

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES

**FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**February 5, 2021 via Zoom**

**UWI GLOBAL ONLINE POLICY**

The attached contains the Policy for UWI Global Online which has incorporated feedback received from the Campus Academic Boards submitted to the February 2, 2021 meeting of the Board for Undergraduate Studies.

University Finance & General Purposes Committee is being asked to **CONSIDER FOR APPROVAL.**

Office of Administration  
February 3, 2021

# UWI GLOBAL ONLINE POLICY

(VERSION FEBRUARY 03 2021)

EFFECTIVE DATE OF POLICY: <to be inserted following approval>

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## 1. PHILOSOPHY

- 1.1 As the No. 1 ranked university in the Caribbean, The University of the West Indies (UWI) has delivered Campus-based learning programmes oriented to the needs of the Caribbean people since 1948. As a global university, UWI needs to take the next step to deliver a selection of its most distinctive academic offerings to wider audiences online. UWI Global Online is the vehicle to project UWI’s distinctive indigenous programmes to underserved audiences in the Caribbean and globally. Programmes and courses selected for delivery through UWI Global Online are fully online, flexible and affordable, but retain their roots in the UWI Campuses that give our regional university its unique Caribbean flair and differentiates our products in the online market.

## 2. RATIONALE

- 2.1 The UWI Triple “A” strategy 2017 – 2022 envisages UWI as “An Excellent Global University Rooted In The Caribbean”. The Triple “A” strategy through its “Access” pillar seeks to increase enrolment at UWI to 65,000 students by 2022, at least 10% of which is to comprise international (extra-Regional) students. The “Access” pillar further seeks to expand the number of paid-up users of university products and services by 50%. Expansion of access on this scale can only be achieved by tapping into the global online market via a single UWI brand and a single online interface.
- 2.2 UWI Global Online provides the single brand entity and interface to serve the global online market through a shared services model, in which seamless collaboration between UWI campuses is coordinated by the Office of Online Learning. The collaborative framework is designed to unleash indigenous programmes developed at the terrestrial Campuses into the online space using the proven expertise of the Open Campus to manage high quality service delivery to online students and learners.
- 2.3 Programmes offered through UWI Global Online are self-financing (i.e. fee paying). Target markets are students within the Caribbean Region and those outside the Region.<sup>1</sup>
- 2.4 UWI Global Online will not replace the terrestrial university paradigm that has helped establish UWI as a top-tier research university. It will permit entry for UWI into new markets by projecting the most distinctive academic offerings from the terrestrial campuses into the online arena, in order to attract full fee-paying online students, diversify revenue and enhance the UWI brand in the global arena.
- 2.5 The benefits of the collaborative framework underpinning UWI Global Online are shared among students, stakeholders, and the university:
- Students: UWI Global Online will provide access for students and learners who are interested in UWI’s educational products but are not able to attend a physical UWI Campus or who desire a more flexible non-semesterised learning structure. This holds true for students within the Caribbean Region, as well as those outside the Region.
  - Stakeholders: Public and private stakeholders will benefit from flexible and modular learning structures more suited to the upskilling and training needs of those in employment.

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<sup>1</sup> Emergency Remote Teaching, while it is a reasonable and sometimes necessary response to a disaster (e.g. hurricane or COVID-19 pandemic), does not fall under the UWI Global Online policy (see “Definitions”)

- UWI: The collaborative model of UWI Global Online will benefit UWI’s financial sustainability and reputation, by making more efficient use of its resources, reducing brand confusion, and increasing market share in the online space by responding to market needs and demands.
- 2.6 UWI Global Online fits into a broader trend in higher education that is reimagining how tertiary education is delivered to suit the needs and learning preferences of students and learners in the online space. UWI is consistent with other top-tier global universities in considering online offerings that may include modular programming versus course based programmes, just-in-time learning versus semester based learning, game-based learning, competency certification, and bespoke educational products.
- 2.7 The purpose of the current policy is to establish the optimal governance and operational frameworks to deliver high quality, flexible and affordable online education to audiences underserved by UWI in the Caribbean and globally. The membership and organisation of the committee that drafted the UWI Global Online policy is described in Appendix 1.

### **3. SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all new self-financed UWI educational offerings delivered online to off-campus students and learners (see “Definitions”).
- 3.2 Blended programmes are exempted from falling under UWI Global Online.
- 3.3 Although the policy is framed to exempt existing online programmes, an existing online programme or course may be considered for delivery through UWI Global Online *if that is the wish of the Campus content owner*.
- 3.4 This policy supercedes the 2014/15 “Policy for Online and Multimode Teaching and Learning; and Staffing Requirements for the Single Virtual University Space” (FGP.P17D). The “Policy on Quality Assurance for Online and Multimode Programmes at The UWI” is retained with revision.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Policy on Quality Assurance of Online and Blended Courses and Programmes at The UWI” (Revised June 30 2020)

## **4. POLICY STATEMENTS**

- 4.1 UWI Global Online shall be the exclusive delivery method through which new self-financed UWI online educational offerings are delivered to off campus students and learners.
- 4.2 The UWI Global Online portal shall be the single interface with online students and learners and this portal shall be managed by the Open Campus.
- 4.3 The Open Campus shall provide the single delivery platform, admission and registration services, as well as online support services, including instructional design, technology support and related student support services. The Open Campus will collaborate with the campus CETLs to provide appropriate faculty development.
- 4.4 All academic Departments, Institutes, Schools, Centres, Units and Sites (DISCUS) of The UWI shall propose new self-financed educational offerings for online delivery through the Office of Online Learning (see Appendix 2 for the procedure for engaging with the Office of Online Learning).<sup>2</sup>
- 4.5 The proposing DISCUS through its Faculty shall be responsible for gaining academic approval for the course or programme for online delivery in accordance with existing policies.
- 4.6 The proposing DISCUS shall be responsible for assigning faculty to the programme, accessing relevant training from the campus CETLs, ensuring academic quality, setting of examination questions and marking, for certifying degrees, and other academic responsibilities.
- 4.7 The proposing DISCUS shall own the copyright of educational programme material in accordance with existing UWI policies.
- 4.8 The Open Campus shall collect tuition fees and share revenue between the Campuses according to mutual agreement.

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<sup>2</sup> The OOL will apply the following criteria to recommend approval and priority of programs for delivery through UWI Global Online: academic strength of the program as certified by the sponsoring Campus; readiness of faculty to commit to course development and delivery; appropriateness of the program for delivery through available technologies; evidence of the existence of an identifiable, reachable market that can sustain costs over the proposed life of the program; and the ability of the program to achieve and support students at a scale of operation needed to recover full costs and anticipated net income.

## 5. EXCEPTIONS

This policy does not apply to the following:

1. Online programmes or courses in existence prior to the effective date of the policy<sup>3</sup>
2. UGC-funded online courses or programmes.
3. Blended courses or programmes.
4. Emergency Remote Teaching (for example, as may be necessary in response to a natural disaster or viral pandemic).
5. Programmes in which students at the different UWI Campuses share a common course delivered via technology.<sup>4</sup>
6. Inter-institutional programmes, in which residential students at two or more institutions share a common course delivered via technology.

## 6. ROLES

### 6.1 Office of Online Learning (Vice Chancellery)

The OOL functions as the centralized administrative unit that coordinates collaborative online activities across the University. The responsibilities of the OOL include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Coordinate collaboration between campuses with respect to the development of new online programmes based on market demands
- b. Work with relevant units to obtain and evaluate market research data
- c. Liaise with UWI Marketing to ensure that all online programmes are adequately promoted in the global space
- d. Work with the Office of Global Affairs to identify and explore partnerships with external institutions or organizations

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<sup>3</sup> While the policy provides for this exception, the Office of Online Learning will provide consultation and access to support existing online programmes or courses for delivery by UWI Global Online **if requested** by the proposing Campus (emphasis added).

<sup>4</sup> Foundation courses are mandatory courses embedded within all UWI programmes. These are delivered in a shared services model that may vary between campuses. A Foundation course, no matter how delivered, does not constitute an exception for an online programme that otherwise qualifies under the scope of this policy.

- e. Provide assistance to campuses in defining resource needs for new online programmes
- f. Broker arrangements between the physical campuses and the Open Campus for the collaborative development and delivery of online programmes/courses
- g. Recommend online programmes for approval by the respective Board (BUS, BGSR)
- h. Support BUS and BGSR in providing guidelines for consistent and high-quality online programmes
- i. Oversee online learning activities to ensure compliance with UWI policies and procedures
- j. Work with campuses to develop mechanisms to provide incentives for faculty to increase interest in developing and delivering online programmes/courses
- k. Arbitrate disputes between campuses with respect to online delivery
- l. Generate reports on online student experiences, enrollment, retention rates, stakeholder satisfaction, viability of programmes, return on investment and make recommendations for improvements where necessary
- m. Maintain a database of UWI's online offerings
- n. Establish policies and procedures for use of the cross-campus Moodle platform
- o. Maintain a repository of UWI's online policies and procedures

## 6.2 The Open Campus

The Open Campus will serve as the single focal point for the delivery of UWI Global Online courses and programmes. The Open Campus will provide the following services to DISCUS to ensure programmes and activities are delivered to the highest quality standards and student satisfaction:

- a. To provide online self-financed UWI educational offerings to the global market via the OC's delivery platform.
- b. To admit students and learners via the OC's Admissions platform
- c. To register students <sup>5</sup>
- d. To collect tuition fees
- e. To provide online support services, including instructional design, technology support and related student support services
- f. To collaborate with the CETLs to provide faculty development, delivery and training services to campuses/content owners
- g. To oversee examination logistics and proctoring arrangements
- h. To source external online experts to aid in the delivery of programmes when such expertise does not exist or is in short supply internally

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<sup>5</sup> Registered students will be assigned to the Campus that is designated as the content owner

### **6.3 Campuses/DISCUS (content owners)**

DISCUS shall propose self-financed educational offerings for online delivery via UWI Global Online. The Campus contributing the educational content is responsible for the following:

- a. To develop the educational content. The proposing DISCUS owns the copyright of the educational material delivered via UWI Global Online in accordance with UWI policy
- b. To gain academic approval for the educational programme or course for online delivery in accordance with existing policies.
- c. To assign faculty to the programme or course, academic quality, setting and marking of examinations, providing e-tutors where appropriate, certifying degrees, and other academic responsibilities.
- d. Senate approved programmes delivered via UWI Global Online will be monitored for quality by the Board for Undergraduate Studies and the Board for Graduate Studies and Research in accordance with existing policies.

### **6.4 Campus CETLs**

The campus CETLs facilitate professional development of staff, and provide support for adherence to quality standards established by The BUS and BGSR, for course and programme development. The campus CETLs will be responsible for the following:

- a. To provide appropriate training in online course development in collaboration with the OC and coordinated by The UWI Online Faculty Development Committee.
- b. To provide support for the development of online educational programmes to ensure adherence to established quality standards

### **6.5 UWI Marketing & Communication Office**

The UWI Marketing & Communication Office has shared responsibility for developing the UWI Global Online brand, and crafting its marketing and recruitment strategies in collaboration with key stakeholder departments. A dedicated “Global Marketing and Recruitment Division” within The UWI Office of Marketing & Communication should be responsible for the following:

- a. Developing the brand strategy, including brand guidelines, brand vision, positioning and value proposition for the UWI Global Online product offering, in collaboration with the Office of UWI Global and the Office of Online Learning.
- b. Planning and execution of relevant campaigns leveraging all channels, including traditional, online and social media to build UWI Global Online brand awareness and



to support its recruitment objectives, based on overall brand strategy, business plan and assigned marketing budgets.

- c. Facilitating, in collaboration with OOL, the execution of market research and relevant market trends, competitor and customer insights analysis which would inform product development, and leveraging business opportunities as well as monitoring customer/brand experience.
- d. Providing ongoing marketing and communication support for the Office of UWI Global and the Office of Online Learning's operations.

## 7. DEFINITIONS

The UWI Global Online Policy applies to “all new self-financed educational offerings delivered online to off-campus students and learners”. Key definitions applicable to this policy are listed below:

- a. “new”: The policy applies to all self-financed online educational offerings approved after the effective date of the policy that conform to the “Policy on quality assurance of online and blended courses and programmes at The UWI” (revised June 2020).
- b. “new” also applies to online programmes that have undergone major revisions since the effective date of the policy that substantially change the character of a programme, necessitating approval by BUS or BGSR.
- c. “new” does not apply to *Emergency Remote Teaching*.
- d. “Emergency Remote Teaching” is defined as a temporary shift in instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode in response to a crisis (see “Policy on Quality Assurance of Online and Blended Courses and Programmes at The UWI” [revised June 2020]).
- e. “self-financed”: Self-financed courses and programmes are fee-paying (i.e. not UGCfunded).
- f. “educational offering”: Educational offerings include full undergraduate or graduate degree programmes; credit and non-credit certificate or diploma programmes; credit and non-credit individual courses.
- g. “students or learners”: A “student” is defined by statute as a person registered in a Senate approved programme of study at The University of the West Indies (see Statute 1, UWI Statutes and Ordinances). A “learner” is a broader term to capture any person accessing an educational offering delivered under The UWI name.
- h. “online course”: A course which has been intentionally designed so that **all** instruction takes place using technology and there are no requirements for face-to-face class meetings. An online course can be delivered synchronously, asynchronously or both. An online course may be for credit counting towards a UWI degree, diploma, or

certificate; or for professional certification (such a continuous professional education [CPE] or Continuous Education Unit [CEU]); or non-credit.

- i. “online programme”: A programme in which **all** the courses are delivered online. An online programme may be delivered synchronously and/or asynchronously.
- j. “synchronous delivery”: Teaching and learning which occurs when instructors and students/learners meet online at the same time.
- k. “asynchronous delivery”: Teaching and learning which occurs when instructors and students/learners interact with each other and the course material at different times.
- l. “off-campus”: An off-campus student or learner is a person who accesses online instruction from UWI that requires **no face-to-face instruction** at a Campus or Open Campus Country Site (an off-campus student may receive physical proctoring services, administrative or residential services at a Campus or Open Campus Country Site.) An off-campus student or learner may be Regional or extra-Regional.
- m. “blended course’: A course that combines physical classroom-based instruction and learning activities with online instruction and activities.
- n. “foundation course”: Foundation courses are mandatory courses embedded within The UWI undergraduate programmes that are delivered via a shared services model across the campuses. Foundation courses served as a fore-runner to the shared services model utilized by UWI Global Online. The presence of a Foundation course, no matter how delivered, does not constitute an exception for an online programme that otherwise qualifies under the scope of this policy.

## 8. APPENDICES

### 8.1 Appendix 1 – UWI Global Online Policy Working Group: Mandate, Membership, Organisation and Consultation

#### Mandate

The mandate of the UWI Global Online Policy Working Group was received from the Vice Chancellor in a letter dated October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019 inviting Professor Landis, as PVC BUS, to chair a policy working group for UWI Global Online. The letter states: *“Arising out of the Working Group to develop a process map for the UWI Global Online Initiative project, one of the recommendations was the need for the establishment of the Working Group to Develop an Online Policy Framework. The mandate of this Workgroup is to develop a comprehensive online policy framework to support the University’s strategic goals, taking into consideration the recommendations of the UWI Global Process Map working group.”*

## **Membership**

Professor Clive Landis, Pro Vice Chancellor, Board for Undergraduate Studies (Chair)

Mr. Troy Carrington, CETL, Cave Hill Campus

Mrs. Brigitte Collins, University CIO

Dr. Denise Gaspard Richards, Director APAD, Open Campus

Dr. Cheryl McDonald-Sloley, Director (Ag.), Open Campus Country Sites

Dr. Tomlin Paul, Dean FMS, Mona Campus – Academic Representative

Dr. Lora Pilgrim, Online Learning Specialist, OOL, Vice Chancellery

Dr. Dianne Thurab-Nkhosi, CETL, St. Augustine Campus

## **Organisation**

The Policy Work Group is one of five (5) Work Groups established for the purpose of implementing the UWI Global Online initiative:

- a. The Funding Model Work Group, which reported in March 2019
- b. The Marketing Work Group, which reported in July 2019
- c. The Process Phases Work Group, which reported on July 1<sup>st</sup> 2019
- d. The Registration Work Group
- e. The Policy Work Group (this group)

The Policy Work Group met via Zoom meetings on the following dates:

- November 28<sup>th</sup> 2019
- December 17<sup>th</sup> 2019
- January 13<sup>th</sup> 2020
- January 30<sup>th</sup> 2020
- February 13<sup>th</sup> 2020\*
- June 4<sup>th</sup> 2020

(\* Continuation of Jan 30th meeting)

Zoom meetings were recorded and meeting notes were kept for each meeting, which were confirmed at succeeding meetings. The draft UWI Global Online policy document was created in Googledocs for full traceability of comments and edits.

## Consultation

The policy submitted to the UFGPC for consideration on February 05 2021 is the product of an extensive consultation process over a 12 month period. The draft policy was initially developed by the Policy Working Group with comments and inputs received from the chairs of the other UWI Global Online Work Groups, PVC Global, and the Campus Deputy Principals. The academic representative, Dean Paul, solicited comments from the Chair Committee of Deans. Written comments were received from the Mona Faculty of Social Science Faculty Board, the St. Augustine CETL, and the Office of Planning and Institutional Research, Mona. Comments were solicited at the Online Steering Committee at its inaugural meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup> 2020. Comments were received from PVC BGSR at the February 01 2021 meeting of OBUS. Other comments were received through the chair and members of the Work Group.

The Notes of the Policy Work Group meetings indicate that consultation with Campuses was seen as essential to avoid misunderstandings and build confidence in the policy before final approval at UFGPC. Hence, the draft policy was submitted to Campus Academic Boards between September 2020 to January 2021 for consideration and feedback to BUS. The Chair of the Working Group was invited by the following Academic Boards to present the draft policy:

- Open Campus Academic Board, September 10 2020
- Mona Campus Academic Board, October 15 2020
- St. Augustine Campus, Open Campus Academic Board, November 19 2020
- Cave Hill Campus Academic Board, November 20 2020

Comments and feedback received from the Campus Academic Boards were discussed at the BUS meeting of February 02 2021 to refine the final policy for consideration by UFGPC.

## 8.2 Appendix 2 - Procedure for Engaging with the Office of Online Learning

### Phase 1: New Course/Programme Idea

1. Idea for a new online course or programme originates from a Department, Institute, School, Centre, Unit or Site (DISCUS) or from the Office of Online Learning (OOL).
2. *Idea originates in DISCUS*: DISCUS sends a request to OOL to determine whether or not a similar online programme exists on any campus. (Please note that all requests should be submitted to [ool.rhq@uwi.edu](mailto:ool.rhq@uwi.edu))

3. OOL decides whether the proposed idea advances to Phase 2 using these steps:
  - a. If a similar online programme/course exists, the OOL will facilitate cross-campus collaboration with a view to revising/enhancing the existing course/programme.
  - b. If there is significant overlap between the proposed programme and the preexisting programme/course OOL may deny the request to proceed further.
  - c. If there is no significant overlap between the proposed programme and any preexisting programme/course, proceed to Phase 2.
4. *Idea originates in OOL based on market research:* OOL invites all campuses with expertise in the area to collaborate on the development of a joint proposal. A lead campus will be identified (based on available resources and expertise) to advance the proposal to Phase 3.

*Note: The proposal process for new online programmes and that for the conversion of existing face-to-face programmes to online modality should follow the same path.*

## **Phase 2: Market Research**

1. Assess the demand for and the feasibility of the target course/programme in the local, regional, global and regional markets
2. Assess the competition in the regional and global markets for the proposed course/programme
3. Share findings with stakeholders and decide whether the programme as proposed is viable or whether changes need to be made for viability.

### **Notes:**

1. *It is critical that market research is conducted to assess the demand and to predict the viability of an online programme prior to its development, regardless of whether the programme is entirely new, or whether an existing face-to-face programme is being converted to online modality.*
2. *A unit outside of the campuses dedicated to conducting market research in the global and regional markets is needed.*

## **Phase 3: Proposal Development and Approval**

1. Proposal Development Process:

- a) DISCUS engages with the OOL in the development of the programme proposal. The OOL will facilitate cross-campus collaboration in a number of areas (e.g. course development, teaching resources, technical support)
  - b) The OOL ensures that the new proposal is compliant with UWI requirements re online learning
  - c) The OOL will assist in the preparation of a resource budget for the programme.
2. Proposal Approval Process:
- a) OOL endorses the proposal (OOL endorsement is a prerequisite for approval)
  - b) DISCUS sends the proposal to the Faculty for approval. In the case of the Open Campus, the proposal is sent to APAD.
  - c) Proposal traverses the normal channels for final approval by BUS/BGSR.
3. Proposal Distribution Process:
- a) Distribute approved proposal to the following entities:
    - i. Originating department/unit
    - ii. OOL for planning, cross-campus coordination and upload to repository
    - iii. OC for master shell development and planning
    - iv. The appropriate campus registry
    - v. Marketing department for marketing and recruitment processes.

*The above phases were adapted from the DRAFT UWI Global Initiative Process Phases document, published June 30, 2019.*

