

BLENDDED LEARNING POLICY

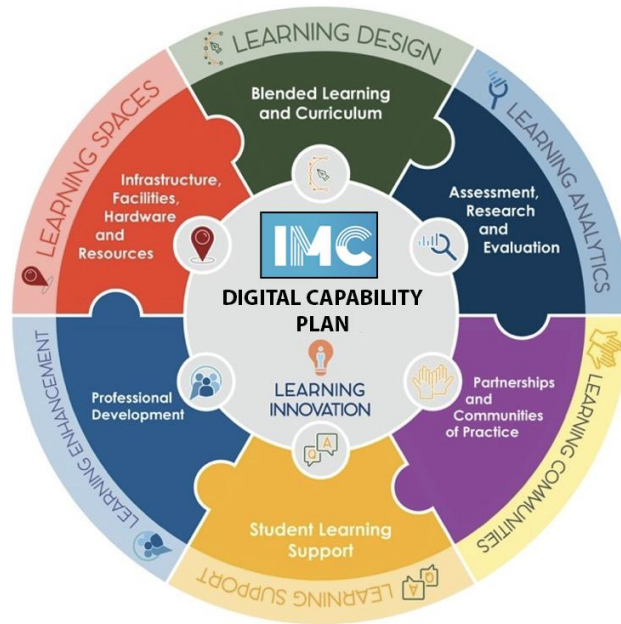
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1. PURPOSE

The Australian National Institute of Management and Commerce (The Institute or IMC) is committed to providing high-quality courses and units that comply with the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) standards, the Higher Education Standards Framework 2021 (HESF 2021), the Australian Universities Accord Final Report (2024) and, where necessary, professional accreditation standards.

IMC is committed to achieving and delivering outstanding quality learning and teaching and has implemented a whole-of-institute approach to Learning Innovation and the use of Blended Learning (BL). This initiative involves development across all units and courses using contemporary learning technologies and encompasses a multi-faceted approach to learning innovation.

This policy identifies and defines the scope, definitions, principles and philosophy of BL for students and staff at the Institute. The following diagram captures the IMC high-level approach to Blended Learning, Learning Innovation and related considerations.



2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students and academic staff at the Institute and across all Institute campuses, as well as to both online and face-to-face (“f2f”) delivery modes and spaces in which technology is used to support and enhance the student learning experience.

3. DEFINITIONS

Active learning means any learning activity in which the student participates in a proactive, responsive and motivated manner. By its very nature, active learning can involve many different activities, with the key elements being (1) activities to construct knowledge and understanding and (2) linking an activity with learning through reflection. Consequently, as students engage with the process and reflect on what they are doing, they require higher-order thinking skills.

Blended learning (BL) means the “*thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences enabled by technologies*”¹

This definition emphasises two fundamental aspects of the potential of blended learning

- a pedagogically informed and well-designed integration of the learning technologies
- cultivating an active blended learning experience that connects the face-to-face and the online environment for students and staff using an active learning approach.

Digital literacy means the ability of both students and academic staff to locate, evaluate and use a range of technologies (including AI) to support lifelong learning.

Flipped classroom means a shift in the focus of the intensity of student engagement. A flipped class requires students to take more initiative and responsibility for their learning before formal classes or interaction with peers. In general, this approach means a lecturer

¹ Garrison, D. R., & Kanuka, H. (2004). Blended learning: Uncovering its transformative potential in higher education. *The internet and higher education*, 7(2), 95-105.

provides learning and teaching activities such as recorded lectures, access to videos, readings, open education resources, online quizzes, or other resources that students can work through prior to coming to class. Classroom time is therefore spent on interaction among students and the teacher, whether this be through discussions, problem-solving, case studies or practical exercises.

Learning Analytics means leveraging data on assessment of how technology has been used to support teaching and scholarship, which informs decision-making for improving learning outcomes.

Learning Communities means leveraging Communities of Practice (CoP) to yield benefits of collaboration, (sharing of experience and realisation of synergy) among the teaching staff and possibly with the aid of external partners.

Learning Design means delivering an engaging, personalized and digitally enriched curriculum technology component of which complements the face-to-face component.

Learning Enhancement means developing IMC academic staff as leaders in the provision of innovative pedagogy via a comprehensive professional development framework and implementation strategy.

Learning Innovation means the overarching approach to the adoption of technology with a focus on BL approaches and the use of technology as “fit-for-purpose” in the IMC context, including the use of AI.

Learning Spaces means the alignment of physical spaces, facilities and infrastructure to enable BL pedagogy.

Learning Support means ensuring students are digitally literate and adequately supported in the adoption of technology in formal and informal learning approaches.

Learning technologies mean the range of communication, information, and related technologies that can be used by teaching staff or students.

Minimum Online Presence means the structure of the Institute’s Learning Management System default unit LMS template which has been developed for BL and is specific to a discipline, student cohort (UG, PG and Non-Award).

4. PRINCIPLES

4.1 Overarching

The overarching goal of BL at IMC is the continuous enhancement of teaching and learning. This goal is enabled by technology and led by supported student learning that is founded on IMC’s curriculum and co-curricular activities, together with a robust system of student support and innovative learning spaces. The IMC approach is “Learning Led and Technology

Enabled”. The diagram above (under Purpose) provides an organising structure within which to situate the broader impetus for incorporating the use of technology around teaching and learning quality assurance and improvement.

The consistent use of the word “Learning” as a precursor to related areas in the structure is reflective of IMC’s adoption of the student-centered approach to Education and lifelong learning, as “Learner-driven”.

Learning Innovation is used as an overarching approach to the adoption of technology with a focus on BL approaches and the use of technology as “fit-for-purpose”, and responsive to the use of AI as outlined in the Institute’s Artificial Intelligence Policy.

4.2 An Overview of BL at IMC

Figure 1 below shows BL as positioned within a continuum with regard to the varying delivery modes and the “degree of blend” as highlighted by the proportion of face-to-face and online activities.



Figure 1: Course Delivery Continuum ²

The courses illustrated in Figure 1 are described briefly below to highlight their differentiation on the continuum:

- a) Web facilitated courses
These are predominately face-to-face campus-based teaching; supported by the simple use of online platforms or relevant software for uploading of resources, collaborations and assessment submissions.
- b) Blended courses
These courses can vary in their proportion and integration of face-to-face and online activities (i.e., 30-79%). These variations are determined by the relevant academic staff/teams as part of the design for the course or programme, and specifically within the learning activities to support the necessary learning process and assessment outcomes. The aim for this section of the continuum is that the design and integration of blended learning is pedagogically considered and thoughtfully integrated to support active, student-centred learning and aligns to OBATL (Outcome-Based Approaches to Teaching and Learning). Examples of blended learning approaches can include techniques such as designing integrated learning and teaching using different learning modalities³, the flipped classroom⁴ or a large proportion of activities are conducted

² Adapted from Allen, I. E., Seaman, J., Poulin, R., & Straut, T. T. (2016). *Online report card: Tracking online education in the United States*. Retrieved from: <http://onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/online-reportcard.pdf>

³ Integrated and connected design and learning using both asynchronous and synchronous environments

online thereby reducing the overall face-to-face contact time.

c) Online courses

These courses include fully online distance courses whereby all learners are studying at a distance, and all aspects of teaching and learning are conducted online and remotely. There is no attendance or delivery of teaching on campus (with exceptions such as for inductions). These may also be courses or programmes conducted as collaborations with other institutions. Other examples included on this end of the continuum can also include Microcredentials, where online courses are delivered fully on the web and are specifically designed for a more significant number of participants from various backgrounds.

4.3 **BL Principles**

- BL will not compromise quality outcomes or rigorous assessment.
- Through BL students are encouraged and engaged to learn independently early in the process, and to understand reflection and life-long learning.
- BL approaches may vary according to the learning contexts within which they are applied.
- BL requires digital literacy, which is recognised as an important graduate attribute (IMC Graduate Attributes B – Capability, 8. - *Engage with transformative digital technologies*), and a core skill for academic staff.
- To become effective learners, students must be involved in appropriate Institute-initiated training that allows them to make the most use of BL learning technologies and methods.
- To maintain a currency of knowledge related to the use of technology staff must be involved in appropriate Institute-initiated training that allows them to make the most use of BL learning technologies and methods.
- Staff are encouraged and supported to adopt fit-for-purpose and innovative BL approaches. Such approaches will be enabled by academic and professional partnerships and appropriate investment in wide-ranging learning technologies.
- IMC will act to ensure high levels of academic integrity are maintained.

4.4 **Expectations of BL quality learning and teaching**

In accordance with the Institute’s Academic Quality Assurance Framework and commitment to maintaining and developing excellence in teaching and learning, the following key aspects for quality blended learning are highlighted

- Teaching and learning quality are essential in the student learning experience

⁴ Where online tasks or activities are designed specifically to be completed outside the physical teaching space, thus allowing the dedicated contact time for more interaction and discussion for further inquiry that helps to reinforce learning

and are more important than the delivery itself. The effective implementation of OBATL and constructive alignment, the design of the curriculum learning outcomes, coupled with the assessment and feedback mechanisms, provide the basis for quality blended learning

- BL approaches are pedagogically considered in curriculum design and not as a bolt-on. The use of learning technologies is integrated and designed into the learning and teaching experience
- Active BL, in the same way as active learning in a physical teaching space, is designed to develop and support interaction and collaboration between teacher-student/peer-to-peer which, in turn, helps to encourage independent learning, enhance motivation and cultivate a deep approach to learning
- BL can help to optimise contact time and in-class learning
- BL provides further insight into our students' learning and progress. Informed and appropriate use of learning analytics via online systems and platforms can help to identify students who may be at risk of failing or struggling, to address gaps in knowledge or skills within the curriculum and to inform and develop teaching practice
- BL in all PG units will incorporate a flipped classroom approach

4.5 Institutional commitments

- Appropriate budgetary resources will be made available to support the design of the Institute's BL approach and rollout
- Training for academic teaching staff will be made available to all and will result in an internal accreditation process. This training will include design and delivery aspects for unit development and be undertaken at two levels. The first level training will provide essential skills, and the second ongoing development to maintain and advance those skills
- Training for students will be undertaken through appropriate LMS-based and internally developed packages to ensure that they are able to navigate through the necessary IMC BL LMS structures regarding all Before-Class Activities (BA), In-Class Activities (ICA) and After-Class Activities (AC) activities. This training will provide navigation skills in the various learning technologies and assist students with time-management
- Unit outlines, both in terms of structure and content, will be revised to ensure that all BL / AI considerations are included in the IMC unit outline templates while recognising that unit outlines can directly impact levels of student engagement
- Assessments will be reviewed in line with the opportunities that BL / AI brings, and care will be taken to ensure that rigour is maintained and, where appropriate, external accreditation guidelines are followed
- The Institute's choice of learning technologies will be carefully considered to enable all academic staff to take complete control of their digital productions with the assistance of appropriate and dedicated in-house expertise

5 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- i. *Academic Quality Assurance Framework*
- ii. *Artificial Intelligence Policy*
- iii. *Academic Quality Assurance Framework*
- iv. *Blended Learning Procedure*

6 VERSION CONTROL

| Historical Version | Approved by | Approval Date |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|
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The Deputy President (Education) oversees the implementation and compliance of this Policy. Please contact the Deputy President's office via – policy@imc.edu.au for any inquiries or clarifications related to this policy.