

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

**POLICY FOR  
ONLINE and MULTIMODE TEACHING and LEARNING - 2015**

*Approved by University Finance & General Purposes Committee (UFGPC) 2008*

*Revised Policy approved by UFGCP May 29, 2015*

# **POLICY FOR ONLINE and MULTIMODE TEACHING and LEARNING**

## **January 2015**

### **Introduction**

The University of the West Indies has been pioneering access to high quality online education since mounting its first full online programme in 2003, and more generally at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels within the Caribbean region since the inception of its Open Campus in 2007/2008. While numerous other providers of online programmes are active in the Caribbean region, The UWI's programming is unique because it is indigenous to the region and oriented to the needs of Caribbean people. As a regional university with multiple Campuses and country sites, the University is also making increasing use of online and multimode educational delivery platforms internally.

Conscious of the transformative potential of technological innovation in educational delivery, in 2013 The UWI launched its 'Single Virtual University Space (SVUS)' to enhance the user experience within the University. This 'Policy for Online and Multimode Teaching and Learning, 2015' – **a revision of the Policy for Online, Distance and Multimode Learning, 2008** – establishes the principles and foundations which guide the development and coordination of related services across the institution. The Policy is consistent with the mission of The UWI and its vision and roots Online and Multimode delivery within an efficient and effective University-wide strategic framework that is service-based and student-focused.

### **Assumption**

This policy is based on the assumption that there is an adequately resourced Single Virtual University Space (SVUS) Unit at The UWI.

### **Strategic Objectives**

The UWI seeks to:-

- i) provide increased access to its programmes and courses;
- ii) provide multiple flexible paths to enable pursuit of tertiary education by the people of the region, and internationally;
- iii) enhance learning effectiveness by providing all students and other stakeholders with more diverse, flexible and multi-disciplinary approaches to teaching and learning at The UWI;
- iv) establish procedures that will ensure a consistent approach to online and multimode development and delivery in line with international standards and practice;
- v) ensure that credit is brought to The UWI on the basis of the provision of a high quality online and multimode learning experience;
- vi) ensure that online and blended course and programme offerings from The UWI are available seamlessly to students and external stakeholders;
- vii) ensure that a consistent, high quality and efficient suite of academic, administrative and financial services is available to all learners through a single, integrated platform.

## Guiding Principles

In the development of online learning opportunities across The UWI, the following principles should apply uniformly, without modification, across all instances of online and multimode learning at The UWI:-

- i) adherence to a consistent high standard in academic quality;
- ii) replicability of learning objects across all campuses, modules, courses and programmes, subject to The UWI Policy on Intellectual Property;
- iii) commitment to a consistent high quality of service to all persons studying in courses/programmes involving online or multimode delivery;
- iv) observance of a uniform public face for all online and blended programmes of The UWI;
- v) respect for intellectual property as governed by *The UWI Policy on Intellectual Property Management and Commercialisation (2015)*; and
- vi) assurance of integrity of data.

## Sharing of Material

All course materials developed for delivery at The UWI are the property of the University and their use is governed by the *University's Policy on Intellectual Property Management and Commercialisation (2015)*.

## Definitions

Within the context of the Policy for Online and Multimode Teaching and Learning, 2014, the following definitions (which are amplified in **Appendix 1**) will apply:

**Face-to-Face Course:** A course in which teaching takes place mainly in the physical classroom based on course contact hours standards.

**Online course:** A course in which all instruction takes place online in a virtual classroom or virtual learning environment. An online course may be delivered synchronously or asynchronously.

**Blended course:** A course that combines physical classroom-based instruction and learning activities with online instruction. There are several variations of blended courses. See **Appendix 1**.

**Online programme:** A programme in which all the courses are delivered online. An online programme may be delivered synchronously or asynchronously.

**Blended programme:** A programme which consists of a planned mix of course delivery modalities, including face-to-face, blended and/or online courses as defined above. Any programme in which less than 100% of courses are online is categorised as a blended programme.

**Synchronous delivery:** With synchronous delivery information exchange takes place in real time. An example of synchronous delivery is the use of video-conferencing or web-conferencing with the support of tools such as Blackboard Collaborate to deliver “live” lectures to students in a remote location.

**Asynchronous delivery:** With asynchronous delivery, a virtual learning environment, such as Moodle, is used to facilitate information exchange without the constraints of time and place. This approach combines self-study with time-independent interactions to promote learning. See **Appendix 1** for a comprehensive list of definitions.

## Service-based Model

This policy assumes that The UWI's strategic objectives for online and multimodal teaching and learning are met uniformly, efficiently and with precision across the multi-campus University using a tiered service-based model. The tiers in the model are as follows:

- i) Technical Services – including Physical Infrastructure and an Integrated Enterprise-wide Electronic Platform
- ii) Academic Services – including services relating to Academic Quality
- iii) Administrative Services including registrarial and bursarial services

These services (infrastructure, electronic platform, academic quality and administration) form the common core for all online and multimode learning across The University of the West Indies. They are facilitated through the services of established units and other entities including, but not limited to, the Office of the University CIO, Campus IT Services, SVUS Unit, Quality Assurance Unit, Libraries, Centres of Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETLs), the Academic Programming & Delivery (APAD) – Open Campus, the Registry, the Bursary and Academic Faculty. The service-based model seeks to ensure a successful enterprise-wide online environment with a consistent UWI brand apparent through the electronic face of the institution. At the same time, the delivery of high quality educational services is facilitated through the substantial breadth and depth of enabling, as well as end-user services implemented according to industry-standard best practice.

The service-based model for delivery of online and blended courses recognizes and responds to the special needs of the institution's various categories of learners. These are:

- i) UWI students
- ii) Under-served communities
- iii) Internationally-based students
- iv) Occasional learners.

## Policy Statements

### Online or Blended Course/Programme Development

- i) Any unit within The UWI wishing to **develop an online programme (synchronous or asynchronous)** shall declare this interest to the SVUS Unit which, through its resources will be able to advise which campuses, faculties, departments and/or individuals within The UWI have already initiated relevant work in the field. Where necessary, the SVUS Unit will assist with brokering a collaborative arrangement between those parties that have expressed an interest.
- ii) Any unit within The UWI needing **assistance to develop online or blended courses/programmes** shall first seek a partner within The UWI. If no response is received within an agreed timeframe, the unit shall be free to seek a partner from outside The UWI. All such courses/programmes shall adhere to the specifications of a University-wide standard for course development and delivery as outlined in Appendix 3: Standard 1. The CETLS shall provide guidance with respect to these specifications.
- iii) In the case of **online courses**, where necessary, the residential campuses shall first seek assistance with respect to the development of such courses from the Open Campus.

- iv) In cases where a **blended course/programme is to be delivered across multiple campuses**, the SVUS Unit shall be consulted and will assist in coordinating the collaborative arrangements for delivery.
- v) All new and/or newly converted blended and online programmes must have approval from the Board for Undergraduate Studies/Board for Graduate Studies & Research.

### **Online or Blended Course/ Programme Delivery**

- i) Blended learning that is campus specific shall remain the main responsibility of the campus and its appropriate sub-units.
- ii) Any campus/multi-campus course or programme delivered online but targeted to on-campus students as part of an online learning or multi-campus approach shall continue to be the responsibility of the campus units engaged in their delivery.
- iii) Delivery of asynchronous online courses/programmes to students not studying at or attending a residential campus, shall be the responsibility of the Open Campus.
- iv) Delivery of synchronous online courses/programmes to students not studying at or attending a residential campus may be carried out by residential campuses, and must be coordinated through the SVUS Unit.
- v) All online and blended courses/programmes which have to date been delivered by residential campuses to non-campus based (distance) students shall remain the responsibility of the campus. Campuses, through their CETLs, shall generate a list of these programmes/courses, and CETLs shall ensure that these programmes adhere to the University-wide standard for online delivery.
- vi) Any expansion of on-campus courses or programmes for asynchronous delivery to students not studying at or attending one or more of the residential campuses shall take place through the Open Campus, unless otherwise determined by mutual agreement.
- vii) Open Campus courses shall be available to campus-based students and campus-based courses to Open Campus students. This will be facilitated by an integrated enterprise-wide electronic platform.

### **Requirements for Course Development**

- i) All online and blended courses and programmes must adhere to the specifications of a University-wide standard (see **Appendix 3: Standard 1**).
- ii) The delivery of courses through online or blended modes will involve a number of specific roles and responsibilities of the various entities involved. These are shown as **Appendices 2A – E**.
- iii) University-wide Standards and Quality shall be ensured by the CETLs and the QAU. Programme proposals shall be presented to the Boards for Undergraduate Studies and Graduate Studies and Research for approval as appropriate.

## **Infrastructure and An Integrated Enterprise-wide Electronic Platform**

An integrated enterprise-wide electronic platform comprising a teaching and learning platform along with registration and financial facilities, is a critical requirement for the achievement of the strategic objectives of The UWI with respect to online and multimodal teaching and learning. This platform will sit on enabling infrastructure, and its functionality as well as its user interface design will be specified, developed, managed and maintained in close consultation with multiple single-campus as well as cross-campus functional units. Performance objectives for the integrated enterprise-wide electronic platform and underlying infrastructure will be established and monitored under consultation with relevant units (See **Appendix 2A**).

### **Single Virtual University Space**

The University shall maintain a unit, the Single Virtual University Space Unit (SVUS Unit), whose function it is to manage requests for online programmes and courses (synchronous and asynchronous) from internal and external stakeholders, and coordinate activities across all campuses to facilitate the delivery of such programmes and courses with a consistent UWI brand. The SVUS Unit will also serve as a central repository for UWI-wide information relating to online and multimode delivery. The SVUS Unit shall maintain a current and historic inventory of all courses and programmes, across the University that currently utilize an online or multimode format.

The SVUS unit will draw on the services of the integrated enterprise-wide electronic platform to ensure a consistent and high quality student experience (See **Appendix 2B**).

### **Open Campus**

The Open Campus shall assure consistency in the development and delivery of online and blended courses. The Open Campus shall maintain a standard for the development of online and blended courses and Programmes (**Appendix 3: Standard 1**) which will specify:

- The characteristics that a course must exhibit before it can be delivered as online or multimode.
- The pathways through which a course may be transformed from delivery within the face-to-face mode to one that is delivered based on The UWI standard for online or blended delivery.

All campuses shall have access to a common pool of services and resources facilitated by the Open Campus. These will additionally include but are not limited to:

- best practice guides, toolkits and other resources for faculty;
- a common Faculty Readiness for Blended and Online Teaching Survey;
- a common Student Readiness for Blended and Online Learning Survey;
- blended and Online Learning guides and resources for students;
- online/blended courses for faculty development and training.

The Open Campus shall draw on the coordinating and monitoring services of the SVUS Unit as well as the enabling services of the integrated enterprise-wide electronic platform and related infrastructure, and shall provide additional services relating to online delivery.

## **Financial Arrangements for Development and Delivery of Courses/Programmes**

Financial arrangements will differ depending on the collaborative arrangement brokered between parties. The following general principles apply:

- 1) During the design and development phase of courses/programmes, the units providing services shall cover their proportion of the respective upfront costs, i.e. the various service providers shall make an investment in the development of the new programme (in the expectation that they would be reimbursed from revenues generated).
- 2) Once the programme is up and running, and generating revenue, this revenue shall be apportioned between the contributing units on the basis of relative contribution, which would be evident from the **documented expenditures**. The respective Campus Bursar (or nominee) with the University Bursar(or nominee) shall serve as a financial oversight committee in this regard.
- 3) The financial oversight committee (as identified above), in consultation with the relevant academic Department shall, after at least a full cycle of programme delivery, assess programme viability, and shall recommend whether or not the programme should continue. This committee might also make a determination on long-term profit sharing.

*NB: If a programme is unprofitable, then contributing units would absorb the loss - which would be shared among them equitably. In the case of a profitable programme, however, all the contributing units would be reimbursed, and would share in the profits.*

#### **The Team**

Academic	- Prof. Beverley Bryan, Dr. Kim Mallalieu
CETL	- Dr. Sylvia Henry
I.T.	- Mrs. Brigitte Collins
Open Campus	- Prof. Vivienne Roberts, Dr. Joel Warrican
Quality & Standards	- Prof. Alan Cobley, <u>Prof. Yvette Jackson</u>
SVUS	- Mrs. Pauline Francis-Cobley

**Approved by UF&GPC May 2015**

## Appendix 1

### DEFINITIONS OF COURSE DELIVERY MODALITIES AT THE UWI

COURSES		
Modality	Definition	Proportion of mandatory course time and/or content online
Traditional Face-to-face	A course in which teaching takes place mainly in the physical classroom based on course contact hours standards. Use may be made of online sources as reference material. Interactive whiteboards and multi-media systems may be utilised in the classroom, but no virtual learning environment (VLE) e.g. Moodle is used.	0%
Web-Enhanced (Blended /Hybrid Supplemental Model)	A course in which teaching takes place in the physical classroom based on course contact hours standards. A VLE e.g. Moodle may be used to house supplemental course materials such as course outline, syllabus, lecture notes, readings, and perhaps to facilitate assignment submission and grading, but no instruction takes place through the VLE and its use by students is largely optional. Web 2.0 tools may also be used minimally, to enhance teaching and learning, but generally online activity supplements, but does not replace course time.	1-29%
Blended/Hybrid - Replacement Model <i>Classroom-based</i>	A course that combines classroom-based instruction and learning activities with self-directed and/or teacher-directed computer-based instruction and learning activities via a VLE (eg Moodle). In such courses, some instructional contact hours are replaced by time online. The proportion of course time allocated to face-to-face activity will vary depending on the nature of the course and contextual circumstance. The VLE is a key tool in delivery of these courses, for housing content, course administration materials, and facilitating communication and learning activities beyond the face-to-face sessions through such tools as the discussion forum and online journal. Other elearning technologies available outside the VLE such as blogs, microblogs, wikis, and various other social media tools may also be used. Student participation in the online activities is mandatory and is usually linked to assessment. Assessment may be apportioned between traditional proctored exams and online activity.	30-99%
Blended/Hybrid – Replacement Model <i>Technology-mediated</i>	A course that combines technology-mediated synchronous instruction utilising web-conferencing (eg Blackboard Collaborate) or video conferencing systems with learning activities and instruction delivered via the virtual learning environment (eg Moodle). There may or may not be requirements or expectations of minimal face-to-face attendance, eg orientation, mid-session, and/or wrap-up. Students may access the virtual classroom from their individual locations, or may be required to meet as a class in a physical video conferencing room. The VLE is a key tool in delivery of these courses, for housing content, course administration materials, and facilitating communication and learning activities integrated with the synchronous sessions. Student participation in the online activities is mandatory and is usually linked to assessment. The use of online discussion forums is common in such courses along with the use of other elearning technologies such as blogs, wikis and online journals. Assessment may be apportioned between traditional proctored exams and online course-work.	30-99%



COURSES		
Modality	Definition	Proportion of mandatory course time and/or content online
Online - Synchronous	A course in which all instruction and learning activities take place online in the virtual classroom, utilising web-conferencing (eg Blackboard Collaborate) or video conferencing systems. Students may access the virtual classroom from their individual locations via the Internet, or may be required to meet as a class in a physical video conferencing room. There is no required face-to-face component or residency requirement. The virtual learning environment (e.g.Moodle) may be used as a supplemental and organising resource, to house course materials such as the course outline, syllabus, study guide, lecture notes, readings, and perhaps to facilitate assignment submission and communication. The VLE is a key resource supporting delivery and its use is expected or required. Assessment may be 100% coursework based, traditional proctored exams, or a mix of methods.	100%
Online - asynchronous	A course in which all instruction takes place online via the virtual learning environment. Course content may consist of text-based or multimedia materials with embedded learning activities. Online discussions and use of other Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, e-journals and e-portfolios may be a major feature of such courses. In-person sessions may be conducted either face to face if appropriate or utilising web-conferencing (eg Blackboard Collaborate) or video conferencing systems. Assessment may be 100% coursework based/online, traditional proctored exams, or a mix of methods.	100%
PROGRAMMES		Proportion of courses online
Online synchronous	A <b>programme</b> in which all courses are online/synchronous courses as outlined above. Such programmes require that students attend classes based on a fixed schedule. This modality offers less flexibility in terms of time than the asynchronous alternative.	100%
Online asynchronous	A <b>programme</b> in which all courses are online/asynchronous courses as outlined above. Asynchronous programmes require that students possess strong time management skills and are self-directed. Careful attention must be paid to student support and engagement.	100%
Blended	A <b>programme</b> which consists of a <b>planned</b> mix of course delivery modalities, including traditional/face-to-face, blended and/or online courses as defined above. Any programme in which less than 100% of courses are online is categorised as a blended programme.	1-99%

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## Appendix 2 - ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### Appendix 2A: The Office of the CIO/Campus IT Services (ICT Depts)

Technical services will be provided by the cross-campus IT departments and will require strong partnerships with a wide range of key functional teams (e.g. Administration, Faculties, CETLs and Libraries). Physical Infrastructure and Integrated Enterprise-wide electronic platform are essential aspects of Technical Services.

Functions	Responsible	Partnership Required
<b>Physical Infrastructure</b> – ICT assets and infrastructure e.g. extensive networking infrastructure, hardware and software at backbone level and peripheral nodes		
University connectivity	ICT Depts	
Education Technology		
Learning Management System	ICT Depts	Faculty, CETL
Video-conferencing/Lecture capture	ICT Depts	Faculty
Web-based Synchronous Communication Tools	ICT Depts	Faculty
Multi-media classrooms	ICT Depts	Faculty
Student computer facilities	ICT Depts	
Training in use of Education Technologies	CETLS	ICT Depts
Inventory of ICT and ODL assets	ICT Depts	Faculty/SVUS
<b>An integrated enterprise-wide electronic platform</b> - will need to be developed (or enhanced), maintained and continually upgraded as a viable, efficient and cost-effective integrated solution that employs the most optimal, scalable technologies capable of handling the complex and dynamic technical operations foreseen.		
<i>Technical Enhancement and Integration</i>		
Enterprise Identity Management	ICT Depts	
Integrated Learning Management System	ICT Depts	CETL/SVUS/Faculty
Integrated Student Portal	ICT Depts	Registry
Shared Knowledge Management (library)	Library	ICT Depts
Integrated user Support	ICT Depts	SVUS
<i>Structural and Organizational Change</i>		
IT Governance	EMT	ICT Depts& the Enterprise
IT Management	ICT Depts	SVUS
Process Improvement & Re-engineering	Registry	ICT Depts/SVUS/ Administration
Monitoring & Reporting	ICT Depts	Registry

## **Appendix 2B:           The Single Virtual University Space (SVUS) Unit**

The proposed Unit will:

1. keep track of requests for online programmes and courses (synchronous and asynchronous) from internal and external stakeholders;
2. evaluate requests and liaise with the campuses to work out a suitable delivery mechanism;
3. facilitate the structured delivery of cross-campus programmes/courses;
4. bring together the relevant personnel to broker cost-sharing agreements between campuses ;
5. work with the relevant campus personnel to facilitate the synchronous delivery of programmes;
6. provide an automated facility through which campuses can request SVUS services;
7. maintain a database of all online and blended programmes offered by all the campuses;
8. bring to the attention of the relevant University officer (UWI Registrar, UWI Bursar) any registration, administrative or financial issue that is likely to impact the delivery of a cross-campus online and blended programme/course;
9. liaise with The UWI CIO with respect to the technological requirements;
10. liaise with OBUS, BGSR to monitor students' and lecturers' experiences with synchronous delivery of programmes/courses;
11. based on assessment of pilots, recommend changes to existing policies/procedures or the establishment of new procedures for the successful delivery of multimode teaching and learning.

## **Appendix 2C:           OPEN CAMPUS – ACADEMIC PROGRAMMING & DELIVERY (APAD)** (Fee-based services)

The Open Campus will have responsibility for:

1. Development of instructional materials.
2. Guidance and support in the development of courses for a blended environment.
3. Training to faculty for quality teaching in an online and blended environment.
4. Provision of expertise in support systems for online services .
5. Provision of facilities to support blended learning (e.g. Blackboard Collaborate; video production studio).
6. Provision of live online and archived webinars and conferences from campuses.
7. Offering courses on developing online materials.
8. Sharing online experiences that exemplify best practice.
9. Sharing findings on research conducted in UWIOC that that can be used to guide practice in an online environment.
10. Delivering continuing professional development courses linked to online education.
11. Fostering partnerships with faculties and departments to deliver programmes.

## **Appendix 2D: Centres of Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL)**

The CETLS will be responsible for:

- i) faculty training - Instructional Delivery and Assessment;
- ii) instructional design services- Course and programme design and development services;
- iii) generating a list of programmes and courses delivered by residential campuses to non-campus students
- iv) development and dissemination of quality standards and teaching /learning principles; and
- v) provision of services and resources to support development of multimedia materials.

In cases where the CETL cannot provide services, the CETL will assist with seeking resources.

## **Appendix 2E: Libraries**

The Libraries will be responsible for:-

- i) development and maintenance of a repository of comprehensive online resources;
- ii) maintenance of electronic resources in support of the programmes of study;
- iii) working in collaborative teams with course developers in ensuring the information resources required;
- iv) working with CETL and APAD in ensuring copyright compliance.

## **Appendix 3: STANDARD 1 - PROTOCOL FOR THE ELEMENTS OF A COMPLETED ONLINE COURSE**

**The characteristics that a course must exhibit before it can be delivered as an online course**

### ***Course Design***

1. Clear course objectives and student learning outcomes have been developed
2. Clear performance criteria have been set
3. The course includes Active Learning, i.e., case study, problem based, anchored learning
4. The course includes opportunity for student-to-student interaction
5. The course includes opportunity for student-to-instructor interaction
6. The course includes the use of further resources, e.g. links, presentations, audio, video files
7. The course includes the appropriate use of technology tools for the objectives

### ***Course Structure and Content***

1. HTML pages have been developed and uploaded
2. The homepage not only provides information and guidance, but is also engaging

3. The course outline provides all information required by the student in the course
4. Course schedule contains core information on assignments and assessment dates
5. Consistent and easily accessible guidance is available for students
6. Navigating through course components and content is easy
7. All segments have manageable amounts of information
8. Learning activities are included in the course content delivery plan
9. A consistent, visually appealing course design has been developed
10. Accessibility issues are addressed
11. Relevant copyright information has been received and approved

### ***Student Support***

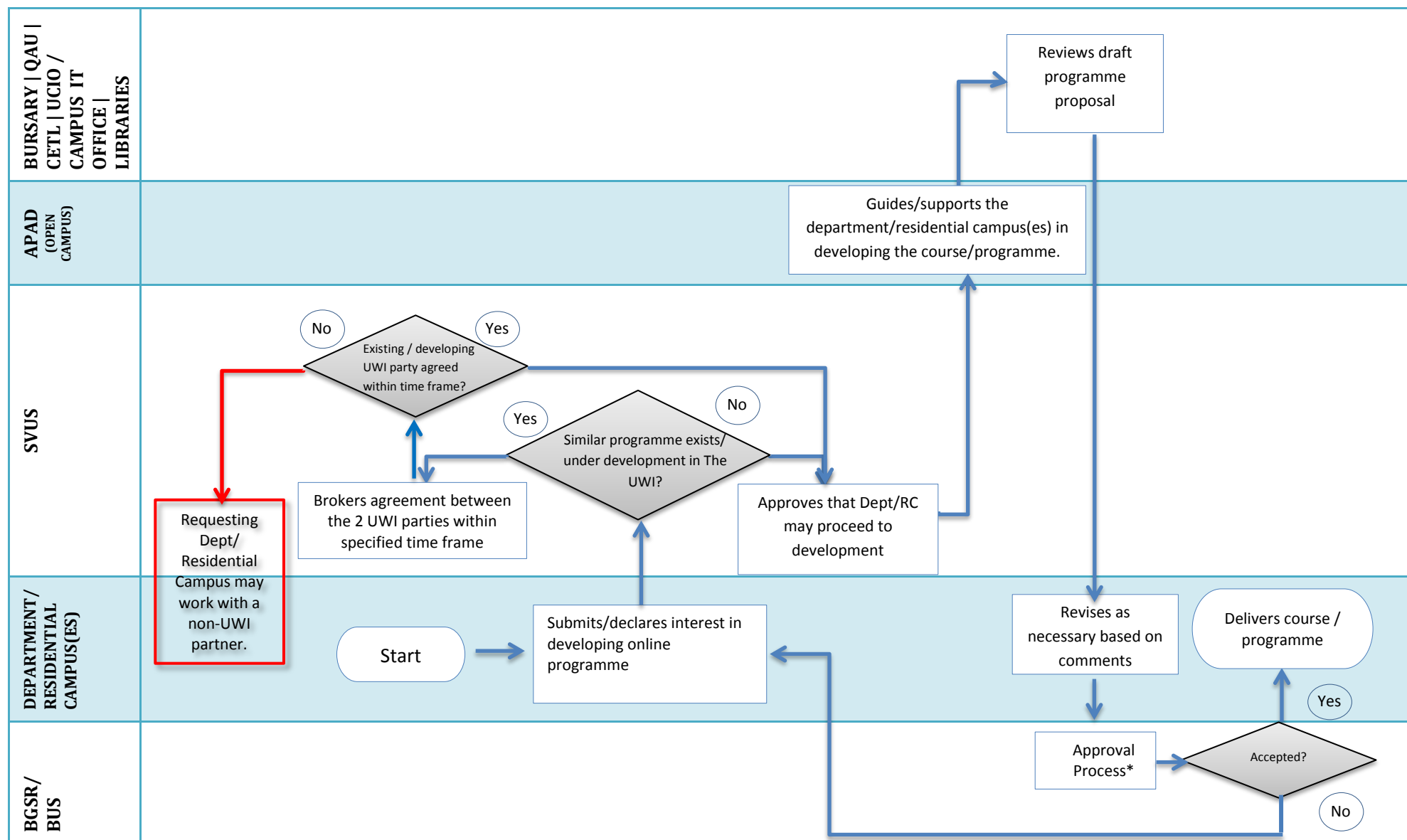
1. Course orientation is designed and prepared
2. Tutors are assigned for the course
3. Communication tools are developed for the course
4. Response time for communication is decided and stated
5. Learning styles are considered in the design of instructional materials
6. All chats and discussions are moderated

### ***Student and Course Assessment and Evaluation Criteria***

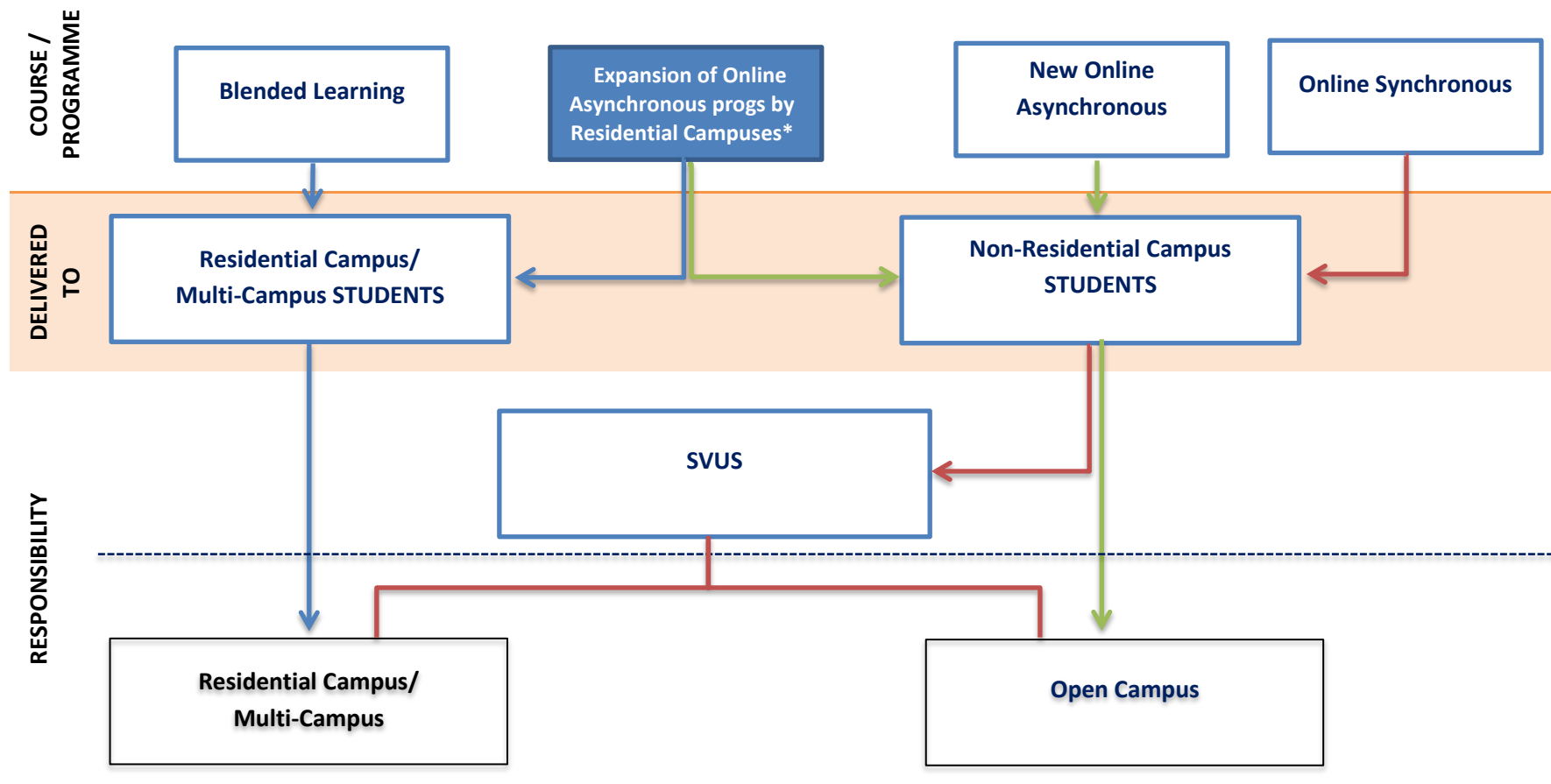
1. Assignments are developed to encourage critical thinking
2. Self-assessment activities have been developed
3. Opportunities are provided for student input into assessment criteria
4. Course evaluation is reliable and valid

***Approved by UF&GPC May 2015***

## Online Programmes Development Process (new/newly converted programmes/courses)



## RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONLINE/BLENDED PROGRAMME DELIVERY



- NB.**
1. All online and blended courses/programmes which have to date been delivered by residential campuses to non-campus based (distance) students shall remain the responsibility of the campus. Campuses, through their CETLs, shall generate a list of these programmes/courses, and CETLs shall ensure that these programmes adhere to the University-wide standard for online delivery. (Programme Delivery v)
  2. Open Campus courses shall be available to campus-based students and campus-based courses to Open Campus students. This will be facilitated by an integrated enterprise-wide electronic platform. (Programme Delivery vii)

\*unless otherwise determined by mutual agreement

Diagram 3:  
Policy for Online & Multimode Teaching and Learning

SERVICE-BASED MODEL FOR THE DELIVERY OF ONLINE/BLENDED PROGRAMMES

