

BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Policies and Procedures

AREA: Academic Affairs

NUMBER: Policy 2.29

SUBJECT: Online Instruction

Online instruction at Blue Mountain College is designed to allow students to learn without time and/or place restriction and to register for classes at more convenient times. Online instruction will embrace “Best Practices for Electronically Offered Degree and Certificate Programs” of the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

1. **Definition of Online Instruction**

Online instruction is a formal, Internet-based or Internet-supported educational process in which instruction occurs between instructor and learner in an online environment. Online instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Online instruction will be consistent with the educational mission of the College.

2. **Principles for Online Instruction**

A. Student Support and Information

1. The program or course provides students with clear, complete and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, prerequisite technology competencies and skills, technical equipment requirements, availability of academic support services, financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.
2. Online instruction courses and programs will provide an opportunity for interaction between students and the faculty member responsible for the course, so that students can receive prompt responses to their questions. Faculty should respond to student requests in most cases within 24 hours.
3. The Class Schedule will clearly identify online courses through the use of footnotes and symbols or in other appropriate ways so that students have access to this information before enrolling in a course or program.

4. The College will use admissions criteria to assess whether the student has the background, knowledge and technical skills required for undertaking the course or program.
5. Advertising, recruiting and admissions materials will clearly and accurately represent the program and the services available.
6. Criteria for student success and expected outcomes in online instruction courses and programs will be as rigorous and comprehensive as those used in classroom-based courses and will be communicated to students in all online materials.
7. Students enrolled in online courses are subject to the same College policies and procedures applicable to students attending courses on campus. Academic standards regarding cheating, plagiarism, and appropriate online behavior will be clearly communicated to students in online instruction courses and programs.
8. Each student enrolled in an online instruction course or program will be informed of available instructional support, student services, library resources, and disabled student support services. There will be coordination between faculty and library staff and student services staff to ensure adequate access and training for online instruction students.
9. Technical support consistent with that available to on-campus students will be made available to students enrolled in online courses.

B. Faculty Support Rights and Responsibilities

1. In courses with sections offered online and in classroom settings, sections of online courses will meet all course objectives normally covered in the classroom-based course and expectations for student outcomes will be the same.
2. The Vice President for Academic Affairs is responsible for ensuring that the course evaluation forms for online courses are administered. Because of the online nature of the course, the procedures for evaluating the courses may be different from those used by the institution for the evaluation of faculty teaching classroom-based courses, but the overall standards will be equivalent.
3. The College will make available appropriate training and support services to faculty to prepare and support them in developing and teaching online courses. No faculty will be allowed to teach courses in the online format unless they have availed themselves of these services and training. The College will make available appropriate support, and training as required.
4. Any course that includes some online instruction will indicate so in the course syllabus/outline. In addition to information required in the syllabi, the following information will be included in course outlines for online instruction courses:

- a) How participation in online activities will be assessed and graded (e.g., participation in chat sessions, frequency of web access, postings, etc.);
- b) Whether and how the instructor will track student online activities, for example, by maintaining a copy/log of online discussions and chat session, etc.;
- c) Weekly deadlines for posting and due dates need to be stated (dates and times);
- d) Office/contact hours (including items such as how quickly the instructor will respond to e-mail questions and online assignments, how often the instructor will be online, and alternate communication options);
- e) Safeguards as to how student work will be authenticated;
- f) Appropriate online behavior;
- g) Technical competencies expected or required of the students;
- h) Minimum computer hardware and software specifications, and course website access requirements;
- i) Whom to contact in case of technical problems;
- j) Alternative procedures for submitting work, in the event of technical problems.

3. **Approval of Online Instruction Courses and Programs**

A. New Online Programs

Online degree programs (including majors, minor, emphases, and concentrations) will be reviewed in accordance with Policy 2.31: Curriculum and Program Approval and Program Closure and the provisions of this document. Any department or program offering online programs (those in which more than half of the units are offered through online instruction) will be required to meet the standards of the Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of College and Schools.

B. New Online Courses

Consistent with Policy 2.31: Curriculum and Program Approval and Program Closure, the Academic Dean's Council and/or the Graduate Council will review any online course that is proposed for degree credit.

C. Converting Existing Courses or Sections to an Online Format

When a course has been approved in accordance with Policy 2.31: Curriculum and Program Approval and Program Closure, and one or more sections of the course are redesigned using an online format, the department proposing the change will provide evidence to the Academic Dean's Council, including a revised course syllabus, that the objectives and content of the course are comparable to the classroom-based course and adhere to this policy. The faculty will review the documentation and forward a recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Existing courses that were approved as classroom-based courses will not be offered as online courses without appropriate curriculum review and approval.

4. **General Information**

A. Technical Requirements

Students should satisfy the technical proficiencies required for the online course.

If the online course has a required real-time interactive component, students must have access to the a computer and the internet at the time(s) required and must participate in real-time interactions at the time(s) indicated in the syllabus.

Current students enrolled in both classroom based and online courses must have access to personal computers other than those owned by the College.

B. Registration and Enrollment of New Students

Students not previously enrolled at the College should submit their online admission application *no later than* August 1 (Fall), January 1 (Spring), or May 15 (Summer).

All students must be registered at the College in order to participate in a class and receive credit.

C. Registration and Enrollment of Current Students

Policies concerning course registration, withdrawal, satisfactory progress, grading and other academic matters apply to online courses.

Current students must obtain approval from their academic advisor and the Vice President for Academic Affairs before registering for an online course.

Registration for an online course by currently enrolled students is the same as for classroom based courses. Current students may complete registration in the Office of the Registrar.

D. Student Agreement Required

Students enrolled in online courses must agree to a user statement enabling the instructor to publish any student work produced for the course.

E. Transfer of Credit for Non-Blue Mountain College Students

If a student intends to transfer credit from the online course to another institution, it is the student's responsibility to obtain approval from the institution (if the institution to which the credit is to be transferred requires prior approval) and to request transfer of the credit after the course is completed.

G. Financial Aid

Financial assistance is available for degree-seeking, eligible students enrolled in online courses. Students must meet federal eligibility requirements and be enrolled for a

minimum of six (6) credit hours. For more information, students should contact the Office of Financial Aid.

H. Tuition and Fees

1. Tuition for Online Instruction

Tuition will be the same for online instruction as that charged for all other courses. Tuition rates are posted on the Prospective Students Section on the BMC Website at www.bmc.edu.

2. Fees for Online Instruction

Students will be assessed a registration fee and a technology fee for each online course. Registration and technology fees are posted on the Prospective Students Section on the BMC Website at www.bmc.edu.

5. **Withdrawal from Online Courses**

Students who register for online courses incur an automatic non-refundable \$100 fee. A student may receive a refund of course tuition, less the \$100 non-refundable fee, if the withdrawal is prior to receiving access to course content. After receiving access to course content, no refund is available. Both the tuition for the course and the technology fee are non-refundable after the student receives access to the course content.

SOURCE: Board of Trustees: June 19, 2006; November 27, 2006.