values that administration and faculty place on blended learning. A strategic plan directs how operations function and resources are allocated in accordance with the goals and objectives established (Moskal, Dziuban, & Hartman, 2013). In fact, the strategic plan provides information on the results that the organization is trying to achieve. Because of this, it is important for the strategic plan to remain current and relevant. Some institutions will develop a five or ten-year strategic plan; however, that does not mean that it is left unchanged for that time period. Each year, it should be reviewed for relevancy and current application.

When developing a strategic plan for a blended learning program, it is necessary to consider both the present and the past activities of the organization in order to reach its goals; in other words, it is vital to know the location of the destination in order to get there. Because the strategic plan should outline principal activities, implementation, and time frames, these should be identified to review for completion and continued relevance. Performance function and duties identified for the institutional members should be periodically reviewed in order to identify potential weaknesses and barrier for completion of the functions and activities.

The strategic plan should include specific activities that support the identified goals and objectives. It is helpful to take the starting and ending dates of activities and to evaluate them periodically to see if they are being fully implemented, or whether it is necessary to make changes to achieve what was planned and/or to update the strategic plan in order to achieve continuous improvement.

Recommendations

- Include specific activities within the strategic plan that should be evaluated periodically. These activities should be scheduled on a timeline for evaluation and updates.
- Evaluate the strategic plan at least once a year and propose necessary improvements to maintain relevancy.
- Within the conceptual framework, it is understood that the leadership of any institution is based on applying management techniques to implement its activities and achieve its objectives. Develop a reporting cycle that reports measured goals and improvement strategies for meeting those goals annually.
- Choose one area of the program and focus on its improvement for a one-year period. Once the goals are achieved, select another area to improve.
4. **The institution has defined the strategic value of blended learning to its enterprise and stakeholders (students, faculty, parents, etc.).**

The extent to which quality may be achieved in blended learning programs depends on many factors; chief among them is the degree to which the organization’s strategic plan, mission, vision define and successfully communicate to the stakeholders. Systematic planning focuses on expressing the blended education strategic objectives within the institutional vision, developing guidelines and operational procedures for programmatic oversight, committing to the quality delivery of services, and establishing budgetary and financial protocols that address the unique aspects of blended education. These actions provide a framework for the relationships among program development, strategy and growth, and operational objectives as well as help to establish the institution or program’s commitment to quality.

There is a tendency among colleges and universities to focus solely on the mode of delivery for blended learning. Such a limited approach does not convey the value of blended education to the institution as a whole. The extent to which the institution’s vision for and operational approach to blended education is articulated to all stakeholders is critical for the quality of blended education programs. Regardless of the operational model, the system can mirror the campus virtually. Blended learning should fit within the institutional goals and be aligned with specific strategies (Niemiec & Otte, 2009).

Strategic development of blended programs that leverage the expertise of multiple stakeholders across the college or university provides the necessary collective efforts that contribute to quality in blended education. Clarity of vision, buy-in, oversight, services, and cost are key areas for consideration with respect to defining the institution-wide strategic value of blended programs.

**Recommendations**

- Affirm the value of blended education within the institutional vision by linking operational activities to strategic objectives. Also emphasize the institution’s commitment to the value of blended education by announcing it in prominent places such as the institution’s and program’s home pages on the website, the president’s welcome page, and student and faculty development centers on campus.
- Establish senior positions to guide strategic and operational objectives and create accountability measures for all designated staff to ensure the organization’s ability to achieve objectives for blended programs.
5. The organizational structure of the blended learning program supports the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.

In any organization, it is important to maintain an open organizational culture, and for its members to show commitment and act responsibly, thereby enable the organization to achieve excellence and success. Typically, when we speak of organizational culture, we are referring to specific patterns of behavior that may be recognized, transmitted, and learned (Schein, 1984). Likewise, Mintzberg (1979) defined the organizational structure as the sum of all the ways in which work is divided into different activities and coordinated. It is the sum of the values that define the relationships between its members.

It is essential for every organization to develop a strategic plan that outlines the principle activities, implementation, and timeframes, including blended education programs. In addition, it is important for the functions carried out by the members of an institution to be clearly defined, so that together, they can meet the institutional goals; i.e. each person should know his or her rights, duties and activities, so that optimal results may be achieved. Without a strategic plan, every member of the organization would be working in isolation, and unaware of the results that the organization is aiming to achieve.

The policies of the institution should clearly reflect the institution's values and the part played by its personnel. If the institutional policies are clear and coherent, they will be key to achieving educational quality and, moreover, enable all processes to be carried out in an effective and efficient manner. For all these reasons, it is essential for the blended program structure to support the policies, the strategic plan, the values and the culture of the organization.

Recommendations

- Provide informative opportunities to ensure all members of the organization become familiar with the strategic plan, supporting policies, and the values and culture of the organization in which they work.
- Survey members of the organization to find out how clearly the communication regarding the strategic plan has been and how it supports blended education.
- Create an organizational structure chart that is visually supported by the mission and vision of the institution. Develop justifications as to why the organizational structure is appropriately aligned.
6. The institution has a process for planning and resource allocation for the blended learning program, including financial resources, in accordance with strategic planning.

Planning involves a process for determining the goals of an organization, resources that are to be utilized, and general policies that will guide the acquisition and administration of such resources, supporting the organization as a whole. Within this process, various actions are taken, one of which is that the organization as a whole analyzes and evaluates the financial resources needed to develop its activities and satisfy the needs of its stakeholders, using different strategies according to the particular structure of the program. The strategic plan for the blended program should support the need for resource allocation.

Each blended education program should have its own budget, so that the origin and application of economic, material, and endowment resources may be identified. The blended program cannot be successful without an adequate budget and other necessary resources such as personnel. In the early days of blended education, many programs tried to operate with whatever funds could be generated from grants or extra funding. While seeking outside funding is still an option, we now understand that a blended education program will not have long-term viability without its own long term funding sources.

**Recommendations**

- Engage all members involved in the blended education program in the process, so that a financial plan is developed by individuals throughout the organization at different levels affected by the blended program and in different support units so their specific needs may be budgeted.
- Develop clear budgetary guidelines for units, taking into account cost and the extent to which budgeting and accounting practices can clearly delineate a true return on investment. Distinguish between benefits of blended education and how each may or may not impact the overall unit cost in terms of delivering services, infrastructure, and staffing.
- Estimate the resources assigned to each of the main activities described in the blended program’s strategic plan. Check halfway through the budget year to be sure adequate resources still exist for all activities identified in the strategic plan for that year.
7. The institution demonstrates sufficient resource allocation, including technology and financial resources, in order to effectively support the mission of blended education.

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Planning involves a process for determining the goals of an organization, resources that are to be utilized, and general policies that will guide the acquisition and administration of such resources, supporting the organization as a whole. Within this process, various actions are taken, one of which is that the organization as a whole analyzes and evaluates the financial resources needed to develop its activities and satisfy the needs of its stakeholder, using different strategies according to the particular structure of each program. The strategic planning for the blended program should support the need for resource allocation as a comprehensive framework of support is one of the essential success factors in blended learning (Niemiec & Otte, 2009).

Each blended program should have its own budget, so that the origin and application of economic, material, and endowment resources may be identified. The blended program cannot be successful without an adequate budget and other necessary resources such as personnel. Blended learning, supported by pedagogy, necessitates that one of the essential resources will include people as well as technology. Instructors must acquire the skills and abilities to leverage technology to facilitate effective student learning (Poon, 2013). As blended learning targets core students and has the ability to positively impact all students, it may not necessitate a special stream of funding if it is seen as a core expense (Niemec & Otte, 2009). Seeking additional outside funding is always encouraged.

Recommendations

- Engage all members involved in the blended program in the process, so that a financial plan is developed by individuals throughout the organization at different levels affected by the blended program and in different support units so their specific needs may be budgeted.
- Develop clear budgetary guidelines for units, taking into account cost and the extent to which budgeting and accounting practices can clearly delineate a true return on investment. Distinguish between benefits of blended education and how each may or may not impact the overall unit cost in terms of delivering services, infrastructure, and staffing.
- Estimate the resources assigned to each to the main activities described in the blended program’s strategic plan. Check halfway through the budget year to be sure adequate resources still exist for all activities identified in the strategic plan for that year.
8. The institution has policy and guidelines that confirm a student who registers in a blended course or blended learning program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives academic credit. This is done by verifying the identity of a student by using methods such as (a) a secure login and pass code, (b) proctored examinations, or (c) other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

Regarding student authentication and the online component of blended courses and programs, the US Higher Education and Opportunity Act of 2208 (HEOA) mandated that accrediting agencies must require:

An institution that offers distance education or correspondence education to have processes through which the institution establishes that the student who registers in a distance education or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the program and receives the academic credit. (H.R. 4137 -- 110th Congress, 2008)

In May 2009, the Negotiated Rule Making Committee on accreditation clarified the requirement by instructing regional accreditors to require that institutions which require distance education programs have processes in place for distance education. The accrediting agency is in compliance if it:

1. Requires institutions to verify the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the institution, methods such as-
   a. A secure login and pass code;
   b. Proctored examinations; and
   c. Identification technologies that are effective in verifying student identification;

2. Makes clear in writing that institutions must use processes that protect student privacy and notify students of any projected additional charges associated with the verification of student identity at the time of registration or enrollment (20 U.S.C. 1099b).

Authentication is analogous to taking attendance in a face-to-face course. The sophistication with which students are authenticated is largely a function of the effort of the instructor and institution (Bailie & Jortberg, 2009). For example, for all classes, institutions normally produce class rosters listing students who have registered and paid for courses. This roster is provided to the instructor, who in turn, has the responsibility of making sure students on the roster are who they say they are, and that they are the ones performing the academic work throughout the course. These same principles apply to the online component of blended education; however, the methods of authentication are different according to whether students are physically or virtually present.

Technology plays a more important role in the authentication of students in the online environment. As identification technology evolves and becomes more sophisticated, the ability to check student identity will become easier in both virtual and physical environments. On the other hand, the technological sophistication of students determined to commit academic fraud will also increase (Bedford, Gregg, & Clinton, 2009). Consequently, all institutions should regularly examine their student authentication process and be cognizant of technological advances that make student authentication more accurate, affordable, and easy to use.
Recommendations

- Employ a secure student login and password process for students to access the online course materials, student information, financial aid processing, and so on.
- Adopt a proctoring system for student examinations completed online. This may include both offline and/or online authentication. Online methods may include webcams, typing heuristics, or other biometric identification.
- Authenticate students upon login with secondary authentication, up to and including biometric authentication.
9. A process is followed that ensures that permissions (Creative Commons, Copyright, Fair Use, Public Domain, etc.) are in place for appropriate use of all course materials.

The growth of openly shared content created by authors who encourage the re-mixing of their work has forged new frontiers into the availability of quality educational resources available at low or no cost. This new sharing economy brings with it a whole new mix of questions about what constitutes a fair use. Faculty are increasingly unsure of what route to take when considering authoring and sourcing content for blended courses. Faculty find it difficult to navigate the permissions for content collected and determining if those permissions permit the faculty’s intended use of the content.

The institution has a standard for distribution of course content, through the teaching and learning process, with specific standards for blended course content:

- Course intellectual property ownership is defined for the institution, department, and faculty;
- A policy for citing permissions for content intended for distribution in a blended course.

Institutional support is available to staff and faculty who wish to author new or derivative work for distribution or create a compilation of resourced content in a blended course:

- A specialist of copyright and fair use.
- A specialist of instructional design.
- A specialist of course and program assessment.

**Recommendations**

- Provide instructional design support to faculty on effective use of educational resources for distributed learning activities and pairing appropriate content with appropriate learning activities.
- Provide education (guides, tools, training, policy) on authorship of new and derivative works, the differences between open/shared works and works protected by copyright or patent, and the benefits open education resources may provide in contrast to use of resources protected by copyright.
- Provide education [guides, tools, training] on open education resource clearing houses, how to assess the quality of open education resources, and discerning the types resources and their best use.
- Provide education [guides, tools, training] on the nature of fair use and understanding the legal scope of different use methodologies: freely shared, limited by an open copyright such as Creative Commons, or protected by a national copyright or patent.
- Provide education (guides, tools, training, policy) on properly citing open and protected content within blended courses.
References for Institutional Support


Creative Commons. (2016). *Explore the Creative Commons licenses.* Retrieved from https://creativecommons.org/choose/

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Technology Support

1. The course delivery technology is considered a mission critical enterprise system and supported as such.

2. Whether the institution maintains local data centers (servers), and/or contracts for outsourced, hosted services or cloud services, those systems are administered in compliance with established data management practices such as the Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) standards, which include appropriate power protection, backup solutions, disaster recovery plans, etc.

3. The technology systems related to the delivery of blended learning programs are highly reliable and operable with measurable standards being utilized such as system downtime tracking and task benchmarking.*

4. A documented technology plan that includes electronic security measures (e.g., password protection, encryption, secure online or proctored exams if applicable, etc.) is in place and operational to ensure quality, in accordance with established standards and regulatory requirements.*

5. The institution has an established (updated and continuously reviewed) contingency plan for the continuance of data centers and support services in the event of prolonged service disruption.

6. A centralized system provides support for building and maintaining the blended education infrastructure.*

7. Faculty, staff, and students are supported in the development and use of new technologies and skills applicable to blended learning.
1. The course delivery technology is considered a mission critical enterprise system and supported as such.

The institution must consider the blended programs' technological infrastructure as mission critical evidenced by a commitment of resources, continuous improvement processes, and a commitment to near 100% uptime. Students and faculty must have access to blended course materials when needed. Learning management systems for course delivery, in whatever format, must be an institutional priority. Coordinating risk management and technology upgrade strategies with online programs is a way to leverage existing institutionalized culture and infrastructure. There must be dedicated technology support personnel available 24 x 7 x 365 for solving issues, as online and blended students access course materials at various times of the day, typically outside of the daytime Monday through Friday hours. Both online and blended class students use course technology during the evenings and on weekends (Moskal, Dzuiban, & Hartman, 2013).

Recommendations

- Seek collaboration between blended program administrators and institutional technology services in order to be involved with the development and updating of the technology support plan.
- Establish and clearly communicate to all personnel involved emergency response procedures for unexpected downtime.
- Budget and plan in order to maintain the technological infrastructure for course delivery.
- Utilize metrics and benchmarking for upgrading and improving technologies used to support the blended education program.
2. **Whether the institution maintains local data centers (servers), and/or contracts for outsourced, hosted services or cloud services, those systems are administered in compliance with established data management practices such as the Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) standards, which include appropriate power protection, backup solutions, disaster recovery plans, etc.**

Maintaining the myriad of technological infrastructure systems required for the delivery and support of blended education programs requires enterprise-level commitment to ensure system availability, response time, data integrity, student privacy, and system security. Such practices change quickly as technology advances and services evolve. Institutions should create and adhere to Information Technology (IT) and data management. The Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) standards (or similar), maintain established and evolving best practices for the management of quality information technology services. The ITSM standards should be followed according to the institution's academic policies. This quality indicator recognizes that blended program technological support is best provided by technologists who subscribe to and adhere to established technology industry quality standards.

**Recommendations**

- Base current technological support operations on established information technology industry standards that ensure quality information technology services.
- Provide sufficient budget support in order to ensure technology support staff personnel are able to participate in ongoing professional development.
- Monitor regularly and adhere to best practices in information technology in order to update and expand services as needed.
3. The technology systems related to the delivery of blended learning programs are highly reliable and operable with measurable standards being utilized such as system downtime tracking and task benchmarking.*

*If the lights go out in a traditional classroom, it may be an inconvenience. If the system crashes, it’s a calamity! (Phipps & Merisotis, 2000, p. 15).

When students are enrolled in blended courses, the importance of reliable technical delivery systems is as critical to the quality of education as physical classrooms have been to traditional education. In fact, for an Internet-delivered classroom to be offline, it is analogous to locking the classroom door to students before they arrive for class. Technology delivery systems should be responsive and operational during peak load times so that students are able to focus on academic content and be minimally disrupted by unresponsive technology. Providing a stable and reliable technical infrastructure is essential as it influences learning (Gibbons & Wentworth, 2002), student satisfaction (O’Brien & Renner, 2002), and student retention (Fetzner, 2003). Blended education programs require a strong technical infrastructure to provide the foundational structures within the online component for how students and faculty interact with each other and with course content.

In the early days of online education, it was common for institutions to host the learning management software and other critical infrastructure onsite using institutionally owned hardware and staff. It is now more common to encounter online, and thereby blended, programs that have contracted with external service providers that offer hosted or cloud-based services external of the institutional network. Regardless of the service method selected, blended programs should be aware of the quality of service and work to ensure the least disruptive learning environment is provided.

No technology can be expected to provide 100% uptime. All systems will need to be taken down for updates, upgrades, and repair. Larger programs may be able to establish redundant server systems that allow for continuous uptime, or programs of any size may contract for such with an external data center. At a minimum, expected downtime should be scheduled well in advance, completed during times of least disruption, and communicated to students, faculty, and blended program staff with sufficient prior notice.

Recommendations

- Provide students and faculty 24x7x365 access (aside from pre-scheduled maintenance periods) for all necessary technical systems such as the learning management system, media servers, etc. that support the blended education program.
- Carefully monitor system downtime and develop data measures to ensure future reliability with a goal of 100% uptime.
- Establish standard metrics for system performance such as webpage load times and include consistent measurements for monitoring goal achievement.
- Monitor system utilization during peak usage times in order to ensure that system stability is maintained.
- Track and document program growth and technology usage in order to project and scale future technology needs.
- Determine lowest use periods and use them for necessary maintenance periods if redundant systems are not financially possible. Publish the downtime schedule on the LMS, institutional website, via email, tweets, and through other applicable communication methods so that students and faculty are fully aware and can plan accordingly.
A documented technology plan that includes electronic security measures (e.g., password protection, encryption, secure online or proctored exams if applicable, etc.) is in place and operational to ensure quality, in accordance with established standards and regulatory requirements.*

A technology plan should ensure that the blended program’s technological infrastructure adequately supports the academic environment. The technology plan should encompass all technological infrastructure required by the program, including systems hosted locally and offsite, or through contracted services. At a minimum, such systems include the learning management system, user authentication systems, collaboration software, and testing software. As consumer expectations coincide with continuously emerging technology applications, technology plans should reflect virtually every business and academic process (National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2011) and thus must be flexible to adapt to fiscal and environmental contexts. Therefore, the hallmarks of effective technology plans include explicitly linking the plan to the institution’s mission and vision; engaging stakeholders in identifying current conditions and assumptions; prioritizing stakeholder needs and desires; and publicizing timelines and benchmarks via clear communications channels (Geer, 2006; November, Staudt, Costello, & Huske, 1996; White & Weight, 2000).

WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET) (2009) recommended that institutions provide “secure student logins and passwords to access online courses and related resources, discussions, assignments and assessments” (p. 1). Currently, with the ubiquity of commercial learning management systems, much of the responsibility for establishing login credentials and encryption can be appropriately managed by these vendors. However, according to the HEO Act of 2008, as the technology for authentication becomes more prevalent, institutions will be required to do more than just provide a secure login process (H.R.B 4137-110th Congress, 2008).

The HEO Act of 2008 requirement spurred numerous hardware and software options to authenticate students and the electronic proctoring of exams. These include options for using biometric data, secondary authentication with challenge questions, keystroke heuristics, use of webcams, and browser lockdown software (Foster, 2008).

Recommendations

- Demonstrate full program compliance with requirements outlined by the HEO Act of 2008 for the online portion of the course.
- Provide students secure login credentials to online course materials using current authentication standards.
- Develop and disseminate to all students and faculty policies that clearly indicate expectations for Acceptable Use, including access to courses, assignments, and related materials.
- Establish and enforce penalties for students and faculty violating Acceptable Use policy.
- Provide faculty training in how to use technology and instructional methods that support academic integrity.
- Monitor innovations in authentication technologies and proctoring and evaluate their fit for the program.
5. The institution has an established (updated and continuously reviewed) contingency plan for the continuance of data centers and support services in the event of prolonged service disruption.

Because the technology infrastructure is mission critical to the blended education program, the institution should have in place a technology system that ensures the integrity of program data and protects against catastrophic loss. Similarly, the institution should have a contingency plan in place in the event of major systems disruption. Institutional services that provide for constant availability, backup, archival, data security, and business continuance in the event of catastrophic failures demonstrate institutional commitment to the program.

Recommendations

- Provide budget support for a system backup solution with off-site vaulting (physical, electronic, or both).
- Develop, maintain, and periodically review and update a disaster recovery and business continuity plan.
- Conduct disaster recovery or mock disaster drills periodically to verify system data backup and that restoration process is viable and maintains data integrity.
- Establish goals for how quickly system data is recovered in case of system failure.
6. **A centralized system provides support for building and maintaining the blended education infrastructure.*

Commitment from the institutional chief information officer (CIO) ensures the blended program is aligned with overall college or university priorities and demonstrates technology commitment at the highest level regardless whether the services are ultimately provided in-house, via a consortium, or by out-sourcing. For this quality indicator, a centralized system means that the technology that supports the blended program is overseen by an institutional technology decision-making and support structure. Having a centralized system for the infrastructure can be effective in several ways: it reduces complexity and misunderstanding between technical staff, it standardizes support (single help desk support and user experience). Centralized support enables a “focus on faculty, student, and local process issues” (Fetzner, 2003, p. 240). The centralized system needs to be coordinated, or clear communication needs to be in place, between the institution’s CIO/IT infrastructure and the chief academic officers (CAO) setting clear expectations of desired support for new and ongoing academic business, such as blended learning.

This does not mean that all technology services need to reside in one space or that they be directly managed by institutional staff. In fact, there may be a mixture of outsourced and in house technology solutions that support a blended program. The quality indicator expects that the institutional technology support has knowledge of the technology and necessary support to build and sustain the program and actively advises to ensure continued reliability.

**Recommendations**

- Design the centralized system to parallel the best aspects of online learning; make it “team-based, collaborative, comprehensive, action-oriented, and non-hierarchical” (Fetzner, 2003, p. 232).
- Include the following in the centralized system: “academic support, training coordination, instructional design and support, library support, technical support, and student services” (Fetzner, 2003, p. 234).
- Collect and review the perspectives of program stakeholders in order to continuously improve the technology systems.
- Utilize the centralized system as an information exchange and for benchmarking service calls, response times, and problem resolution.
7. Faculty, staff, and students are supported in the development and use of new technologies and skills applicable to blended learning.

The increasing changes in workforce requirements and students' need for flexible learning options will continue to drive higher education in the use of new technologies to better serve its students. In fact, students “expect their education to be personalized to their individual wants and needs; they expect their education to be easily achieved and focused on the skills they will require in their future profession. In other words, most students are not learning for learning’s sake or for getting a degree; instead, they want the skills needed to enter the workforce” (Tamarkin, 2010, para. 11). Because of this need for student preparation, an institution should support new technology initiatives that will better support learning and prepare students for the current workforce.

When new technologies are adopted and implemented, all those involved (students, faculty, and institutional staff members who will be supporting all those involved) will most likely need some form of training. Dalziel (2003) pointed out that “faculty need to know how to use technology to incorporate different types of learning media to create a complete educational package that makes sense to their students” (p. 669). Students will benefit from help desk support, tutorials, and demonstrations, and access to a knowledge base for self-help. Staff will need training in how best to support both the faculty and students with the new technology.

**Recommendations**

- Provide ongoing training for faculty and other relevant personnel. The times and days should be varied so that all stakeholders can be reached.
- Encourage faculty to share how they embrace new technologies for teaching and learning and how it better serves or better engages their students.
- Provide faculty and students with opportunities to explore new and existing technologies for creating and curating blended course components.
- Provide students with technical support, opportunities for self-training modules, and tutorials on new technologies that are implemented for teaching and learning.
References for Technology Support


1. A course development process is followed that ensures courses are designed with alignment between course materials, assessments and learning objectives so that students develop the necessary knowledge and skills to meet measurable learning outcomes at the course and program level.

2. Guidelines regarding minimum requirements for course development, design, and delivery of blended instruction (such as course syllabus elements, course materials, assessment strategies, faculty feedback) are followed.

3. There is consistency in course development for student retention (enrollment and course completion) and quality (i.e., courses in a program have a consistent navigational structure).

4. A blended course should be designed as one cohesive whole, incorporating both face-to-face and online experiences in complementary ways.

5. Instructional materials (both online and in-class) and course syllabi are reviewed periodically to ensure they meet the blended course's and program's learning outcomes.

6. Course assignments and activities are reviewed periodically to ensure they meet the blended courses' and program's learning outcomes.

7. Student-centered instruction is considered during the course development process (i.e., student engagement, immersion, and personal responsibility).

8. Course design promotes both faculty and student engagement.

9. Course workloads are reviewed to ensure it is appropriate for designated credit allocation.

10. A process is established and followed for evaluating the effectiveness of current and emerging technologies to support the achievement of learning outcomes and delivering course content.

11. Course embedded technology actively supports the achievement of learning outcomes and delivering course content and unnecessary use of technology is minimized.

12. Usability tests are conducted and applied and recommendations based upon Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAGs) are incorporated in the course design process.

13. Curriculum development is a core responsibility for faculty (i.e., faculty should be involved in either the development or the decision making for the blended curriculum choices).

14. Faculty support and resources are provided to promote the best use of blended delivery method in course development and instructional design to facilitate teaching and learning.
1. A course development process is followed that ensures courses are designed with alignment between course materials, assessments and learning objectives so that students develop the necessary knowledge and skills to meet measurable learning outcomes at the course and program level.*

Alignment is a key consideration for accreditation; yet, not all courses are instructionally designed so the learning outcomes are clearly measured. Learning outcomes must be measured in order to know if students are meeting course goals and program goals. This can be done so that “individual courses within the curriculum help learners progress from basic, introductory levels of knowledge and skills to higher level objectives for critical thinking, mastery of skills, and demonstration of knowledge common to a discipline” (Porter, 2004, p. 31). In order to accomplish this, Puzziferro and Shelton (2008) recommended courses be developed with the following goals for learning:

- mastering information, such as key concepts, terms and ideas through exposure to the information and recall,
- progressively grasping the information by practicing learning activities that focus on recall, trial and error, and building the vocabulary and comprehension of the information,
- applying the information to a problem-based situation that can be collaborative,
- analyzing the problem further by deconstructing the information and reconstructing it into a solution by applying and analyzing the information, begin to recognize the patterns or relationships between the information and the problem, and creating new knowledge and the ability to reason about the information and apply it practically to situations.

Thus, courses should be designed to reinforce the interactive stages of learning towards the mastery of objectives in the overall program and discipline.

**Recommendations**

- Clearly demonstrate that blended course learning outcomes are measured each term and compared to learning outcome goals.
- Clearly demonstrate that blended course outcomes contribute to the program learning outcomes within which the course occurs.
- Use formative and normative assessment criteria in courses and programs to support the learning outcome being measured and to help students to gauge progress towards mastery.
- Build practice activities into blended course design that encourage students to check understanding, refine understanding by applying it, and test understanding with feedback from peers and experts.
2. **Guidelines regarding minimum requirements for course development, design, and delivery of blended instruction (such as course syllabus elements, course materials, assessment strategies, faculty feedback) are followed.**

Although faculty members are considered experts in their disciplines, they cannot be expected to be experts at developing blended course materials (although certainly there are those who are very good). For consistency, the institution (or college) should provide guidelines leading to consistent design for blended course development and delivery (Mesh, 2016). In developing an effective blended learning environment, just like in online learning, it is important before developing the course, to determine what quality looks like in course design and plan the appropriate standard (Puzziferro & Shelton, 2008). From the institution’s vision of quality, the framework for course quality should emerge to guide development of course materials that are specifically effective for blended teaching and learning. Providing standards or a course development rubric does not mean that all courses have to be identical. It simply means there are basic components that are standard to all courses.

Institutions can create their own standards, or select and/or adapt a variety of standards and blended course rubrics that evaluate quality. For example, the Online Learning Consortium provides the Quality Course Teaching and Instructional Practice (QCTIP) scorecard and co-sponsors the OSCQR course review rubric. Both tools can be used in part or in whole to evaluate the effectiveness of course design as well as addressing teaching the course and using good pedagogical strategies for engaging blended students.

**Recommendations**

- Provide clear guidelines and recommendations for minimum standards that should be closely followed in the course development process before course development begins.
- Include in the standards, effective practices for blended teaching and expectations for faculty obligations, including expectations for faculty presence in the course and communication response time.
- Provide effective best practices and models of exemplary courses before the course development begins.
- Develop and implement a process that compares developed blended courses to established standards and guidelines on a regular basis.
3. There is consistency in course development for student retention (enrollment and course completion) and quality (i.e., courses in a program have a consistent navigational structure).

A well-designed blended course boosts learning and enhances student retention (Amaral & Shank, 2010). Implementation of design tools such as the Blended Learning Toolkit (Moskal, Thompson, & Futch, 2015), EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative Discovery Tool: Blended Workshop Guide (EDUCAUSE, Diaz, & Strickland, 2009), or the Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008) will ensure consistency in the design of the blended course, to facilitate learner interaction and engagement. Factors that enhance students’ success in blended learning, include using student success strategies identified in the Blended Learning Toolkit such as welcoming students to the course, consistent syllabus organization, guide to navigating the course, a “getting started module”, creating opportunities for collaboration and engagement, tips for success, frequent and timely feedback, guidelines on using technology, links to resources, and time management assistance (UCF & AASCU, n.d.).

Intentional course development should address quality concerns such as: consistency in course rigor and achievement of outcomes with blended courses in courses delivered using either fully face to face or online, preparedness of faculty to facilitate learning in the course, as well as evaluation activities that evaluate course learning objectives in a manner congruent with systematic evaluation plan providing a feedback loop (Niemec & Otte, 2009). Use of peer review for the blended course, such as the Blended Course Peer Review Form (available from Creative Commons), the SUNY OSCQR course review rubric, Quality Course Teaching and Instructional Practice (QCTIP) or the Blended Quality Scorecard will facilitate the assessment and measurement of quality, facilitating continual quality improvement as well as providing data or direction for strategic planning.

**Recommendations**

- Use of resources, such as the BlendKit Course, Community of Inquiry design principles or EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative Discovery Tool: Blended Learning Workshop Guide to ensure consistency in the design of the blended course, to facilitate learner interaction and engagement.
- Use of peer review and a quality rubric to ensure quality and consistency in blended courses. Rubrics are available from the OLC Blended Quality Scorecard or the Blended Course Implementation Checklist (available through Creative Commons license).
4. A blended course should be designed as one cohesive whole, incorporating both face-to-face and online experiences in complementary ways.

When designing a blended course, it is important to fully integrate both the face-to-face and online components into each other. There can be a tendency to simply “bolt on” online components to a face-to-face course, instead the course should be seen as if two cans of differently colored paints are being mixed. This mix should yield a new paint where the original colors no longer exist as independent paints. It is important that the design of a blended learning course is not just a temporal construct.

Both the face-to-face and online components of a blended learning course need to be aligned with the stated learning objectives of the course. In addition, the course learning objectives should be used to guide not just the activities of the course, but also the portion of the course in which the activity occurs. The face-to-face portion should be student-centered while the online activities are both challenging and engaging to complement the face-to-face portion.

**Recommendations**

- The course should be designed in a way that integrates both the online and face-to-face portions in a clear and concise way.
- Online materials are designed to support the face-to-face session.
- Online resources are provided that allows for the activities that began in the face-to-face session to continue online.
5. **Instructional materials (both online and in-class) and course syllabi are reviewed periodically to ensure they meet the blended course's and program's learning outcomes.**

According to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Core Requirement 2.5 (SACS, 2012), institutions should engage “in ongoing, integrated, and institution-wide research-based planning and evaluation processes that (1) incorporate a systematic review of ... outcomes; (2) result in continuing improvement in institutional quality; and (3) demonstrate the institution is effectively accomplishing its mission.” Furthermore, Comprehensive Standard 3.3.1 prescribes that the institution will identify “expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results ... in educational programs, to include student learning outcomes.” Each of the regional accreditors has similar recommendations. For continuous improvement, the institution should have a periodic review of learning outcomes, analyze the student achievement data, and develop improvements based on those data. This should include blended courses as well as traditional and online courses.

Once blended course materials are developed, the course development process should not end at that point. In fact, rarely should blended course materials remain completely unaltered. Likewise, instructional design models recommend an evaluation process should be implemented after the course is first taught (and in subsequent offerings) and possible revisions addressed for continuous improvement, with the ultimate goal being the achievement of learning outcomes. All blended courses should be reviewed on a periodic basis.

**Recommendations**

- Engage in a systematic review of learning outcomes to determine currency, relevance, and measurability.
- Implement a process where all courses are reviewed and updated on a recurring basis.
- Systematically review and refine blended instructional materials to be sure they support the course syllabus and current learning outcomes.
- Systematically review blended course materials and course syllabi to ensure relevance of educational technology and assessment activities.
6. **Course assignments and activities are reviewed periodically to ensure they meet the blended courses' and program's learning outcomes.**

As students progress through a blended course, assessments must be developed that measure the level of student success and mastery of the materials. These assessments may take many forms; however, it is critical that assessments map exactly to the course content, and that they are defined early in the course design process. Assessments for the blended environment do not necessarily need to match assessments given in face-to-face courses, although for comparison purposes, the faculty may choose to administer the same assessment. Assessments should be mapped early in the design process. Assessments that work well for blended coursework include papers/essays, case studies, problem-based activities, quizzes and tests, and group projects. Papers and other written assessments are often effective evaluation tools for blended learning, as they can indicate a student’s critical thinking and direct mastery of the material.

New forms of blended assessment are constantly evolving that allow a more student-centered approach. Properly designed and implemented assessments should provide the instructor with evidence of the students’ learning, the efficacy of the course materials, and provide input for future enhancements of the course materials.

**Recommendations**

- Map course assessments early in the course design process.
- Recognize that a single assessment can measure several learning objectives.
- Encourage the use of rubrics for assessment that guide students and provide feedback.
- Provide self-assessment tools (that provide automatic feedback) to students as they progress through the class.
7. **Student-centered instruction is considered during the course development process (i.e., student engagement, immersion, and personal responsibility).**

Student-centered instruction acknowledges the shifting roles in the classroom (Dewey, 1938; Piaget, 1963; Vygotsky, 1978) so that students learn best when they are personally motivated to obtain new skills, behaviors, and knowledge to solve an authentic challenge. Thus, blended education is particularly well-suited for this shift in roles because of its capacity to draw on individual perspectives and compare them with multiple perspectives. In learner-centered design, the teacher shifts to the facilitator of learning and a model of expert learning, rather than a dispenser of knowledge (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, n.d.), and thus promotes interaction among learners to solve authentic, real-world problems, and collaborate on solutions and learning paths. Blended instructors are seen by students as serving an organizing and course design function more than traditional roles of lecturer, discussion facilitator, or social supporter (Hung & Chou, 2015).

**Recommendations**

- When designing the blended course, identify challenge questions that trigger individual responses and motivate interaction among learners.
- Connect assignments with learner’s lives and previous experiences.
- Design activities and assignments that engage students in learning how they learn.
- Reduce the role of lectures and direct instruction activities and focus on student problem-solving, collaboration, and learning paths.
8. **Course design promotes both faculty and student engagement.**

Blended learning offers the opportunity to engage learners with each other and with the course content. Both students and faculty can have a rich and rewarding experience.

Blended delivery offers a wide array of opportunities for engagement through course design and delivery. Course design that allows students to interact with content, faculty, and classmates helps maintain a highly engaged environment (Swan, 2004). In fact, several of Chickering and Ehrmann's (1996) Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education center on all levels of interaction and indicate how technology can be used effectively for interaction.

Today, faculty and students are utilizing more engaging and collaborative activities that expand engagement, such as immersive environments, blogs, wikis, audio and video productions, and collaborative projects. The Online Learning Consortium's Effective Practices provide excellent examples of interactive collaboration that engages students (Online Learning Consortium, 2016).

**Recommendations**

- Provide instructional design support for faculty to transition from a classroom-based (possibly lecture-based) course to an interactive blended course that emphasizes active learning. This should include examples and models of best practices.
- Provide faculty with the appropriate training required to use technology to increase interaction.
- Encourage faculty to provide students with clearly defined expectations regarding methods and frequency of engagement with other students, faculty, and content.
- Provide the means for students to provide feedback regarding the level of engagement offered by the design of the course.
9. **Course workloads are reviewed to ensure it is appropriate for designated credit allocation.**

Blended course workloads should be reviewed periodically to ensure that the workload is consistent with credit/clock hour as defined by the organization and USDE (2015) to ensure compliance with regulatory and accrediting requirements. This will include traditional seat time as well as time needed to complete designated learning activities to achieve the course learning outcomes using the blended format. Academic organizations will need to be able to provide support for the equitable distribution of credit among blended, online and face to face courses (Forum on Education Abroad, 2014). It is important to note that while the course workload does not differentiate between face to face or online learning activities, it does refer to an equitable amount of student work (USDE, 2013).

**Recommendations**

- Use a standard process for defining credit/clock hours to ensure consistency in allocation as well as congruency with regulatory and accreditation standards
- Periodically review existing blended courses to ensure they have appropriately designated credit allocation.
- Review new blended courses to ensure they have appropriately designated credit allocation.
10. A process is established and followed for evaluating the effectiveness of current and emerging technologies to support the achievement of learning outcomes and delivering course content.

Evaluating and recommending the use of new technology for the blended classroom becomes more challenging each day with the rapid introduction of new applications and functionality. Thus, an institution should plan for the appropriate measures needed to systematically analyze technologies that will support blended teaching and learning.

New technologies emerge at such a rapid pace that instructional designers and academic technologists need to continuously monitor and examine issues surrounding evaluating and integrating emerging technology for teaching and learning, with a focus on achieving learning outcomes. Today’s toolkit of academic technology and innovative tools include cloud computing, video conferencing, virtual laboratories, ebooks, virtual worlds, social networking, mobile applications, open education resources and advanced learning management systems. What is now innovative, changes quickly; moreover, what’s innovative for one institution may be old technology for another or even too “bleeding-edge” for yet another.

Not all tools "out of the box" are necessarily useful for improving learning outcomes, so it is important for educators to first identify learning outcomes and methods for achievement and then apply the appropriate technology. Integrating new technologies also requires updated perspectives about their use. While providing flexibility, they may be difficult to deploy because of issues related to scalability, policy, and technology adoption variations. Armed with this knowledge, only then can the educator evaluate and recommend the deployment or appropriate rejection of the technology.

**Recommendations**

- Support the use of emerging technologies by explaining their value for improving teaching and learning. For example, Odom (2010) explained how Web 2.0 technologies support constructivism.
- Ask what the institution needs before investing in new technologies, for example:
  - What emerging technologies are needed for this institution at this time?
  - What are the problems associated with integrating them?
  - What standard evaluative tools will be used to assess and recommend the emerging technologies?
- Encourage and enable faculty and content experts to be familiar with innovative technologies.
- Minimize skepticism towards new technology by using well-trained, knowledgeable academics, technologists, and analysts in the evaluation process.
11. **Course embedded technology actively supports the achievement of learning outcomes and delivering course content and unnecessary use of technology is minimized.*

The rapidly changing landscape of learning technologies requires institutional agility and adaptation. Managing the use of technology in the blended classroom becomes more challenging each day with the continuous introduction of new applications and functionality. Because of this, we must think both strategically and tactically about the best use of technology to support learning outcomes for the delivery of course content.

Technology use abounds not only to support learning, but also to support student information systems, student financial services, library, faculty recruitment and development, as well as outcomes assessment. Strategically, best practices are needed for these areas to appropriately assimilate technology use across the entire institution and to be as reliably available as possible. However, special emphasis needs to be on integrating best practices into the use of technology for teaching and learning while developing and delivering course content to students. The emphasis should include tools that support learning outcomes and will produce sustained results once the student completes the course and program.

We face many new technologies in the areas of web‐based materials, cloud computing, video conferencing, virtual laboratories, ebooks, virtual worlds, social networking, mobile applications, open education resources, and of course, the nucleus of blended course delivery, the learning management system. However, not all tools are necessarily applicable to learning outcomes, so academics must first identify learning‐related issues and then apply technologies that address the learning issues. Integrating these technologies requires updated perspectives about their use. While tools may increase flexibility, they may also be difficult to deploy due to issues of scalability, policy, and technology adoption variations. Technology should not be the driver in the delivery of courses; instructional designers should seek the best mix of technologies to achieve learning (Palloff & Pratt, 1999).

The institution must align technologies with both program outcomes and teaching and learning goals. The learning management system should be user friendly. For flexibility, technology advances already provide the potential delivery of content anytime, anywhere. For diversity, institutions must make decisions about approaches to external content acquisition, learning management system activities, intelligent tutoring implications, adaptive assessments, etc. For consistency, technology must support course creation in a centralized fashion in the design, development, and maintenance of blended courses that are enhanced with academic content, sophisticated tools, and innovative technologies.

**Recommendations**

- Develop institutional guidelines and standards for investigating technologies, not just for the sake of integrating new tools but to better support learning outcomes and the needs of learners.
- Develop standards and policies for appropriately acquiring and integrating open source materials and learning objects, audio, video, and other multimedia.
- Provide best practices of where to locate quality open source materials, audio, video, and other multimedia.
• Provide guidance for using new technologies in the form of reports, presentations, demonstrations or just-in-time training materials.
• Use selection criteria for evaluating new technologies, such as accessibility and affordability, usability, privacy and intellectual property affordance, workload and time management, and interactivity (Bovard, n.d.).
12. **Usability tests are conducted and applied and recommendations based upon Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAGs) are incorporated in the course design process.**

According to the Web Accessibility Initiative (2012), the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) were developed through a cooperative process with individuals and organizations around the world. The goal is to provide a single shared standard for web content accessibility that meets the needs of individuals, organizations, and governments internationally.

The Web Accessibility Initiative (2012) provides many resources in the following areas:

- Getting Started
- Designing for Inclusion
- Guidelines and Techniques
- Planning and Implementing
- Evaluating Accessibility
- Presentations and Tutorials
- Getting Involved with the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).

WCAG is a technical standard (Web Accessibility Initiative, 2012) and is not intended to serve as an introduction to accessibility issues. As a blended education administrator, it may be necessary for training and development activities to begin with an introduction and graduate to WCAG depending on the audience. However, as more and more blended courses transcend geographic boundaries, developing blended courses that meet the WCAG technical standard should be considered best practice.

**Recommendations**

- Stay abreast of advances within the Web Content and Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) initiative.
- Provide training opportunities for faculty and course development/instructional design personnel which highlight the importance of designing for inclusion and showcase relevant guidelines and techniques.
- Plan and implement blended courses that are designed using the WCAG from the initial foundations.
- Use a checklist for best practices for blended course development according to WCAG.
- Identify and deploy internal usability testing processes that underscore the importance of and incorporate the WCAG.
13. Curriculum development is a core responsibility for faculty (i.e., faculty should be involved in either the development or the decision making for the blended curriculum choices).

The curriculum is the major statement any institution makes about itself, about what it can contribute to the intellectual development of students, about what it thinks is important in its teaching service to society (The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1977).

The responsibility for curriculum development or decision making and selection should reside with faculty because of their professional credentials and commitment to teaching, research, and service. This core responsibility typically includes developing curricula and keeping it current; reviewing and evaluating courses and programs, maintaining grading standards, selecting instructional resources and media, and developing new programs. Because of the prolific amount of resources for blended courses, faculty should be involved if the program or institution chooses to use resources such as purchasing ready-made course materials.

The following all put pressure on traditional governance and decision-making processes, including curriculum development:

- the proliferation of learning media and channels;
- competency-based learning initiatives;
- regulatory demands for greater accountability;
- federal, corporate and foundation calls for better workforce development;
- the availability of open educational resources and commercial content and course providers;
- standardization of courses;
- the growth of part-time faculty and non-traditional learners; and
- fiscal shortfalls.

Recommendations

- Ensure faculty lead in the blended curricula process including decisions to adopt content experts, and open resources.
- Ensure faculty lead or are heavily involved in decisions to change curricula, courses, and programs.
- Provide faculty with data about learning outcomes, persistence, graduation rates, default rates, cost efficiencies, and graduate employability.
- Engage in national efforts to determine and compare success rates and quality standards.
14. **Faculty support and resources are provided to promote the best use of blended delivery method in course development and instructional design to facilitate teaching and learning.**

When designing a blended course, it is important to fully integrate both the face-to-face and online components into each other. There can be a tendency to simply “bolt on” online components to a face-to-face course, instead the course should be seen as if two cans of differently colored paints are being mixed. This mix should yield a new paint where the original colors no long exist as independent paints. It is important that the design of a blended learning course is not just a temporal construct.

Both the face-to-face and online components of a blended learning course need to be aligned with the stated learning objectives of the course. In addition, the course learning objectives should be used to guide not just the activities of the course, but also the portion of the course in which the activity occurs. The face-to-face portion should be student-centered while the online activities are both challenging and engaging to complement the face-to-face portion.

**Recommendations**

- The course should be designed in a way that integrates both the online and face-to-face portions in a clear and concise way.
- Online materials are designed to support the face-to-face session.
- Online resources are provided that allows for the activities that began in the face-to-face session to continue online.
References for Course Development and Instructional Design


1. The blended course includes a syllabus outlining course objectives, learning outcomes, evaluation methods, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and other related course information, making course requirements and course schedule transparent.*

2. The course structure ensures that all students, regardless of location, have access to library/learning resources that adequately support the blended course.*

3. Expectations for student assignment completion, grade policy, and faculty response are clearly provided in the course syllabus.*

4. Links or explanations of technical support are available in the course (i.e., each course provides suggested solutions to potential technical issues and/or links for technical assistance).

5. Rules or standards for appropriate student behavior, both online and face-to-face, are provided within the course.

6. Instructional materials are easily accessible to the student, easy to use, with an ability to be accessed by multiple operating systems and applications.

7. Instructional materials are easily accessed by students with disabilities via alternative instructional strategies and/or referral to special institutional resources.

8. The blended course is visually appealing to the student and the course is navigationally sound.
1. **The blended course includes a syllabus outlining course objectives, learning outcomes, evaluation methods, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and other related course information, making course requirements and course schedule transparent.**

   The sooner students know the course requirements, the easier their transition will be into the blended classroom. The more detailed the syllabus, the fewer questions an instructor will have to respond to in the early stage of participants getting to know and trust each other and become comfortable in the blended course environment.

   At a minimum, a detailed course syllabus will include course objectives, learning outcomes, evaluation methods, information about the textbook(s) and other required materials, as well as technical requirements. In addition, the textbook and required course material information should be available well before a student enrolls in the course. This allows advance preparation on the part of the student, time for accessibility support services to help with input/output issues for students with disabilities, and can also serve as a nice recruiting tool for the program.

   Weekly modules/units should indicate a more granular set of learning outcomes that are clearly linked back to the course objectives. To enhance transparency, term-specific dates (first day of class, last day to drop, finals week, grades due) and local dates (campus, state, and national holidays) should be indicated.

**Recommendations**

- Provide, at a minimum, the textbook and required materials or resources to students in advance of their course registration.
- Create a user-friendly syllabus that is easily accessible. Separate the syllabus into sections to allow for easy downloading and printing as needed.
- Develop a well-designed syllabus including answers to common questions, provide links to popular campus websites (e.g., library) and include all institutional policy requirements.
- Utilize a set of consistent standards for syllabus development such as a best practices rubric.
2. **The course structure ensures that all students, regardless of location, have access to library/learning resources that adequately support the blended course.**

All students are entitled to the same learning resources provided by the institution regardless of if they are attending face-to-face, blended, or fully online courses. This means any learning resource support that is provided on campus should also be provided or at least offered to blended students. Access should include the institution’s library for book checkout and online research capabilities and all other institutional learning resources such as a writing center, tutoring support, counseling, etc.

In addition to a link to the library website, a links page for resources within the course can list recommended journals obtainable through the campus library, links to relevant how to use online resources, information about plagiarism, how to get help, and links to external websites that have required or recommended materials (which must be accessible or available in alternate formats). Instant messaging or chat programs may be used to provide just-in-time service through the institutional website because blended students may need additional

**Recommendations**

- Offer quick links to the library website, writing center, tutoring, and other applicable learning resources within the blended course materials.
- Ensure all library and academic support services are available to all types of students.
- Dedicate at least one librarian to provide dedicated support in a way that is feasible given the institution's organizational structure and resources.
- Communicate with blended students using a variety of methods to remind them of all resources available to them.
3. **Expectations for student assignment completion, grade policy, and faculty response are clearly provided in the course syllabus.**

Clearly posted expectations, instructions, due dates, point assignments/rubrics, and instructor response times are very important for students who might not otherwise be organized enough to keep up over time, and are particularly important for students with executive function disorders. Grading policies should be designated in the course syllabus, including links to assignment rubrics.

Instructor response times could differentiate among discussion boards, email, holidays, and days “off” and should clearly show that the instructor will not be available 24x7. However, there should be guidelines that help with student expectations of when to anticipate a response from the instructor. Online office hours can be helpful for most students, though synchronous requirements will be an advantage to some. Synchronous methods include instant messaging, web conferencing, face-to-face meetings, and chat. Consider providing a one-on-one session with a student who needs extra time to input text or process questions/answers.

“Head’s up” reminders of upcoming events are useful for all students, and can generally be linked to the email system of the LMS so that the information will simultaneously become an announcement within the course and an email to each student.

**Recommendations**

- Provide clear instructor office hours as well as expected response time to emails, discussion board postings, and text messages (if encouraged by instructor) in the course syllabus.
- Designate in the course schedule when course sessions begin, and include topics, reading assignments, and student deliverables with due date and time.
- Ensure institutional, program, and/or specific course grading policies are included in the syllabus.
- Encourage faculty to provide grading rubrics for each assignment.
- Develop and provide a late policy that clearly communicates what the penalty will be (if accepted at all) when assignments are submitted late.
4. **Links or explanations of technical support are available in the course (i.e., each course provides suggested solutions to potential technical issues and/or links for technical assistance).**

All of the technical aspects of a blended course are not always obvious to students, who just want to quickly get into the course materials and start the course. Instructors should not have to spend valuable class time trying to troubleshoot technical issues for students who need help. The institution should, at a minimum, provide a help page or tutorial for the learning management system and the campus email website. A campus policy on “safe computing” is beneficial. Students (and instructors) are often not sure if a problem is with their Internet browser, their blended Internet provider, the learning management system, the institution’s server, or the Internet itself. Instructors should not be the primary resource for resolving these issues, especially for their students.

Access to specific technology support can be linked within the course materials. For example, if an audio file is to be played, a link to the corresponding player software should be provided with instructions on how to download it, install it, and play the file.

**Recommendations**

- Provide a course discussion thread focused on technical issues where students are encouraged to post and answer questions to help each other.
- Provide a frequently asked questions area in the course that addresses typical technical support issues.
- Include basic support links in the course syllabus and also include a link to the student accessibility center/resources (along with a friendly statement on requesting help for disability accommodations).
- Remind students to store copies of their electronic files in more than one place and have an updated virus checker installed on their computer.
- Ensure campus technical resources and supports are available for students in face-to-face aspects of the blended course or program.
5. **Rules or standards for appropriate student behavior, both online and face-to-face, are provided within the course.**

Because of the ubiquity of technology-mediated interactions that blended students face, it is really important to be aware of, and provide support for, each aspect of these interactions. From the time a student first logs into the course and finds the syllabus, throughout all the assignment submissions, discussions, and until the last exam or paper is handed in, technology is ever present and can possibly to create barriers or be a source of student frustration. This in turn, can lead to student misbehavior in the course and while faculty are more accustomed to dealing with that face-to-face, the online aspect of the blended classroom can be intimidating. Faculty need a framework of classroom rules to reference and receive guidance.

Some institutions are developing resources guides to assist faculty in managing student behavior blended. Examples of some of these guides or codes of conduct specifically aligned with blended courses include:


**Recommendations**

- Develop rules, standards, or codes of conduct focusing on appropriate student behavior for blended students.
- Train faculty to be prepared for potential student misbehavior with recommendations for how to address it. This could include practices such as blended role playing for how an instructor should respond when a student verbally (via text) attacks another student in the discussion forums.
6. Instructional materials are easily accessible to the student, easy to use, with an ability to be accessed by multiple operating systems and applications.

Inclusive design should be the foundation for blended course design and course structure. While students with documented disabilities present the most obvious design challenges, it is useful to expand the definition of “at-risk” beyond that. Problems with vision, mobility, hearing, and cognition can affect anyone at any time (and nearly everyone as they age), as can illness and the side effects of medication and fatigue. Other barriers include having to read and write using an unfamiliar language, having to decipher newly encountered academic writing and subject area terminology, and balancing many demands on time and energy.

Usable design includes presenting course materials with “writing for the web” rules such as chunking, plenty of white space, simple and obvious navigation (with as few clicks as possible), clearly labeled buttons and menu items, judicious use of color with an emphasis on good contrast, and not using color alone to provide information for those who are color-blind (for example, a display with a red bar showing females, the green bar showing males is indecipherable to some students).

According to the Usability.gov (2014) website “UX is a growing field that is very much still being defined” (para. 4). The User Experience Professional Association (2014) defines user experience design as “a discipline concerned with all the elements that together make up that interface, including layout, visual design, text, brand, sound, and interaction” (para. 2). Gube (2010) asserted that the “user experience is how a person feels when interfacing with a system. The system could be a website, a web application or desktop software and, in modern contexts, is generally denoted by some form of human-computer interaction (HCI)” (para. 4). For blended administrators, focusing resources on the UX as it relates to course structure is increasingly becoming a best practice.

Recommendations

- Write the course syllabus, instructions, and weekly objectives in easy to understand language.
- Use file formats that students are most likely to use, i.e. pdf or html files.
- Provide links within the blended course to Internet browser plug-ins when using less common file formats. For example, pdf files need the Adobe Reader plug-in to allow the file to be read within the browser.
- Consider how UX design principles become inherently embedded within the course structure.
7. **Instructional materials are easily accessed by students with disabilities via alternative instructional strategies and/or referral to special institutional resources.**

A disability can occur suddenly and unexpectedly to anyone. Planning ahead by designing accessible course materials not only serves all students and instructors, it also creates possibilities for classes continuing even under conditions of natural or other disasters. In fact, there are many people who do not quite meet the threshold for “disability” but who, nonetheless, face challenges.

Learning styles, preferences, and abilities also vary widely among students and instructors, so a well-designed course should have multiple modes of course material formats and alternative ways to submit work.

Research is clear—brains and bodies differ greatly, and a one-size-fits-all approach to course design benefits relatively few students. If, on the other hand, the course is designed to be as inclusive as possible, all students (and instructors) benefit.

**Recommendations**

- Provide accessible course design by ensuring that required course materials can be used with assistive technology such as closed-captioned videos and sound files that have text scripts provided.
- Ensure that faculty/professional development offices, in conjunction with library and other relevant units provide ongoing “best practices” in course design training and support services to address students who require accommodations.
- Welcome students with disabilities; invite them to discuss their needs with advisors, and provide links to additional relevant resources.
8. **The blended course is visually appealing to the student and the course is navigationally sound.**

Often a course shell is made available to student prior to the first face-to-face session of a blended learning course. This course shell can be the first impression a student may have of a course and it is important that the course be both welcoming and informative.

A course shell that contains primarily text can be intimidating to students. Therefore, the course shell should appropriately use audio, images, and video in a meaningful way that enhances the student experience (while considering the needs of diverse students). For an example, when the course instructor provides an introduction of themselves they should include either a video introduction (with transcript) or a text-based one with a photo.

A student should not be overwhelmed by too many menu choices. Menu items should be both clear and simple and this can be achieved by reducing the number of choices on the main menu. The main menu should represent the key areas of the course that a student may need to access.

The course shell design should also inform the students that this is a course that utilizes both the face-to-face and online learning environments. In doing this, the integration of the two environments should be highlighted by explicitly identifying what a student is to do prior to a face-to-face session and how the face-to-face session connects back to the online portion of the course. In addition, the course shell design should group content by week or module keeping the course content and components grouped by context within the course in a consistent manner.

**Recommendations**

- Course should utilize a similar course shell design within the program.
- Navigation menu represents the hierarchy of the course.
- Course content is presented in context to how it will be used.
- The course shell clearly distinguishes what is to be completed by the student prior to coming to a face-to-face session.
References for Course Structure


1. Student-to-Student and Faculty-to-Student interaction are essential characteristics and are encouraged and facilitated.*

2. Instructor feedback on student assignments and questions is constructive and provided in a timely manner.*

3. Instructors use specific strategies to create an engaged, learning-focused presence in both modalities of the course.

4. Faculty teach the course as one cohesive whole, with "presence" in both the face-to-face and the online portions of the course.

5. Resources are provided to assist students in conducting research online and assessing the validity of online resources.*
1. **Student-to-Student and Faculty-to-Student interaction are essential characteristics and are encouraged and facilitated.*

Both student-to-student and faculty-to-student interactions are recommended for a richer, more engaging blended environment. In fact, Boettcher (2006) recommended both as best practices for teaching, in order to alleviate students from feeling alone or abandoned and to create a positive learning community. Both types of interactions can be accomplished with a variety of asynchronous and synchronous activities.

Faculty-to-student interaction serves two primary purposes: supportive and instructional. Faculty teaching blended courses can create a supportive classroom environment by ensuring that they are active in the course early and often. In addition, a supportive environment may be created through introductory, welcoming, and continued messages and announcements to individual students and the whole class throughout the course term. These messages can be delivered through a variety of forms, including text, social media, audio, in-person, and video. Providing multiple options for each interaction allows students to select the accessible and/or the most personal level of engagement.

Faculty can provide an engaging instructional environment by providing interaction in class discussions, emails, face-to-face meetings, and through directions within the class content such as lectures, PowerPoint presentations, articles, podcasts, etc. These interactions may also be of a more individual nature such as providing feedback on individual assignments, providing guidance on the development of a paper, providing feedback to students’ postings in threaded discussions, etc. Course content may lend itself to group work in which students collaborate to complete assignments. In these situations, faculty oversight and input are often required for a meaningful outcome for the students such as helping to form the groups, facilitating collaboration, and requiring individual participation.

The level of student-to-student interaction may depend on the nature and outcomes of the course. Care should be taken to ensure that the interactions are a means to either provide a supportive/social environment or allow students to achieve the learning outcomes. Faculty can require student-to-student interaction through the types of assignments and assessments developed for the course. Additionally, faculty can create assignments that require peer review and group work.

Modern learning management systems provide a structure for both faculty-to-student and student-to-student interactions. These include, but are not limited to, threaded discussions, chat rooms, group tools and pages, and video. As technologies are developed, it is important for the faculty members to decide if and how the technology can be used in their courses. However, choosing the appropriate technology for a particular activity is not as important as the design of the activity itself.

**Recommendations**

- Create and implement policy regarding faculty interaction in blended classes such as participating in the discussion boards, offering office hours, and providing robust feedback on assignments.
- Monitor course evaluations for student comments on lack of faculty interaction.
- Provide faculty tips for how to encourage student-to-student interactions.
- Provide faculty best practices for group work and recommended activities for blended teaching and learning.
- Provide students with requirements for interaction and monitor student interaction.
- Provide support for faculty to evaluate and adopt new technologies to enhance interaction.
2. **Instructor feedback on student assignments and questions is constructive and provided in a timely manner.*

For this quality indicator, the definition of feedback is the constructive information the instructor provides to students regarding course assignments and activities and should include direct instruction so that students can correct and improve understanding. One of the primary ways faculty provide instruction in the online aspects of the blended classroom is through feedback (Shaw, 2014). Faculty play a critical role in this process as “effective feedback moves students beyond reflection on what they have accomplished; it moves them forward by helping them to identify gaps in knowledge and goals and strategies for future learning, both in the course and in non-course activities in their lives” (Getzlaf, Perry, Toffner, Lamarche, & Edward, 2009, p. 16). In fact, Getzlaf et al. (2009) found themes for effective instructor feedback:

- there should be student involvement to create a feedback process with individualized feedback; it should be gentle guidance;
- it should be positive and constructive;
- it should be timely; and,
- it should help students to identify gaps in knowledge and goals and strategies for future learning.

The institution can play an important part in this process by providing tools such as feedback forms and rubrics, as well as professional development on strategies and processes for good feedback. The feedback provided by the instructor must be within a relevant time frame as to provide constructive correction because it is easy for students to become frustrated and disengaged if they do not receive feedback in time to apply it to the next assignment.

**Recommendations**

- Encourage or require if possible that faculty provide constructive feedback on course assignments within a stated time frame. For example: including the statement that all graded assignments will be returned within one week after submission will help with student expectations and may prevent multiple student emails asking when to expect the return.
- Provide faculty resources such as models of good feedback, feedback forms, and rubrics to help formulate constructive feedback.
- When training faculty to teach blended courses, emphasize the importance and use of constructive feedback.
- Consider providing diverse feedback types on each graded assignment to encourage content mastery.
3. **Instructors use specific strategies to create an engaged, learning-focused presence in both modalities of the course.**

This criterion refers specifically to instructor presence rather than a collective presence of instructor and students. Students in blended courses must know that their instructor is paying attention, scaffolding, challenging, assessing, communicating, monitoring, and enhancing their learning experience. They need to feel a connection to their instructor and know that he or she is accessible and interested in their success. By using specific strategies to establish a presence, instructors can provide motivation, improve learning outcomes, avoid misunderstandings and feelings of isolation, and maximize student satisfaction. Instructors can help students become effective blended learners as well as can also experience a more rewarding teaching experience.

Without robust instructor presence in a blended course, students often feel isolated, unsupported, unmotivated, unrecognized, and unsuccessful. In addition, their only way of knowing if they adequately comprehend the material and are completing assignments as expected is the grades they receive, when it is too late. Formative feedback from an active instructor is a critical support for the learning process (Shaw, 2014). The learning experience is enriched further when instructors participate in and help guide blended discussions and collaborative projects. Students can be challenged to think more deeply, critically, and creatively if the instructor is observant, responsive, and engaged.

In a study by Gayton and McEwen (2007), both faculty and students perceived the following as important strategies for ensuring instructional quality: maintaining open communication with students, requiring students to interact with the instructor (and each other) to foster group cohesiveness, and building a strong learning community. Timely and detailed feedback regarding the quality of student work and building good rapport and collaboration with students were also considered important.

Instructor presence can be accomplished in many ways, and is best accomplished by using a combination of strategies. Some are built into the course, but many are dynamic activities that require that the instructor be fully engaged with the course delivery and student involvement.

**Recommendations**

- Establish a welcoming class environment with personal touches, such as these:
  - Send a welcome message before the course begins
  - Post an introductory text, audio, or video message, and invite students to do the same
  - Continue to use audio/video in messages to individuals to convey presence
  - Use a conversational, plain English style
  - Address students by name
  - Be sensitive to cultures, genders, religions, nationalities, learner confidence levels, and differing abilities in all communications
  - Call each student during the class to convey personal interest
- Use learning management system features regularly to convey instructor presence, interest, and consideration to announce progress and events, to post office hours and contact information including methods and times, and to encourage, motivate, and challenge students.
- Encourage instructors to use (but don’t require) social networking media to communicate with students.
- Encourage faculty to always provide students timely, individual feedback on assignments.
4. **Faculty teach the course as one cohesive whole, with "presence" in both the face-to-face and the online portions of the course.**

Faculty presence means more than just providing content to students in person or online. Faculty need to be engaged with students in both portions of the course and respond to students’ questions and concerns. When teaching a blended course, there can be a tendency to utilize the online portion to deliver content in a “bolted on” component to a face-to-face portion; therefore, it is important that the faculty is present in the both portions of the course.

A sense of community should be established that utilizes both the online and face-to-face portions of the course. Faculty should establish social presence in both portions of the blended course in order to create a sense of connectedness. The dialog should flow from the face-to-face portion to the online portion and back to the face-to-face portion.

**Recommendations**

- Set aside a portion of the face-to-face session to answer student questions and participate in a discussion board where students can ask questions.
- Actively encourage a sense of community within the course.
5. **Resources are provided to assist students in conducting research online and assessing the validity of online resources.***

Students in blended learning courses are often asked to conduct research, ranging from a straightforward undergraduate class research project to a thesis or dissertation for a graduate program. Because students in blended courses have less access to a face-to-face instructor, resources must be provided with the online course materials for information on this process, including the instructor’s expectations regarding research. Students must know how to find, organize, evaluate, and cite information used in their research.

Students in blended courses must understand that they are accountable for the information they use in completing course assignments. Instructors must emphasize that the standards for the online component of the course are as rigorous as those for the face-to-face portion. Maintaining consistency and integrity in research expectations will help maintain course and program integrity. It will also prepare students to effectively use online information beyond the scope of the course. In the online course materials, instructors can embed or link to adequate, clear instruction on how to conduct effective research of the professional literature through web searches, and library holdings or databases. Once information has been located, students must also understand how to evaluate that information. With the ease of online searches and the plethora of information available, students must learn to be critical consumers of information and recognize the criteria for reliable sources. They must know how to discern the difference between credible information from peer-reviewed articles and biased information from subjective sources such as blogs, wikis, and commercial sites (Naufel, Briley, Harackiewicz, Johnson, Marzec, & Nielsen, 2010).

**Recommendations**

- State expectations and research requirements, clearly and in detail, in the course syllabus and online learning management system.
- Provide students information:
  - On how to use Boolean search terms to find abstracts,
  - Information on citation, and full-text articles in library databases
  - About the various library databases related to the course topics about Google Scholar (or others) as a useful sources of information
  - About the most reliable and credible journals (by discipline)
  - On how to correctly cite Internet-based sources, including the DOI
  - On how to evaluate the information found online by students for source, accuracy, credibility, focus, bias and relevance
  - About methods and ethics of research, including proper citation and acknowledgement of sources, plagiarism, and academic integrity.
- Consider using a form to help students evaluate online sources.
- Create an online tutorial on research techniques using a recorded presentation including voice and video if possible, so that students can access and revisit as needed.
References for Teaching and Learning


1. Technical assistance is provided for faculty before and during blended course development and teaching.*

2. The institution ensures faculty receive training, assistance, and support to prepare faculty for course development and effective teaching with technology in a variety of modalities.*

3. Faculty receive training and materials related to Fair Use, plagiarism, and other relevant legal and ethical concepts.*

4. Faculty are provided on-going professional development related to blended teaching and learning.

5. Clear standards are established for faculty engagement and expectations around blended teaching (e.g. response time, contact information, etc.).

6. Faculty are provided training in blended teaching.
1. Technical assistance is provided for faculty before and during blended course development and teaching.*

As blended learning requires faculty to adopt various learning technologies, it is more important than ever that institutions provide faculty with technical assistance and ongoing support for integrating technology into both the face-to-face and online classroom. Students expect to utilize these technologies to interact and collaborate in both of these learning environments.

Institutions are challenged not only to provide an adequate level of technical support and assistance for faculty, but also appropriate support and assistance. Institutions must think strategically about how to staff, promote, structure, and deliver the technical assistance faculty need for teaching in a blended learning course. Often, institutions associate “technical” with “information technology,” and the technical assistance for course development and blended courses is housed within IT departments. Technical support should be provided for the learning management system, web page development, social media tools, audio and video recordings, graphic development, classroom wifi, classroom technologies, and new emerging technologies. Support must also be contextual, pedagogy-based, and easily accessible, and fit within the overall organizational structure to maximize efficiencies and resources. The support should continue through the time of teaching blended courses, and not solely focus on course development.

Recommendations

- Embed technical support practices for both face-to-face and online education within the institutional mission and culture to encourage faculty acceptance. Support should be allocated to assist faculty in blended course development so they will become more familiar with online education and its role in the context of their own department.
- Carefully consider where to locate technical support services. Think about existing organizational structures and decide whether to centralize or decentralize services. Keep in mind accessibility, approachability, consistency, maintaining educational context, and ensuring expertise is available.
- Technical support will be needed, at times, for faculty and their home computers. Provide a resource in order for faculty to be able to troubleshoot home computers with the online teaching environment.
- Technical support will be needed, at times, in the face-to-face classroom. Provide a resource for faculty to be able request classroom support during a class so that the session is not disrupted. This is important due to the reduced number of class sessions.
2. The institution ensures faculty receive training, assistance, and support to prepare faculty for course development and effective teaching with technology in a variety of modalities.*

When an institution places value on blended learning by providing policies and support mechanisms that supports faculty, faculty satisfaction with blended learning will increase. This includes providing access to educational technologies, instructional teams, and guidance as to how faculty can communicate the course format to students.

The educational technologies selected by the institution should be widely adopted with consideration to how it will enhance blended learning. The selection process of these technologies needs to consider the process of teaching and learning, as well as faculty and student usage. A sufficient staff needs to be available to support and maintain these technologies.

An instructional team of instructional designers, instructional technologists, media developers, and other specialists should join with the faculty to develop blended learning courses. By “unbundling” the various functions of the faculty and distributing these roles to the instructional team, the course can be developed and taught more efficiently and effectively.

This support may include information for faculty to communicate to students about the blended learning format and tips for success.

These resources need to be provided via different modalities in order to support both part- and full-time faculty. This may include help guides, in-person consultation, and through online technologies.

Recommendations

- Provide comprehensive course development support, training, and assistance for blended learning instructors. The faculty development opportunities should be frequent and ongoing.
- Examine different models of delivery (virtual modules, handouts, live training, self-paced, etc.) and provide a variety of resources for professional development.
- Adopt a variety of faculty training and support strategies, e.g. faculty mentoring programs, web-based knowledge bases, collaborative wikis, training workshops, online support materials, and others.
3. **Faculty receive training and materials related to Fair Use, plagiarism, and other relevant legal and ethical concepts.***

The blended environment presents educators with considerable legal and ethical challenges. Understanding of issues related to ownership, privacy, identity, and copyright law are critical. Copyright law and Fair Use are essential concepts for all faculty members to understand. Faculty generally approach these issues from two distinct perspectives: as consumer and creator. Their concerns and perceptions about copyright law may differ depending on the scenario being considered. One common copyright issue related to blended learning is faculty ownership of material created for blended courses. Each institution must be proactive in setting a core intellectual property policy, and providing guidelines for compliance.

Fair use is perhaps the least understood aspect of blended course development and teaching among faculty. In a recent study, Sweeney (2006) found that faculty members were generally unclear about copyright law and were uncertain of where and how to locate university policies. In addition, faculty noted that they were concerned about their course content, but continued to use material for which they did not seek copyright release. The consequences of copyright infringement can be dire for an individual and an institution, and can include disciplinary action, termination, legal fees, and an assortment of criminal penalties. Institutions must support faculty with the needed information and training about copyright law in order to avoid a breach. In addition to the risk of infringement, a lack of knowledge about Fair Use can result in faculty avoidance of incorporation of diverse content into a blended course.

Another major ethical issue for faculty is plagiarism. Faculty must understand the nature of plagiarism in the blended environment, and learn to recognize it in order to deter frustrating and challenging incidents. Faculty must understand their role is not to “catch” students; rather, faculty should have the knowledge and tools to educate students about academic integrity, ethical issues, and appropriate conduct.

**Recommendations**

- Create checklists, tip sheets, examples, workshops, and chunked information to make copyright compliance easier for faculty to apply. See for example, Copyright Compliance Made Simple – Six Rules for Course Design (Enghagen, 2001).
- Ensure faculty receive copyright information within relevant contexts. For example, copyright information in relation to course development should be included in blended course development support materials.
- Ensure that copyright law does not become one department’s responsibility, but rather, universal and integrated throughout the institution.
- Provide faculty with workshops, discussions, roundtables, and other opportunities to collaboratively discuss ethical issues in blended education.
4. **Faculty are provided on-going professional development related to blended teaching and learning.**

Blended education has evolved quickly over the past decade. The frequency with which new technologies become available is staggering. In addition, as more and more research is conducted on electronically mediated educational practice and outcomes, further evidence emerges that compels us to change our educational methods and pedagogical approaches.

An ongoing program of professional development is a necessary part of supporting quality in blended education. Staying current with the body of research and the availability of new technologies is critical to success in the blended environment. In addition, focus on additional areas for faculty development can enhance an instructor's effectiveness, such as generational studies, learning theory, time management, and retention strategies. Professional development can also help to avoid instructor burnout, and give instructors important time for reflection, learning, and personal development.

The traditional definition of professional development encompasses activities such as sabbaticals, grant funding, conference attendance, and activities directly related to development as a professional or researcher. However, a more student-centered definition is emerging, and this is especially true of professional development for blended faculty. Professional development is not simply a series of workshops or classes to hone skills, though those are certainly a part of professional development. Rather, professional development is a holistic process that should include faculty's long-term goals for improving teaching and learning.

It is a myth that professional development for faculty is cost-prohibitive. Although professional development requires some institutional investment for staff, materials, and programs, the essence of professional development thrives within a culture of continuous improvement, student learning, and quality focus.

**Recommendations**

- Define and communicate the importance of professional development for faculty.
- Approach professional development as a process of individual goal setting or self-improvement with a focus on improving teaching for improving learning.
- Ensure that staff selected to lead professional development efforts have buy-in and support from faculty and that all initiatives and departments work collaboratively on the programs.
- Proactively engage faculty by ensuring their awareness of development opportunities through various communication channels.
- Provide flexible and diverse professional development strategies to meet the demands of the diverse faculty population. Engage adjunct faculty in the teaching culture of the institution.
5. **Clear standards are established for faculty engagement and expectations around blended teaching** (e.g. response time, contact information, etc.).

In an age of accountability, the establishment and implementation of instructional standards provides institutions a way to measure performance and effect student learning outcomes. However, a potential pitfall of standards is that they sometimes inhibit innovation and creativity and become codified as rules.

Institutions should establish standards that are directly and positively tied to student learning outcomes. The only way to truly know whether certain educational methods contribute positively to student outcomes is through the collection and analysis of data. Thus, individuals who are developing standards should ask themselves what they want to accomplish through each standard and use evidence to justify the standard.

A culture of quality is built on shared values about good practice. Often, institutions spend too little time building the culture, and too much time codifying and enforcing standards. In the blended environment, this is especially true, as often there is a focus on monitoring faculty performance for adherence to response time and engagement indicators.

Once standards are established and understood, there must be a process and staff in place to communicate standards and enforce them. Blended faculty must be made aware of the performance expectations and standards of teaching performance. The communication must be clear, consistent, and precise.

**Recommendations**

- Document standards for faculty expectations and always include them in teaching contracts and faculty policy handbooks. Support standards by including informal messages about specific standards in a diverse selection of materials (websites, collateral material, meeting agendas, and so forth).
- Ensure that appropriate personnel and systems are in place to communicate standards and monitor faculty performance. Inculcate the benefits of assessment and performance evaluation in the institutional culture so that methods are embraced rather than condemned.
- Create and implement blended faculty certification courses that impart the essential components of blended teaching standards, and provide the necessary tools and skills to achieve quality blended teaching.
- Create a consistent performance review process with detailed documentation. Provide faculty with performance feedback, in writing, as well as specific information on how to rectify any noted issues.
- Establish measures for standards that come from various sources so that performance assessments can be improved. For example, measure faculty engagement in a class by administrative observation, peer review, student reports, and login activity.
- Assess competence in the blended classroom through combined measures, including written skills, technical skills, pedagogical awareness, compliance with administrative duties and more.
6. **Faculty are provided training in blended teaching.**

   Faculty need to be prepared to purposefully integrate the online and face-to-face portions of a blended course. This training program should allow for faculty to immediately transfer their new knowledge to their practice and should include topics such as course design, teaching strategies, formative and summative assessments, educational technology, and the integration of these topics into one another.

   Models for providing training to faculty include programs that are delivered face-to-face, online, or blended. These programs may be offered as an “intensive” one or two-week program or may be spread out over multiple weeks. Another option may include providing mentoring to faculty new to blended learning. These programs should be available to both full- and part-time faculty.

**Recommendations**

- Provide a faculty development program to prepare faculty to teach in a blended learning environment.
- Faculty development program should include topics such as course design, teaching strategies, formative and summative assessments, and educational technology as related to blended learning.
References for Faculty Support


1. Before starting a blended learning program, students complete an orientation or self-assessment to determine if they possess the self-motivation and commitment to learn.*

2. Before starting a blended learning program, students are advised about the program to determine if they have access to the minimum technology skills and equipment required by the course design.*

3. Before starting a blended learning program, students receive (or have access to) information about programs, including admission requirements, tuition and fees, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and student support services.*

4. Throughout the duration of the course/program, students have access to training and information they will need to secure required materials through electronic databases, interlibrary loans, government archives, news services, and other sources.*

5. Throughout the duration of the course/program, students have access to appropriate technical assistance and technical support staff.*

6. Support personnel are available (24/7) to address student questions and problems of a technical nature.*

7. Policy, processes, and resources are in place to support students with disabilities.

8. Students have access to information regarding required course materials in print and/or digital format, such as ISBN numbers for textbooks, book suppliers, and delivery modes prior to course enrollment.

9. Program demonstrates a student-centered focus and intentionality in the integration of online and face-to-face resources.

10. The institution provides guidance/tutorials for students in the use of all forms of technologies used for course delivery.

11. Students are provided clear information for enlisting help from the institution.
1. **Before starting a blended learning program, students complete an orientation or self-assessment to determine if they possess the self-motivation and commitment to learn.**

As online and blended learning matures, student success has been linked to certain motivations and skill sets. Alem, Plaisent, Bernard, & Chitu (2014) found in a systematic review that e-learning readiness was represented through attributes such as: computer internet self-efficacy, self-direction, motivation, interaction and attitude. To support student retention, institutions should take action to ensure students are both capable and equipped to succeed in a blended learning environment. Although students may be familiar with technology that Garrison and Vaughan (2008) suggest provides the essential linkage in blended learning, and are able to find, create and share information via the web, Tang and Chaw (2015) found that digital literacy that facilitates accessing, understanding and applying information obtained from the web is also important. Students should be aware that:

- They are enrolled in a blended learning course that facilitates learning in both the online and face to face learning environments.
- While blended courses give more flexibility in scheduling, they can require more self-discipline than a traditional face to face class.
- They will have the opportunity to interact with the course instructor in both the online and face to face learning environment.
- Online learning may require the student to work from written directions for course assignments.
- It may take as little as a few hours or as much as several days to get feedback from instructors.
- Print materials may the primary source of directions and information for the online weeks.
- Students should feel comfortable to contact the instructor for help as soon as they need help for the course.

**Recommendations**

- Encourage students to assess their motivation and commitment to blended and online learning (see below; Moore and Shelton, 2013).
  - Student Online Readiness Tool (available from University System of Georgia) through Creative Commons license and assesses: Technology experience, access to tools, study habits, my lifestyle, goals and purposes, and learning experiences.
  - SmarterMeasure™ Learning Readiness Indicator (2016) is a commercial tool that assesses: Individual attributes, life factors, learning styles, technical competency, technical knowledge, on-screen reading rate and recall, and typing speed and accuracy.
- Develop processes to measure student success and motivation (i.e., using a “dropped student” survey to determine commonalities).
2. **Before starting a blended learning program, students are advised about the program to determine if they have access to the minimum technology skills and equipment required by the course design.**

Online students rely on technology to interact with instructors, classmates and institutional support staff in an online and blended learning environment. Therefore, it is important to advise students of the need for basic computer and technology skills and equipment before taking blended classes. This advice can come from the admissions office, via the institutional website and marketing media. Many colleges have implemented online self-assessment activities that allow students to ascertain if they possess the technical skills needed to succeed in an online course, as discussed in the previous indicator. Student success in a blended learning environment necessitates students have the necessary knowledge and ability to use information and communication technology (Poon, 2013), as well as access to an adequate computer system. To assess if a student has access to adequate computer system, institutions need to disseminate technology requirements. (Simonson, Smaldino, Albright, & Zvacek, 2009, p. 202).

Simonson et al. (2009) reminds us that that this communication should start before students begin the course. Technology requirements should be clearly displayed and articulated, before the student registers for the course, including requirements for browsers, browser settings and browser add-ons. Technology requirements should also include any special equipment that is specific to the course requirements, such as cameras, microphones, CD-ROM, DVD drives, special software, or the need to download additional software programs. All specific online course technology requirements will need to be included in the source syllabus course schedule, and other appropriate places within the course site as well as be easily accessible on the web site so expectations are clear before a student signs up for a course.

**Recommendations**

- Provide information on the program website, through email, social media, etc. concerning all required online technologies for the blended course before the course begins.
- Provide web links to help students locate the resources they need (i.e., bookstore, vendors, websites, software, downloads).
- Provide a list of troubleshooting tips and frequently asked questions for students to access online.
- Provide information on technical skills and standards specific to the institution. For example, “Students should have basic skills using word processing software.” Disseminate the information to students through several channels of communication.
- Address specific technologies required by the institution such as email on online learning management systems.
- Provide a demo in video or a tutorial that explains the technologies needed for success.
3. **Before starting a blended learning program, students receive (or have access to) information about programs, including admission requirements, tuition and fees, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and student support services.**

Students need access to relevant information regarding blended program offerings before making a decision to apply to a degree program or enroll in a blended course. Communication of available support services and necessary information is an important element in effective program administration.

The more options the student has to access relevant information and support services, the better. Since many students wish to conduct business with the institution during non-standard hours, providing answers to frequently asked questions that can be accessed anytime has proven helpful for students. Furthermore, each question clearly answered may reduce the number of responses needed from support staff or instructors. Student services support staff and instructors should be aware of all locations (physical and online) to direct students for answers to any additional questions.

**Recommendations**

- Make information related to in-class and online attendance expectations for blended courses and programs easily accessible to prospective and enrolled students.
- Provide online information related to program admission, enrollment, cost and financial aid, books, policies, and student support services. Keep the website updated, organized, and easily accessible.
- Consider the following questions when developing the informational website:
  - What requirements must be satisfied for students to gain admittance to a course?
  - How should students communicate (phone, email, fax, etc.) with the school to acquire information/support?
  - What procedures should students follow to access services, such as the library (identification, login, URL)?
  - How do students communicate with advisors and other faculty members?
  - What kinds of barriers might students encounter in successfully completing their program and how will the institution remove these barriers?
4. Throughout the duration of the course/program, students have access to training and information they will need to secure required materials through electronic databases, interlibrary loans, government archives, news services, and other sources.*

Learning to use online library databases for the first time without expert help can be intimidating. And even if students successfully locate appropriate resources, finding full-text versions of journal articles or arranging for e-document delivery can often be a challenge. Library professionals should provide training and educational opportunities for students and faculty, and may want to view teaching information literacy as part of their job. Instructors should make use of the expert help that library professionals can provide so that they can support and encourage use of library resources.

**Recommendations**

- Provide access to information on accessing library databases (i.e., a link to library resources and library staff contact information).
- Provide services that help students locate relevant information such as a self-paced tutorial or library orientation module.
- Create an online library research article scavenger hunt for your students as a class or subject orientation assignment.
- Designate a librarian for each discipline area and provide students with the designated librarian’s contact information, so students have a primary point of contact for questions and trouble-shooting.
5. **Throughout the duration of the course/program, students have access to appropriate technical assistance and technical support staff.**

Students may encounter difficulty working with required technology in a blended course or program, and may need support to successfully function using such technology. However, they still must be able to complete course learning activities and assignments without undue related stress.

Both students and instructors working in a blended teaching and learning environment will need technical support from time to time. If a student is unable to resolve technical problems in the course of study, frustration and isolation will occur, which, in turn, may impact student retention and learning (Shelton & Saltsman, 2005).

Faculty introducing a new technology or application in a blended course must take responsibility for working with campus information technology services to ensure appropriate documentation and training is available to support the students working with that technology or application.

However, “instructors cannot be responsible for other than cursory training of their students in the use of technology” (Miller & King, 2003, p. 292). Therefore, the institution should provide online support for the students. Ideally, the support should be 24x7 when combining self-help and access to a person for support. As much information as possible should be available in a self-help format so students can access help at any time. However, there must be a process for contacting support a person if additional help is needed. Some institutions provide a direct telephone number (often toll-free); others have an online ticketing system or chat room. The support should include everything from how to reset a password to what to do if a student gets locked out of an online examination.

**Recommendations**

- Provide accessible information on how to access technical support on the website and/or the LMS, a toll free phone number, and/or live chat.
- Provide technical support services as close to 24 hours, 7 days a week as possible.
- Clearly specify when various support services are available if they are not offered 24x7.
- Create a channel through which faculty can request the development and delivery of new documentation and training in support of blended course integrated technologies.
- Create a technical support request form that is web-based with details about expected turnaround time, evening/weekend availability and telephone and/or chat availability for “live” help.
6. **Support personnel are available (24/7) to address student questions and problems of a technical nature.**

Student frustration with technology in learning environments needs to be avoided, and research supports that frustration with technology has been cited as a key factor in student failure (Moore & Kearsley, 1996). In a blended teaching and learning environment, a support system needs to be in place for addressing technology related questions outside of the classroom. In the learning management system or student portal, it should be clear whom to contact if a student forgets his/her password, if the LMS is not working properly, if an instructor is not responding to the students, or if the complaint is not getting addressed in a timely manner. Students “need to understand where the responsibility of the institution lies regarding reliability. Policies need to be articulated so that all parties are clear about responsibilities” (Simonson et al., 2009, p. 201).

**Recommendations**

- Provide support staff to address specific questions about accessing course and program components.
- Present a clear process for students to report problems and make complaints, preferably online.
- Create a searchable online knowledge base that addresses current issues that might affect students using blended learning technologies and applications.
7. **Policy, processes, and resources are in place to support students with disabilities.**

Although students with disabilities have a legal and fundamental right to be able to enroll in all classes and programs, they will need a way to procure assistance from the institution when necessary. The institution should designate support personnel (often in the area of student affairs) who document students’ needs, provide guidance in allocating resources, and help determine how best to meet those needs.

The institution must take usability and accessibility of technologies and applications into consideration when offering options and solutions to faculty creating and delivering blended teaching and learning components.

**Recommendations**

- Put in place process that determines the types of services that should be available for disabled students interacting with blended learning components.
- Put in place policy which supports students with disabilities across all modes of delivery, including blended teaching and learning.
- Assure that the process for documenting a disability is accessible to all learners.
- Provide dedicated support staff for serving the needs of disabled students.
- Assure that faculty and staff are aware of student support services and understand the best methods for referral.
8. **Students have access to information regarding required course materials in print and/or digital format, such as ISBN numbers for textbooks, book suppliers, and delivery modes prior to course enrollment.**

Information on the materials needed for each course should be made available to students at the time of registration or before so that students can “shop” for the course materials.

To be in compliance with federal Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (HEOA) regulations:

To the maximum extent practicable, an institution must include on its Internet course schedule for required and recommended textbooks and supplemental material the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and retail price; if the ISBN is not available, the author, title, publisher, and copyright date; or if such disclosure is not practicable, the designation “To Be Determined.”

If applicable, the institution must include on its written course schedule a reference to the textbook information available on its Internet schedule and the Internet address for that schedule.

Institutions disclosing the information to be included on their course schedules for required and recommended textbooks, and supplemental material are encouraged to provide information on:

- renting textbooks;
- purchasing used textbooks;
- textbook buy-back programs; and
- alternative content delivery formats such as ebooks.

The HEOA also requires the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study the implementation of this section and report to Congress.

**Recommendations**

- Develop and continuously update online and print materials that provide information on course schedules and all relevant textbooks and supplementary materials.
- Provide students and faculty with the location of the campus bookstore, including directions, hours of operation, and contact information.
- Provide easy access to online bookstores that students can search for the best prices. (Many institutions will not want to do this since they are often business partners with the campus bookstore. In that case, provide links to the books on the campus bookstore website.)
9. **Program demonstrates a student-centered focus and intentionality in the integration of online and face-to-face resources.**

Blended teaching and learning approaches are steadily evolving alongside existing and emerging technologies. To ensure a student-centered focus, systems, services, resources, and instruction must be integrated to create a seamless experience, removing all obstacles to focus the learner's attention on knowledge to be acquired and applied.

The institution should provide advertising, recruiting, and admissions information to students that adequately and accurately represents the programs, requirements, and services available. There should be a set of written policies, procedures, and guidelines pertaining to degree-related courses and programs which includes information on admissions, curriculum, requirements for completion of the courses or programs, costs and payment policies, financial aid, and any other pertinent information.

Institutions should provide information about the nature of blended offerings, detailing expectations related to both face-to-face and blended components, including the nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about students' technological competence and skills, technical equipment and software requirements, and availability of academic and student support services.

**Recommendations**

- Provide equal access to student services appropriate to support the online and face-to-face components of blended courses programs, including financial aid, academic advising, registration, access to course materials, proctoring requirements, placement and counseling, and career support.
- Commit to the continuation of a program or certificate for its publicized time frame to allow all admitted students to complete.
- Ensure that student service personnel can accurately and quickly answer all student questions and have a structured system for addressing student complaints.
- Provide prospective students with a realistic preview of the blended learning experience through an orientation or course demonstration.
- Provide time-management resources for students to effectively manage the balance of online and face-to-face workload within the blended learning framework.
10. The institution provides guidance/tutorials for students in the use of all forms of technologies used for course delivery.

Blended teaching learning takes advantage of technology to enhance the classroom experience. As students learn in a blended environment, they may need training and guidance to master the technologies used for blended component delivery.

The institution's learning management system may be one component of the blended course or program. “The complexity of a modern [learning] management system (LMS) and the related infrastructure can be daunting, yet providing a stable and functional learning environment is absolutely necessary” (Shelton & Saltsman, 2005, p. 117).

At the heart of the LMS are classroom administrative functions like student authentication, discussion threads, chat, grade books, and in-class messaging and announcements. All of the systems available today contain these core capabilities. However, additional content delivery methods, interaction components, and assessment capabilities may also be utilized as part of a blended course or program. These technologies may reside within the LMS, or be accessible from the open Web or mobile devices.

Students must be comfortable with using these technologies so that they are not at all distracted from the learning process.

Recommendations

- Provide access to documentation and training for all technologies within the scope of blended course and program offerings.
- Develop and distribute minimum technology requirements for students in blended courses or programs.
- Provide opportunities to crowdsource knowledge by having students to contribute to training materials related to blended course and program technologies.
- Enable faculty to create their own instructional videos in support of technologies used in blended courses.
11. **Students are provided clear information for enlisting help from the institution.**

For institutions to be successful and competitive, they must provide a full range of academic and administrative support services, along with clear communication to students on how to access those services.

Links to various academic and administrative support services of the institution can be placed throughout the LMS, on institutional web pages, and administrative portals. All relevant contact information should be listed, including hours of operation. Careful attention must be made to ensure that the information listed throughout these venues is accurate and up-to-date.

**Recommendations**

- Provide links in course instructions, school web pages, and portals to clear descriptions of available support and tutorials/resources that answer basic questions concerning research, writing, technology, etc.
- Remind students via email or learning management system announcements that there is a distinct process for students to use to contact administrative and academic support services.
- Develop an institution-wide strategy for keeping all published administrative and academic support service information up-to-date and relevant.
References for Student Support


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1. The program is assessed through an evaluation process that applies specific established standards (i.e., accreditor guidelines and/or other recognized agency such as the OLC Scorecard).*

2. A variety of data (academic and administrative information) are used to regularly and frequently evaluate program effectiveness in order to guide changes toward continual improvement.*

3. Intended learning outcomes at the course and program level are reviewed regularly to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness, and effectiveness.*

4. A process is in place and followed for the comprehensive assessment of support services for faculty and students.

5. A process is in place and followed for the assessment of student retention in blended courses and programs.

6. Program demonstrates compliance and review of accessibility standards (Section 508, etc.).

7. Course evaluations collect student feedback on the effectiveness of instruction in relation to faculty performance evaluations.

8. Course evaluations collect student feedback on quality of blended course materials.

9. A process is in place and followed for the institutional assessment of faculty blended teaching performance.

10. A process is in place and followed for the assessment of stakeholder (e.g., learners, faculty, staff) satisfaction with the blended learning programs.

Evaluation and Assessment
1. **The program is assessed through an evaluation process that applies specific established standards (i.e., accreditor guidelines and/or other recognized agency such as the OLC Scorecard).**

The blended program evaluation may be defined as “the means by which the institutions or providers set their program goals and measure results against those goals” (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 1998, p. 1). A common perception has been that a blended education program is “often poorly designed and/or underfunded; it is more of an afterthought rather than an integral part of planning and implementation” (Thompson & Irele, 2007, p. 419). But as blended education continues to grow, as students are attracted to the promise of convenience and flexibility, and as we learn more about the pedagogical and learning advantages of blended education, blended programs must be able to demonstrate that they are guided by and accountable to the highest standards. Demonstrating evidence of accountability means implementing “evaluation activities that assess alignment of pedagogy, educational activities, and desired learning outcomes, plus address specific issues of usability and benchmark achievement, [which] provide valuable information for continual improvement” (Balanko, 2002, p. 7). These suggested activities for evaluation are a good starting point for any blended education program. In addition, any regional or discipline specific accrediting group will have standards that will need to be adhered to and can support an established evaluation process.

**Recommendations**

- Use an evaluation process that is aligned to established standards to assess blended programs, and use evaluation results to improve programs. The evaluation should be completed with multiple assessments and a variety of data collected and analyzed.
- Document evidence of program evaluation and improvement to use for support. This should be done at least annually.
- Use applicable accrediting standards and demonstrate adherence to these standards for blended program with artifacts and data analysis. For example, using the institution’s regional accreditor standards, show compliance for those that apply to the blended education program and how program improvements are developed and implemented after data collection and analysis.
2. **A variety of data (academic and administrative information) are used to regularly and frequently evaluate program effectiveness in order to guide changes toward continual improvement.**

A single evaluation process (student course surveys, for example) cannot effectively or fully evaluate a blended education program. Quality program evaluation will require multiple processes, instruments, evidence and analysis. In addition, inputs and outputs should be periodically reviewed. In fact, “effective program evaluation is the best way to achieve continuous program improvement” (Chapman, 2006, para. 33).

A holistic, 360-degree approach to program evaluation that supports continuous improvement includes data collection and evidence of analysis in the following areas:

- Perception of department commitment to the program;
- Effectiveness of the administrator/coordinator;
- Extent and quality of support services;
- Quality of technical support;
- Perspective on student learning;
- Quality of students and comparison with traditional campus students;
- Rigor of courses and programs;
- Effective use of faculty time;
- Personal and professional satisfaction with involvement in the program (Lesht, Montague, Page, Shaik, & Smith, 2006, pp. 98-99).

Other data may be used; however, these are the primary areas that should be focused upon.

**Recommendations**

- Use more than a single review process to evaluate quality. The following areas should be combined for use in the evaluation process:
  - Student satisfaction and student complaints (program and support services);
  - Student success/persistence/withdrawal/drop rates including feedback received;
  - Course evaluations;
  - Faculty satisfaction;
  - Blended course materials and methods reviews;
  - Learning outcomes achievement (at the course and program level);
  - Evidence of institutional support for blended education.

- Establish goals for each of the evaluation processes and develop improvement plans when results fall short of intended goals. Recognize and share positive results with all those involved.

- Engage in efforts to determine and compare success rates and quality standards with other programs of like size with similar institutions.
3. **Intended learning outcomes at the course and program level are reviewed regularly to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness, and effectiveness.*

Learning outcomes should be the foundation for both courses and programs. A learning outcome is “a general statement of what learners will be able to do after the instruction is completed” (Davidson-Shivers & Rasmussen, 2006, p. 84). Likewise, learning outcomes should describe explicit student behavior. They should be current, relevant, appropriate for supporting the program goals, and clearly stated — these characteristics help with developing student assessment activities. Learning outcomes should be reviewed for relevance and course activities and assessments should be updated accordingly.

Effective assessment depends on standards and clear objectives (Holtz & Radner, 2006). Because clarity is so important to student understanding, there should be a periodic recurrent review to determine if learning outcomes are clearly defined and still applicable and relevant to the learning goals.

**Recommendations**

- Map course learning outcomes to demonstrate how they support academic program goals and objectives.
- Update learning outcomes during regular curriculum review to ensure they are clear, current, and relevant.
- Regularly review learning outcomes in blended courses and programs (include peer review in the process) and ensure learning outcomes in each course support overall program goals, objectives, and expected student proficiencies.
- Demonstrate a learning outcome review process with documented changes or notes of review process.
4. A process is in place and followed for the comprehensive assessment of support services for faculty and students.

Evaluating the quality of a blended education program should include an examination of all support services for both student and faculty. The review process should include annual goals for improved services and satisfaction levels. In addition, the institution should demonstrate a commitment to a process for continuous improvement. For example, a goal for the technology support services could be to offer 24x7 support to students with 90% of those students believing their needs were met after the first phone call or email. If only 70% of students reported that their needs were met, then a strategy should be developed to improve the service being provided to students. All results of surveys and improvement strategies should be documented for evidence. Support services would include library services, tutoring, bookstore, counseling, advising, blended student orientations, financial aid, and cashier services. Faculty support services would include technical support, course development support, professional development activities, and ongoing support during the teaching process.

Recommendations

- Survey faculty teaching blended courses and annually assess all faculty support services for teaching and creating blended course materials, such as course development support, training, and ongoing teaching support for possible improvement and faculty satisfaction. Establish a goal for faculty satisfaction. If the goal is not met, develop a strategy for improvement.
- At the least, annually survey blended students to review student satisfaction with support services to determine how well students' needs are met, and use data from the review process for continuous improvements. For example, find out from students if they use the campus bookstore for textbook purchases and how they feel about the service provided.
5. A process is in place and followed for the assessment of student retention in blended courses and programs.

Program retention can be defined as “the number of learners or students who progress from one part of an educational program to the next. In higher education, student retention is normally measured as enrollment from academic year to academic year” (Martinez, 2003, p. 3). Retention may be measured by blended course completion rates which should also be closely monitored; however, retention involves returning back each semester and being successfully enrolled in courses.

While retention rates do vary from program to program, there are many programs that experience normal or even better retention rates. Program leaders and instructors can take proactive steps to increase student retention.

It is clear that data must be collected from a variety of areas to formulate a strategy for improving retention. Students who drop out of the program should be surveyed and feedback collected on their reasons for not finishing a course or program.

Recommendations

- Examine and document student retention in courses and programs from semester to semester and year to year. Compare the resulting data to the feedback collected on prior course evaluations.
- Develop, implement, and assess strategies to continuously improve student retention.
- Provide faculty and advisors with strategies and techniques for improving student retention.
- Survey students for feedback regarding why they dropped courses and review feedback for possible improvement in processes.
6. **Program demonstrates compliance and review of accessibility standards (Section 508, etc.).**

Students with disabilities have a legal and fundamental right to access higher education, which includes blended courses and degree programs. In the United States, legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973), and the 1998 Amendment to Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act provide foundation requirements for making blended education accessible to all students. However, in spite of technological improvements in blended education, there are still reports that students with disabilities are not very well served (Kinash & Crichton, 2007). Yet, the number of students with disabilities that pursue a postsecondary education continues to increase (Simoncelli & Hinson, 2010). Because of legislation, students’ rights, and the increasing number of disabled students enrolling in blended programs, institutions must be able to demonstrate compliance with accessibility standards. Compliance includes providing student support services and developing website and blended course materials that are accessible by adaptive technologies such as screen readers and other technologies for assisting students.

**Recommendations**

- Provide clear information on the website to students with disabilities who are interested in or enrolled in blended classes and links to special support pages in the blended course materials.
- Designate support personnel that are knowledgeable of ADA compliance issues in blended education programs.
- Provide continuous training for all those involved with serving students with disabilities.
- Publish compliance with accessibility standards on the blended education program’s website.
- Apply universal design standards in blended course development and course materials.
7. **Course evaluations collect student feedback on the effectiveness of instruction in relation to faculty performance evaluations.**

While faculty should never be evaluated solely on data collected from course evaluations, the feedback from students should be carefully examined because it may provide specific information that could improve policy development and point to potential faculty behaviors that will need correction or additional training. Course evaluation results may also suggest levels of instructor activity, course engagement, and timeliness of response to students’ questions. In fact, “by using evaluations to guarantee rapid turnaround times, provide custom questions that focus on current or even planned activities, and address the innovative teaching strategies and individual characteristics that distinguish different courses, faculty and students can come to reflect more easily upon those unique aspects of instruction that matter to them” (Anderson, Brown, & Spaeth, 2006, para. 20).

**Recommendations**

- Determine if current course evaluations for blended courses collect student feedback on instructor performance in the blended classroom. If not, modify the instruments in order to collect feedback specific to instructor performance.
- Carefully review blended course evaluation results as a part of the overall performance evaluation process for faculty teaching blended. Look for trends or similar comments about individual instructors’ blended teaching performance.
- Based upon the course evaluation results, go over the feedback with the faculty member and develop a plan to minimize similar negative feedback the next time the course is taught.
8. **Course evaluations collect student feedback on quality of blended course materials.**

Evaluation is “the formal determination of the quality, effectiveness or value of a program, product, project, process, objective, or curriculum” (Worthen & Sanders, 1987, p. 23). Blended course evaluations help determine the effectiveness and value of a course as well as provide feedback regarding instructor performance. Thus, Cavanaugh (2002) recommended, “students should be asked to explain their satisfaction with their experience, including likes and dislikes” (p. 184). The data collected from course evaluations, if reviewed, analyzed, and reflected upon, supports better awareness of the instructional practice (Huba & Freed, 2000).

**Recommendations**

- Gather information beyond how much the student liked the course. Use evaluations to collect information about the specific blended course materials and textbooks, as well as how the instructor performed as the mentor and facilitator of the course.
- Periodically review the questions in the course evaluations for relevance and effectiveness.
- In blended course evaluations, ask students how they feel about the effectiveness of the blended instruction.
- Collect student feedback about technology supporting the course delivery and course activities.
- Consider the following questions for evaluations (Achtemeier, Morris, & Finnegan, 2003, p. 8):
  - Were the course goals, learning objectives and outcomes made clear to you at the beginning of the course?
  - Did you have the necessary technological equipment and skills required for this course?
  - Was there adequate technical support if you encountered difficulties?
  - Was the format and page design of the course easy to use?
  - Were there sufficient instructions given for you to complete all assignments?
  - Did you feel hindered in your course experience in any way? Please describe.
  - Were standards for evaluation of assignments made clear?
  - Did you receive prompt feedback on your completed assignments?
  - What learning activities most influenced your learning in this course?
9. **A process is in place and followed for the institutional assessment of faculty blended teaching performance.**

The success of a blended education program can often depend largely upon faculty involved as they can directly affect student retention, student satisfaction, and student success. In fact, Tinto (1999) found in the traditional classroom, that the frequency and quality of faculty and student contact is directly related to student persistence. This also applies to the blended classroom. Because of the impact faculty can have on the blended classroom and students, faculty performance should be assessed and the results should be provided to the faculty member after each course they teach. This should include a variety of measurements, including student evaluations and direct performance review in the blended classroom.

**Recommendations**

- Create policies to guide expectations for faculty performance in blended classes.
- Assess faculty performance each time they teach a blended course. This may mean a dean or program director will need to access the learning management system to verify instructor activity.
- Provide performance standards for faculty. Develop an improvement plan and follow-up evaluation for those who do not meet the established standards.
10. A process is in place and followed for the assessment of stakeholder (e.g., learners, faculty, staff) satisfaction with the blended learning programs.

Every education program exists to meet the needs of external constituents such as students and future employers and to advance society's needs overall. Blended education programs use internal constituencies such as administrators, technologists, faculty, and staff to achieve the goals defined for the program. Each of these groups of constituents is a stakeholder of the blended program.

Establishing a process that collects feedback from stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of the blended program gathers the data needed to establish a program of continuous improvement. The solicitation of feedback from multiple perspectives allows the program to implement multi-rater feedback, or 360-degree evaluation. Ideally, this evaluation should include a variety of measurements and cover most or all services offered by the program, in addition to the overall satisfaction. Once feedback is collected, corrective action can be taken to ensure the program continues to be effective in serving stakeholders needs.

**Recommendations**

- Establish a regular time frame in which to apply questionnaires/surveys to discover the students' and all external clients' level of satisfaction with the blended program. For example, every fall and spring, survey blended students to determine their satisfaction level with the program.
- Solicit informal feedback from all stakeholders.
References for Evaluation and Assessment


Appendix
Blended Quality Scorecard Rubric
## Quality Scorecard
Criteria for Excellence in Blended Learning Programs

### INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT (27 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The institution has a governance structure to enable systematic and continuous improvement related to the administration of blended education.</th>
<th>The institution has had no discussions about the blended governance structure.</th>
<th>Governance, responsibilities, decision making authority and organization of blended operations is haphazard and inhibiting systematic and continuous improvement</th>
<th>Governance, responsibilities, decision making authority and organization of blended operations is somewhat amorphous with multiple units having specific responsibilities complicating systematic and continuous improvement</th>
<th>Governance, responsibilities, decision making authority and organization of blended operations is deliberate and clear; lines of authority for supporting units are delineated (e.g., in a shared service agreement).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The institution has a governance structure to enable clear, timely, effective, and comprehensive decision making related to blended learning courses/programs.</td>
<td>The institution has had no discussions about the blended governance structure and decision making</td>
<td>Governance, responsibilities, decision making authority and organization of blended operations is haphazard and it is not always clear which unit is taking the lead</td>
<td>Governance, responsibilities, decision making authority and organization of blended operations is somewhat amorphous with multiple units having specific responsibilities.</td>
<td>Governance, responsibilities, decision making authority and organization of blended operations is deliberate and clear; lines of authority for supporting units are delineated (e.g., in a shared service agreement).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The blended learning program's strategic plan is reviewed for its continuing relevance, compliance with accreditation objectives, and is periodically improved and updated.</td>
<td>No strategic plan exists.</td>
<td>The blended program is in the process of developing its own strategic plan tied to the institutional plan.</td>
<td>The blended program has its own strategic plan tied to the institutional plan and accreditation standards; the plan is periodically reviewed to ascertain its continuing relevance.</td>
<td>The blended program has its own strategic plan tied to the institutional plan and accreditation standards; the plan is periodically reviewed to ascertain its continuing relevance; based on the review, it is improved and updated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The institution has defined the strategic value of blended learning to its enterprise and stakeholders (students, faculty, parents, etc.).</td>
<td>The institution is engaging in exploratory conversations about the potential of blended learning.</td>
<td>The institution is working to build its capabilities (e.g., leadership, budgetary support, support services) in order to realize the strategic value of blended learning.</td>
<td>The institution establishes senior leadership positions to steward the blended initiative with clear budgetary support guidelines; there is a commitment to develop the necessary services to support students and faculty members; but blended learning has yet to become a clear part of the institution's mission/vision.</td>
<td>Blended learning is part of the institution's mission/vision; the institution has established senior leadership positions to steward the work with clear budgetary support guidelines; there is a commitment to develop the necessary services to support students and faculty members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The organizational structure of the blended learning program supports the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.</td>
<td>The institution is engaging in exploratory conversations about blended learning.</td>
<td>The institution is in the beginning stages of realizing how a blended learning program supports the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.</td>
<td>The blended learning program is clearly tied to the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.</td>
<td>The blended learning program is positioned within the organizational structure to ensure success; it is clearly tied to the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The institution has a process for planning and resource allocation for the blended learning program, including financial resources, in accordance with strategic planning.</td>
<td>The blended program is considered a 'start-up' and is not tied to the institution's strategic planning process specifically with regard to resource allocations.</td>
<td>The blended program struggles to realize strategic importance when it comes to processes associated with institutional planning and resource allocation</td>
<td>Planning and resource allocation (e.g., financial resources) processes associated with blended learning are tied to the institution's overall strategic strategy.</td>
<td>Blended learning is considered mission critical; planning and resource allocation (e.g., financial resources) processes associated with online learning are tied to the institution's overall strategic plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Blended Learning Scorecard Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0=Deficient</th>
<th>1=Developing</th>
<th>2=Accomplished</th>
<th>3=Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The institution demonstrates sufficient resource allocation, including technology and financial resources, in order to effectively support the mission of blended education.</td>
<td>The blended program is considered a 'start-up' and is not tied to the institution's strategic planning processes specifically with regard to resource allocations</td>
<td>The blended program consistently struggles to garner sufficient resource allocation (e.g., financial resources) to effectively sustain the program</td>
<td>Blended learning is considered 'mission critical'; the institution demonstrates sufficient resource allocation to effectively sustain and also grow the blended program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The organizational structure of the blended learning program supports the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.</td>
<td>The institution is engaging in exploratory conversations about blended learning.</td>
<td>The institution is in the beginning stages of realizing how a blended learning program supports the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.</td>
<td>The blended learning program is positioned within the organizational structure to ensure success; it is clearly tied to the institution's mission, values, and strategic plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A process is followed that ensures that permissions (Creative Commons, Copyright, Fair Use, Public Domain, etc.) are in place for appropriate use of all course materials.</td>
<td>No process is established to ensure that permissions (Creative Commons, Copyright, Fair Use, Public Domain, etc.) are in place for appropriate use of all course materials.</td>
<td>The institution's program is in the beginning stages of developing a consistent process to ensure that permissions (Creative Commons, Copyright, Fair Use, Public Domain, etc.) are in place for appropriate use in all course materials.</td>
<td>The institution's program has developed a consistent process to ensure that permissions (Creative Commons, Copyright, Fair Use, Public Domain, etc.) are in place for appropriate use in all course materials; courses are conducted to verify adherence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0=Deficient</td>
<td>1=Developing</td>
<td>2=Accomplished</td>
<td>3=Exemplary</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The blended course delivery technology is not considered important; it is more like an afterthought than a planned service.</td>
<td>The blended course delivery technology is considered important, but not yet viewed as ‘mission critical’ and is supported as such.</td>
<td>The blended course delivery technology is considered ‘mission critical’ and is supported as such.</td>
<td>The blended course delivery technology is considered ‘mission critical’ and is supported as such; the program/institution uses metrics and benchmarking for upgrading and improving technologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Whether the institution maintains local data centers (servers), and/or contracts for outsourced, hosted services or cloud services, those systems are administered in compliance with established data management practices such as the Information Technology Service Management (ITSM) standards, which include appropriate power protection, backup solutions, disaster recovery plans, etc.</td>
<td>The institution has yet to establish parameters or a plan with regard to data management standards.</td>
<td>No documentation is provided to know whether data centers (local or outsourced, hosted or cloud services) are administered in compliance with established data management practices such as ITSM standards.</td>
<td>Data centers (local or outsourced, hosted or cloud services) are administered in compliance with established data management practices such as ITSM standards; the blended program administration documents continual compliance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The technology systems related to the delivery of blended learning programs are highly reliable and operable with measurable standards being utilized such as system downtime tracking and task benchmarking.*</td>
<td>To date, the technology system performance is not continually monitored, tracked, and reported.</td>
<td>Technology delivery system performance is continually monitored, tracked, and reported.</td>
<td>The program/institution views its technology delivery systems as ‘mission critical’; system performance is continually monitored, tracked, and reported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A documented technology plan that includes electronic security measures (e.g., password protection, encryption, secure online or proctored exams if applicable, etc.) is in place and operational to ensure quality, in accordance with established standards and regulatory requirements.*</td>
<td>No evidence is provided which illuminates that the program/institution has discussed or is engaging in a technology planning process.</td>
<td>The program/institution is in the process of developing a technology plan.</td>
<td>The program/institution has developed and disseminated a technology plan to students and faculty which includes electronic security measures; the technology plan is developed in accordance with established standards and regulatory requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The institution has an established (updated and continuously reviewed) contingency plan for the continuance of data centers and support services in the event of prolonged service disruption.</td>
<td>The institution has yet to explore developing a contingency plan in the event of a prolonged service disruption.</td>
<td>The institution is in the process of establishing a contingency plan in the event of a prolonged service disruption.</td>
<td>The institution has established a contingency plan in the event of a prolonged service disruption; mock disaster drills are conducted periodically to ensure back-up and restoration processes are viable and maintain data integrity; faculty goals have been established for timely system recovery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><strong>A centralized system provides support for building and maintaining the blended education infrastructure.</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0=Deficient</td>
<td>The blended program is in 'start-up' and has yet to develop a system for building and supporting the blended infrastructure.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1=Developing</td>
<td>The program/ institution has a distributed system (e.g., several functional units are involved) for building and maintaining the blended infrastructure.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=Accomplished</td>
<td>The program/ institution has invested in a centralized system for building and maintaining the blended infrastructure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3=Exemplary</td>
<td>The program/institution has invested in a centralized system for building and maintaining the blended infrastructure; it is team based, collaborative, comprehensive, action oriented and nonhierarchical; perspectives of key stakeholders are continually assessed to improve the system.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7</th>
<th><strong>Faculty, staff, and students are supported in the development and use of new technologies and skills applicable to blended learning.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0=Deficient</td>
<td>No evidence is provided that faculty, staff or student use new technologies and how they are supported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1=Developing</td>
<td>Entrepreneurial faculty members are exploring new technologies and developing their individual skills with limited institutional support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2=Accomplished</td>
<td>The program/institution provides sufficient services to support faculty, staff and students in the use of new technologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3=Exemplary</td>
<td>The program/institution provides sufficient services to support faculty, staff and students in the use of new technologies; guides, information sheets, or tutorials are developed; help desk support staff are knowledgeable; faculty workshops or other in-service training is conducted to ensure faculty have the necessary skills to use new technologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COURSE DEVELOPMENT AND INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN (42 points)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. A course development process is followed that ensures courses are designed with alignment between course materials, assessments and learning objectives so that students develop the necessary knowledge and skills to meet measurable learning outcomes at the course and program level.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0=Deficient</td>
<td>1=Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is no indication that courses are designed to ensure that learning outcomes are met.</td>
<td>Blended courses are designed to meet learning outcomes, but no consistent mechanism exists to ensure course and program learning outcomes are met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Guidelines regarding minimum requirements for course development, design, and delivery of blended instruction (such as course syllabus elements, course materials, assessment strategies, faculty feedback) are followed.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No evidence is provided which indicates guidelines regarding minimum standards exist.</td>
<td>The program/institution has begun the process of developing guidelines concerning minimum standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. There is consistency in course development for student retention (enrollment and course completion) and quality (i.e., courses in a program have a consistent navigational structure).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The institution has yet to establish consistency in course development for student retention, quality or have a consistent navigational structure.</td>
<td>The institution is exploring methods to establish consistency in course development for student retention, quality or have a consistent navigational structure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A blended course should be designed as one cohesive whole, incorporating both face-to-face and online experiences in complementary ways.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The online components of the blended course are used for to deliver content that is also repeated in the face-to-face course.</td>
<td>Online content is utilized to prepare students for the face-to-face session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Instructional materials (both online and in-class) and course syllabi are reviewed periodically to ensure they meet the blended course's and program's learning outcomes.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No periodic review process of instructional materials and course syllabi exists.</td>
<td>The program/institution has developed a plan to periodically review course syllabi but few reviews have occurred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Course assignments and activities are reviewed periodically to ensure they meet the blended courses' and program's learning outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No periodic review process of course assignments and activities exists.</td>
<td>The program/institution has developed a plan to periodically review course assignments and activities but few reviews have occurred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Student-centered instruction is considered during the course development process (i.e., student engagement, immersion, and personal responsibility).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The institution has yet to demonstrate that courses are developed with a student-centered focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Course design promotes both faculty and student engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Course workloads are reviewed to ensure it is appropriate for designated credit allocation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A process is established and followed for evaluating the effectiveness of current and emerging technologies to support the achievement of learning outcomes and delivering course content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Course embedded technology actively supports the achievement of learning outcomes and delivering course content and unnecessary use of technology is minimized.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Usability tests are conducted and applied and recommendations based upon Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAGs) are incorporated in the course design process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No evidence exists that usability tests are being considered or conducted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Discussions are underway and plans are being developed concerning how to conduct usability testing, but no action has been taken to date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The program/institution is conducting usability tests, but the recommendations have yet to be included in all courses and programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The program/institution has a formal and consistently applied process of conducting usability tests across all courses and programs; review recommendations are incorporated into courses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Curriculum development is a core responsibility for faculty (i.e., faculty should be involved in either the development or the decision making for the blended curriculum choices).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Faculty members have no consistent involvement in curriculum development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Administrative personnel have an active role in the development and decision making for blended curricula, but faculty members provide input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Faculty members have an active role in the development and decision making for blended curricula, with administrative oversight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102</td>
<td>Faculty members are integral in both the development and decision making for all blended curricula.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Faculty support and resources are provided to promote the best use of blended delivery method in course development and instructional design to facilitate teaching and learning.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No evidence exists that faculty support and resources are provided to promote the best use of blended learning in course development and instructional design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Some faculty support and resources are in place and being implemented and used on a regular basis to support the best use of blended delivery method in course development and instructional design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The program/institution provides faculty support and resources on a regular basis to support specific course or program needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The program/institution provides regular, comprehensive and consistent faculty support and resources to support the best use of blended delivery method in course development and instructional design across the institution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Blended Learning Scorecard Rubric (24 points)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>The blended course includes a syllabus outlining course objectives, learning outcomes, evaluation methods, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and other related course information, making course requirements and course schedule transparent.*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The program/institution does not have requirements or standards for syllabi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The program/institution does not have requirements or standards for syllabi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Syllabi parameters/standards are provided to all faculty members and all blended courses include a syllabus; textbook and any required learning materials are made available to students in advance of their course registration; the program/institution ensure consistency in syllabi placement in the LMS for all blended courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Training and syllabi standards/parameters, based on program/institutional requirements) are provided to all faculty members; all blended courses include a syllabus; textbook and required learning materials are made available to students in advance of their course registration; the program/institution ensure consistency in syllabi placement in the LMS for all blended courses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>The course structure ensures that all students, regardless of location, have access to library/learning resources that adequately support the blended course.*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The program/institution has no plan to ensure that blended students have access to necessary library/learning resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The program/institution has no plan to ensure blended students blended students have access to necessary library/learning resources (e.g., tutoring, writing center).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The program/institution is building out its access to ensure blended students have access to necessary library/learning resources (e.g., tutoring, writing center).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The program/institution ensure all blended students have access to necessary library/learning resources (e.g., tutoring, writing center) regardless of geographic location.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>Expectations for student assignment completion, grade policy, and faculty response are clearly provided in the course syllabus.*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The program/institution has no plan to ensure that required elements for syllabi are included in course syllabi.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Information is provided for all faculty members, so course syllabi include key expectations and grading policies, but faculty response time is not addressed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Faculty members are provided information concerning key expectations for syllabi and grading policies; the program/institution has a recommended faculty response time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Information/training is provided for all faculty members so course syllabi include key expectations and grading policies; the program/institution has a required faculty response time; the response time is regularly evaluated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>Links or explanations of technical support are available in the course (i.e., each course provides suggested solutions to potential technical issues and/or links for technical assistance).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No evidence exists which illustrates that providing links or explanations of technical support are used in blended classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Some blended courses provide links or explanations of technical support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The majority of blended courses provide links or explanations of technical support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>All blended courses consistently provide links, explanations or FAQ's of technical support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>Rules or standards for appropriate student behavior, both online and face-to-face, are provided within the course.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>No evidence is provided which supports a focus on rules or standards of behavior within the program/institution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>While rules or standards exist within the program/institution, they are broad with limited application to blended courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The program/institution has developed rules, standards, or codes of conduct focusing on appropriate student behavior for blended students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The program/institution has developed rules, standards, or codes of conduct focusing on appropriate student behavior for blended students and makes those consistently available (through the LMS or other means) for all courses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6</th>
<th>Instructional materials are easily accessible to the student, easy to use, with an ability to be accessed by multiple operating systems and applications.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>At the present time, no attention has been given to the accessibility of instructional materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The program/institution has a plan to ensure instructional materials for all courses are easily accessible, easy to use; can be accessed by multiple operating systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The program/institution has a process to ensure instructional materials for all courses are easily accessible; easy to use; can be accessed by multiple operating systems; however, it is not consistently deployed across all courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The program/institution has consistent business processes to ensure instructional materials for all courses are easily accessible; easy to use; can be accessed by multiple operating systems; and UX design principles are inherent to course design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Instructional materials are easily accessed by students with disabilities via alternative instructional strategies and/or referral to special institutional resources.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0=Deficient</td>
<td>1=Developing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No evidence exists which illustrates that the program/institution is prepared to offer instructional materials that are easily accessible by students with disabilities.</td>
<td>The program/institution has ad hoc business processes to ensure instructional materials for all courses are easily accessible by students with disabilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8</th>
<th>The blended course is visually appealing to the student and the course is navigationally sound.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The program/institution does not oversee the aesthetics and navigation in the online component of blended courses.</td>
<td>The program/institution provides some training about aesthetics and navigation for faculty designing blended courses, but there is no monitoring process to ensure quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student-to-Student and Faculty-to-Student interaction are essential characteristics and are encouraged and facilitated.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Instructor feedback on student assignments and questions is constructive and provided in a timely manner.*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Instructors use specific strategies to create an engaged, learning-focused presence in both modalities of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Faculty teach the course as one cohesive whole, with “presence” in both the face-to-face and the online portions of the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Resources are provided to assist students in conducting research online and assessing the validity of online resources.*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TEACHING AND LEARNING (15 points)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Technical assistance is provided for faculty before and during blended course development and teaching.*</th>
<th>Technical assistance is provided for faculty before and during blended course development and teaching.*</th>
<th>Technical assistance is provided for faculty before and during blended course development and teaching.*</th>
<th>Technical assistance is provided for faculty before and during blended course development and teaching.*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The institution ensures faculty receive training, assistance, and support to prepare faculty for course development and effective teaching with technology in a variety of modalities.*</td>
<td>No evidence is provided concerning faculty training.</td>
<td>A faculty development plan is in place and some ad hoc training occurs.</td>
<td>The program/institution provides regular training based on specific course or program needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Faculty receive training and materials related to Fair Use, plagiarism, and other relevant legal and ethical concepts.*</td>
<td>No evidence exists that faculty members are provided training or other materials related to Fair Use, plagiarism, etc.</td>
<td>Some limited training exists for faculty members.</td>
<td>Faculty members are provided training, checklists, tip sheets and engage in discussions concerning Fair Use, plagiarism and other relevant legal and ethical concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Faculty are provided on-going professional development related to blended teaching and learning.</td>
<td>No evidence is provided which supports a commitment to ongoing professional development for faculty members teaching blended courses.</td>
<td>The program/institution provides professional development for faculty members on an ad hoc basis.</td>
<td>The program/institution provides ongoing professional development for faculty members focused on blended teaching and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Clear standards are established for faculty engagement and expectations around blended teaching (e.g. response time, contact information, etc.).</td>
<td>To date, no discussions or planning was evident with regard to establishing clear standards.</td>
<td>The program/institution has established clear standards for faculty engagement and expectations; ensure appropriate personnel and systems are in place to communicate standards and monitor faculty performance.</td>
<td>The program/institution has established clear standards for faculty engagement and expectations; ensure appropriate personnel and systems are in place to communicate standards and monitor faculty performance; create and implement blended faculty certification courses; engage a consistent performance review process.</td>
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</table>

**FACULTY SUPPORT (18 points)**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>Deficient</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The program/institution has limited technical resources and can provide little technical support.</td>
<td>The program/institution has minimal technical support resources to assist faculty members during both course development and teaching.</td>
<td>The program/institution has adequate technical support resources to assist faculty members during both course development and teaching.</td>
<td>The program/institution has adequate technical support resources to assist faculty members during both course development and teaching; tutorials and web resources have been created to augment faculty needs; the technical support resources are considered &quot;mission critical.&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No evidence is provided concerning faculty training.</td>
<td>A faculty development plan is in place and some ad hoc training occurs.</td>
<td>The program/institution provides regular training based on specific course or program needs.</td>
<td>The program/institution provides regular, comprehensive and consistent course development support, training and ongoing assistance (e.g., mentoring programs) and the training is provided using different models of delivery (e.g., virtual modules, handouts, live training).</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No evidence exists that faculty members are provided training or other materials related to Fair Use, plagiarism, etc.</td>
<td>Some limited training exists for faculty members.</td>
<td>Faculty members are provided training, checklists, tip sheets and engage in discussions concerning Fair Use, plagiarism and other relevant legal and ethical concepts.</td>
<td>Faculty members are provided training, checklists, tip sheets and engage in discussions concerning Fair Use, plagiarism and other relevant legal and ethical concepts; the program/institution has a business process in place to assess compliance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No evidence is provided which supports a commitment to ongoing professional development for faculty members teaching blended courses.</td>
<td>The program/institution provides professional development for faculty members on an ad hoc basis.</td>
<td>The program/institution provides ongoing professional development for faculty members focused on blended teaching and learning.</td>
<td>The program/institution provides ongoing professional development for faculty members focused on blended teaching and learning; development opportunities are provided through various delivery formats; the needs of faculty members are considered when developing a training schedule of topics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To date, no discussions or planning was evident with regard to establishing clear standards.</td>
<td>The program/institution is in the process of establishing clear standards for faculty engagement and expectations; ensure appropriate personnel and systems are in place to communicate standards and monitor faculty performance.</td>
<td>The program/institution has established clear standards for faculty engagement and expectations; ensure appropriate personnel and systems are in place to communicate standards and monitor faculty performance.</td>
<td>The program/institution has established clear standards for faculty engagement and expectations; ensure appropriate personnel and systems are in place to communicate standards and monitor faculty performance; create and implement blended faculty certification courses; engage a consistent performance review process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Faculty are provided training in blended teaching.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No evidence is provided which supports a commitment to ongoing professional development for faculty members teaching blended courses.</td>
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<td>1=Developing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The program/institution provides professional development for faculty members on an ad hoc basis.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2=Accomplished</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The program/institution provides ongoing professional development for faculty members focused on blended teaching and learning.</td>
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<td>3=Exemplary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The program/institution provides ongoing professional development for faculty members focused on blended teaching and learning; development opportunities are provided through various delivery formats; the needs of faculty members are considered when developing a training schedule of topics.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>STUDENT SUPPORT (33 points)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Before starting a blended learning program, students complete an orientation or self-assessment to determine if they possess the self-motivation and commitment to learn.*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0=Deficient</td>
<td>1=Developing</td>
<td>2=Accomplished</td>
<td>3=Exemplary</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no evidence to support student’s are advised about blended program readiness</td>
<td>A defined advising process is in place and embedded into business processes before a learner starts blended classes</td>
<td>A defined advising process is in place and embedded into business processes before a learner starts blended classes; develops processes for learners to self-assess their motivation and commitment</td>
<td>A defined advising process is in place and embedded into business processes before a learner starts blended classes; processes are developed for learners to self-assess motivation and commitment; tutorials and checklists are provided; 'test drives' or other decision support tools are offered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Before starting a blended learning program, students are advised about the program to determine if they have access to the minimum technology skills and equipment required by the course design.*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no evidence that student’s are advised about minimum technology skills or equipment</td>
<td>Information available to prospective students is incomplete and/or not available before enrolling</td>
<td>Information available to prospective students is complete but not available prior to enrolling and starting a blended learning program</td>
<td>Prospective students are provided program information so they can make informed decisions before enrolling; necessary information is easy to find on the web site.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Before starting a blended learning program, students receive (or have access to) information about programs, including admission requirements, tuition and fees, books and supplies, technical and proctoring requirements, and student support services.*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no evidence that students receive important information before starting a blended program</td>
<td>Information available to prospective students is incomplete and/or not available before enrolling</td>
<td>Information available to prospective students is complete, but not always available prior to enrolling and starting a blended program</td>
<td>Prospective students are provided program information so they can make informed decisions before enrolling; necessary information is easy to find on the website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Throughout the duration of the course/program, students have access to training and information they will need to secure required materials through electronic databases, interlibrary loans, government archives, news services, and other sources.*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The library has no tutorials, web resources or forms to support students enrolled in blended courses or programs.</td>
<td>Some blended courses include information on how to access library professionals whether they are generalists or specialists; limited tutorials, web resources or forms are made available online for students in blended courses or programs.</td>
<td>The library has various tutorials, web resources or forms to help students learn how to use all of the library resources (e.g., interlibrary loan, electronic document delivery, e-reserve system); most blended courses include information on how to access library professionals whether they are generalists or specialists.</td>
<td>The library has various tutorials, web resources or forms to help students learn how to use all of the library resources (e.g., interlibrary loan, electronic document delivery, e-reserve system) embedded in each course; all blended courses include information on how to access library professionals whether they are generalists or specialists.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Throughout the duration of the course/program, students have access to appropriate technical assistance and technical support staff.*</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There is no evidence that students have access to technical assistance and support.</td>
<td>Students have access to technical support, but support is inconsistent and/ or not provided during peak hours based on the student’s time zone.</td>
<td>Students have access to consistent technical assistance and support but instructions for accessing support are unclear and hours are limited but are provided during peak hours.</td>
<td>Students have access to consistent technical support and have clear instructions on how to access; technical support services are provided 24X7X365.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Support personnel are available (24/7) to address student questions and problems of a technical nature.*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>No evidence is provided of how students may address their questions and issues.</td>
<td>It is unclear how all types of student questions, problems, and bug reporting is handled across courses and programs.</td>
<td>Clear and consistent support is available and business processes surrounding the full range of student issues (e.g., questions, problems, bug reports, complaints) is documented.</td>
<td>Clear and consistent support is available and business processes surrounding the full range of student issues (e.g., questions, problems, bug reports, complaints) is documented; support staff monitor reemerging issues to ensure mitigation of any systemic problems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scorecard Rubric</td>
<td>0=Deficient</td>
<td>1=Developing</td>
<td>2=Accomplished</td>
<td>3=Exemplary</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>7</strong> Policy, processes, and resources are in place to support students with disabilities.</td>
<td>There is no evidence that students with disabilities are supported.</td>
<td>There is evidence of support for students with disabilities, but policies and processes are not evident.</td>
<td>The program/ institution has policies, processes and resources to support students with disabilities; however students with disabilities receive inconsistent support or instructions for access are unclear.</td>
<td>The program/institution has consistent policies, processes, and resources to support students with disabilities; it is clear that the institution is working to incorporate the relevant standards and best practices; documentation includes specific course information as well as how students access relevant services.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8</strong> Students have access to information regarding required course materials in print and/or digital format, such as ISBN numbers for textbooks, book suppliers, and delivery modes prior to course enrollment.</td>
<td>There is no evidence that students have access to required materials prior to enrollment.</td>
<td>Access to required course materials varies by course and is inconsistent.</td>
<td>Access to required course materials is consistent across the program, but students must be enrolled for access.</td>
<td>Access to required course materials is consistent and students have access prior to enrollment.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9</strong> Program demonstrates a student-centered focus and intentionality in the integration of online and face-to-face resources.</td>
<td>There is no evidence of a student-centered focus or intentional integration of resources.</td>
<td>Student-centered support services are targeted primarily for on-campus students.</td>
<td>Student-centered support services are available for students in blended courses or programs, but evidence is incomplete and/or hard to locate.</td>
<td>Student-centered support services are available for students in blended courses or programs. The institution actively integrates support services across the continuum of learning modes, including blended courses and programs. Services are continuously monitored and updated to serve the shift in blended learning approaches.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10</strong> The institution provides guidance/tutorials for students in the use of all forms of technologies used for course delivery.</td>
<td>There is no evidence that students are provided with guidance concerning use of technology.</td>
<td>There is evidence that guidance is available for students but guidance provided is confusing or unclear. Instructions for access may be needed.</td>
<td>Guidance is provided for only the primary technology used for course delivery. Instructions for access are clear.</td>
<td>Guidance, fact sheets, infographics are provided for all types of technologies used in coursework and may include video tutorials. Instructions for access are clear and consistent across all courses regardless of delivery mode.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>11</strong> Students are provided clear information for enlisting help from the institution.</td>
<td>There is no evidence that students are provided instructions for enlisting help.</td>
<td>Students are provided information to enlist help but services are limited, access is unclear and/or minimal channels are available.</td>
<td>Students have access to both one-time services and repeated services, but information is not clear and/or channels are limited.</td>
<td>Students have clear information in order to access both one-time and repeated services; multiple channels (e.g., e-mail, phone, chat, web conferencing) are provided for enlisting assistance; service standards are monitored over time and improvements made.</td>
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<td>Deficient</td>
<td>Developing</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The program/institution does not have a plan or process to evaluate the blended program. Mostly performed on ad hoc basis.</td>
<td>The program/institution has developed a program evaluation plan to periodically assess the program.</td>
<td>The program/institution has developed or follows specific standards which are consistently and periodically used to assess/evaluate the program.</td>
<td>The program/institution has developed or follows specific standards which are consistently and periodically used to assess/evaluate the program; evaluation results are used to improve blended program(s).</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No evidence exists that the program/institution evaluates its blended program using a variety of data.</td>
<td>Blended program evaluation is just beginning and limited academic or administrative measures are used to assess program effectiveness.</td>
<td>Blended program evaluation includes some academic (e.g., course evaluations, learning outcomes achievement) and administrative (e.g., satisfaction surveys, student success/persistence rates) measures to assess effectiveness.</td>
<td>Blended program evaluation includes a wide variety of academic (e.g., course evaluations, learning outcomes achievement) and administrative (e.g., satisfaction surveys, student success/persistence rates) measures to assess effectiveness; the evaluation occurs regularly and frequently; and, results are used to guide changes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Learning outcomes are assessed on an ad hoc basis to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness and effectiveness.</td>
<td>Learning outcomes are assessed on a regular basis to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness and effectiveness.</td>
<td>Learning outcomes are assessed on a regular basis to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness and effectiveness; a peer review process is used; outcomes from the process drive updates.</td>
<td>Learning outcomes are assessed on a regular basis to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness and effectiveness; a peer review process is used; outcomes from the process drive updates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>No process is in place and followed for the comprehensive assessment of support services for faculty and students.</td>
<td>A process is in place and engaged on an ad hoc basis to assess support services for faculty and students.</td>
<td>A process is in place and followed on a regular basis (e.g., annually) to assess support services for faculty and students.</td>
<td>A process is in place and followed on a regular basis (e.g., annually) to assess support services for faculty and students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No process is in place to assess student retention.</td>
<td>A process is in place and engaged on an ad hoc basis to student retention.</td>
<td>A process is in place and followed on a regular basis (e.g., annually) to assess student retention.</td>
<td>A process is in place and followed on a regular basis (e.g., annually) to assess student retention; outcomes serve as a foundation for improvements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Program/institution has designated personnel to support accessibility needs; a process is in place and followed on an ad hoc basis to assess accessibility standards.</td>
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**EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT (30 points)**

- **110 Quality Scorecard for Blended Learning Programs**
  - **1.** The program/institution does not have a plan or process to evaluate the blended program.
  - **2.** A variety of data (academic and administrative information) are used to regularly and frequently evaluate program effectiveness in order to guide changes toward continual improvement.
  - **3.** Intended learning outcomes at the course and program level are reviewed regularly to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness, and effectiveness.
  - **4.** A process is in place and followed for the comprehensive assessment of support services for faculty and students.
  - **5.** A process is in place and followed for the assessment of student retention in blended courses and programs.
  - **6.** Program demonstrates compliance and review of accessibility standards (Section 508, etc.).

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*Intended learning outcomes at the course and program level are reviewed regularly to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness, and effectiveness.*

*Blended program evaluation includes a wide variety of academic (e.g., course evaluations, learning outcomes achievement) and administrative (e.g., satisfaction surveys, student success/persistence rates) measures to assess effectiveness; the evaluation occurs regularly and frequently; and, results are used to guide changes.*

*Learning outcomes are assessed on a regular basis to ensure alignment, clarity, utility, appropriateness and effectiveness; a peer review process is used; outcomes from the process drive updates.*

*A process is in place and followed on a regular basis (e.g., annually) to assess support services for faculty and students. Outcomes serve as a foundation for improvements.*

*A process is in place and followed on a regular basis (e.g., annually) to assess student retention; outcomes serve as a foundation for improvements.*

*Program demonstrates compliance and review of accessibility standards (Section 508, etc.). Outcomes published on the program's website; outcomes also serve as a foundation for improvement.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Course evaluations collect student feedback on the effectiveness of instruction in relation to faculty performance evaluations.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Course evaluations are not regularly reviewed.</td>
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<td>Course evaluations and other feedback (e.g., peer review results) are reviewed on an ad hoc basis to assess effectiveness of instruction; feedback gleaned from the review is used to shape faculty performance evaluations.</td>
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<tr>
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<th>Course evaluations collect student feedback on quality of blended course materials.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Course evaluations are not collected and used to assess the quality of blended course materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A comprehensive course evaluation is deployed periodically to collect student feedback; outcomes serve as a foundation for improvements.</td>
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<td>A comprehensive course evaluation is deployed for each blended course to collect student feedback; outcomes serve as a foundation for improvements.</td>
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<th>A process is in place and followed for the institutional assessment of faculty blended teaching performance.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>No program/ institutional policies have been developed to guide expectations for faculty performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The program/ institution has developed policies to guide expectations for faculty performance and the policy/ standards are shared with faculty members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The program/ institution has developed policies to guide expectations for faculty performance; policy/ standards are shared with faculty; these standards are used periodically to evaluate a faculty member’s performance each time they teach in a blended modality.</td>
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<th>A process is in place and followed for the assessment of stakeholder (e.g., learners, faculty, staff) satisfaction with the blended learning programs.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>No process is in place to assess stakeholder satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
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*Adapted from Institute for Higher Education Policy’s Quality on the Line: Benchmark for Success in Internet-based Distance Education (2000).*