



BITS College

Online Learning

Rules and Procedures

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1 Introduction

1.1 Online Learning Platform at BITS

BITS College is a private higher learning institution with a vision of promoting excellence in the production, growth and dissemination of advanced scientific knowledge through teaching and research.

BITS promotes Hybrid/Blended courses that provide an opportunity to take advantage of both online learning and face-to-face interaction. While students must attend face-to-face class instruction, they are also encouraged to use the eLearning platform for better and individualized interaction with the instructor. On a typical course site, an instructor posts announcement, a course syllabus, class notes and presentations, and related learning materials for easy access by students. In addition, instructors can use the course site to facilitate forums and chats, to receive and return student assignments, to administer online quizzes and tests, and to maintain an online gradebook. The teaching method can be

The College has prepared this online learning policy in order to secure well designed structure with proper rules and regulations. This is also believed to create a conducive environment for the College's vision of becoming an eLearning excellence centre. It is expected that anyone who is using the eLearning platform read this policy and adhere to the guidelines provided. Faculty and students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this policy, and acting ethically and in accordance with this policy. The policy is subject to revision and change when deemed necessary.

1.2 Online Learning Platform at BITS

- asynchronous where there is a student-centered teaching method that uses online learning resources to facilitate information sharing outside the constraints of time and place.
- Synchronous where online conference tools are used for real time lecture.

This online learning policy outlines the appropriate usage, roles, responsibilities and authority for the College's learning platform. It is introduced for all users of the College's LMS who participate in, develop, implement, administer or support online learning experience. The overall assumption is that students are more likely to achieve the learning goals set when they know precisely what rules govern the pursuit of these goals

BITS has introduced the online learning platform in order to :

- Encourage the sharing of effective technology-enhanced teaching and learning practices among Instructors and students.
- support and encourage the internal development of the e-learning program by promoting and providing guidelines and technical support for inclusion of course materials in the eLearning platform
- provide online informational resources and reference services for students enrolled in the College
- encourage and support the use of the Learning Management System (LMS) and other technologies in online learning environments.

1.2. Online Learning Committee (OLC)

The College designates an Online Learning Committee consisting of 5 individuals.

Composition

- The Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and Research
- The E-Learning Coordinator
- Representative of the ICT Office
- Faculty member appointed by Dean of the College
- Relevant content specialist as invited
- Representative of student body

The Dean of the College or the President may participate in any meeting of the Committee that they deem appropriate to attend

Responsibilities

The Online Learning Committee is responsible for

- (i) all operational matters relating to the online learning;
- (ii) overseeing the full implementation of the rules and regulations outlined in this policy.

- (iii) for continuous quality assurance and enhancement of the online learning platform;
- (iv) for updating and making changes to the policy as deemed necessary and in consultation with the Dean
- (v) Review content as required by appointing content review board.

Frequency of Meeting

The (OLC) meets at least once a month to review operations, best practices, student complaints, as well as to implement any changes necessary to improve the functioning of the online learning effort.

Invited guests to the meeting have to be informed of all Committee meetings at least two days in advance

Accountability

The OLC is accountable to the Dean

1.3 Related Policies

This policy relates to other organizational policies, such as IT policy and/or confidentiality policies.

2. Responsibilities of Major Actors

2.1 The E-Learning Coordinator

The eLearning coordinator is responsible is the designated chief of the online learning platform with the following responsibilities.

- assists instructors and other privileged users in the use of the eLearning platform.
- adds, updates or remove courses upon formal request by the designated instructor
- works closely with the registrar to validate student accounts and permissions, to add students to online class offerings based on student program requirements
- is responsible for Student and staff ongoing support

- provides periodical training for efficient use of the eLearning platform

2.2 Course Instructor

The course instructor/s is/are the individual/s assigned to teach a course. Their responsibilities include the following

- Keep a copy of all graded work, just in case a technology failure destroys an online grade book and grades have to be recreated.
- Should comply to the course rules and regulation and state the rules for taking online tests and the penalties associated with violating these rules. In

2.3 Student Code of conduct

The College expects students to conduct themselves in the e-learning environment. A student should read, agree and sign the code of conduct in order to get access to the online learning site.

It is the responsibility of each student to note the following:

- Comply with the information technology policy of the College
- Contribute to course discussions. Listen to others, and respond respectfully to their comments.
- Contribute to team activities, and respect the ideas of others.
- Comply with all course policies.
- Submit constructive suggestions for improving the course.
- Become familiar with and abide by all course policies and procedures found in the policies section of the course site
- Be self-motivated and approach a course with a desire to learn
- Treat all other students, instructors and guests with dignity and respect in any electronic communications;
- Participate respectfully in team collaborations and team projects
- be courteous and professional in e-mail communications and electronic discussions.
- Discourage disrespectful responses to other students or the instructor or the use of inappropriate language
- consult with the instructor or teaching assistant on the types of subjects that are appropriate and those that are inappropriate for the course, before you initiate forums or chats.
- Absence—failure to reply to e-mail or engage in a discussion or chat, or being passive during online synchronous lectures is considered as lack of participation.
- participation counts towards a student's grades.
- Voluntarily help other students, bearing in mind, however, that doing other people's work for them is tantamount to cheating.

- Be aware that plagiarism is obviously dishonest and that engaging in it will result in dismissal from the course and perhaps from the College.
- Anything posted on the Web cannot be freely incorporated in students' work without citing the source.
- The following are considered as cheating and plagiarism
 - Getting someone else to take a test
 - Group test taking where students gather together in a lab or at a student's domicile
 - Printing and distributing copies of online tests
 - copied and pasted information from the Internet for papers without citing the source
 - Unfair use of materials created by others in e-learning assignments or any other source on the course site.
- Students must complete their own tests/exams/quizzes given online. Failure to do their own work will result in a student receiving a letter grade of "F" for that course.
- Any student found to have used any kind of identification fraud in an online course where they are not the one doing the required work and sign-up for courses will be subject to disciplinary measures

2.4 Technical Help

- Students should notify the eLearning coordinator on time in cases of technical difficulties with computer or an Internet connection or downtime on the course site server, among others (particularly when submitting an assignment)
- If a student repeatedly claims technical difficulties when submitting late assignments, the instructor has the right to reflect this in grading as failure to meet course requirements.
- Students are normally expected to be in close touch with teaching assistant for any issues related to the teaching/learning activity.
- The student academic support help desk is the first point of contact for any technical issues with course sites.
- Any technical issues above the help desk should be escalated to teaching assistants of the specific course
- Computers that students use off campus are typically their own responsibility,
- To obtain technical help while working in laboratories, report the problem to the lab assistant on duty.

3. Access and Privacy Policies

3.1 User Access

- All users of the online learning platform must access the system through a designated account using unique user credentials.
- Guest access will be granted with approval from the course owner.

3.2 Privacy

- The College takes appropriate technical and organizational measures for the security, confidentiality, integrity and availability of the data. These measures ensure that, by definition, personal data are not made accessible without the intervention of the natural person.
- The College employs reasonable measures designed to protect student/staff information and related academic activities from unauthorized access.
- The College does not share or disclose any of students' Personal Information or Content with third parties.
- Student's or staff's personal Information is used only to administer use of the eLearning platform
- The learning management system does make student information (such as full name, email, skype id, etc.) available to other students and to course instructors
- Students have the right to require the rectification of inaccurate data without undue delay, as well as to update personal data if necessary.

3.3 Account Deactivation

- Internal user accounts will be deactivated at the time a person's network account is deactivated.
- External user accounts will be reviewed and deactivated on a quarterly basis, or as needed.

4. Course Policies

4.1 Course Creation

- The College requires that
 - all courses be created for the next semester at least three months before the start of the next semester
 - All instructors be given access as soon as the courses are created

4.2 Content Uploading

- Course outlines and introductory course materials have to be entered for every course prior to the start of the semester in which the course is offered.
- The following conditions have to be met for all contents
 - The content has to support the College's mission, values, and strategic goals
 - The materials have to be relevant to the course the instructor is teaching
 - Comply with good practice, as defined by College's culture
 - Messages, announcements, policy statements, and other communications that are not learning programs have to be excluded from the LMS
- Faculty will post assignment content and due dates the first class day of the workweek.

4.3 Content formatting

- Documents uploaded to the eLearning site whether power point or any handout should be in pdf format.
- When instructors upload a document on the course site, they have to make sure that students have the software that recognizes the file format of the document
- Likewise, when a student sends an electronic assignment document, it has to be in pdf format. Unless and otherwise the instructor specifically requests for documents to be sent in MS Word and PowerPoint formats.

4.4 Content Ownership

- The instructors own the content of the course once it is created. The content owner is responsible for:
 - Ensuring the course is relevant, up-to-date, accurate, and in compliance with any applicable local or copyright laws
 - Responding to learner inquiries related to the course and its content
 - Backing up their course content

4.5 Content Review

- All instructors involved in eLearning programs are required to participate in scheduled content reviews.
- Course owners will monitor usage of learning programs under their purview and update the course as needed.
- Active courses will be subject to a mandatory review cycle, occurring every year in coordination with an Instructional Designer.
- The Vice Dean for Academic Affairs reserve the right to require a review earlier than a year, at their discretion.

4.6 Content Retention

Online courses meeting one or more of the following conditions will be archived:

- Not offered in the current semester
- Not reviewed in more than a year
- Archives will be kept for a maximum of 2 years from creation.

4.7 Student enrollment for Courses

- Students have to be enrolled in the online course within one week of registration

4.8 Course Archiving

- All courses of a previous semester should be archived two weeks after examination

5. Policy Compliance

Non-compliance with this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including the archival or removal of learning programs, or temporary or final suspension of users. The Online Learning Committee has the authority to remove or disable access to the LMS.