

AIMS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND IT  
(PVT) LTD

# **BLENDED AND DISTANCE LEARNING**



## **Overview**

AIMS has been in the forefront in providing high-quality education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels with diverse multimodal learning experience. As a leading higher education institution in the country with multiple faculties and postgraduate institutes, AIMS is making all efforts to use the online and multimode educational delivery platforms internally. The Policy on Online Teaching, Learning and Assessments establishes the principles and foundations which guide the development and coordination of related services across the Campus. The policy shall promote activities to supplement the activities undertaken through other modes of educational delivery. This policy covers the web-enhanced, blended and online learning of courses, hereinafter referred to as 'online learning', including the online delivery of courses during 'Emergency Remote Teaching' (ERT).

## **Review of the Policy**

This policy shall be reviewed and confirmed every two years to maintain its relevance and validity. The Board of Governance possesses the sole authority and power to exercise its discretion with respect to any or all of the clauses of this policy and provide for any interpretation, modification or amendment to the policy where necessary when the situation demands.

## **Scope and Application**

This policy applies to all the academic staff members, both internal or external, who teach in the courses offered for students and staff. The policy covers the following key areas:

- a. Programme Design, Delivery and Requirements
- b. Academic Standards and Ethics
- c. Student Support and Ethics (Digital Citizenship)
- d. Assessing-Students-Online and Requirements
- e. Staff Training on Online Teaching and Learning

## **Objectives**

- a. To provide a framework for the teaching staff to engage with online course delivery
- b. To ensure that the learning environment has the necessary institutional supports for online course delivery
- c. To ensure that the technical infrastructure is available for online course delivery

- d. To ensure that the teaching staff and students are provided with necessary training on- and support for- online course delivery
- e. To provide guidance on instructional design for online course delivery
- f. To ensure that the legal and ethical responsibilities of the Institute have been met for online course delivery

## **Key Policy Principles/ Policy Statements**

### **Programme Design, Delivery and Requirements**

1. Teaching, learning and assessment strategies and delivery mechanisms shall specifically be designed for online learning course delivery.
2. AIMS shall ensure that online learning courses are learner-centred and subject-led rather than technology-led and that the technology is appropriately used to support pedagogy.
3. The course/programme design shall specify the level of ‘blending’ between the online component and the regular face-to-face classroom-based component of the courses and the synchronous/asynchronous nature of activities planned.
4. The course/programme design shall specify the nature of the effort required of the students towards the activities of teaching, content creation and moderation in blended and online learning delivery.
5. AIMS shall take all practicable steps to ensure the security and reliability of its online learning and support systems in accordance with the information technology security policy of AIMS.
6. During ‘Emergency Remote Teaching’ (ERT), AIMS shall ensure that the best practices for ERT are adopted.

### **Academic Standards and Ethics**

7. The online courses shall be newly developed or be converted from the existing courses in a manner that the academic standards of AIMS are maintained.
8. The inclusion of online components shall ensure accessibility to learning resources and activities for all learners, including those with special needs, and appropriate digital technologies shall be used to address the diverse learning needs of the learners.
9. AIMS shall ensure that the learning materials used in online teaching are free from plagiarism and that the ownership of such materials is adequately acknowledged.

10. AIMS shall encourage the academic staff members to use an appropriate licensing service (e.g. Creative Commons) to protect the rights of intellectual properties.
11. The academic staff shall be provided with all necessary guidelines on the ethics pertaining to the online environment with the goal of promoting 'digital citizenship'. This shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - Online presence
  - Ethical use of online information
  - Responsible use of online materials in learning
  - Consequences of the irresponsible use of digital materials

### **Student Support and Ethics (Digital Citizenship)**

12. At the beginning of courses, the students shall be made aware of the specific requirements pertaining to the online learning environment.
13. AIMS shall conduct an orientation programme on online learning at the beginning of each degree programme.
14. Prior to enrolment on an online learning course, students shall be provided with all necessary guidelines on the course. This shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - the nature and extent of independent learning involved
  - collaborative and supported aspects of learning
  - details of specific time slots assigned for synchronous learning or assessment
  - the regulations that are in place to provide a unique student identity and protect student information
15. Students shall be informed of the level and nature of support available, including but not limited to academic, technical and mentoring support for online learning.
16. AIMS shall ensure that procedures and regulations as specified in a Code of Conduct for students are fit-for-purpose in an online learning environment.
17. AIMS shall ensure that guidelines specifically formulated for the use of social media are fit-for-purpose in an online learning environment.
18. Students shall be provided with the required technical support when and where necessary.

19. Students shall be provided with all necessary guidelines on ethical conduct in an online environment, targeting 'digital citizenship'. This shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Online presence
- Ethical use of online information
- Responsible use of online materials in learning
- Consequences of the irresponsible use of digital materials

### **Assessing-Students-Online and Requirements**

20. All online assessments shall adhere to and comply with the University Policy on Assessment and Award of Qualification.

21. In collaboration with the Network and Communication Services Unit (NCSU), the Office of the Dean in each faculty/institute shall provide the courses/programmes with accessibility to required/appropriate assessment software.

22. The individual faculty/institute shall decide the level of proctoring required during online assessments and make students aware of such conditions and requirements at the commencement of the course.

23. The NCSU shall be responsible for the cyber-security and backup facilities for student assessments.

### **Staff Training on Online Teaching and Learning**

24. The University shall ensure that the academic staff involved in teaching on an online learning programme are appropriately trained and supported.

25. The University shall ensure, through the Staff Development Centre, that the members of the academic staff are provided with opportunities to develop their academic and technology - enhanced learning skills and digital competence.

26. The University shall assist the faculties, institutes and centres in creating high quality online learning environments and innovative teaching and learning programmes and methods.

### **Definitions:**

- Face-to-face classes                      The usual classroom learning environment where no online technologies are used

- Web-enhanced learning      When the traditional face-to-face classes are combined with usually 1-30% of online technologies
- Blended learning              When the traditional face-to-face classes are combined with usually 30-80% of online technologies
- Online learning                When the learning takes place using >80% of online technologies
- Synchronous learning        When the learning takes place at a fixed time slot 'real-time' using online technologies
- Asynchronous learning        When the students learn at their own pace and time using online technologies
- Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode, perhaps online, due to a crisis situation, which involves the use of fully remote teaching solutions or some blended learning as a hybrid