

Disclaimer:

The official version of the regulation and any amendments thereto is published in Arabic in the UOB's website. This version of the regulation, including amendments thereto, is provided for guidance and easy reference purposes



UNIVERSITY
OF BAHRAIN

Regulation

e-Learning and Distance Education System at the University of Bahrain

Effective: February 6, 2023

Authority / Owner of Regulation: The eLearning Center at the University of Bahrain

Regulation Information

Document Number:	Version: 01/2024
Title:	e-Learning and Distance Education Regulation at the University of Bahrain
Regulation Description:	A regulation that aims to organize the educational process for e-learning and distance learning models for all target groups of students and academic staff members.
Regulation Scope:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Academic <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative <input type="checkbox"/> Research <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> general
Regulation Status	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New regulation <input type="checkbox"/> Revision of existing regulation
Approval Authority:	University of Bahrain Council
Authority/owner of Regulation:	The eLearning Center at the University of Bahrain
Approval Date:	February 6, 2023
Effective Date:	February 6, 2023
Approval Date of Last Revision:	February 6, 2023
Date of Next Revision:	After 5 years of the Approval
Document Ref:	University Council approval
Document ID:	Version: 1/2024
Classification:	General and non-confidential because it is for students and faculty.
Related Documents:	The study and examination regulation.

University of Bahrain Council Decision
Number (12) of (1986)
Regarding e-Learning and Distance Education Regulation at the
University of Bahrain

Approval of University President / Date: February 6, 2023
University Council:

Article I

The provisions of the e-Learning and Distance Education regulation at the University of Bahrain shall apply. All provisions and decisions that contradict it shall be canceled.

Article II

[The Vice President for Academic Programs, Graduate Studies and Stakeholders, and concerned parties, each within its competence, shall implement this regulation, which shall come into force from the date of its issuance or according to the date decided by the University Council.]

Chapter I

General provisions

Chapters are mentioned if the divisions of the regulations require it, but if the regulation includes few articles, the texts can be written directly and dispensed with dividing it into chapters.

Article (1)

Definitions

Law: Decree-Law No. (12) of 1986 and its amendments.

University: The University of Bahrain

Council: The University of Bahrain Council

Course Instructor: The teacher (faculty member, faculty assistant, or adjunct faculty)

College: One of the colleges of the University or any of its academic centers

Center: e-Learning Center

Usual education: The usual teaching method of the course depending on the nature of the subject and its scientific content, approved by the Council based on the recommendation of the department council and the college council.

Traditional education: An educational pattern that requires face-to-face interaction between the course instructor and students at the University of Bahrain's campuses.

Distance Education: A pattern of education that does not require the presence of the course instructor and students at the same place during the education process. It is

conducted using various technologies for communication and interaction between course instructor and students.

Synchronous Distance Education: One of the patterns of distance education between course instructor and students, both being present at the same time in the virtual classroom using the Learning Management System, through which live broadcasts of virtual lectures, live discussions, and educational and assessment activities take place.

Asynchronous Distance Education: A pattern of distance education between course instructor and students not requiring their presence at the same place nor the same time, through which the course instructor avails scientific material and learning resources to students, (electronic resources such as assignments and non-live discussions made available at any time) with direct or indirect guidance from the instructor but without the use of synchronous interaction.

Self-Learning: The process by which the student learns, via the use of materials or resources made available or via other sources, in order to achieve the set objectives of the course and gain skills, this without any direct assistance from the teacher.

Blended Learning: An education pattern that combines traditional education with other patterns of e-learning and distance education.

Hybrid Education: An educational pattern that combines together traditional education and distance education by making use of educational technology in a way that integrates, synchronously, a set of teaching methods and approaches within both the classroom and the virtual class.

Virtual Classrooms: A virtual environment for synchronous distance education connected with the Learning Management System that simulates the traditional classroom, in a manner that enables learners to interact with the course instructor and the rest of their peers within the virtual classroom and which allows students to take part in discussions as well as other audio or visual educational and assessment activities electronically provided by the course instructor and which offer a follow-up on some of the material written on the virtual board.

Approved Educational Platform: The educational platform approved by the University which meets the following conditions:

- A. To be logged in using a unified login mechanism, through the central authentication service, by the student ID number or the official University email and password.
- B. To be subject to the supervision of the Center or the Information Technology Center, in terms of operation and management.

Learning Management System: The main platform used at the University to manage distance teaching and learning operations (LMS), including follow-up actions related to teaching, educational and assessment activities and exams. This platform is connected to the student information management system (SIS), which allows the following functions:

1. Link the scientific content offered (lectures, assessment activities and exams) with educational outcomes in order to ensure that the content is covered within the course and is effectively and fairly implemented.
2. Display grades and results of assessment activities.
3. Extract periodic reports whenever needed to evaluate the educational process at the University.

Assessment Tools: The means that measure the level of knowledge, skills and competencies acquired by students after their completion of a specific course, including various assessment tools (tests, assignments, projects, reports, case studies, oral discussions, visual presentations, etc.), and including final exams.

Educational Material: The texts, audio and visual educational resources used in teaching a specific course.

Article (2)

The regulations Scope of application

The e-Learning and Distance Education Regulation aims to achieve the following:

1. Establish a systematic reference for e-learning and distance education at the University.
2. Ensure the quality of e-learning and distance education at the University.
3. Support the educational technology's sustainability in developing teaching and learning programs at the University with the purpose of achieving the national Sustainable Development Goals as well as community advancement.
4. Provide an opportunity for diversity in providing academic and training programs that use various types of e-learning, self-learning and distance education.

5. Maintain the level of learning resources and make full use of the time, effort and resources available through the use of educational technology in order to improve educational processes within academic and training courses.

Chapter II

e-Learning and Distance Education Scope of Application

Article (3)

The Council shall determine the type of educational pattern to be used within academic courses, be it traditional education, e-learning, distance education or a combination thereof, based on recommendations from the department council and the college council, and taking into account the nature of courses, their content, objectives and competencies.

Article (4)

The college shall develop an emergency plan to be approved by the Council, according to which the optimal education pattern is to be selected in exceptional situations and in case academic courses cannot be delivered according to the usual teaching patterns, while taking into account the nature of the academic courses. This emergency plan is to be updated and reviewed every two years.

Article (5)

The emergency plans referred to in Article (4) of this regulation shall be activated by virtue of a resolution by the Council based on the concerned college's recommendation about all, or some, of the academic courses, during the whole semester or part thereof, when study is not possible within the usual educational pattern, due to crises, disasters, pandemics, system failures or other adverse conditions.

Article (6)

All courses shall be offered through the Learning Management System. One (or more than one) classroom (virtual classroom) shall be allocated to every single course. The virtual classroom shall be deemed a real classroom within the traditional educational environment and provisions thereof shall apply in a way consistent with its nature. The course instructor shall use the virtual classroom to provide students with the course plan, educational materials, assessment methods and grades of assessment activities.

Article (7)

The Learning Management System shall be the principal platform for the basic teaching and learning processes. However, the course instructor may use any of the approved educational platforms for extra-curricular activities and communication with students. The instructor may also make use of complementary platforms, provided they are approved by the Council.

Article (8)

Subject to the provisions of Articles (5) and (6) of this regulation, priority shall be given, during exceptional circumstances, to some courses with special subjects (such as those that require the use of laboratories, training, practical education, projects, clinical tests, etc.). These courses shall be taught on University premises or within training places, using traditional education or one of the blended or hybrid education patterns, as the case may be, taking into account questions of health and security requirements as well as the necessary precautionary measures. In case study is not made possible on University premises and within the training places, courses shall be taught through virtual laboratories and remote workshops.

Article (9)

In multi-section courses, which may require pre-recorded and pre-prepared sessions, lectures may be identical for a single course. A coordinator shall be assigned for every course and would be responsible for all necessary arrangements.

Article (10)

In courses that are offered using one of the educational patterns requiring University campus attendance, it is permissible, in exceptional circumstances approved by the department head, to implement, till the end of the exceptional circumstance, the hybrid education pattern, in some or all of the lectures through the use of distant education patterns. The concerned students shall be assessed in the same manner used to assess the rest of the students within the course.

Chapter III

Coordination and Collaboration between University Units in Distance Education

Article (11)

The Center and the Information Technology Center, each within its area of competence, provide technical support to the colleges, train course instructors, students and technicians nominated by the colleges, provide manuals for using approved educational platforms, and circulate them among the colleges.

Article (12)

The Unit for Teaching Excellence & Leadership (UTEL) shall provide training workshops for course instructors on best practices and teaching methods in e-learning and distance education with the objective of achieving best results. The Deanship of Student Affairs shall provide support and guidance to students.

Article (13)

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center at the University shall undertake assessment of academic courses, based on their usual education pattern. The assessment method shall be amended in a manner commensurate with the pattern to be adopted within the context of exceptional circumstances, if applied for more than four consecutive weeks during the semester.

Article (14)

Colleges, deanships, centers, departments, and other units shall provide the supporting educational services online to ensure success and efficiency of the educational process.

Article (15)

The college shall coordinate academic schedules in collaboration with the Deanship of Admission and Registration, so that distance education courses shall be offered with timings different from those specified for courses offered through the traditional teaching method or even other types of e-learning (such as blended or hybrid learning). Alternatively, each college shall allocate well-equipped facilities for students to attend lectures offered online. These facilities shall accommodate the number of students enrolled within courses. Students shall be instructed to make use of earphones and microphones and connect them to their laptops.

Article (16)

Each college shall form a committee under the name the “e-Learning and Distance Education Committee”, including representatives of academic programs and departments. The said committee shall monitor and follow up the process of e-learning and distance education in collaboration with the director of the Quality Assurance Office within the college. The committee shall also submit periodic reports on its work and make recommendations to the dean of the college or the director of the academic center with the objective of developing the educational process and taking all necessary resolutions in this regard. Each college shall nominate a number of technicians who would coordinate with the Center and solve any issues that may be faced by students and faculty members.

Article (17)

Course coordinators and heads of departments shall assist adjunct faculty appointed on a part-time basis and any new staff members in order to ensure the quality and compatibility of educational materials and resources provided online to students.

Chapter IV

Duties of the Course Instructor

Article (18)

In addition to duties stipulated in university regulations and systems, the course instructor, in particular in e-learning and distance education systems, shall:

1. Ensure having the necessary training, and acquire the knowledge and skills required to use the Learning Management System and other approved educational platforms at the University, including communication tools, virtual classes and various testing and assessment tools.
2. Attend the training workshops provided by the University and stay updated with the periodic publications related to e-learning and distance education.
3. Give details, through approved educational platforms, about progress of the study and any assessment activities set within the course.
4. Comply with the rules governing the intellectual property rights of electronic content at the University.
5. Record students' attendance and interaction in the Learning Management System in all cases, through the student's ID number or official University email and password, while requiring students to make use of cameras during the distance education virtual lectures.
6. Adhere to the University calendar and lecture timings specified in the academic schedules, the teaching load of the course and its scientific content; and not to combine classes except with the approval of the University President following a request from the department head concerned and a recommendation from the competent dean¹.
7. Make up for any lost lecture time – if necessary – in exceptional circumstances in a manner that does not conflict with the timings of other lectures.
8. Be present with the students during the entire duration of a lecture and within the same physical or virtual classroom in case the course is delivered via one of the synchronous e-learning methods.

9. Allocate office hours, via one of the approved platforms, to interact with students and address their queries and any issues they may have.
10. Provide specifications and the study plan of the course during the initial week of the semester, and upload this information onto the Learning Management System, including details about course topics, resources, expected learning outcomes, teaching methodologies and mechanisms, assessment methods, learning outcomes, grade distribution, dates and types of tests and exams, and office hours.
11. Apply teaching strategies commensurate with educational outcomes in e-learning and distance education, and interactive education tools, including discussion rooms and interactive tests, and mechanisms to improve student performance within the Learning Management System.
12. Provide sufficient learning resources to ensure achievement of learning objectives and upload them onto the Learning Management System platform, as well as presentations and textbooks, if any, for each individual course. Additional materials may be downloaded, including supporting videos and live broadcasts, without prejudice to intellectual property rights.
13. Provide appropriate means of assessing the learning outcomes; apply them fairly and effectively, in person or through the use of the Learning Management System; explain the procedures associated with them at the beginning of the semester; use test specification tables to ensure that all learning outcomes are covered.
14. Provide information to students about methods used in tests, exams and various assessment tools. In case they are to be presented electronically or remotely, the instructor shall train students on them an adequate time before the final assessment or exam, by presenting a similar mock test or trial assessment at least one week before the actual test, assessment or exam, and this shall be similar to the actual assessment and should share the same technical characteristics used in the actual assessment.
15. Announce the results of different pieces of assessment (assignments, tests, etc.) through the Learning Management System, within a reasonable period, taking into account the dates set for withdrawal from the course as per the study and examinations regulation; provide results of other assessment tools on time, that is, before final examinations are due.

16. Provide electronic feedback to students on their performances, if necessary, through the Learning Management System.
17. Not to make use of educational platforms or means other than those approved or authorized by the University; to use only the Learning Management System for assignments, tests, exams, or practice; to notify students about their grades. And taking into account the provision of Article (7) of this regulation, instructors may use other approved complementary platforms for feedback, discussion and any extra-curricular activities.
18. Keep away from any sources of noise during virtual sessions while maintaining a clear voice and tone throughout the lecture.

¹ Amended by University Council Resolution No. (422) of 2021 dated October 27, 2021.

Chapter V

Duties of the Student

Article (19)

In addition to duties stipulated in University regulations and systems, the student, particularly in e-learning and distance education systems, shall:

1. Have the training necessary to acquire the required knowledge regarding the use of approved educational platforms, various testing and assessment methods within the Learning Management System; attend training workshops provided by the University and review periodic publications related to e-learning and distance education.
2. Adhere to the rules and the established norms of the University.
3. Adhere to the rules of attendance in force at the University regarding attending e-lectures within the Learning Management System, according to the dates specified thereof in the academic schedule; adhere to the rule of camera use during virtual sessions, except in cases that may require otherwise and that the course instructor finds acceptable on the basis of a justification submitted by the student concerned.
4. Attend the virtual classroom in a place deemed suitable, away from sources of noise.
5. Observe the intellectual property rights of others and adhere to the University's provisions of intellectual property rights for electronic content.
6. Refrain from publishing or disclosing educational material, notes or explanations thereof to third parties by any means whatsoever, except after obtaining a written approval from the course instructor, and without prejudice to intellectual property rights.

7. Refrain from publishing, transmitting or disclosing the contents of any assignments, assessment activities, exams or answers thereof, to third parties or assisting in these breaches, through the Learning Management System, or other platforms or means of communication.
8. Refrain from attending or taking part in platforms or courses other than those already registered in, except for reasons deemed acceptable to the concerned department and with its approval.
9. Refrain from disseminating and transferring to third parties, in any form, the content of exchanges made with fellow students or the course instructor, except with the prior written approval of the course instructor
10. Refrain from allowing or enabling a third party to record lectures, listen to them, monitor them, or copy part or all of the scientific content from the educational platform, without obtaining the prior written consent of the course instructor and with due regard to copyrights.
11. Refrain from using, during exams, programs from the student's device designated for study and exams that may disrupt the smooth running of the exam proctoring programs or that of the screen lock program (²).

Chapter VI

Test and Assessment Methods Controls

Article (20)

With due regard to the provisions of the study and examination system followed at the University, assessment activities and final exams shall be held according to the usual education plan of the college. This, unless the Council determines to apply the plan for exceptional circumstances of the college, in accordance with Article (5) of this system and the University's general policy. All necessary precautionary measures shall be observed.

Article (21)

In case it is determined that assessment activities or final exams are to be held electronically or online through the Learning Management System, the electronic verification and monitoring tools approved by the Center shall be used to monitor students and their commitment to the rules of academic integrity. The course instructor shall verify the identity of the student taking the exam. The student shall show his/her University ID to the course instructor or his/her national ID in case the former is not available. The use of electronic proctoring programs in online assessment activities and final exams shall be considered a general rule, unless the Council determines otherwise.

Article (22)

In the event of using, during the semester, a pattern other than the usual one, due to exceptional circumstances, the college council may, on the basis of a recommendation from the relevant department, change the method of distributing the weights of the remaining tests and assessment activities within the course. These new weights shall be communicated to students and the rationale behind them explained to them during the early phase of the new education pattern's implementation and without any prejudice to the rights and duties of students evolving through the implementation of the usual education pattern.

Article (23)

With due regard to the study and examination regulations, the college council may, on the basis of a recommendation from the concerned department, determine different percentages from the total for the final exam for courses that require the use of laboratories, workshops, practical exercises, graduation projects or courses of a special nature,.

Article (24)

The scientific department or academic center shall enforce, in person or remotely, the invigilation schedules for the mid-term and final exams held through the Learning Management System. A sufficient number of invigilators must be distributed during these exams to ensure academic safety and integrity.

² Amended by University Council No. (243) of 2022 dated June 28, 2022.

Article (25)

The student's transcripts shall include a note indicating the implementation of different education systems followed during their study (that is, traditional, self-learning, integrated, hybrid or distance education), while detailing the semesters and courses that were subject to this as well as the percentage of application thereof in each course.

Chapter VII

Technical Requirements for E-Learning and Distance Education Systems

Article (26)

The educational platforms identified by the University, through the Center and the Information Technology Center, shall be the educational platforms approved by the University at the time this system had been enforced. The task of approving the educational platforms shall fall within the competence of the Council.

Article (27)

The Office of the Vice President for IT Services, Administrative and Financial Affairs shall, after coordination with the administrative centers, undertake the procedural follow-up in order to provide educational platforms approved at the University level, provide the material and support necessary to operate and maintain the e-learning and distance education systems as well as achieve integration and inclusion within the remaining technical systems related to the University.

Article (28)

Before an actual application of an e-learning platform, an experimental application shall be carried out under the supervision of the Center or that of the Information Technology Center, each within its area of competence, just long enough before actual use, to ensure its proper functioning.



Chapter VIII

Communication Controls in E-Learning and Distance Education Courses

Article (29)

Both course instructor and students shall be dressed appropriately as it is required within a learning environment and while using or communicating through electronic platforms, during live broadcasting, filming or attending virtual classes, this in accordance with public ethics and University rules and regulations. They shall also keep to terms of confidentiality about any information they may have about each other's private lives and maintain a balance between the right to education and the right to privacy.

Article (30)

Any student with queries about the course shall communicate with the course instructor during official working hours via the approved educational platforms. The course instructor shall, during the initial week of study, determine the means of communication with students through the Course Page of the Learning Management System, and shall respond to student's inquiries at his/her earliest convenience.

Article (31)

During the process of e-learning and distance education, the student shall abide by the behavioral rules and guidelines issued by the Deanship of Student Affairs, whether within virtual, hybrid, blended, or self-learning classes, including electronic discussion forums, communication messages and exchanges with fellow students as well as course instructors.



Chapter IX

Access to E-Courses and Related

Data Article (32)

The management and staff of the Center and the Information Technology Center, each within its area of competence, shall have access to the electronic content of courses and the data of both instructors and students in order to facilitate the provision of technical support to them. None of these authorized employees may change or modify the scientific content uploaded onto the approved platforms by the course instructor or students except by written permission from the course instructor. These employees shall observe confidentiality regarding student information, including their assessment results and grades.

Article (33)

The Dean of the College / Director of the Academic Center or their representative, and the Director of the Quality Assurance Office within the College shall have access to the electronic content and information related to courses run within the College / Center through the Learning Management System, the approved educational platforms and other analytics systems, so that the proper functioning of the educational process is maintained. The head of the department shall have access to the electronic content and information related to the department itself. However, none of these officers may be allowed to change or modify the scientific content uploaded by either the course instructor or the students. They shall observe confidentiality regarding student information, including their results and grades.



Article (34)

The President of the University, the Vice President for Academic Programs and Postgraduate Studies and the Director of the Quality Assurance Center at the University shall have access to reports about the educational process and its progress within all colleges and academic centers on the basis of information gathered via data analysis systems linked to both the Learning Management System and the student information management system.

Chapter X

Student Grievance Against Final Results in E-Learning and Distance Education Courses

Article (35)

Provisions from Article (67) of the Study and Examination System at the University of Bahrain shall apply regarding students' grievances made against course results. The relevant department head or director of a center shall have access to the electronic content of courses delivered via the Learning Management System in order to facilitate the referral of grievances to the concerned examination committees.

Article (36)

The department head shall involve members of a Grievance Committee formed by the department within the concerned academic section of the Learning Management System. Members of this committee are not authorized to alter the scientific content uploaded onto the Learning Management System by the course instructor or the students. They shall, however, examine and review a student's grades by assessing them against answers submitted through the system, following the usual approved mechanism used for inspecting grievances.



Chapter XI

Final Provisions

Article (37)

Every breach by the student of his/her obligations stipulated in Articles (19), (21), (29) and (31) of this system shall be considered a case of misconduct for which the provisions of the disciplinary penalties of the University shall apply.

Article (38)

The provisions of the Study and Examination System at the University of Bahrain shall apply for cases not stipulated within this system, and in a manner that does not conflict with the nature of e-learning and distance education.

Article (39)

This system shall come into force as of the date of issuance thereof.