



TO: UR ACADEMIC STAFF (ALL)

Re: Establishing a new pedagogy at UR from the reopening in mid-October 2020

The management of the University of Rwanda (UR) acknowledges the sustained efforts and dedication demonstrated by colleagues during the process of digitizing instructional materials for all modules, which can now be delivered online.

Although the digitization of Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) started some years ago at UR, with the Covid-19 outbreak there was an imperative to complete this exercise and we are all proud of the tangible achievements.

As we near the reopening, I would like to reiterate that UR will never go back to traditional face-to-face teaching as the sole mode of delivery; the blended mode is here to stay.

We have to leverage the laudable achievements in digitizing LTA activities, and as ready ourselves to resume on campus teaching and learning activities, taking into account all the support offered to academic staff through a series of trainings, the following pedagogical considerations should be taken account:

I. Mode of delivery

- a. The blended mode of delivery has to apply across all UR academic programmes. Blended mode of delivery does not mean privileging face-to-face teaching while using online resources and material in place of traditional handouts.
- b. Maximize online teaching, while substantially reducing the reliance on face-to-face teaching as the means of information transfer.
- c. If you deem it necessary to meet the students for further explanations, exemplifications and demonstrations; the use of virtual meeting applications (Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, and WebEx) is recommended.
- d. Learners and staff will now be able to use the Moodle resources offline.

II. Notional hours (face-to-face vs online)

- d. Refer to the module description and the template for developing blended modules (this template must be filled and readily available for each module deliverable online).

III. Assessment

III.1. Formative assessment

- e. Where possible, all formative assessment activities should be carried out through the UR e-learning platform.
- f. The use of various formative assessment strategies and types is recommended. These may include but are not limited to quizzes, graded discussion fora, reflection papers, self-and peer assessment, individual and group assignments (administered and graded



through the UR e-learning platform and checked for plagiarism using Turnitin) and e-portfolios.

- g. It is recommended to use grading rubrics for all formative assessment activities other than quizzes.
- h. It is recommended to give as many formative assessment activities as possible (at least one quiz at the end of each section, unit, or chapter).
- i. In case a formative assessment is not administered in the form of an objective quiz (which is automatically graded by the system), you are expected to grade the formative assessment activity and give feedback to students as soon as possible (one week after its administration).

III.1. Summative assessment

- j. The use of various summative assessments strategies (in addition to traditional exams) is recommended. These may include but are not limited to individual and group final projects, take home exams, open book exams and e-portfolios.

IV. Teaching presence, facilitation of online learning and student support

- k. You should login to their online module as often as possible (at least once every two days) and monitor the students' learning progress.
- l. You should regularly monitor the online students' learning progress and identify those students who are not progressing as expected and devise strategies to provide individualized support.
- m. You should be readily available to attend to students' queries and questions through messaging, forum discussion and live chat Moodle modules. Also, the use of social media class groups (WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, and Twitter) is recommended. An "*I have a question*" or "*I need help*" forum can be created and you should regularly check the forum and attend to students queries and questions.
- n. The completed module development template and the storyboard must be shared with the learners to enable them to closely monitor their learning progress against your expectations.
- o. Virtual classrooms held by using virtual meeting applications ***should be recorded*** to allow future student access for revision and deepening

V. Monitoring student engagement

- p. In addition to (l) and (m) above, you are required to closely monitor the students' engagement in tackling online instructional activities through:
 - The use attendance plugins available and inbuilt in the UR e-Learning platform
 - Checking the students' login frequencies (see the 'last access to course' feature on the UR e-learning platform)



- Students should login to the online modules they are enrolled in as often as possible (at least four times a week and depending on the module particularity, you may recommend otherwise)
- Check whether the students completed the scheduled instructional tasks within defined time frames
- Set activity completion timelines
- In the case of virtual classrooms held by using virtual meeting applications, attendance should be recorded at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the virtual classroom.

The collective efforts deployed in digitizing LTA have transitioned UR from a teaching institution to an institution of learning; UR never has to go back to the conventional mode of teaching and the blended mode of learning has become our new normal.

Should you need any support with respect to blended mode of learning and teaching, do not hesitate to contact your College's e-learning champions and DTLE.

Sincerely,

Kigali on 12th October 2020

Prof. Philip Cotton
Vice Chancellor