

# Online Learning

# Policies & Procedures Manual

(version 2.0)

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## MORTON COLLEGE

*A revision to the 2016 manual, created by the OLPPM workgroup, an ad hoc group organized by the Teaching & Learning Center*

*Approved by Faculty Assembly, Spring 2022*

## MORTON COLLEGE ONLINE LEARNING POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

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# MORTON COLLEGE ONLINE LEARNING POLICIES & PROCEDURES MANUAL

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The mission of Morton College is “to enhance the quality of life of our diverse community through exemplary teaching and learning opportunities, community service, and lifelong learning.” Online and hybrid learning helps Morton work toward advancing that mission. Making more courses at Morton College available in online and hybrid formats means building more bridges into the community, making the College’s coursework more accessible to the student body, and making Morton College a more viable alternative to prospective students. This manual explains the policies and procedures in regard to online and hybrid coursework, and is written in accord with the Higher Learning Commissions’ standards and previously existing Morton College policies.

### 1.1 Purpose

Morton College offers a range of instructional approaches to provide educational opportunities to as many people as possible. The ever-evolving scope of communication technology means that with the proper policies and procedures in place the College can offer the same quality experience in all instructional modes, to benefit students in a traditional classroom setting as well as the wider audience that benefits from the flexibility that online and hybrid learning provide.

### 1.2 Definitions

For the sake of this manual, online learning courses are considered those managed via a college-approved Learning Management System. These courses can be offered fully online, with no on-campus meetings, or in a hybrid format with some on-campus meetings combined with online coursework. The instructional mode will be explicitly noted in the course schedule, with the fully online courses having no classrooms listed, and the hybrid courses having a set classroom scheduled for any on-campus meetings.

#### 1.2.1 Online & Hybrid Instructional Models & Section Labels

Online on a Schedule (OS): All instruction/coursework is online; class sessions meet virtually on a schedule as listed in the Schedule of Classes.

Online Anytime (OA): All instruction/coursework is online and follows an assignment schedule, but there are no regularly scheduled live, virtual sessions.

Hybrid Balanced model (HB): Instruction is roughly balanced between on-campus and online. Time/location of on-campus sessions are listed in the Schedule of Classes.

Hybrid Classroom-driven model (HC): Instruction is mostly on-campus, with some instruction online. Time/location of the on-campus sessions are listed in the Schedule of Classes.

Hybrid Online-driven model (HO): Instruction is mostly online, with some instruction on-campus. Time/location of the on-campus sessions are listed in the Schedule of Classes.

Flexible / Hyflex (HF): The Hyflex Model combines on-campus and online learning. Each class session and learning activity is offered in-person, synchronously online, and asynchronously online. Students have the flexibility to decide how to participate for each class activity.

NOTES: A. Total student workload and time-on-task for a given course is similar regardless of instructional mode. B. None of the instructional models here involve self-paced classes. C. Online on a Schedule (OS) may have live online sessions equal to Traditional/on-campus course sections or may have fewer live sessions, with synchronous work replaced by asynchronous online coursework; days/times are noted in the Schedule of Classes.

### 1.3 Morton's Commitment

Morton College is committed to building and maintaining administrative policies and procedures that allow for online learning with an effective and efficient infrastructure, with resources allocated for both the faculty and student sides of the process. The College is also committed to following the letter and the spirit of the Collective Bargaining Agreements with both the full and part-time faculty unions regarding academic freedom, compensation, and course scheduling while considering online policy.

## 2.0 GENERAL POLICIES

The policies and procedures pertaining to online and hybrid learning at Morton College generally align with those of traditional on-campus courses. However, some areas of operation may require different methods or procedures for online/hybrid vs. traditional formats. This manual attempts to clarify such situations.

### 2.1 Academic Compliance

Course sections taught using online and hybrid formats are conducted in accordance with the established policies and procedures of Morton College as outlined in the current editions of the Morton College Catalog, the Student Handbook, and Board Policies. This includes compliance with all relevant Higher Learning Commission (HLC) criteria and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) standards.

The Office of the Provost, through the Academic Deans' office, oversees academic review procedures and provides documentation of compliance with various criteria for appropriate accrediting, certifying, and sanctioning bodies. The Deans' office maintains current copies of criteria and guidelines for these agencies to assist Morton's administration in developing programs that satisfy the relevant standards.

### 2.2 Planning Process

The College emphasizes the student body's scheduling needs and the appropriateness of course content when selecting courses for online and hybrid formats. Faculty, in consultation with their department colleagues and the Deans' office, may propose courses for online and hybrid formats.

### 2.3 Academic Calendar

Both fully online and hybrid formats will follow the traditional academic calendar dates and can be modified to fit the late-start schedule as well. Dates and cut-offs for roster verification, refunds, withdrawal and others (as stipulated by the Office of Admissions & Registration/Registrar) will remain the same.

### 2.4 Course Integrity

The same standards for admissions, repetition of courses, approving incompletes, grading, earning credits, and degree completion apply to online and hybrid learning as to on-campus courses. The course goals, learning objectives, skills, and competencies are the same for online and hybrid courses as they are for the same course on-campus. Additionally, faculty will apply the same standards to coursework and grading for online and hybrid courses and on-campus, and students should expect to put forth a commensurate level of effort in whichever format they choose.

### 2.5 Course Ownership

Ownership of online and hybrid courses will be in compliance with the College's intellectual property and copyright policy as stipulated by the Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA).

### 2.6 Grievance Procedures

Resolution of disputes regarding academic matters originating from an online or hybrid course will follow the same grievance procedures as those in the on-campus format.

### 2.7 Financial Aid

Students taking online or hybrid classes for credit at Morton College must meet the same eligibility requirements for financial aid as those taking on-campus courses. Financial Aid recipients must demonstrate the same satisfactory academic progress in online and hybrid courses as in on-campus. After having received aid, withdrawing from an online or hybrid course has the same negative consequences to a student's aid package as withdrawing from an on-campus course.

### 2.8 Future Online Policy Changes

Future online and hybrid policy changes will be introduced through the College's Academic Standards Committee with input from other College committees and academic groups including: Assessment Committee, Teaching and Learning Center, Deans' Office, MIS, and current online and hybrid faculty.

## **3.0 ROLES, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

A successful teaching and learning experience depends on all parties involved meeting their responsibilities in the process. Administrators, faculty, and students all have a role to play in helping Morton to maintain a high quality educational experience online and in hybrid formats. The following section establishes what each participant in online and hybrid learning is responsible for and their rights in the process.

### 3.1 College Administration

Morton College's administration recognizes their responsibility to provide ongoing support to its faculty and students in their efforts to teach and learn in online and hybrid environments.

#### 3.1.1 Rights of Administration

- College administrators reserve the right to cancel or reschedule courses based on low enrollment in the same fashion as with on-campus courses.
- The Deans' office will evaluate faculty teaching online in a manner equitable with evaluation of on-campus courses, combining observation data, student assessment, and other data available. Evaluation instruments will be adapted as necessary to the online environment.

#### 3.1.2 Responsibilities of Administration

- To provide ongoing financial, technical, and personnel support for the development, administration, and continuation of online learning options subject to budget constraints.
- To ensure reasonable and adequate access to a range of appropriate academic support services and resources.
- To ensure compliance with accrediting agency guidelines.
- To provide a secure digital network that ensures the integrity and privacy of the communications and records exchanged.
- To assist in the appropriate development and scheduling of online and hybrid courses.
- To provide academic advising and technical support to students in online and hybrid classes.
- To provide technical support for online faculty.
- To provide for faculty training on the use and development of instructional technologies and pedagogical implications. This includes support and training opportunities (workshops, seminars, etc.) offered via the Instructional Technologist, the Teaching and Learning Center, and the Faculty Development Committee, as well as support for relevant external professional development opportunities such as coursework or attendance at conferences.
- To familiarize all college staff with the relevant online procedures and guidelines.
- To disseminate results of any course- and program-level assessment processes for use in subsequent rounds of strategic planning.
- To strive to provide adequate online security and fraud prevention systems and practices.
- To have in place processes to ensure and verify that each student enrolled in an online course section is the same individual who participates in the course and receives academic credit for it, in accordance with the Higher Learning Commission policy FDCR.A.10.050 (Practices for Verification of Student Identity) and the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA)(Public Law 110-315), Federal Requirement 34 CFR §602.17(g).

## 3.2 Faculty

While Morton College's full-time and adjunct faculty are bound by their collective bargaining agreements, online and hybrid instruction require specific attention to the interactive and technological aspects of online and hybrid learning.

### 3.2.1 Rights of Faculty

- A faculty member who wishes to complete relevant coursework or training may be reimbursed for course fees out of the College's professional development funds.
- A faculty member teaching an online or hybrid course section has the same freedoms over content and evaluating student progress they would have in an on-campus course section on the same subject.
- A faculty member may suggest the use of new technologies or online tools to help a class meet its learning objectives and request training from the College on said tools.
- The development and teaching of any online course section is part of the faculty member's workload.
- In the event an overload is created, the approval procedure is the same as for an on-campus class.
- In the course syllabus, a faculty member specifies what constitutes "participation" in the class.

### 3.2.2 Responsibilities of Faculty

- To possess adequate background knowledge and to have undergone training in both the technology and pedagogy related to online and hybrid learning.
- To engage in ongoing study and/or training to stay current in evolving and emerging technologies and trends related to online and hybrid learning.
- To follow the College's guidelines and established practices for development, scheduling, and conducting online and hybrid course sections.
- To have completed relevant coursework, unless they have prior online teaching experience deemed acceptable by the Academic Deans' Office.
- To explicitly note the instructional mode(s) in the schedule of classes.
- To design/adapt class instruction to achieve the same student learning outcomes as set for traditional on-campus course sections.
- To ensure that any course section's outline, syllabus and assignment schedule – including clarification of any scheduled on-campus and/or online class sessions – is developed for the online or hybrid format prior to the start of its initial semester.
- To provide for, initiate, and maintain regular, substantive interaction with students in online and hybrid course sections.



- To observe copyright laws, licensing, and guidelines as they pertain to software and the use and reproduction of materials.
- To participate in the College's evaluations of online and hybrid learning.
- To complete the same 10<sup>th</sup> day of term and mid-term roster verifications and early alert requests for non-participating students as expected for on-campus course sections.
- To post a class syllabus on the LMS prior to the start date of each class.
- To respond to student contact within the time-frame as stated on the syllabus.
- To be flexible with regards to technology upgrades and disruptions that might occasionally interfere with coursework, participation, and/or assignment deadlines.
- To help ensure student identity verification in online-only course sections by maintaining ongoing direct communication with students. Additionally, faculty may implement any or all of the following instructional strategies designed to support identity verification: Projects completed in a monitored step-by-step process (e.g., brainstorming, planning, draft, completion); Video-conferencing and group video sessions; Face-to-face conferencing; Tests/activities that are proctored either on-site or via browser lockdown technology.

### 3.3 Students

The student experience in online and hybrid course sections is different from that of a traditional on-campus environment. The following sections set guidelines for students to be successful online.

#### 3.3.1 Rights of Students

- To receive the same high-quality educational experience in an online or hybrid environment that they would find in the same class in an on-campus mode.
- To have access to Morton College student support services whether taking an online or hybrid class or an on-campus class.

#### 3.3.2 Responsibilities of Students

- To ascertain (with the assistance of academic advisers as needed) that they possess the appropriate skills, comfort-level with technology, and access to adequate computer facilities required for taking an online or hybrid class.
- To read and understand the class syllabus and the expectations and requirements for the class.
- To complete all assigned coursework by given deadlines.
- To follow all relevant college guidelines, including the code of conduct and academic integrity policy.
- To observe copyright laws, licensing, and guidelines as they pertain to software and the use and reproduction of materials.

- To ensure that once they register for an online or hybrid class using their Morton ID and password, that information should not be shared with anyone. An enrolled student should not allow any other person to log into their online class for any reason. Students are responsible for any use and activity of their account. If a password is lost or compromised, the student must verify identity to re-establish the secure account.

#### **4.0 ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

Evaluating and assessing courses and the entirety of Morton’s online and hybrid offerings is an important part of ensuring a high-quality educational experience. Morton College has tailored the student evaluation used in traditional courses for use online and will continue to adjust the evaluation methods as necessary to maintain the same level of quality in all instructional models. The delivery and collection methods for conducting online assessments will mirror and be equitable with on-campus assessment as much as possible.

##### **4.1 Course Needs Assessment**

Online course development and scheduling will be based on current and projected enrollment numbers, focusing on maintaining enrollments capable of sustaining repeated course offerings. Enrollments for courses will be monitored over time for planning purposes.

##### **4.2 Faculty Evaluation**

The Deans of the respective academic divisions of the College will evaluate tenure-track faculty and adjunct faculty members in their initial semester teaching in online or hybrid modes, using appropriate forms of observation and/or data available over the run of a course in accordance with either the Tenure Evaluation Plan for full-time faculty or the CBA for part-time faculty. Performance in all online and hybrid courses will be included as a part of any tenure seeking process by full-time faculty in accordance with the tenure policy and be treated on an equitable basis with performance in traditional classroom settings.

##### **4.3 Student Evaluation**

Online and hybrid students will have the same opportunity to evaluate their classes/instructors as in on-campus course sections. All instructors will have access to their individual evaluation summaries. The results of the student course evaluations may also be used for an ongoing longitudinal assessment of Morton’s online and hybrid offerings.

#### **5.0 INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN AND ONLINE COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

In order to strengthen its online course offerings, the college will help instructors develop online courses that meet quality standards.

## 5.1 Instructional Technologist

The Instructional Technologist will be available to assist instructors to develop their courses for online and hybrid delivery, and to support the course design process. The Instructional Technologist supports faculty in the effective use of technology in teaching and learning. This includes conducting training workshops for faculty and providing group or one-on-one consultations with faculty seeking to incorporate new or different educational technology into their classes. The Instructional Technologist is also available to assist faculty in using technology to ensure academic integrity and incorporating information literacy resources into instruction.

The Instructional Technologist is available to provide assistance to faculty as they develop course materials, transition them to an online delivery, troubleshoot issues as they occur during development or delivery, and make updates to the final product for as long as the course is offered online.

## 5.2 Course Development Agreement

Faculty preparing to develop an online class are encouraged to contact the Instructional Technologist to assist with the online development process. Before development can begin, the faculty member agrees that:

- The course section in question will be labeled in regard to its instructional mode in the schedule of classes.
- Faculty must offer the online elements of the course primarily through the College-approved LMS.
- Faculty may participate in customized training/consultation by the Instructional Technologist as necessary.
- If assistance is required from the Instructional Technologist, faculty must agree to schedule consultation in a timely manner to allow for the development process.
- Those responsible for online or hybrid classes under development will report on progress to the Dean.
- Faculty are encouraged to seek student feedback about class design .

## 5.3 Online Course Template and Quality Standards

In the interest of supporting continuity and ease of use for students, online and hybrid course sections and those elements of any classes which are managed via the LMS should be organized in a consistent manner to the degree possible, taking into account differences in how classes are structured and organized in different disciplines and according to the preferences of individual instructors.

A general class template with recommended components and subsections will be determined via a collaborative effort between the Academic Standards Committee, the Instructional Technologist, relevant deans, the Teaching and Learning Center, and other interested parties. This template is subject to periodic modification (as deemed appropriate by the aforementioned parties) and is implemented on the LMS to appear in all class shells. Instructors are able to make adjustments as needed, as long as

these are necessitated by pedagogical concerns; an objective should be to provide as consistent and equitable an experience as possible to students as they navigate from class to class and term to term. In all cases, instructions and all content should be as clear and straightforward as possible.

#### 5.4 Faculty and Staff Training/Support

The Instructional Technologist will support and train faculty in the implementation of the best practices and standards adopted by the College for online teaching. Training, workshops, consultations, and other forms of professional development will be offered to assist the online and hybrid faculty. The Instructional Technologist or the Teaching and Learning Center may invite experts in the field or recommend trainings, workshops, and other forms of professional development to enhance faculty and staff competencies in the implementation of online teaching and learning. In addition, faculty may seek training and professional development relevant to online and hybrid teaching; financial support for this may be available through professional development funds.

#### 5.5 Course Design Assessment and Evaluation

Faculty are encouraged to meet with the Instructional Technologist as needed to discuss possible improvements on the design of the online and hybrid classes. Student feedback should also be used to build a more effective class design.

### **6.0 STUDENT SERVICES**

#### 6.1 Students with Disabilities

Morton College is committed to providing equal access for students with documented disabilities. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students are guaranteed access to college programs and services. Students with a documented disability may request accommodations through the Office of Disability Services and Accommodations. Any student requesting accommodations must complete a Request for Accommodation Form, provide sufficient documentation, and complete an intake interview with the Disability Services Coordinator. Students are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Coordinator before the start of the semester to ensure there is no delay in accommodations and/or services.

#### 6.2 Student Orientation

All Morton College students will have access to an introduction to online learning module. This module will introduce students to the basics of online learning and our college Learning Management System (LMS). This module will be presented in-person during student orientation, and will also be available asynchronously on the college website.

#### 6.3 Universal Design for Learning

Instructors strive to apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to online delivery to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners. Morton College is committed to a flexible online learning environment in which instruction is delivered in multiple ways, students will have the

opportunity to engage in multiple ways, and students will be provided options to demonstrate their knowledge in multiple ways.

## **7.0 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Morton College treats ethical violations affecting course work with the utmost seriousness. Academic dishonesty of any kind will result in an academic penalty and may result in further disciplinary action. Morton College instructors have access to various technologies to ensure academic integrity, including plagiarism detectors and secure testing platforms.

Online courses will follow the same Academic Integrity and Plagiarism policies governing student work as presented in Morton College's Student Code of Conduct, with one addendum: For online courses an enrolled student allowing another person to sign into an online course under their log in and password with the intention of participating as the enrolled student or submitting work not completed by the enrolled student will also be grounds for an instructor to cite the enrolled student for academic dishonesty.