

TITLE: Online & Hybrid Course Development Policy for Graduate Programs

RESPONSIBLE UNIT: Office of Academic Affairs

APPROVAL BY: Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs

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INTRODUCTION

The School of Professional Studies at Columbia University is committed to delivering the highest quality learning experience to all students regardless of the modality of instruction. Academic research on effective learning provides ample evidence that course design, content, and delivery affect the quality of online learning. A review of the literature indicates that when online and hybrid courses are designed according to research-based quality standards, institutions are more likely to see an increase in student engagement, learning, and overall satisfaction.

This document aims to clarify the school's policy on the design, development, and continual improvement of all graduate-level online and hybrid courses and the formal school-wide review and approval procedure for online and hybrid course offerings.

POLICY

1. To ensure that all graduate-level online and hybrid courses at SPS meet the school's quality standards, faculty developing or redeveloping online or hybrid courses or converting an existing on-campus course to an online or hybrid format must collaboratively participate in a formal course development cycle with design and project management support from a member of the school's Instructional Design team.
 - 1.1. The school's Instructional Designers (ID) are trained in research-based online course quality standards, learning theory, and all aspects of course design, including developing learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments.
 - 1.2. In addition to serving as a trusted advisor in these areas, IDs also bring a quality assurance framework and proven project management capabilities to ensure course projects meet Committee on Instruction (COI) expectations for academic quality and stay on pace to launch during the desired semester of instruction.
2. If a course is entirely new and has never received the approval of the school's COI, it must be reviewed and approved by COI before being offered for instruction.
3. If an existing course has never been intentionally designed for online or hybrid instruction with design and project management support from an ID, it must undergo a formal course development cycle with an Instructional Designer and meet online quality standards before it can be added to a semester schedule and offered for instruction.