Blended Teaching and learning strategy for FFAS (FALL, 2020-2021)

Executive Summary

According to the Ministry of Higher Education regulation, Blended learning technique was announced as the adopted model for teaching and learning for the academic year (2020-2021). Accordingly, the campus life's gradual opening took place with all the precautionary measures taken into consideration.

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Blended learning is also known as hybrid learning, allowing students to control time and space. Blended learning in its simplest form would include face to face as well as online teaching. From an educational perspective, it is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods. From the Learning perspective, it refers to combining both synchronous (face -to face, on -live meetings) with different asynchronous dimensions such as (recorded lectures) and on class sessions.

Given that the terms "blended learning", "hybrid learning", "technology-mediated instruction", "web-enhanced instruction", and "mixed-mode instruction" are often used interchangeably in the research literature

Starting from Fall (2020-2021), the Faculty of financial and Administrative sciences have adopted Blackboard application as a digital learning platform. Blackboard satisfies the new digital era requirement, let alone the condition of the pandemic situation.

Main Features of Blackboard

The Blackboard application provides an intuitive way of interacting with courses, content, instructors, and other students. The Blackboard app shows only the modules where students enrolled. In the Blackboard app, the following tasks can be performed:

- View course items and course announcements
- Take assignments and tests
- Participate in discussions
- Interact with your instructor and class in Blackboard Collaborate
- Access both Original and Ultra courses
- Collaborate Integration
- Group Management
- Grading Enhancements
- Student Preview
- SafeAssign

- Enhanced Cloud Programming
- Social Learning
- Data Management
- Blackboard Drive
- Course Enrollments
- Active Collaboration
- Calendar
- Content Editor
- Retention Center
- Dynamic Content

Benefits of the Blackboard Learning Management system

- One of the essential benefits of Blackboard is the ease of use. In a sense that students can access it whether using their tablets or even their smartphones, so regardless of where the student is, HE/SHE is capable of accessing it.
- The dashboard enjoys ease of navigation, much like social media platforms.
- Blackboard equip educators with a set of tools to better ensure the students' engagement; furthermore, it motivates them to achieve their full potential.
- Blackboard, as an LMS, can easily integrate with other learning management systems.
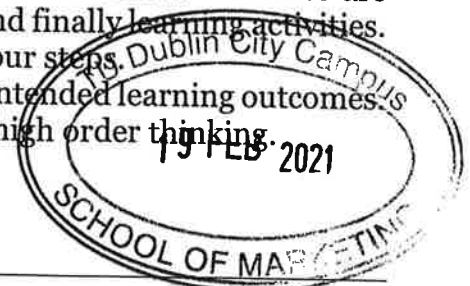
Advantages of Blended learning would include:

- Students are getting acquainted with the use of digital tools in everyday life, which enable them to accumulate meaningful digital experiences. In addition to mastering the digital tools which are required by the employers later in their professional life.
- The adoption of a digital learning platform will improve the university worldwide standing
- The online and offline availability of learning material enriches the student learning experience and the value-added.

Evaluating the teaching and learning strategy under a blended mode in FFAS includes:

- Feedback on student satisfaction surveys concerning the quality of education, quality of resources, and experience(Q6).
- Comments and feedback from internal reviewers and external reviewer reports for Quality assurance.
- Informal feedback collected from staff and students on the effectiveness of blended learning.

Important milestones to our respective Teaching staff:

- The starting point of the course is its design, not it's delivery.
- Start by backward design to the course, where the intended outcomes are identified followed by the assessment, content, and finally learning activities. Make sure of the constructive alignment of the four steps.
- Ideally, a course shouldn't have more than eight intended learning outcomes.
- Make sure your assessment engages students in high order thinking.

- When designing your course, keep in mind which modules need face to face and which can be done via the asynchronous method.
- When uploading your content on Blackboard, "Course modularization" is needed, whether by weeks or number of the modules.
- A proposed module component is highly recommended. Thus, a consistent structure leads to a consistent learning experience for the students.
- When deciding the module content on synchronous and asynchronous methods, both should be complementary rather than overlapping.