
Blended Learning Policy

1. Policy Overview

This policy sets out UniHaven's approach to blended learning to ensure that all blended learning approaches are designed and used to complement and support students in-class learning.

2. Policy Statement

This policy on Blended Learning provision is consistent with QQI standards, guidelines, policies, and criteria relating to programmes and awards, in particular: QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018). As described in the QQI guidelines, blended learning will always have an in-class teaching element. Concerning the UniHaven International Foundation Pathway Programme ("the programme"), being the only programme run at the college, not only does the College wish to provide as much in-class teaching as possible to satisfy its ethos and strategic priorities, but foundation programmes like this also need to satisfy the Department of Justice's ILEP requirements where in-class teaching must be at least 15 hours a week for visa compliance purposes for international students¹. Because of the above requirements, the programme will be taught fully in class five days a week as a programme of full-time study over a six-to-9-month period with blended learning aspects limited to teaching and learning support and student support activities. Should in-class teaching be suspended due to Government directives, the College can temporarily switch to fully online teaching, learning and assessment until in-class delivery resumes because the LMS facilitate this in conjunction with Microsoft Office 365 software that students will have access to.

¹ <http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/form-ILFC.pdf/Files/form-ILFC.pdf>



It is important to clarify that despite being an international education provider, all students studying the programme will travel to Ireland to study in class. Consequently, the programme will not be available as a fully online offer to students outside of Ireland nor will it have any students studying the programme outside of Ireland.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

This policy aims to ensure that online and remote components of College teaching, learning and assessment provision are supported by fit-for-purpose organisational infrastructure and processes for the ultimate benefit of students. The principles and processes set out in this policy are intended to facilitate access to and participation in the programme, ensuring a high-quality, consistent, learning experience for all students. The Academic Director is responsible for determining the degree to which blended learning is employed in the context of best practice and the College's strategic priorities under the auspices of the Academic Council (AC). The Programme Manager is responsible for ensuring that programme development, monitoring and review include its blended learning aspects. Academic staff are responsible for implementing this policy as developers, teachers, and assessors of programme content.

The Academic Director is responsible for ensuring that policies are developed and maintained, that they remain fit for purpose, that they remain in compliance with QQI guidelines, that they are updated as per agreed timetables, and that they are being implemented as intended. In the latter context, the Academic Director will inspect a sample of policies each year to check for the correct implementation and bring the findings to AC as part of the annual QA/QQI review and reporting process.

4. Policy

Blended learning refers to “the integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences”². The programme will be delivered in class and will have in-class summative assessments. Formative assessments may be completed remotely and submitted online. Great care has been taken to ensure that blended learning approaches have been designed to preserve and enhance the academic standards associated with the programme.

Blended learning concerning other programme and learning supports at the College may include a combination of the following as remote-accessible or online elements:

- Teaching and learning supports and resources developed for online delivery or access.
- Access to learning technologies.
 - Claned is the name and supplier of the College learning management system (LMS).
 - Office365 will be offered free to students to allow them to use
 - College email.
 - Use Microsoft’s suite of Word, Excel and PowerPoint software packages for document writing, data processing and presentation purposes.
 - Use MS Teams for individual or group remote/online tutorial/student support, projects or other forms of student group learning and formative assessment work.
- Teaching and learning support provided online as easily accessible off-campus support.
- Online activities to support formative assessment.
- Submission, grading and feedback on formative assessments.
- Provision of student learning supports such as Teacher mentoring, resource material depository etc.

² QQI’s Statutory Quality Assurance guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018)

IT Infrastructure and Resources

Consistent with QQI resource-related requirements³, the College's choice of learning management system (LMS) is a very affordable, ready-to-go cloud technology option where the LMS design expertise and technology update is the responsibility of the provider while the responsibility for designing the content and making it accessible to or delivering it interactively and engagingly is the responsibility of College staff. In conjunction with Microsoft's Office365 free student and low-cost staff education licensing that the College avails of, the College is satisfied that its LMS and learning technology support provision is a user-friendly, modern, accessible, and affordable option for staff and students. The College has been careful to ensure that the LMS chosen will support teaching and learning rather than teaching and learning is a secondary consideration to the choice of LMS product.

Student Information about Blended Learning

We are committed to ensuring students are adequately prepared to function in a blended learning environment with academic staff guiding them through the process. Students must have full access to information on how blended learning approaches may differ from their previous experiences with traditional learning environments. Students will be pre-informed about the structure of the programme, the blended learning aspects of teaching, learning, assessment and support as well as any IT requirements they will need to avail of, including how to access and use the LMS, in the Programme Handbook and in College registration and induction materials given to them as they begin the programme...see UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2 and UPRO002 UniHaven Student Registration and Induction Procedure Rev 1. Information given will include

- A clear explanation of the degree to which blended learning will be utilised in their programme and which activities will and will not be available/delivered online/remotely.

³ QQI's Statutory Quality Assurance guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018)



-
- IT and Data
 - Details of the technical requirements necessary to access, participate in and successfully complete the programme including hardware, software, and items such as broadband/connectivity.
 - How student data is gathered, protected, stored, and used for the benefit of their academic journey with UniHaven as per UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1, UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1, UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1 and UPOL025 UniHaven Learning Analytics Policy Rev 1.



Programme

All blended teaching and learning components go through the programme development and review process to ensure a high-quality learning experience for all students as per UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Development Policy Rev 2. This includes the inclusion of blended learning aspects as part of QQI programme validation processes. The College focuses on the practical alignment of learning outcomes, assessments and content of all online learning activities making sure they are fit for purpose as per UPOL013 Teaching and Learning Policy Rev 1 and UPOL015 UniHaven Assessment and Awards Policy Rev 2. Specifically, concerning blended aspects

- Teaching and Learning – see UPOL013 UniHaven Teaching and Learning Policy Rev 1
 - Students will be informed of the in-class and online elements of teaching and learning activities.
 - The weekly timetable will show any online components.
 - Any requirements for online collaborative participation such as involvement in webinars, group work or online discussions will be communicated in advance.
- Assessments – see UPOL014 UniHaven Assessment and Awards Policy Rev 2
 - A comprehensive schedule of assessments including feedback timelines will be provided with summative and formative assessments identified separately.
 - Students will be told if formative assessment and assessment feedback will be provided online or in class.
 - Assessment guidelines will outline if they are to be completed and/or submitted online, how students will be identified, how assessments will be verified as being authentic to the student, how data is protected and how feedback will be provided.
- Student support – see UPOL019 UniHaven Student Support Policy Rev 1
 - Information will be made available to students about the online support services that are available regarding academic, pastoral and technical support, when they are available, from whom and how to access each.



All programme-related information will be approved by the Programme Manager before release to students.

5. Procedures and Forms

The following policies are relevant to the implementation of this policy:

- UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Development Policy Rev 2.
- UPOL013 Teaching and Learning Policy Rev 1.
- UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1.
- UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1.
- UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1.
- UPOL025 UniHaven Learning Analytics Policy Rev 1.
- UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2.

Quality Assurance Manual (QAM) Chapter 6

Document Name	Blended Learning Policy
Procedure Document Number	UPOL014
Version Reference	Rev.1
Document Owner	Academic Director
Roles with Aligned Responsibility	Academic Staff
Approved By	Academic Council (AC)
Approval Date	2.3.2023
Date Policy Becomes Active	1.4.2023
Revision Cycle	Annually
Revision History/Amalgamation History	Revised for text errors post programme validation
Additional Information	N/A
References/ Supporting Documentation	<p>UDOC000 UniHaven Quality Assurance Manual Rev 2 Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for use by all Providers (2016) Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines developed by QQI for Independent/Private Providers coming to QQI on a Voluntary Basis (2016) QQI Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes (2018) UPOL005 UniHaven Programme Development Policy Rev 2 UPOL013 UniHaven Teaching and Learning Policy Rev 1 UPOL020 UniHaven Data Protection Policy Rev 1 UPOL023 UniHaven Data Retention Policy Rev 1 UPOL024 UniHaven Data Security Policy Rev 1 UPOL025 UniHaven Learning Analytics Policy Rev 1 UPOL026 UniHaven Communications Policy Rev 1 UDOC001 UniHaven Programme Handbook Rev 2</p>