

# COURSE APPROVAL GUIDELINES

More effective instructional technologies have enabled the rapid development of alternative course delivery methods, especially ones that are significantly or completely on-line. This document outlines a classification of these courses and specifies pertinent University policies with regard to these methods. In particular, a distinction is made in this document between courses offered by The University of Iowa for credit,<sup>1</sup> courses offered by entities outside of the University which do not earn University of Iowa credit, and courses offered outside the University of Iowa which are eligible for transfer credit. In all cases, technology can change the way that courses are delivered. However, technology has also enabled the development of more courses of the second type, and we expect that trend to continue.

Participation in technology-enhanced course delivery is valuable for both faculty and the University, and assists in the development of necessary skills in new course delivery formats. To that end, the University of Iowa encourages faculty to engage in different kinds of course delivery; with the understanding that University policies will define and govern that engagement when such experimentation takes place outside of the normal processes of the University.

For purposes of this policy, a course is defined as the delivery of academic materials to students, who are assessed on their understanding of those materials and are assigned a final grade. The following nomenclature will be used for course offerings:

1. Course Type I. The following types of courses are offered by the University of Iowa for University of Iowa credit (including courses offered for 0 s.h. credit). These courses appear on the student's transcript. Students must pay tuition in order to enroll. Courses must meet the credit hour requirements in the University of Iowa Credit Hour Policy.<sup>2</sup> Colleges, departments and faculty determine the enrollment size for the course and the policies that govern the course.
  - a) *Regular course*. This is a course offered in a face-to-face format.
  - b) *Online course*. This is a course offered without a face-to-face component. Students complete work on the internet, and may meet virtually. Class may be synchronous or asynchronous.<sup>3</sup> However, all students complete the course by a fixed deadline.
  - c) *Hybrid course*. This is a course that includes both face-to-face and online components.
  - d) *Guided Independent Study (GIS)*. This is a course offered without a face-to-face component. The class is generally asynchronous and students may complete the course at different dates.

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<sup>1</sup> This category includes those courses offered for 0 s.h. that are included on students' transcripts.

<sup>2</sup> Credit Hour Definition at <http://provost.uiowa.edu/credit-hour-definition>.

<sup>3</sup> In a synchronous course, students are completing assignments and exams on approximately the same dates. In an asynchronous course, students complete assignments and exams at their own pace.

Courses of Type I are governed by University course policies.<sup>4</sup> New courses in this category must be approved through normal workflow channels, which include the DEO and Dean of the appropriate college. In general, online and GIS courses are supported through the Division of Continuing Education (DCE), both in terms of course development and instructor salary. Faculty can use University resources to develop such courses. Faculty performance in teaching these courses is evaluated and is used as part of the promotion and reappointment process.

2. Course Type II. A Type II Course includes courses and educational opportunities that are offered by the University of Iowa, but which do not produce a transcript entry. This includes, for example, continuing education courses such as Continuing Legal Education (CLE), professional development workshops and training (excluding workshop courses listed in the University of Iowa general catalogue), art, theatre and music outreach programs, etc. This category also includes Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) or Massive Online Courses (MOCs) that have been approved to be offered by the University of Iowa.

By general definition, MOOCs are courses offered online to a large number of participants who do not pay tuition or fees while MOCs are similar to MOOCs but require that participants pay a course fee.

Course Type II participants are not necessarily University of Iowa enrolled students. These courses cannot be included on a University transcript and are not awarded academic credit. Course Type II participants may, however, receive a certificate of completion.

3. Course Type III. This type of course is offered by University of Iowa faculty and staff, but is not approved by the University of Iowa or offered for University of Iowa credit. Because they are not approved by offered for University credit, participants need not be University of Iowa students, the University does not collect tuition, and the courses do not need to meet a credit hour requirement. University course policies (e.g., academic misconduct, drops and adds, and the required syllabus, etc.) do not apply to Type III courses.

Type III courses would include MOOCs or MOCs that are not approved by or offered by the University of Iowa.

Courses of Type III will be treated as “outside professional activity.” Hence, participation in these courses will be governed by the Conflict of Commitment and Conflict of Interest policies<sup>5</sup> and by other applicable policies developed by the University. In particular, if the activity interferes with a faculty or staff member’s regular University of Iowa commitments,

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<sup>4</sup> These include both collegiate and University polices (including those listed on the Provost’s website <http://provost.uiowa.edu/policies-procedures> and in the operations manual <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/human-resources/professional-ethics-and-academic-responsibility/responsibilities-students>).

<sup>5</sup> <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/community-policies/conflicts-commitment-and-interest>.

the faculty or staff member must work with his or her DEO or unit director to formulate a management plan. Additionally, the faculty or staff member must abide by the portion of the policy that allows the University to have the first right of refusal for the activity. Specifically, the instructor should consult with the relevant department about whether the course should be offered as a Type I or Type II course before offering it as a Type III course.

4. Transfer credit. Currently, courses submitted by students for transfer credit are evaluated by the Office of Admissions or by departmental faculty to assess their equivalency to University of Iowa courses. This assessment is based on an examination of the syllabus and any other material deemed relevant, such as exams or assignments. Once a course from an institution has been approved, it is entered into the University's transfer equivalency table.
  - a) Credit must be transferred from either a regionally-accredited domestic institution or a foreign institution that is recognized by an appropriate government agency.
  - b) Third-party coursework consists of courses delivered by a non-accredited educational program that have been awarded credit by an accredited institution. This credit is evaluated on a case-by-case basis.
  - c) MOOCs and MOCs delivered by or awarded credit by other institutions will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Other considerations include:

- 1) Faculty or staff interested in teaching Type II MOOCs or MOCs must receive approval for their course through the normal workflow and approval channels for new courses.
- 2) Faculty training and instructional design support will be made available for staff and faculty interested in teaching Type II MOOCs or MOCs through the Division of Continuing Education if the course is approved through the appropriate channels.
- 3) The University's Copyright Policy<sup>6</sup> will apply to any Type I, Type II or Type III course that is created with the significant use of University resources.
- 4) To move a course from Type III to Type I, or from Type II to Type I, the faculty or staff member must proceed through the normal workflow and approval channels for new courses.
- 5) To move a course from Type III to Type II, the instructor must obtain approval from his or her DEO or program director and the Dean of the College through which the course will be offered.
- 6) As long as a course is of Type III, the University of Iowa will not grant credit for completion of the course, nor will University course or academic misconduct policies be applied to the course.
- 7) No Type III course can be advertised as a University of Iowa course
  - a) Faculty cannot use the approved name of a University of Iowa course for a non-University of Iowa course unless the name is a standard reference (e.g., Calculus I).
  - b) Faculty may show their affiliation with the University of Iowa as part of their title (e.g., Professor of Economics, The University of Iowa)

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<sup>6</sup> <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/administrative-financial-and-facilities-policies/university-iowa-intellectual-property-policy-5>. In particular, note the following statement: "The University does not claim ownership of copyright in pedagogical, scholarly, artistic, or research works regardless of the mode of expression except when a work is described in section V-30.4b(2)(b) below."

- 8) As with textbooks, some University resources may be used to create courses of Type III. For example a faculty member may be allowed to create videos using University software if permitted by the licensing agreement for that software and applicable University policies. The course must be provided on a non-University server.<sup>7,8</sup>
- 9) The University of Iowa is financially responsible for Type I and Type II courses; the University assumes no financial responsibility for Type III courses.

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<sup>7</sup> For a more specific description of what resources may be used, see the Operations Manual, V-30.4b(2)(b).

<sup>8</sup> Acceptable use of technology, <https://opsmanual.uiowa.edu/community-policies/acceptable-use-information-technology-resources/individual-responsibilities>.