

POLICY NAME	ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES POLICY				
POLICY NO.	P94-015-24	VERSION NO.	01	EFFECTIVE DATE	October 1, 2024

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INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE

This policy details the parameters and actions that must be followed by students enrolled in courses/programs offered in part (blended/hybrid) or whole (100% online) via distance education. Ana G. Méndez University (AGMU) offers or manages online courses with a learning management system (LMS) administered by AGMU.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in courses/programs offered in part (blended/hybrid) or whole (100% online) via distance education. It encompasses all synchronous and asynchronous instructional and participation activities (academically related activities) between students and their instructor within the online course that measure or contribute to their academic performance. These academic-related activities include but are not limited to assignment submissions, virtual presentations, synchronous and asynchronous discussions, and active participation in group meetings, among others.

PROCEDURE

To comply with this policy, students must adhere to the following requirements:

Academic Attendance

- Students are expected to actively participate in each online course through various scheduled academic activities and through regular and substantive student-to-instructor and student-to-student interaction. Logging into an online course without completing one or more academically related activities does not constitute academic attendance.
- For students enrolled in any academic program, acceptable evidence of academic attendance and attendance at an academically related activity in a distance education course/program include, but are not limited to:
 - Submission of an academic assignment or exam within the first 14 days of the start of classes.

- Recorded or registered participation in an interactive activity such as group study, discussion forum about academic matters, interactive tutorial, or computer-assisted instruction.
- Email communication from the student initiating contact with a faculty member to ask a question about the academic subject studied in the course.
- There are several synchronous activities in which academic attendance is of utmost importance. The following examples highlight the significance of student participation:
 - Attendance is mandatory for presentations in the virtual room, where students are expected to present an assignment/task individually or as part of a group presentation.
 - Participation in chats or virtual class meetings is not compulsory unless explicitly stated by the course facilitator. Nonetheless, for non-mandatory sessions, students are strongly encouraged to make every effort to attend the scheduled activity for the course(s).

Assignment Submissions

- Students must submit assignments or projects exclusively through the LMS administered by AGMU and by the specified due date and time published within each course's guidelines. Assignments submitted via personal email, educational platform messaging systems, assignment comments sections within the educational platform, institutional email, or any other means will not be accepted. In cases where a particular situation exists and alternative arrangements have been made, students must adhere to the submission date established accordingly.
- Submitting assignments or projects after the specified due date and time for the course without justification will result in penalty of the total value of the assignment at the faculty discretion or as stipulated in the course grading rubric
- If the assignment is submitted more than two weeks late, the instructor for the course may reject or accept the work. If the work is accepted, the grade for the assignment will be subject to the appropriate penalty percentage.
- If students encounter circumstances that prevent their on-time completion of an academic assignment/project, they must promptly inform their instructor to determine the necessary course of action. If the circumstance is beyond the student's control, such as hospitalization, the death of an immediate family member, childbirth, accidents, or other events of the same nature, the student should communicate these circumstances with the faculty member to arrange for an extension or alternate assignment submission date. It is advisable to provide relevant documentation, such as a medical certificate or official notification.
- Assignment submissions are not allowed after the last day of class, except for students granted an "I" (Incomplete) for the course(s).

Participation

- Participation in academic discussion forums is required and will be graded. Discussion forums do not allow for makeup sessions after the end of the week for which they were due. Therefore, students are expected to actively engage in online discussion sessions throughout the course. To actively participate in a discussion forum, students must:
 - Submit their initial discussion post (new thread) in the forum by Wednesday of the current week.
 - Actively participate through substantive interaction to ensure comprehension of the academic topic through a collaborative, collective, and interactive conversation.

Substantive interaction involves sustained, interactive communication of at least three (3) discussion posts from fellow classmates (will depend on course enrollment). This should be done before the assignment's completion date.

- Participation in group work on special projects (Groups, Blogs, Wikis, etc.) is mandatory. These meetings should preferably take place on the educational platform. Alternatively, if students choose to use a different online platform for their meetings, they must ensure that evidence of the meetings or educational exchange of information is available should it become necessary to present them as evidence of the assignment.

ENFORCEMENT

Students who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to corrective academic action.

VALIDITY

This Policy will come into effect from the date of its publication and will be reviewed every three (3) years or when deemed necessary, whichever comes first.

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