

College Group Policy

Blended Learning Policy

Manager Responsible: Director of Teaching, Learning and Quality

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AMENDMENT SUMMARY

<u>Version</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
1.0	16 Oct 2020	First Publication
1.1	6 Dec 2021	Addition of 'netiquette'
1.2	9 Jan 2023	Removal of out of date references to COVID 19
1.3	5 Apr 2024	Further removal of out of date references to COVID 19 and addition of reference to use of AI
1.4	28 Aug 2026	Further removal of out of date references to COVID 19

Age, Disability, Gender & Race Equality Statement

Age, Disability, Gender and Race Equality Impact Measures will be set and monitored through analysis of all data related to potential suspected or actual abuse of this policy.

A copy of the Equality Impact Assessment Initial Screening Form is attached as an Annex to this document

Blended Learning Policy

Context

Over the last few years there have been several changes in the delivery of the curriculum and in the manner in which learners and apprentices access learning. Some curriculum areas may have a blended learning approach or be fully online, because it is beneficial to the delivery of the curriculum (Access to HE). Furthermore, in an environment which is dynamic and ever changing there is always the possibility of changes to the delivery of the curriculum. Attendance to all classes is compulsory.

Aims

1. To ensure that blended learning delivery meets the guidelines set by the awarding organisation
2. To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage any group or individual learners

This policy is to be read in conjunction with:

Teaching, Learning and Assessment Improvement Strategy

Safeguarding Policy

Key terminologies:

Face-to-face (F2F): This is a traditional mode of delivery in which learners/apprentices and teachers/WBT meet each other on campus on a regular basis.

Online learning (or remote learning): In this mode of study, learners/apprentices and teachers/WBT are separated by distance. They communicate with each other using computer technology. This may be via Microsoft Teams or Smart Assessor. There are two methods of communication: synchronous and asynchronous communication. Synchronous communication means that both teachers/WBT and learners/apprentices are online at the same time using video conference software. Asynchronous communication means that learners/apprentices and teachers/WBT are not required to be online at the same time, but participate in the course at their own convenience. Thus, the asynchronous mode allows for a significant degree of flexibility as to when and where you learn.

Blended learning: This is a combined approach of both online and F2F learning. Learners will attend the F2F classes while also completing online activities between sessions. This study mode is also referred to as "Hybrid Learning". A course or program that contains blended learning includes some instruction and learning activities that take place in the classroom, and some that take place online. This distribution gives learners/apprentices the freedom to complete part of their coursework remotely and the rest in periodic and intensive learning sessions with their teacher/WBT on campus. Combining the flexibility of online courses with the

attentiveness of traditional classroom instruction, blended learning provides accessible, quality education for learners/apprentices of all ages and backgrounds.

Mirrored Learning (or hybrid learning): This is an educational model where some learners/apprentices attend class in-person, while others join the class virtually from home. Teachers/WBT teach remote and in-person learners/apprentices at the same time using tools like Microsoft Teams.

Learning technologies: These are the broad range of communication, information and related technologies that can be used to support learning, teaching and assessment.

Artificial intelligence: Usually referred to as AI, is the science of using a machine to automate tasks that would otherwise be performed by a human. AI use algorithms to undertake problem-solving operations, often processing high volumes of real-time data.

Principles of Blended Learning

- Learners/apprentices are inspired, motivated and engaged to learn, through blended learning approaches that vary according to their appropriateness to the particular learning context.
- Staff are encouraged and supported to adopt fit-for-purpose and innovative blended learning approaches.
- Digital literacy is recognised as an important learner/apprentice attribute and a core skill for teachers/WBT.
- Flexible delivery options are utilised to reflect the needs of learners/apprentices, the intended learning outcomes and the availability of resources.
- Blended learning will not always include flexible delivery and so will not always provide students a choice of where and when they can study.
- In some circumstances, blended learning delivery may require increased investment of resources to ensure sustainable delivery of high-quality learning and teaching.

Blended Learning Approaches

In order for learners/apprentices to be at the heart of teaching, learning and assessment, blended learning approaches at Chelmsford College must:

- Ensure the diversity of our learners/apprentices, their learning preferences, preparedness and the life circumstances that impact on learner/student engagement with learning, informs the design and choice of blended learning approaches.
- Ensure that learners/apprentices are provided with consistent and easy access to services, information, tools and resources necessary to facilitate and enable learner/apprentice learning and engagement.

- Utilise approaches that enable and encourage interaction, collaboration and communication between learners/apprentices and staff and create a sense of belonging to the college learning community.
- Include opportunities to develop the digital literacy of learners/apprentices through orientation to platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Padlet etc used for learning and teaching over the course of their studies.

Blended Learning course and subject design

In order for course and subject design to meet the principles set out in the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Improvement Strategy, those who design and teach must:

- Design courses where blended learning approaches are embedded in overall curriculum design and are logically linked to learning outcomes and the intent of the curriculum.
- Ensure learning technologies and face-to-face teaching approaches are chosen to best meet the desired course and subject learning outcomes and support student learning and engagement.
- Ensure there is a process to manage feedback on assignments, questions are constructively answered and feedback is provided in a timely manner
- Regularly review blended learning approaches used in subjects across the whole course of study for applicability, relevance and best practice in relation to learner/apprentice needs and desired learning outcomes.
- Ensure subjects use an appropriate/effective mode of technology to enable blended learning.
- Ensure that when learners submit work, measures are taken to ensure the work is authentic and has been completed by the learner. Be aware of the awarding organisations approach to AI.

Implement Blended Learning Institutionally

In order to achieve blended learning institutionally, Chelmsford College will:

- Ensure staff are recruited, trained, supported, resourced and recognised for effective and innovative blended learning approaches at an institutional level taking into account fiscal and environmental restrictions.
- Invest in, research and support online infrastructure and learning spaces that allow for blended learning approaches, including online learner/apprentice feedback, online submission of assignments, learner/apprentice created content, learner/apprentice sharing of own content and personalised student communications.

- Ensure that staff are kept up to date with the KCSIE guidelines associated with Blended Learning and Safeguarding. *When delivering blended learning, the College will ensure appropriate online safeguarding measures are in place, including digital filtering and monitoring systems. Staff will support learners to identify and respond to online risks such as misinformation, deepfakes, radicalisation and other harmful content. All virtual learning and communication must take place through approved College platforms and maintain professional boundaries. The College will continue to monitor attendance, engagement and welfare, ensuring that vulnerable learners receive appropriate support and that safeguarding responsibilities are maintained regardless of where learning takes place.*

Netiquette for Staff and Learners

In order to provide a teaching and learning environment conducive to learning, online 'etiquette' guidance for both staff and learners has been created. It is colloquially known as 'netiquette' and is to be used by all staff and learners.

Netiquette for Staff

1. Set ground rules at the start of class and stick to them

- Ask learners to use the chat function or raised hand image to ask a question.
- Ask learners to use their cameras.
- Ensure that everyone can participate and seek support from IT if not. Learners will need a working laptop/PC/tablet that is suitable for their course, a working microphone, a working camera, and reliable internet connection.
- Be conscious of learners who do not participate. Ask them questions directly or follow up with them after the session.
- Always inform learners if the session is being recorded.

2. Dress and present yourself appropriately

- look presentable and professional onscreen as you would at your place of work.
- Always use your camera.
- Ensure that you are teaching in a well-lit room and that the light source does not cast strong or strange shadows on your face.

3. Use appropriate body language

- Be conscious of your facial expression, gestures, posture, and even tone of voice. They can either motivate or discourage your learners and can make you look interested or disengaged.
- Make eye contact with your learners when you're talking to them and don't forget to smile!

4. Eliminate background noise and distractions

- Blur your background or add a suitable backdrop. If you are happy to not do this, think about what is visible in the background. You may want to remove family photos, for example.
- Use the mute button to eliminate sudden unwanted noise.
- Ensure that pets can be managed effectively if at home with you.

5. Be punctual

- If an emergency or a technical problem crops up, remember to notify your learners right away.

6. Set boundaries to maintain your work/life balance

- Agree on the times when you can be contacted

Netiquette for Learners

1. Dress appropriately as you would at college.
2. Remote lessons should take place in a safe space where you have room to work.
3. You must have your camera on and your microphone muted in order to join in the lesson. You can change or blur your background on Teams if you want.
4. If you are unable to unmute or use the microphone during the lesson, notify the teacher via the chat box at the start of lesson.
5. Use the hand up button or chat feature to ask a question. Be polite and respectful in your choice of language and. Use humour carefully.
6. An online register will be taken, and your attendance will be recorded. If you are absent, it will be dealt with the same way as if you missed a lesson at college.
7. Be on time to the lesson.
8. Be prepared for your lesson, with notebook, pen or online note taking.
9. Only send messages to your teachers through Teams during the agreed times.
10. You are required to participate fully in lessons. You should not be taking food deliveries, looking after pets, carrying out household duties or working.
11. If you are absent, you must report this using the college process – by phoning the absent line or by emailing the absent email address.
12. Lessons may on occasion be recorded. Your consent will be asked for at the time for this.
13. Please let your tutor know if you need support in working towards achieving the above.

Appendix : Equality Impact Assessment

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination or harassment based on nine protected characteristics. This means that individuals are legally protected from unfair treatment or being disadvantaged due to a protected characteristic, which are designed to ensure that individuals are treated fairly and equally in various aspects of life, including employment, education and access to goods and services.
- 1.2 The protected characteristics are shown in the table below:

Protected Characteristic	What does this refer to?
Age	Includes any age group, not just older individuals
Disability	Covers physical or mental impairments that have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender reassignment	Refers to the process of transitioning from one gender to another. Refer to updated guidance May 2026 EHRC.
Marriage / Civil Partnerships	Protects individuals in legal partnerships
Pregnancy and Maternity	Protects women who are pregnant or have recently given birth or have returned to work since giving birth.
Race	Includes colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins.
Religion or Belief	Encompasses any religion, religious belief, or philosophical belief.
Sex	Refers to a person's sex. (male or female). The law has confirmed that there are only two sexes.
Sexual Orientation	Covers a person's sexual orientation, such as heterosexual, homosexual, lesbian, or bisexual for example.

2.0 What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

- 2.1 It is a process used to evaluate the potential effects of a policy, practice, or service on different groups of people under equality legislation. It aims to identify and address any potential negative impacts or barriers, while also exploring opportunities to promote equality. It also enables the College to comply with legislation and promote equality, fairness, and inclusivity within our policies, practices and services, and ensure that in implementing this policy it has a positive impact on the College and where any concerns arise the College has implemented appropriate action to eradicate or minimise negative impact.

3.0 Who should complete the Equality Impact Assessment?

- 3.1 Staff who are designated to design and implement policies, procedures, and practices, whether for staff or students, and who have successfully completed the College designated Equality & Diversity training. The training is designed to enable staff to understand the equality legislation and how it may affect different groups.

4.0 Equality Impact Assessment (Template)

Name and job title of staff member completing the assessment	Penny Petch Director of Teaching, Learning and Quality
Name of the policy, practice, service being assessed.	Blended Learning Policy
What are the main objectives or aims of the policy/practice/service?	To ensure that blended learning delivery meets the guidelines set by the awarding organisation To ensure that assessment methodology is valid, reliable and does not disadvantage any group or individual learners
Who could this strategy impact on?	Learners and teachers
Date EIA assessment completed.	28/8/26

Consider the following questions in terms of who the policy/practice/service could potentially have an impact on. Detail the impact assessment in Table 2.0 below, areas you have considered mitigations to reduce any potential negative impact and review period.

Could the strategy?

- a) Prevent the promotion of equality of opportunity or good relations between different groups of people?
- b) Create barriers to allocation of pay fairly & equitably or new staff obtaining employment because of a protected characteristic?
- c) Affect the usage of the strategy in practice?
- d) Result in someone with a protected characteristic being disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged?
- e) Make it more or less likely that someone with a protected characteristic will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

Table 2.0 – Assessment

Characteristic	Potential Impact Yes / No	Evidence to demonstrate this impact or state "Non Identified".	Mitigations to reduce potential negative Impact	Who is responsible to review / oversight?
Age	No			
Disability	No			
Gender Reassignment	No			
Marriage / Civil Partnership	No			
Pregnant Worker / Maternity	No			
Race / Ethnicity	No			
Religion / Belief	No			
Sex	No			
Sexual Orientation	No			

2.2 Any other areas of consideration

Other areas for Consideration	Potential Impact Yes / No	Evidence to demonstrate this impact	Mitigations to reduce potential negative Impact	Who is responsible to review / oversight?
Just Transition Framework / Sustainability pilot project				

3.0 Generic Controls

- 3.1 The College has generic controls in place to monitor the uniform application of this strategy in practice through:
- Safeguarding Policy and guidelines
 - Acceptable use of IT Resources Policy