PROCESS AND CRITERIA FOR CENTRALIZED DDLC FUNDING OF DISTANCE AND DISTRIBUTED LEARNING (DDL) COURSES AND PROGRAMS

The Distance and Distributed Learning Committee (DDLC) has the responsibility for determining which distance and distributed courses are selected for centralized development using University of Regina funds and Flexible Learning (FL) Instructional Design (ID) Team and Administrative resources. This document outlines the process and criteria for the selection of online and blended courses as well as research projects related to flexible delivery modes that could receive DDLC funding. Note: There is a visual representation of this process found at the bottom of this document.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Chair of the DDLC will issue a campus-wide call for proposals twice a year, in the fall (generally October) and spring (generally April) for the development of new and major revision online and blended courses as well as research projects related to flexible delivery. The call will include information on how to access the online application form and the required information to construct a successful application.

STEP 1: APPLICATION PROCESS

The DDLC will consider proposals for the following modes of flexible delivery as well as research proposals related to flexible delivery modes:

• Primarily asynchronous web-based courses (such as UR Courses) (at least 80% of the course must be asynchronous web-based.)
• A balanced blend of asynchronous web-based and face-to-face courses (between 40-70% of the face-to-face classroom time will be replaced by asynchronous web-based components.)
• A balanced blend of asynchronous web-based and synchronous online (such as Zoom based) (between 40-70% of the course will be delivered in the form of asynchronous web-based components).
• Research related to distance and distributed teaching and learning

Applications can be new proposals, or proposals for major revisions of courses that have already been developed. In both cases, applications are to include all required information in the online form. For help in completing the application form, please contact the Flexible Learning Head, Willadell Garreck at 306-585-5897 or willadell.garreck@uregina.ca.

a. Mandatory Requirements

• Proposals must contain all the information requested in the application form in as much detail as possible.
• All proposals must be supported and overseen by the Faculty’s Distance and Distributed Learning (DDL) Coordinator, or they will not be considered. For a list of DDL Coordinators by faculty, go to https://ursource.uregina.ca/cce/access-services/develop-flexiblecourse/index.html or https://www.uregina.ca/cce/flexible-learning/faculty-services/developflexible/index.html. The DDL Coordinator and Department / Program Head must be advised by the applicant and show a willingness to support an application. The applicant will be asked to indicate agreement by the Coordinator and Department / Program Head by checking two boxes in the application.
• All applicants must agree that the course can be used for a period of five years with only minor revisions as needed. For the ownership and use of the course intellectual property and the appointment for teaching the course, please consult Article 30 “Instructional and Information Technology” (academic staff members other than sessional course developers) and Appendix J “Sessional Course Developers” of the URFA Academic Staff Collective Agreement 2017-2021 (https://ursource.uregina.ca/hr/assets/pdfs/collectiveagreements/Academic/2017-2021-Academic-CBA-Final.pdf).

b. Assessment Criteria

The following criteria will be used for assessing the proposals. The criteria are listed in the order of significance.

• Proposals that meet the goals of the University of Regina Strategic Plan.
• The proposals must explain how they will meet the relevant goals of the Strategic Plan.
• Proposals that create courses that will allow students to complete an existing distance or distributed education program at a distance.
• Proposals that are based on a programmatic approach. The proposals must outline how the proposed distributed / distance course fits in the program; how it is related to other distance / distributed courses in the program; and what the program’s plan is for the future development of distributed / distance courses.
• Proposals that will meet or are likely to create strong student demand:
  o A key introductory course for a program or degree o A key mandatory course in a major
  o A course that typically has higher enrolments. Instructors must be willing to accept at least 30 students per course, and preference will be given to even higher enrolment limits. In general, enrolment caps will be set in consultation between the Faculty and the Flexible Learning.

In all of the above situations, a detailed and evidence-based case will be made with the aid of FL staff.

Note: The Committee is willing to consider pilot projects, even if they would serve a smaller set of students, if the project will allow the University to assess the ongoing viability and delivery methods.

• Courses that will be developed by a team of permanent faculty members who agree to teach the course on a rotating basis or another section of the course in the same semester.

• Courses that meet the accessibility needs of a key group of University of Regina students. Examples might include courses that allow students outside Regina access to a course they otherwise cannot access. Alternatively, it might increase the flexibility of course options for students in Regina who face particular challenges enrolling in in-person classes for a variety of reasons (such as mature students with family responsibilities)

• Courses that are cost-effective for the University – courses that are less expensive per student taught. Factors to be considered include:

• How expensive is the planned development of the course? How expensive is the planned delivery of the course?
Relevant costs would include: development time of content expert, instructional designer and graphics/multimedia designer as well as copyright costs, server costs, specialized software or hardware need.

DDLC-funded courses may only use University approved or supported learning management systems and software.

Please note that factors other than cost and enrolments will be considered in decisions by the Committee, and higher-cost or lower-enrolment courses may be developed and delivered in specific circumstances. In addition, Faculties can offset costs by using their own direct funds, or by earmarking some of their revenue-shared funding.

c. Desirable Features

- The delivery of a fully online or blended course is pedagogically beneficial or a natural fit for the course and the program.
- The costs to the students are not excessive. Do students need special software or hardware? Will there be too big a draw on their time?
- Course modules should be re-usable elsewhere, in another online or blended course or as supplements to a face-to-face course.
- A faculty/department’s willingness to cross-subsidize low-enrolment courses will reflect positively on the application.

STEP 1 - PART 1: FIRST SCREENING

Once applications are received, a team from Flexible Learning will carry out the first screening of the applications. The initial screening will examine if the application contains the mandatory requirements for selection, as outlined. If, in the opinion of the FL Team, consisting of the Head of FL, the Senior ID and the Program Manager, the mandatory requirements are not present, they will contact the applicant and the applicant’s Faculty DDL Coordinator and ask for these missing requirements to be added. If the applicant is not willing to add these requirements, the Committee will reject the application.

If the mandatory requirements are present, the Team will arrange for a deeper examination of the application (in consultation with the applicant and course developer as needed), with up to one hour of ID time allocated to this stage of the application. The instructional designer will be looking at the viability of the proposal in the light of the University’s technical and design capacities, as well as providing some initial estimates of the costs of the proposal.

Based on this initial screening, the Team will provide a report to the DDLC on the viability of the application with respect to the development of the course, as well as on the delivery viability of the course.

STEP 1 – PART 2: SECOND SCREENING AND FINAL DECISIONS

The final application, along with the accompanying analysis of the potential development costs, complexity and on the potential for successful delivery of the course, will be forwarded to the DDLC. The Committee will use the criteria outlined in STEP 1: APPLICATION above to decide which courses should be funded, and at what level, and with what conditions (if any).

As needed, the DDLC may consult with the applicant and/or course developer (CD) if the Committee needs more information.
a. Communication of the Results

An official letter will be sent from the Chair of the DDLC to each Faculty DDL Coordinator shortly after the Committee’s decision on the applications. The DDLC Coordinator will then communicate the results to the applicant(s). Unsuccessful applicants may consult with the Flexible Learning Head about possible improvements to the application if they are interested in adjusting and re-submitting their proposal at the next call.

b. Successful Applications and Next Stages

   i. Faculty Member Course Development Appointments

If the successful applicant (course developer) is a faculty member, a separate Letter of Appointment (LOA) will be sent to the name identified on the application form. The LOA will need to be signed by the course developer and by the DDL Coordinator and sent back electronically to flexible.learning@uregina.ca for further processing. Once the LOA is received, the ID assigned to the course will contact the course developer to begin course development.

   ii. Sessional Course Development Appointments

If the applicant (proposed course developer) is not faculty, each faculty/department will need to post for a course developer. The Faculty/Department will then send the names of the successful applicants to the Flexible Learning Head or designate so that a LOA for course development can be created and signed by the successful applicant and the Faculty DDL Coordinator. The signed LOA should be returned to flexible.learning@uregina.ca for further processing. Once the LOA is received, the ID assigned to the course will contact the course developer to begin course development.

Note: When a course receives DDLC funding, the expectation is that it will be delivered with the cooperation, coordination and support of the CCE.
STEP 2: COURSE DEVELOPMENT, REVISIONS AND SUBSEQUENT APPLICATIONS

Course Development

After courses have been approved by the DDLC and the LOAs signed and returned to Flexible Learning, an ID will be assigned to work with the course developer (CD) to oversee course development. Other members of the ID Team (AID, GM) may be brought in during the development process to assist with the course development including, but not limited to, video productions, simulations, animations, copyright clearance of images and videos, adding and formatting content in UR Courses and to advise on technologies, activities and assessments that could be used in the course. This development typically takes about 12 months.

When jointly determined by the CD and ID, the FL Senior ID will notify the DDL Faculty Coordinator that 50% and 100% of the course is complete and to release DDL funds to the CD, if they are to be paid.

It is expected that a course will be delivered for at least five years from the date of first delivery before becoming eligible to apply for DDL money to do major revisions or to redevelop as a new course.

Major Revisions and Subsequent Applications

The DDLC will look at the following criteria when deciding whether or not to give additional funding to do major revisions for courses that have already been given DDL funding in the past.

- Typically, courses that are five years old or older since first being delivered can apply for new DDL funds either as a new course or as a major revision. New DDL money may be allocated for courses that are less than five years, but not less than two years old, if a good case can be made in doing so. Assigning a new faculty member or sessional instructor to teach a course does not guarantee that a course will automatically be given additional DDL funds.

Note: Please see Article 30 (academic staff members other than sessional course developers) and Appendix J (sessional course developers) of the URFA Academic Staff Collective Agreement 2017-2021 (https://ursource.uregina.ca/hr/assets/pdfs/collectiveagreements/Academic/2017-2021-Academic-CBA-Final.pdf) for more information.

- If the applicant is asking for funds to revise an existing course, then the history of course development will be taken into consideration.
  - Was the original course developed on time and on budget?
  - How many times has the course been delivered?
  - How many students were enrolled?
  - How necessary is the revision?
  - How extensive (expensive) is the revision?
  - Will it be the existing developer or a new developer doing the revisions?
STEP 3 – COURSE DELIVERY
Once it has been determined that the DDL funded course is 100% complete, the FL Program Manager will work with the Faculty and/or the department to determine a suitable first delivery date.

The FL Instructional Design Team (ID, AID and GM) will assist the developer in teaching the course for the first two deliveries. After this, FL ID Team will continue to provide support, but at a reduced level.

Latest update and approval date: 10 March and 19 April 2021
DDLC