

Hybrid Learning Strategy of a module

Mode of provision

At SU any **academic offering** (module or programme) can be offered via one of two modes of provision:

<p>Contact <i>(Face-to-face/ F2F)</i></p>	<p>The majority of the learning, teaching and assessment occurs in a physical classroom/facility with lecturers/facilitators and students present in person. Students will mostly follow the traditional timetable (Monday to Friday).</p>
<p>Hybrid learning <i>(HL)</i></p>	<p>The majority of learning occurs online and a traditional timetable is not followed. This offering must still adhere to the minimum requirements of contact time, therefore distinction must be made between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asynchronous learning: students engage with learning materials at their own pace, from different locations at different times. Usually via digitally mediated platforms. • Synchronous online learning: Students and lecturers/facilitators engage with each other in the online/virtual space at the same time. This could include an online meeting, live streaming of lectures, virtual chatrooms and online assessments. • Block contact sessions on-campus: specific times (days/weeks, etc.) are identified throughout the year whereby students are required to attend physical sessions on-campus. This can be arranged at the beginning of the year/semester (i.e. to include an orientation) or at another time of the year that would be more ideal for the specific student context, i.e. working teachers can be accommodated during the school holidays.

Blended learning

At SU, blended learning is regarded as an over-arching approach that involves including a blend of learning, teaching and assessment methods and technologies to facilitate learning. Blended learning is therefore not regarded as a separate *mode of provision*, but rather the systematic and sensible blende of different pedagogical approaches, teaching methodologies and appropriate digital technologies within one module. It can be used in both a full contact and HL module.

For example, a full contact module can follow the *switched classroom approach*. This would require students to still follow the traditional timetable, however, the contact sessions will be used for discussion of examples and case studies, rather than traditional lectures. The more traditional form of learning and engaging with material will occur online (via SUNLearn) in preparation for the contact sessions.





Hyperlinks to other sources

Other documents that should be consulted:

[Overview of the Modes of Provision at SU](#)

This document provides more information on the different modes of provision, the different considerations when considering a HL mode of provision and frequently used terminology that should be considered.

Minimum requirements for contact time

Minimum contact time refers to all of the synchronous ("real time") interactions that are planned for the student. It is therefore not limited only to lectures, but includes research supervision, time for assessments and other activities (lab work, etc.), online or in-person discussions, etc.

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) defines the minimum required contact time for all modules and programmes. As SU is a registered contact Higher Education institution, all of our modules and programmes have to adhere to these minimum requirements:

Undergraduate programme and modules at NQF levels 5 to 7	At least 30% of the notional hours must be offered via synchronous activities (face to face or digitally assisted)
Postgraduate programmes and modules at NQF level 8 (Honours or Postgraduate Diploma)	At least 25% of the notional hours must be offered as synchronous activities
Postgraduate programmes and modules at NQF levels 9 and 10 (Masters and Doctorate)	No minimum synchronous contact time requirements. However, use of synchronous (including on-campus) engagements are encouraged.

As indicated above, the synchronous (contact) interaction is calculated according to the notional hours of the module.

Notional hours	The agreed estimated learning time taken by the average student to achieve the specified learning outcomes of the module or programme (DHET, 2021). This is not a precise measure but indicates the amount of study time and degree of commitment expected. This includes consideration of contact time, research, completion of assignments, time spent in structured learning in the workplace, individual learning and assessments. Each credit represents ten notional hours, i.e., a ten-credit module is equal to 100 notional hours and would indicate that the average student would need 100 hours to achieve the identified outcomes and obtain the necessary knowledge and skills.
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Reference(s)

Council on Higher Education. 2014. Distance Higher Education Programmes in a Digital Era: Good Practice Guide. Pretoria: CHE

Department of Higher Education and Training. 2021. Dictionary of Terms and Concepts for Post-School Education and Training

Drafting a HL strategy

If a module will be offered using HL, a HL strategy must be included to clearly differentiate how the curriculum will be designed to consider the following types of learning opportunities:

- **Asynchronous** (i.e. fully online)
- **Synchronous online** (i.e. online with real-time interaction)
- **Synchronous on-campus/block contact session** (i.e. requiring the students to attend learning/assessment opportunities on-campus)



Suggestions:

When designing these learning activities, consider the following:

1. What does the module intent to achieve?
2. Who are we designing the module for, i.e. how regularly or when will they be able to attend sessions on campus?
3. Is there a possibility that some (or the majority) of students will need to complete the programme over an extended period of time (part-time students)? This would mean that we would have to consider how we stagger information and contact sessions.



Take note:

*When considering whether content, assessments or skills should be addressed asynchronously **or** synchronously, online **or** in person, we need to identify first and foremost which learning opportunities and aspects need to be addressed in-person.*

Once we know what learning opportunities should be addressed in-person, we can identify whether:

1. *this learning opportunity should be preceded by prior learning (i.e. requiring preparation); and*
2. *when this should be addressed (i.e. introducing students to new methods/techniques or threshold concepts at the beginning of the module vs a learning opportunity that requires foundational knowledge)*

*The block contact sessions should be designed to focus on addressing these aspects of the module. These decisions will also influence **when** the block sessions are scheduled.*









How to describe the different components for the HL strategy:

Asynchronous learning




Provide a short description of what learning opportunities will be dealt with online or via learning technologies, that does not require interaction with peers or with the lecturer.

The online platform/SUNLearn becomes an extension of your classroom. This "space" should be designed so that it is easy for a student to navigate the page (similar to a physical environment).






This description should ideally include and identify:

-  Which **learning technologies** will be used,
 - i.e. SUNLearn, MS Teams, Zoom, other disciplinary-specific computer programmes/technology
-  The **learning material** that will be made available online
 - i.e. videos, narrated PowerPoints, visual or written sources, prescribed readings, etc.
-  **Preparation for in-class activities**
 - Allow students to preview study material (readings, videos, etc.)
 - Consider setting up an online quiz (diagnostic) with instant feedback as a formative assessment
-  **Online assessment tools**
 - Consider using different methods of assessment and different assessment opportunities that students can submit or complete online
 - Provide rubrics for assessment opportunities (and discuss it with students) to create opportunities for self- and peer assessment
-  **Using messaging boards/discussion forums**
 - A shared space can be created to allow students to post questions, key definitions or reading responses while they are working through learning material. This can inform what is dealt with during the synchronous interactions
-  **Online support**
 - We cannot simply assume that all students are "tech savvy", and even if they are, that they will understand how to "do" everything on the online platform. We have to consider what kind of support will be



	<p>available to students (apart from the standard SUNLearn support) and how students will be able to interact with this support mechanism.</p> <p>It is not necessary to indicate in the strategy how much time is expected of the student for these learning opportunities.</p>
<p>Synchronous online</p>	<p>This component should indicate how and what "real-time" interaction with lecturers and fellow students will be used in the online environment.</p> <p>These engagements can mimic engagements on campus. Ideally the synchronous engagements should create a learning community that will ensure that students do not feel "isolated" while studying, but rather utilise the diversity of the student profile to foster a learning-centred approach whereby students are co-contributors of knowledge. The online platform can therefore create a learning environment.</p> <p>Synchronous online interaction does not have to be limited to lectures. Similar to on-campus a variety of learning activities can be utilised. However, if it is regarded as <i>synchronous</i>, it requires the lecturer/facilitator and/or fellow students to be actively participating/"present" online as well. Synchronous online engagements should ideally mimic a supportive learning environment conducive to learning, similar to what students would experience in the classroom.</p> <p>Since SU is a registered residential institution, we need to take cognisance of the amount of time that is allocated to <i>synchronous</i> engagements, to ensure that we meet the minimum requirements of a "full contact" programme. It is therefore important to also quantify the synchronous online engagements.</p> <p>The following should ideally be included in the description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  What kind of learning opportunities will be offered as synchronous opportunities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I.e. online lectures, flipped classroom (i.e. using discussions to focus on practical case studies), Q&A sessions, group work, student-feedback, peer evaluations, students presenting a topic, etc.  Duration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As this requires planning a timetable, we need to consider how long each session would be, i.e. 1h / 2h  Frequency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How regular will these interactions be scheduled?



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it be scheduled as a session once a week? Or twice every two weeks? Daily? <p> Engagements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will these engagements occur, i.e. Teams, Zoom, Skype, etc? <p> Learning technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be the "material" / technology be that students will require, i.e. laptop or tablet, any special applications, software or hardware? • For any synchronous online engagements students will need access to stable internet. <p> Online support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We cannot simply assume that all students are "tech savvy", and even if they are, that they will understand how to "do" everything on the online platform. We have to consider what kind of support will be available to students (apart from the standard SUNLearn support) and how students will be able to interact with this support mechanism. <p> Possibility of on-campus interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It could be possible to indicate that some of the synchronous online engagements will be recorded in a venue that will allow for in-person attendance. An invitation can therefore also be issued that should students wish to attend some of these sessions in-person, they can do so. Just consider how this communication would work. <p> Indicate the total time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make it easier for evaluators to consider the module's strategy, it would be ideal to indicate the total number of notional hours that will be allocated towards synchronous online engagements.
<p>Synchronous on-campus</p>	<p>This component should provide a short description of the planned on-campus engagement(s). All programmes and modules offered via a HL mode of provision should include at least one on-campus engagement, as feedback indicates that students still prefer to meet their lecturers and peers at least once in person, we have the infrastructure to meet special learning needs (i.e. laboratories, practical facilities, etc.) and we do not want to create a perception that any of our offerings are fully online.</p> <p>When describing the synchronous on-campus interaction, the description should indicate/consider:</p>



When

- Consider the student profile and identify what time of the year would ideally be most suitable for these students to attend sessions on campus. Within a profession there are usually times that will be more suitable than others, i.e. teachers can attend during school holidays.

Frequency and duration

- How long (days, weeks, hours) will students need to be on-campus for this specific module?
- How often would students need to come to campus?
- Remember, if the aim is widening of access, which would include making the module/programme available to a wider audience (working professionals, international or African students, etc.) it might be costly for students to travel to SU regularly and it might be difficult for working professionals to regularly receive leave for this purpose.

Consider the entire programme

- Ideally the block contact session should provide a timetable/itinerary for the entire programme, i.e. a block contact session in semester one should be scheduled to allow for students to literally attend a period of time blocked out for on-campus engagements.
- It is also important to consider how content will be structured within the *module* and within the *programme*, to ensure that the right activities are dealt with on-campus.

Learning activities

- Consider what kind of activities would be delivered optimally on-campus. These module design should then allow for these focus areas to be dealt with during the on-campus sessions.
- Activities could include: laboratory work, practical assessments/activities, collaborative work/learning, programme orientation, working with specialised technology.

Venue requirements

- Consider what type of venue will be needed.
- If a lecture venue is required, what would the venue size and content of the venue be? Is this type of venue available within the faculty, or would another venue need to be sourced?



- Is a specialised venue (i.e. laboratory, hospital) needed, or a venue that includes specialised equipment? Does the faculty/department have access to this type of venue and equipment?
- Will students need to be present in a specialised setting to complete an activity, i.e. the Welgevallen Experimental Farm?

 **Prior and following learning**

- Would the focus of the on-campus engagements build on knowledge or skills that students should already have prepared/learned, or will the engagements focus on foundational knowledge (threshold concepts, etc.)
- Is there any learning material or assessments that students should prepare/complete to prepare for the engagement?
- How would these on-campus learning engagements influence learning for the rest of the module?

 **Indicate the total time**

- To make it easier for evaluators to consider the module's strategy, it would be ideal to indicate the total number of notional hours that will be used for on-campus engagements
- All of the synchronous engagements will be added up to indicate that the minimum requirements for contact has been adhered to.



For example

Example A:

This timetable information is for a 10-credit module in a postgraduate diploma, therefore at least 25h of synchronous interaction is required (i.e. 25% of 100 notional hours). For this programme a block contact week will be used (5 days) consisting of one full day of on boarding and programme orientation and one full day of in-person engagement for the 4 first-semester modules. Thereafter students will have synchronous online engagement with lecturers for 2h per week (as a combination of lectures and flipped-classroom approaches), supported by online assessment-engagement spread throughout the duration of the semester. Readings and video-material will be made available online for students to engage with asynchronously.

Asynchronous

The SUNLearn page for this module will be designed to guide students through the required learning on a weekly basis. Each week will focus on a specific theme. Within each theme the following learning material will be made available, which the students are required to prepare before the synchronous interaction. The learning material will consist of at least one narrated PowerPoint and 3 – 5 readings (book chapters, articles, etc.) on the theme.



Students will be required to prepare the learning material for Theme 1: Introduction before the scheduled on-campus interaction. The synchronous online engagements will start 2 weeks after the on-campus engagement to allow students to learn to navigate the online platform and to understand the pace for the module.

As indicated below, each student will be required to deliver a 10-minute presentation. Recordings of these presentations will also be uploaded on the SUNLearn site as valuable resources explaining how the theory can be applicable in the workplace.

Several formative and summative assessment opportunities will also be dealt with asynchronously. Online quizzes and activities will be made available for each theme, whereby students will get immediate feedback on their own learning and progress.

Written assessments (2) will have to include a Turnitin report as evidence that no plagiarism has occurred. Students will be required to continuously participate in discussions via the online discussion forum, as key questions and questions from peers related to the content of the theme will be posted here.

An online tutor (for the programme) will provide technical support (to academics and students). Students will be able to contact the tutor for online support related to the module(s), for example experiencing problems accessing material or uploading an assignment via Turnitin.

Synchronous online

Each of these online engagements (facilitated via MS Teams) will consist of approximately 45 minutes of lecture time and an hour following a "flipped classroom" approach whereby students will be required to interact with case studies and examples similar to what can be expected in the workplace. Some of these examples will also create formative assessment opportunities, to enable students to understand how the assessment criteria for the assignment will be applied and to inform and develop their own evaluative judgements. Recordings of lectures will also be made available to students to allow them to review information afterwards or re-watch areas that they experience difficulty with. As it is expected that some students will be able to travel to campus more regularly than required for the block on-campus sessions, the majority of the synchronous online engagements will be scheduled in a venue that will be able to accommodate some students. Students will be able to indicate to the administrative support staff of the department, whether they plan to attend on-campus, to ensure that enough space is made available.

Synchronous assessment opportunities will also be used, as each student will be required to deliver a 10-minute presentation (synchronous online) on an identified topic, followed by a Q&A session. For this purposes students will be required to gather their own workplace-based examples. These presentations will be scheduled on an additional day of the week than the already scheduled interaction, and will be dealt with in weeks 4 – 7 of the module offering. These presentations will be evaluated by peers, and will create engagement opportunities amongst students to learn from different real-life contexts and therefore critically engage as a learning community. Students will be required to "attend" and submit a peer evaluation for at least 5 of their fellow students. Throughout the module specific topics will be raised in the discussion forum, that students are encouraged and required to interact with.

Total minimum synchronous online time for this module: 23h

On-campus

A full week will be used for the block on-campus interaction for the first semester. This week will be scheduled at the end of January of each year. The block on-campus week will include a full day for on-boarding and programme orientation for the programme (which will provide students with an overview of the programme, understanding how the SUNLearn platform will be utilised and



discussing the over-arching *learning and teaching* and *assessment* strategies for the programme). Students will also be introduced to all the lecturers within the programme and the online tutor.

For this module 1 full day (8h) of learning activities are scheduled. As this module acts as an introduction to fundamental concepts and theories that will be used within the programme, the majority of the contact session will be dealt with in a lecture format, focussing on threshold concepts and fundamental theories. However, students would have been required to prepare for this full day sessions by preparing the learning material provided as Theme 1: Introduction, which includes two seminal readings for the field of study and some sources (videos) on how these theories and concepts are used in the professional context and how confusion can be created when it is used incorrectly. The second half of the contact session will focus on discussing case studies and discussing the assessment strategy, assessment plan and feedback practices. The lecturer will also highlight to students how constructive alignment was used in the design of the module and how this module provides the foundation for the rest of the programme. A lecture venue will be scheduled within the department to accommodate the enrolled number of students. No specialised equipment (apart from the standard teaching and learning equipment) will be required for this module.

Total minimum synchronous on-campus interaction for this module: 8h

Example B:

The following information is for a 16-credit module (NQF level 8) which would require students to attend an 8 day block contact session at the beginning of the second semester. This module would require 2 days of contact on-campus of which each day would consist of theory and practical application at the Welgevallen Experimental Farm. 40h of synchronous interaction is required for this module.

Asynchronous

With the support of the HL team, a full online "classroom" will be designed on the Moodle platform, SUNLearn. Training videos, pre-recorded narrated PowerPoints and prescribed reading material will be made available. Participation in online forums and chat rooms is a cornerstone of continued learning in the field. The discussion forum on SUNLearn will therefore be regularly used to discuss important questions raised by students on the content and to make students aware of new media coverage or opportunities that are offered within the field. Connecting regularly with the aquaponics community via the Aquaponics Association of South Africa, creates a meaningful professional network to take students into their aquaponics career. Throughout the semester, some interactions will be arranged with the association of which one will at least be a synchronous session.

Recordings of all synchronous engagements, including the group presentations, will be made available via the SUNLearn platform to ensure that students can easily access these sessions at a later time, to refresh their memory.

The online platform will also be used for asynchronous assessment (formative and summative) opportunities, for example activities that will guide students in aquaponics design (interactive activity) and uploading of written assessments.

Synchronous online

Microsoft Teams will be used for scheduled synchronous online interaction for 2h per week (for 12 weeks). These sessions consists of a combination of theoretical discussions and theories, practical application and workplace-related context. Recordings of lectures will also be made available to students to allow them to review information afterwards or re-watch areas that they experience difficulty with.



The sessions focussing specifically on practical application and design of systems, will be recorded in an appropriate venue (capacity approximately 30) to allow for students who are in the vicinity to attend these sessions.

One group work activity (5 students per group) will be hosted online. Each group will be given a specific context and problem statement (related to the design of a working aquaponics system) and will be required to address this problem with a 15-minute presentation (followed by individual written submissions) identifying the impact of the context on the problem and how the problem could be addressed considering the different design options discussed during the module. As the students will be located in different places across the world, online engagement will be required for the group members. Although it is not required, students will be able to download the Open Source design/planning software used by some larger companies to enable them to draw the plans for their design.

At least one Q&A session with members from the Aquaponics Association of South Africa will be arranged as a synchronous online engagement.

Both learning and online support will be available to students via a tutor focusing on this module and the preceding Introduction module.

Total minimum synchronous online time for this module: 28h

On-campus

During the 2 weeks of block sessions on-campus, 3 full days will be allocated towards this module. These 3 days will be used as follows:

- 4h per day (totalling 12h) for theoretical learning, which would include discussing relevant theory, as well as discussions of case studies and practical examples.
- 4 per day (totalling 12h) will be used for practical application at the Welgevallen Experimental Farm, which will focus on the design and building of different aquaponics systems

A lecture venue (capacity 60) will be required close to the Welgevallen Experimental Farm (i.e. ideally one of the training venues on the farm). No specialised equipment (other than the basic learning equipment available in all the AgriSciences venues) will be needed for the lectures. The practical components will be scheduled at the identified areas at Welgevallen already utilised for practical testing for aquaponics and hydroponics systems.

Students will be required to have completed the first semester *Introduction to Aquaponics* module and complete some additional readings before the contact session in preparation for the on-campus engagement.

Total minimum synchronous on-campus interaction for this module: 12h

