

# BLENDING LEARNING STRATEGY

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## Description of the Policy:

This strategy supports Griffith's learning and teaching priorities as outlined in *The Strategic Plan 2009-2013* and *Academic Plan 3*, while building on and consolidating the University's long history of achievements in deploying technology to enhance learning.

## Related Policies, Procedures and Forms:

[The Strategic Plan 2009 – 2013](#)

[Griffith Academic Plan 3: Learning for Success](#)

[Course Catalogue Coding Attributes Policy](#)

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[\[Introduction\]](#) [\[Definition of Blended Learning\]](#) [\[Benefits\]](#) [\[Learning-teaching-technology framework at Griffith\]](#) [\[Goals for Blended Learning\]](#) [\[Organisational and Management Implications\]](#) [\[Indicators of Success\]](#) [\[Review\]](#)

## 1.0 Introduction

Griffith University prides itself on the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for learning and teaching as a means of achieving its distinctive mission and assuring an excellent learning experience for its students. Combinations of resources, media, technologies and facilities are used to support and facilitate learning, based upon the learning context, nature of student needs and discipline requirements.

The strategic intent of this statement is to support the institutional learning and teaching priorities as outlined in *The Strategic Plan 2009-2013* and *Academic Plan 3*, while building on and consolidating the University's long history of achievements in deploying technology to enhance learning.

This strategy contributes to these priorities by proposing that:

- blended learning approaches be systematically embedded in the teaching and learning activities of all programs by 2010;
- a campus environment capable of supporting blended learning be developed;
- the University's quality assurance framework be extended to support blended learning approaches;

and that these goals are realised as outlined in the *Blended Learning Implementation Plan 2008 -2010*.

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## 2.0 Definition of Blended Learning

Griffith has adopted the term 'blended learning' as the principal means of addressing the use of ICTs to enhance its learning and teaching activities. In the Griffith context, the following definition is used to inform policy and practice in relation to blended learning:

*Blended learning is realised in teaching and learning environments where there is an effective integration of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning as a result of adopting a strategic and systematic approach to the use of technology combined with the best features of face to face interaction. (Krause, 2007)*

This definition encompasses many of the pedagogical approaches and practices already in place at Griffith enabling consolidation of the University's existing approach to integrating ICTs into the curriculum.

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### 3.0 Benefits

The use of blended learning approaches has the following benefits:

- Enriches the student experience and learning outcomes
  - Supports the important goal of accommodating student diversity
  - Emphasises learner and teacher choice by implementing at the course and program level the unique pedagogical qualities characterised by the blending of face-to-face and technology-enhanced learning and teaching
  - Makes optimal use of physical and virtual resources.
  - Increases competitiveness in building new student markets enabled by innovative program delivery
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### 4.0 The Learning-Teaching-Technology Framework at Griffith

The blended learning environment at Griffith is characterised by:

- Strategic and systematic use of technology in association with a quality face to face environment to support student learning
- Enhanced interaction between students, staff, peers and the learning community
- Creation of collaborative, distributed learning environments
- Increased capacity for student-managed learning
- Learning that takes place at students' discretion in terms of time and place
- Flexibility in terms of implementation at the program and course levels

Griffith's degree programs and courses are designed to provide a number of pathways to completion, in doing so consideration is given to the integration of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and learning styles.

To increase student access and participation the University offers its programs and courses both 'on-campus' and/or 'off-campus'. Within a program students are able to undertake the study of individual courses in a combination of on- or off-campus offerings, inside or outside traditional semester times. Programs comprising courses with a variety of learning modes provide students with greater choice over when and where to study.

International students enrolled in a program at a Griffith campus may also undertake courses that are available off-campus, provided that no more than 25% of their total program of study is off-campus and at least one course per compulsory study period (e.g. semester 1 or semester 2) is undertaken on-campus. International students may enrol exclusively in off-campus courses during a non-compulsory study period (e.g. summer semester) provided that it fits within the threshold of no more than 25% of their total program of study.

To facilitate students' progress through a course based upon their needs and preparedness for study, the University offers its courses in a range of different learning modes as set out in Table 1. A course may be offered to students in the same study period in more than one learning mode.

Staff-student and student-student interactions are critical to the quality of learning at Griffith and such interactions, whether mediated face-to-face or facilitated via technology, define the University's learning-teaching-technology framework as 'blended learning.'

The use of technology in learning and teaching at Griffith encompasses three modes of operation:

#### Mode 1:

*Technology is used to facilitate course management and resources for learner support. This level of provision is mandatory for all courses at Griffith University.*

**Mode 2:**

*Technology is used to enrich the quality of the student learning experience through interactive learning activities beyond those attainable through face to face classroom interactions. The facilitation of more courses to Mode 2 is the main goal of this strategic statement.*

**Mode 3:**

*Technology is used to support learning that is largely self-directed but also involves the use of interactive and collaborative learning activities. Mode 3 courses will be developed in response to the strategic needs of the University.*

Details of these modes are shown in the [Course Catalogue Coding Attributes Policy](#).

When entering a new learning environment, students at Griffith University are given assistance to become familiar with different teaching methods, new technologies and to develop independent learning skills. Support offered in the form of orientation activities specific for course or degree programs, information literacy or study skills workshops, electronic resources or help desks is available.

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## **5.0 Goals for the Blended Learning Strategy**

**5.1 Goal (i) To systematically embed blended learning approaches in the teaching and learning activities of all programs by 2010, including the provision of support to staff and students**

- Academic staff and relevant support staff to have an informed understanding of the conceptual and pedagogical implications of the application of blended learning in curricula
- Academic staff to be further competent in documenting and explaining the rationale and applications of blended learning in course and program design, including expectations for, and impact on, the student learning experience and outcomes
- Curriculum documents and quality assurance process make explicit statements on the means by which the University's strategic priorities are enhanced by blended learning approaches

**5.2 Goal (ii) To develop a campus environment capable of supporting blended learning**

- Provide both physical and virtual environments for collaborative and individual blended learning activities
- Ensure that all students have access to skills training in information handling and the use of technologies within their disciplinary and program contexts

**5.3 Goal (iii) To extend the University's quality assurance framework to support blended learning approaches**

- Develop a series of indicators and measures for institutional success in terms of embedding blended learning in the student learning experience across programs at undergraduate and postgraduate level
  - Develop and incorporate quality assurance mechanisms and measures related to blended learning as an integral part of the University's learning and teaching quality assurance framework
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## **6.0 Organisational and Management Implications**

In order to fulfil the goals and objectives of the *Blended Learning Strategy*, the following factors require attention:

- Ensure the cohesion and effectiveness of all organisational units supporting the academic community in developing blended learning approaches
  - Ensure that budget reviews and provision are aligned to enable sustainable blended learning approaches
  - Ensure alignment between the University's institutional Blended Learning Strategy and the strategic plans of groups and divisions
  - Ensure the effective integration of teaching and learning activities with administrative services
  - program delivery
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## **7.0 Indicators of Success**

There are several ways in which Griffith will know that it has succeeded in fulfilling its strategic goals for blended learning, including:

- Blended learning becomes an integral part of all curricula by 2010
  - Academic staff confidently integrate ICTs into curricula in a manner consistent with course and program learning outcomes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels
  - Students graduate with confidence in their capabilities to use ICTs for enhancing lifelong learning
  - Students are attracted to Griffith because of its reputation for providing a 'high-tech' enhanced learning experience
  - Links with local, national and international communities are optimised and dependent on the effective use of blended learning approaches
  - Innovative approaches to developing teaching-research linkages emerge through the application of blended learning
  - Blended learning approaches are recognised as being integral to the Griffith vision of engagement through public scholarship.
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## **8.0 Review**

The *Blended Learning Strategy* and the *Blended Learning Implementation Plan 2008 - 2010* are regularly monitored and reviewed annually.

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