

UAL Blended Academic Delivery Model 2020-2021

Due to ongoing global coronavirus pandemic and the UK Government's 'COVID Safe' requirements for higher education, UAL is operating all of its degree courses in 2020/21 according to our **Blended Academic Delivery Model**. This model extends the teaching and learning week to 6 days, providing students with defined periods of teaching and learning on campus *and* online each week, ensuring that our whole community operates safely and in line social distancing and safe working practices.

The changes introduced in each course allows UAL to continue to deliver high quality creative teaching, learning and assessment. UAL's teaching and learning approach is framed by our [assessment criteria](#) and a commitment to the development of students [digital and creative attributes](#). Our assessment approaches and the emphasis on the [Creative Attributes Framework](#) help to shape and connect students' learning and enquiry across on campus and online spaces.

1. What is a Blended Learning model?

Blended approaches use multiple methods to deliver learning combining face-to-face interactions with online activities.¹

“The flexibility inherent in this form of delivery enables teachers to rethink where and how they focus learning activity and students to develop self-directed learning skills and digital literacies.”

<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/blended-learning>

Blended learning is based on the understanding that the online and in-person experience works by complementing and building on the benefits of each.

The move between online and on campus should be a seamless and interrelated experience, with each interaction maximised through its appropriate form of engagement and the benefits of both asynchronous and synchronous activity.

¹ www.advance-he.ac.uk

2. What do our Blended Delivery courses look like?

During the 20/21 academic year all of our courses will be delivered in a blended way – employing a mix of on-campus and online activity to meet the course and unit learning outcomes. Students will be expected to be present on campus for 2 days each week. Courses are prioritising the use of physical spaces on campus for essential activities that cannot be reasonably delivered online, giving students access to libraries, studios, workshops and other specialist facilities in a way that it is safe to do so.

The delivery of each course has been designed carefully at unit level, to achieve a successful blend of on campus and online activity using the following categories.

On-campus activity

On-campus activities focus on providing opportunities for students to participate in:

- **Physical and social learning opportunities** – Supporting group cohesion and collaboration. This may include group crits & reviews of physical work, and other Teaching & Learning events that can operate safely within social distancing guidelines. These are located primarily in studio and seminar spaces.
- **Making practice** - Individual creative activity in studios & learning zones, which is not dependent on specialist resources.
- **Technical making** - Access to specialist resources in workshops & labs.
- **Self-directed learning** – including independent work in learning zones and libraries, but also in small self-forming groups to allow community building.

Online activity

All courses are being delivered with a strong, inclusive online core of content and support for students beyond the on-campus activity.

This online core includes:

- All **briefings and lectures** using both synchronous and asynchronous access
- **Group tutorials, discussions and seminars** which can be supported by UAL online platforms
- **1 to 1 tutorials**
- **Enhanced and expanded resources** (skills tutorials etc.)

A proportion of our students have been (and may continue to be) required to delay their arrival in London in the autumn term, and/or to self-isolate for a period of time during the year. Some students with disabilities are also unable to attend the on-campus components of the course. Students in this position are able to continue to access content and support for their learning seamlessly.

Hybrid on-campus/online activity

Each course may have activity that sometimes requires to be on campus and sometimes could be online. This might include the following:

- Group **seminar sessions** to discuss work
- **Peer-led student seminars**
- **Skills building sessions**, which might start on campus and develop online

Induction

A fully online 'Big Welcome' and induction programme **was delivered at the beginning of the academic year** and helped students prepare for this blended academic delivery.

Adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment

Courses have where necessary made temporary modifications to the programme specification and course handbook where specific unit learning outcomes, assessment requirements or teaching and learning statements needed to be simplified to reflect the blended delivery model. This has ensured that students, whatever their circumstance, are able to succeed and meet the course requirements at assessment.

3. How are our campuses operating under this Blended Academic Delivery Model?

Defining student access to our buildings

On-campus access has not been overly choreographed and has instead been designed to support self and peer-directed learning, continuing where possible to allow students to move between libraries, learning zones and other spaces. For some courses this will be less relevant but for all students at UAL being able to access campus facilities in a self-directed way is an important aspect of their experience.

Revised/extended campus opening times and spaces:

- Courses are being delivered across a 6-day week with students able to be on campus for 2 of these days
- We have extending campus opening hours to avoid peak travel times and increase capacity
- Where necessary campuses and courses have adopted 2 or more start times for the working day to reduce congestion on entrances and corridors, ensuring that social distancing is possible
- We have opened our campuses on Saturdays to create 6 days in which student access can be scheduled at course level
- To ensure that we can maximise access to our campuses for students we have temporarily suspended the 'no teaching on Wednesday afternoons' policy with the intention to reinstate as soon as relaxation in social distancing guidance allows
- We've been able to repurpose some spaces on campus to extend learning zones, community spaces and low risk maker spaces.

Student Access

- Each cohort of student (i.e., stage group, PG year, pathway group) has two days per week for access to on campus activity, as set out above, including directed and self-directed learning. These days may be consecutive or non-consecutive depending on pedagogic requirements. Colleges have coordinated the scheduling of cohorts across the 6 days to ensure an equal distribution to operate within building occupation capacities.

Courses have determined the balance between directed and self-directed activity appropriate to course design and pedagogy, however normally one of the two days is predominantly reserved for self-directed learning. We know that providing regular directed events supports engagement and attendance and this is particularly important in retaining a focus on our priority to support student attainment.

- Within each day, teaching and other programmed events have been scheduled into three 3-hour blocks, with courses designing their timetables accordingly (though entire 3-hour blocks do not have to be used, and there is no requirement to fill all three shifts on any day with planned activity – they can also be used for self-directed learning).
- Colleges are, where necessary to maintain social distancing, adopting 2 start times to better distribute building access.
- Student booking systems are in place for access to specific campus spaces including technical workshops and libraries. Colleges have also been able to introduce additional bookable slots outside of core access days dependent on demand on capacities.