



MUHABURA INTEGRATED POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE

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Blended and Online Learning Policy

List of abbreviations

CAT: Continuous Assessment Test

DQA: Director of Quality Assurance

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

MIPC: Muhabura Integrated Polytechnic College

MIS : Management Information System

SSL : Secure Socket Layer

VLE: Virtual Learning Environment ()

VPAT: Vice Principal Academics and Training

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I. Introduction

Muhabura Integrated Polytechnic College (MIPC) is an institution opened in 2014 by Anglican Church of Rwanda, Diocese of Shyira. The idea of creating such kind of Institution is triggered by following objectives.

1. To provide technical and professional programs for students who wish to develop competencies in specific career areas or to upgrade their skills.
2. To support economic development by providing job-specific programs for business, industry, hotels, and other organizations.
3. To provide developmental education courses for students who need basic academic skills.

MIPC Motto

“Striving for excellence...”

And whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not to men. Colossians 3:23

MIPC Vision

To be the Premier Source for education, workforce training, partnerships and economic development.

MIPC Mission

To provide innovative educational environments, opportunities, and experiences that enable individuals, communities, and the region to grow, thrive, and prosper.

MIPC Philosophy

We act to foster inclusion education and promote excellence in all that we do. We commit to approach all decisions with integrity, kindness and generosity both on and off campus.

MIPC Values

1. Commitment
2. Respect
3. Excellence
4. Accountability
5. Diversity

MIPC Goals

1. Ensure the students access and increase enrollment facilities.
2. Inspiring students' success and enabling to achieve their life skills for the labor market and entrepreneurial skills.
3. Ensure high quality programs and services.
4. Sustain environmental relationship in education.
5. Reinforce continuing education and community service.
6. To develop and implement a student welfare policy.
7. To develop and enhance library services.
8. To generate income and develop projects to support smooth learning of the college.
9. To promote a culture of entrepreneurial and business, technical skills among students.
10. Ensure students access to ICT services

II MIPC-Blended-and-Online-Learning-policy-Panorama

2.1 Purpose

The Muhabura Integrated Polytechnic College's eLearning Policy is focused on guiding the delivery of top-quality eLearning in all its aspects including instruction, learning and the imparting of valuable knowledge, skills and attitudes. Thus, learners will be enabled to attain their professional and career goals in a flexible and student-centered learning environment.

2.2 Definition of key concepts

- **Curriculum**

A curriculum is an organized programme of study for a given degree, diploma or certificate awards incorporating all matters such as academic requirement, duration of programme, admission requirements, programme content requirements and assessment process requirements.

- **Course/Programme of study**

A course or programme of study refers to the prescribed syllabus that students must be taught at each key stage.

- **E-Learning**

eLearning refers to the application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance distance education, implement open learning policies, make learning activities more flexible and enable those learning activities to be distributed among many learning venues.

- **Blended /hybrid courses**

Hybrid classes provide an opportunity to take advantage of both eLearning and face-to-face interaction utilizing Video Conferencing and/or LMS. Students must attend face-to-face class instruction or video conferencing courses and log in to their E-learning environment where necessary

- **Blended /hybrid modes of instruction**

An approach to instruction where a learner can take some courses via eLearning and others through the traditional face-to-face mode.

- **Online Course**

An online course is defined as a course in which 80% or more of the course is conducted online via a variety of media.

Flexible delivery: refers to how the timing, pace, content, assessment and location (in both virtual and physical environments) of learning can be varied, personalized and chosen by the student to suit their needs, whilst still meeting the desired learning outcomes. The extent of variability will be determined by course and/or subject requirements.

Digital literacy: refers to the ability to locate, evaluate, choose, use and create technologies effectively, critically and safely for lifelong learning. Students require digital

literacy to locate, engage, interact, create, share and communicate with a range of learning technologies in order to access subject information, participate in learning activities, collaborate with peers and complete assessment tasks. Staff require digital literacy to communicate, support, motivate and inspire learning for students in contemporary learning environments.

Mode of delivery: refers to whether a subject is delivered internally, externally or via limited mode. Blended learning can, and should be, integrated into any subject regardless of mode of delivery

2.3 Policy Scope and Related Policies

This policy applies to all members of staff and students of MIPC, related approved institutional policies.

2.4 Objectives of the eLearning of MIPC

The objectives of MIPCs eLearning are to:

- a. Provide an opportunity for learners who are not able to attend face-to-face classes to acquire quality education.
- b. To build internal capacity amongst staff for development of eLearning mode of instruction by promoting and providing guidelines for training in eLearning mode of instruction.
- c. To apply eLearning as a strategy to improve MIPC market presence as well as improve the image of the College.
- d. Continually identify and address instructor and student needs in teaching and learning online so as to continually develop the eLearning instruction.
- e. Provide support services including informational resources for students enrolled in MIPC
- f. Promote and support the use of the Learning Management System (LMS) and other technologies in both face-to-face and online learning environments.

- g. Encourage the sharing of effective technology-enhanced teaching and learning practices among instructors.
- h. To identify, provide, expand, and coordinate the development of quality courses and programs to meet the needs of learners.
- i. Evaluate periodically and comprehensively every facet of the eLearning program and use these results to restructure and improve the program.
- j. To promote MIPC eLearning into a mode of instruction of choice locally and internationally.

POLICY STATEMENT

- ✚ The college will provide all the required eLearning infrastructure as well as the materials and technical support.
- ✚ All students are expected to have an access to all the relevant eLearning resources to enable them to meet the learning outcomes of the eLearning courses.
- ✚ Staff should have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to facilitate learning via online strategies. Department and other staff will be provided with training as well as guidelines which govern the teaching, learning, and support services for eLearning.

I. Guiding principles for implementation of the policy

- ✚ The MIPC eLearning policy shall endeavor to align eLearning activities of the college.
- ✚ At MIPC, the courses are offered through eLearning and face-to-face instruction. The structure of the programs shall always be tailored to meet the specific needs of on-campus and off-campus learners wherever they are.
- ✚ The design of the curriculum and teaching/learning resources shall conform to the acceptable standards of eLearning.

- ✚ The pedagogy applied, the type of content covered, the appropriateness of learning activities, and the nature of the assessment will be designed in a way that should enhance effective learning to impart the desired knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- ✚ The college shall undertake assignments for all the students taking eLearning courses.
- ✚ MIPC shall ensure that students taking eLearning courses have easy access and equity of opportunity with those undertaking campus-based courses, and that its marketing, recruitment, administrative and support procedures and provision are fully aligned to the needs of the e-Learner in local, national and international contexts.
- ✚ MIPC shall partner with other stakeholders to ensure that appropriate technology and skills used in the eLearning are at the disposal of the learners and are effective for the attainment of both individual and corporate objectives of eLearning.
- ✚ MIPC shall ensure high quality eLearning that meets the expectations of the learners; as well as the quality standards set by the College and other regulatory agencies.
- ✚ eLearning courses will be offered as one part online and another part with face-to-face Session.

II. Governance and administration

As it is the case for Campus-based learning, eLearning at MIPC shall be administered and managed under the office of the Vice Principal Academics and Training. The Curriculum Development Committee (Comprising of all academic staffs) shall oversee the design and development of eLearning course under the guidance of VPAT and Director of Quality Assurance (DQA).

V. Implementation of the eLearning policy

5.1 eLearning Curriculum

a) Customizing an Existing Course to an eLearning Course

eLearning material developers will follow the following process for customizing an existing course into an eLearning one:

The departments will convert the course based on international best practice eLearning guidelines. It is recommended that department members work with MIPC IT team throughout the development process to ensure the course meets the College's and appropriate national standards for online courses.

MIPC IT team will evaluate the online course for the required standards as recommended in the eLearning curriculum and notify the department member, the appropriate department head and dean, and the VPAT when all the online course design criteria have been met.

In case the course does not meet MIPC's eLearning course standards and is not aligned with the underlying principles and quality standards, the proposed course shall be returned to the department member with recommendations for amendments.

It is mandatory that all online courses meet requirements established by this policy.

b) Creating a New Course for the Online Program

If a department member desires to create a course specifically as an online course, the course must first conform to the requirements of developing eLearning courses. Department will be responsible for developing eLearning materials in their Schools. If faculty are developing the materials as part of their duties at MIPC, the authorship shall fall to MIPC as the copyright owner.

c) Course Review

The responsibility for ongoing assessment of online courses rests with the appropriate department and department heads. The department heads will work with the Directorate of Quality Assurance and/or any other appropriate assessment tools. Course review for eLearning courses shall be done annually because of the dynamic nature of eLearning environment.

5.2 Instruction and general administration of eLearning Courses

Department (Instructors)

Departments shall prepare course materials to be ready ahead of the offering of such a course. Once the course is on offer, Departments shall be at hand to guide the students at every stage of the course.

Students

- ✓ A student will be required to login into the eLearning and access the course material assigned to his/her class. Students who are admitted to study at MIPC will be required to have a laptop and internet connection for use during the course of study. They will also be required to undertake all scheduled the online lessons.
- ✓ Attendance and Participation:
 - ✓ To encourage effective attendance all students are advised to attend live class.
 - ✓ Department participation and appropriate facilitation requires weekly posting of feedback to students.

Department Member Interaction with Online Students:

The critical role of communication should be appreciated, given that communication is essential to the success of all courses. The requirements for planned interaction and timely feedback between students and faculty are detailed in online course guidelines. Department

may apply methods of interaction such as email, phone, chat, discussion boards, or audio/video conferencing.

Feedback to students:

Feedback for student assignments will be delivered in a timely manner by the instructor. Recent research shows that delay in returning feedback to students makes eLearning courses to be less effective; so that the longer the delay the less effective the course becomes. Departments should provide interaction between the student and faculty member on a regular basis. They should also respond to all submitted work within one week of submission.

Department Member Responsibilities:

The faculty member is responsible for the course content, delivery of instruction, evaluation of student progress in online learning courses, and timely communication with students. The department member will evaluate course content on a continuing basis to ensure currency of materials.

College responsibility:

Access: Schools should ensure students have access to the following:

- ✓ Information that sets out the respective responsibilities of the school and College for the delivery of the programme, module, or element of the course.
- ✓ Module descriptors, to show the intended learning outcomes and teaching, learning and assessment methods of the module(s).
- ✓ A clearly defined schedule for the delivery of their study materials and for assessment of their work.

Study materials: College should ensure that students can be confident that:

- ✓ All the requisite study materials, whether delivered through staff of a programme presenter or through web-based or other distribution channels, meet the expectations of the College in respect of the quality of teaching and learning-support material for a programme or element of study leading to one of its awards.

Assessment:

Departments shall be responsible for planning and administering all forms of student assessment. Other College academic policies shall also apply accordingly. Schools will ensure that learners have access to the following:

- ✚ Relevant information on the ways in which their progress will be judged, and the relative weighting of units, modules or elements of the course.
- ✚ Grades for student progress through the course will be posted a week after the assignment is done.
- ✚ University policy regarding examinations shall apply

Written Assignment Requirements:

- ✓ All written work shall follow the guidelines for academic honesty, copyright, and intellectual property policies.
- ✓ All assignments will be given as scheduled. The instructor is not obligated to repeat or remind students of tests and assignment dates. This is because each student is responsible for acquiring notes and assignments online.

Continuous Assessment Test and Final Examination:

Procedure for taking CATs and final examinations will be in line with MIPCs examinations rules and regulations and they should be taken on face-to-face basis.

III. Academic standards

- ✓ MIPC will ensure that procedures and regulations as specified in academic policies are fit for purpose in a blended learning environment.

- ✓ MIPC will ensure that quality assurance systems to monitor and/or moderate standards are fit-for-purpose in a blended and online learning environment.
- ✓ MIPC will ensure that the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) system supports blended and online learning programmes and the quality assurance of a flexible learning experience.

IV. Infrastructure:

ICT

The MIPC, through the ICT department will establish and maintain a robust ICT infrastructure capable of efficiently supporting MIPC -wide blended and eLearning learning initiative.

The MIPC, through the ICT department and eLearning team will ensure the delivery of a technical support service.

❖ Course Development & Delivery Support

The MIPC through the ICT department will equip the ICT services to provide quality services in instructional design for blended learning and eLearning, department training for blended course development and delivery, and multimedia materials development. The ICT team and eLearning team shall in turn coordinate Blended and eLearning Learning Instructional Design in collaboration with stakeholder units.

Oversight & Planning:

The MIPC should establish a Blended and eLearning Learning Implementation Team to oversee the implementation of the Blended and eLearning Learning Initiative

V. Student support

6.1 Prospective students should receive a clear and realistic explanation of the college expectations on them for study of the programme or elements of study, and for the nature and extent of autonomous, collaborative and supported aspects of learning.

6.2 Learners should have access to:

- ✚ Clear and up-to-date information about the learning support available to them locally and remotely for their programme or elements of study.
- ✚ A schedule for any learner support available to them through timetabled activities, for example tutorial sessions or web-based conferences.
- ✚ Documents that set out their own responsibilities as learners, and the commitments of the University and school for the support of a programme or element of study.

6.3 Learners should have:

- ✚ As facilitated by the school from the outset of their study, an identified contact either local or remote through email, telephone and post, who can give them constructive feedback on academic performance and authoritative guidance on their academic progression.
- ✚ Where and when appropriate, regular opportunities should be available for inter-learner discussions about the programme, both to facilitate collaborative learning and to provide a basis for facilitating their participation in the quality assurance of the programme.
- ✚ Appropriate opportunities to give formal feedback on their experience of the programme.

6.4 Schools should ensure that learners can be confident that:

- ✓ Adequate staff are available to support their eLearning.

- ✓ All staff who provide support to learners on these programmes have appropriate skills, and receive appropriate training and development.
- ✓ Support for learners, whether delivered through staff of a support provider or through web- based or other distribution channels, meets the expectations of the College for the quality of learner support for a programme of study.

6.5 The University shall endeavor to establish support centers to enable the learners easily access necessary support services.

VII. Monitoring and evaluation of elearning policy

- ✚ The HoD shall be responsible for continuous monitoring and control of all aspects of the eLearning activity. At the end of every academic year, the HoD
 - ✓ shall evaluate performance of the eLearning process and advise the
 - ✓ VPAT and DQA accordingly. The DQA bears the overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation processes.
- ✚ The Heads of Department are responsible for the implementation of this Blended Learning policy under supervision of VPAT

VIII Privacy, intellectual property, security and copyright

The policy is that intellectual property, disclosure procedures, royalties and proceeds participation, equity and management, infringement, and production of properties by students follow standards set by the College. To actualize this foregoing, the following procedures shall be observed:

- ✚ Content Ownership: Any materials and content developed by department to deliver instruction for the College becomes property of MIPC.
- ✚ Content re-use: Any materials and content developed by faculty for the University can be used in other course modules.
- ✚ NB: Students cannot re-use work from previous courses for sub-sequent course modules unless approved by the course instructor.

- ✚ Disclosure: The University will follow its non-disclosure agreements necessary for internal/external projects.
- ✚ Infringement: MIPC will follow its intellectual property policy and other applicable regulations.
- ✚ Royalties and Proceeds: Content that generates royalties or proceeds will be owned and managed by the University.
- ✚ The MIPC, eLearning course development will require lecturers to borrow artifacts and intellectual material from the Internet all the time to linking to external resources. But they should use them by attributing the original author or the materials they have borrowed.
- ✚ The ability to edit and control the presentation of their work, and to exercise a right of first refusal in the preparation of subsequent versions
- ✚ The ability to change and update materials over time, reflecting new research, evidence, or developments
- ✚ The right to take educational materials they create when they leave for another institution, for their own teaching and research purposes
- ✚ The right to share their work with peers in their disciplines (e.g., to check their work or to build upon it)
- ✚ E-Learning MIS platform should be protected with valid SSL certificate

IX. Review of Policy

The eLearning policy and minimum standards for the use of the virtual learning environment shall be subject to be reviewed on the two-year basis.

X. Quality Assurance and Evaluation

- ✚ The instruments used for student evaluation of teaching shall take account of elements unique to eLearning.
- ✚ The Campus, through the Quality Assurance Office shall routinely conduct student, Faculty and staff evaluations of blended courses and assess the impact on learning outcomes, performance and the student experience

Approved by the MIPC Academic Senate in 8th May, 2020

Chaired by,

Rev. Vital MANIRAKIZA

Principal