

Memorandum of Understanding

For the Development, Launch and Support of an
Accelerated Online Program (AOP)

PURPOSE

This Memorandum of Understanding is an agreement between Academic Affairs, UNM Online (UNMO), the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) and the College/School in support of an Accelerated Online Program.

BACKGROUND & RATIONALE

Online delivery extends UNM's reach, making quality higher education possible for those unable to access traditional instructional formats. UNM Online, in partnership with the Center for Teaching & Learning and Academic Affairs, is pleased to champion the institution's online education strategies through Accelerated Online Programs.

AOPs are typically designed around a carousel of 8-week courses with up to five (5) starts per year¹. The courses are reviewed for quality based on the [Online Learning Excellence Framework](#) and are primarily asynchronous, that is, there are no meetings requiring students to attend synchronously. Base tuition is at a flat, residency-free rate. With the benefit of choosing when and where learning occurs, the program attracts adult learners who are juggling full schedules and perhaps time zone differences. Although online learning may not meet the needs for every learner and every situation, this alternative pathway is often the preferred and sometimes the only access to UNM in our target market of working adults and non-traditional students. In addition to the flexibility and access afforded by online programs, our students are drawn to the institution's strong brand and academic reputation.

An AOP is to be comprised of courses that should be financially self-supporting and able to stand alone by the end of three years from the time of initial offering. An Accelerated Online Program must not diminish a department's ability to also maintain traditional, on-the-ground offerings in support of a higher education experience rich with campus-based programs. AOPs must target a market different from the traditional student who enrolls at UNM as a recent high school graduate. Similarly, AOPs are best offered to a learner who is inclined to be self-directed and adept at time management. A department should not shift existing 16-week online courses to an 8-week format without justifiable rationale. The 16-week online format is especially better suited for lower division courses, as their registrants tend to be less experienced with the rigors of accelerated online learning.

FUNDING

Funds to start up or otherwise support an AOP are available as a loan and repaid with AOP revenue. Repayment is managed by the Assistant Vice President of Academic Resource Management within Academic Affairs.

The college/school may request stipends at \$500 per course. They are separate from support loans as they are grants awarded upon each successful course design and review, and are paid to the instructor building the online course (IBOC).

¹ It is possible to allow in 16-week AOP courses and requests are considered case-by-case.

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REVENUE SHARE

Once deliverables and timelines are met, the AOP tuition share will route total net tuition as follows,

- 65% to the College or School,
- 17.5% to the central tuition pool,
- 7.5% to the Provost's Office,
- 5% to Digital Learning at the Center for Teaching & Learning and
- 5% to UNM Online.

Managed by Academic Affairs, tuition revenue distribution will occur at the end of each Fall, Spring, and Summer semester in which the revenue is earned. Departments are to consult with their dean regarding how AOP revenue will be managed within the college/school.

REPORT FINANCES ANNUALLY

Academic Affairs will provide quarterly financial reports to the department and college/school dean showing AOP revenues and expenditures. These reports should reflect instructional costs being charged to AOP indexes and show whether AOP revenues are sufficient to cover costs of instruction. It is recommended that colleges/schools also monitor patterns in course scheduling and the instructors assigned to teach AOP courses to cross-reference with financial reports. Departments will report annually on how AOP revenue-share monies are spent. College/school deans will review and forward reports to Academic Affairs.

IMPACT TO CURRENT CURRICULA

Before initiating an AOP, there should be considerations for instructional capacity, financial resources and strategies to ensure there are no negative consequences to existing curricula. The college/school is strongly advised to conduct an analysis for dean's approval. It should examine three to five years of a degree program's performance *before* it is re-designed into an accelerated online format. While optional before entering into an MOU agreement, such data is required for Academic Program Review. Pre-AOP performance metrics include:

- The numbers of, and associated costs for, current regular and TPT faculty employed and an outline of strategies to meet projected AOP instructional capacity;
- The counts of sections and enrollments for courses delivered online, hybrid and on-the-ground;
- The rates of D/F, Withdraw and Incomplete outcomes for at least three sections at different levels of the degree program; and
- The population of students being served by existing program and the proposed AOP.

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ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW

As of Fall 2024, online education is incorporated into academic program reviews. Online curriculum performance data is compiled by the [Academic Program Review Office](#) and [UNM Online](#) for the college/school according to the [APR master schedule](#) and terms of this AOP's Consent Form. To enter this Memorandum of Understanding is to agree to supply, at an APR's Mid-Cycle and Site Visit stages, an analysis of online education performance per [Online Education Data Requirements](#) criteria. Deans review the evaluation, followed by Academic Affairs, either of which may require revisions to Accelerated Online Programs, the MOU, planned department actions, or withdraw AOP approval.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

A faculty member who participates in the development of an online courses subject to this MOU shall continue to hold rights to the intellectual content of such online courses and will share ownership of the online course(s) with the college/school. All participating faculty members shall be required to separately grant a royalty-free, perpetual, worldwide license to UNM to use the online content, and all associated intellectual property rights therein, to create and offer online courses to enrolled UNM students, through any platform of UNM's choosing. UNM shall retain all tuition revenue and fees generated from its licensing activities, and will share it with the college/school, in accordance with the terms of this MOU.

COLLEGE/SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- **PROTECT TRADITIONAL OFFERINGS AND ENROLLMENTS.** Online courses, and particularly those that are offered at a rapid pace, have been disproportionately difficult for freshmen and sophomores. In addition, 8-week courses may not be appropriate for graduate or advanced undergraduate courses that involve research or conceptually challenging literatures that require extra time for students to take in. Launch and continuation of an AOP must not decrease a department's ability to offer its usual line-up of on-the-ground and/or 16-week classes.
- **IDENTIFY COURSE OFFERINGS.** An AOP bachelor's is a degree-completion program. Only the courses required to fulfill the major are in the accelerated format. This amounts to about 36 credit hours of primarily junior- and senior-level courses. A master's program is about 30 credit hours and, because all courses are in the accelerated format, it is promoted as fully online. An undergraduate or graduate certificate is entirely online and must be transcribed. An undergraduate minor program may be offered in the accelerated online format, however, due to likelihood of lower student success rates in lower division 8-week online courses, justification is needed to substantiate a request. This program's courses are identified in a Consent Form with changes to it communicated to UNM Online at least one semester before implementation. Common changes are to curriculum or admission requirements, or to the cadence of course offerings. Notifications are emailed to aop@unm.edu.

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- PROVIDE CONSISTENCY. This program's Consent Form represents an agreement to offer AOP courses at a predictable cadence. The 8-week format allows up to five (5) starts a year at the first and second half of fall and spring semesters and during the full summer term. The cadence, or course carousel, must guarantee a consistent and uninterrupted student experience from the point of admission through to degree completion.
- FACULTY AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS. The college/school agrees to commit *regular faculty resources* to fulfill the terms of AOP participation. Ideally, there should be no increase to the existing part-time instructor (PTI) budget.
 - In the short term, if PTI funds are to be requested, the department should submit to the dean a budget reflecting additional instructional costs caused by operating the AOP, and a timeline for drawing it down, ideally by the time of the Mid-Cycle Evaluation of an [Academic Program Review](#).
 - In the long term, the costs of instruction for an AOP, including both PTI and regular faculty-taught offerings, should be charged by labor allocation to the department's AOP index. The proportion of AOP courses taught by regular faculty should equal the proportion of the unit's on-the-ground courses taught by regular faculty prior to creation of the AOP. Units will need to document these ratios for [Academic Program Review](#).
 - After a Mid-Cycle Evaluation, operation of an AOP should be cost neutral with respect to college-/school-sourced PTI funding.
- PREPARE FACULTY AND STAFF. The college/school agrees to communicate the expectations of AOP participation to faculty and staff, especially pre-launch requirements for trainings and course development. Likewise, updating academic advisors, schedulers, department administrators and student support staff, among others, is prudent. UNM Online is available to host information sessions on launch preparations. An [AOP Deliverables document](#) is a useful tracking tool available in the [UNM Online Handbook](#).
- ENSURE BEST PRACTICES. The college/school agrees to appoint faculty to develop courses to AOP standards. The faculty member developing a course is not required teach it, making preparedness to teach dependent on a faculty member's role.
 - WORKSHOP. Each faculty member assigned to *build* an AOP course is required to complete the [Evidence Based Practices for Teaching Online](#) (EBPTO) workshop developed and administered by the Center for Teaching & Learning. It is to be completed once every five (5) years and is not required for [Golden Paw](#) recipients.
 - TRAINING. A faculty member *teaching* online is required complete Regular and Substantive Training Interaction in [Learning Central](#). One who successfully completes EBPTO, or is a Golden Paw recipient, is exempted from the requirement.

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- COURSE DEVELOPMENT. The college/school ensures that AOP courses are prepared according to the expectations documented in the Consent Form. The college/school assures that each faculty member assigned to course development works with an [instructional designer](#) at the Center for Teaching & Learning to meet quality standards based on the [Online Learning Excellence Framework](#).
- AOP CERTIFICATION. The college/school ensures this program's faculty begin course development at least 3 months before instruction begins. The process includes the 6-week EBPTO workshop and a course review culminating in an AOP certification. The timing of course preparation is dependent on CTL's [workshop schedule](#). Where eligible, a stipend is awarded at the end of the semester in which a course is reviewed and certified.
- COURSE CADENCE AND ENROLLMENT. AOP courses must be offered at a consistent cadence for students to progress toward graduation on a predictable timeline. Courses are also expected to meet enrollment minima. The dean may approve waiving the criteria in the program's first three years. Thereafter, enrollment minima are enforced by the dean.
 - Cross-listing an AOP course with another online section – that is co-offering an AOP section with a non-AOP online section -- is common strategy for meeting enrollment minimums. Academic Affairs however expects an Accelerated Online Program to be financially self-sustaining (without cross-listing) within its first three years. An exception may be made in cases where the department has a pedagogical outcome or student demand that justifies cross-listing.
- DISTANCE EDUCATION COMPLIANCE. The college/school will comply with rules and regulations required for the University of New Mexico to legally deliver education across state lines. Failure to adequately meet requirements subjects the University to punitive financial liabilities and revocation of the ability to offer federal financial aid. Communicate with UNM Online about this program's compliance requirements by emailing aop@unm.edu or saracompliance@unm.edu.
 - COURSE INFORMATION DISCLOSURES. It is a requirement to disclose to students, *before* registration opens, pertinent online course information that influences registration decisions. The UNM Online [Course Information Form](#) is a guided disclosure form to be completed by an online course's instructor of record. Shortly after submission, CIF content is publicly accessible on the UNM Online [Schedule of Online Courses](#). It is a best practice to address CIF disclosures to the program's target market.
 - PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE DISCLOSURES. The University of New Mexico is required to publicly disclose information on each [program leading to a professional license](#). The institution must disclose licensure information regardless of a program's delivery type. Branch campuses are included in the requirement.
 - OUT OF STATE LEARNING PLACEMENT DISCLOSURES. The University of New Mexico is required to compile and disclose, per the [State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement](#),

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information on a program's *required* [learning placements occurring outside New Mexico](#). The requirement applies to programs of any delivery type and to Branch Campuses.

- **MONITOR PERFORMANCE.** The college/school is responsible for tracking curriculum, student and financial data on this program before and once it becomes an AOP. It is to supply analytics on the program's performance as specified in this Memorandum of Understanding, and make clear its value to students, the broader campus community and New Mexicans.

UNM ONLINE RESPONSIBILITIES

- **HOST INFORMATION SESSIONS** on AOP launch preparations by request of the college/school.
- **FINALIZE THE CONSENT FORM** in collaboration with the college/school.
- **MONITOR ADHERENCE TO THE TERMS OF THE CONSENT FORM** and communicate matters of non-compliance to the program's leadership.
- **AQUIRE AN AOP PROGRAM CODE.** UNM Online will initiate the request for a new AOP program code or amendment to an existing one. A program code is necessary,
 - for a student to declare an AOP major,
 - for the Bursar's Office to assess AOP tuition and fees,
 - to schedule AOP courses,
 - to identify AOP curriculum and student data.
- **COORDINATE AOP LAUNCH** in collaboration with the program's leadership.
- **LEAD COURSE QUALITY REVIEWS** and issue AOP certification.
- **FACILITATE COURSE SCHEDULE COORDINATION.**
- **MANAGE THE AOP's WEB PRESENCE** on the UNM Online website at online.unm.edu.
- **CONTRIBUTE LIMITED INVESTMENTS IN DIGITAL ADVERTISING** coordinated by UNM Online in partnership with University Communication and Marketing.
- **MANAGE LEADS GENERATION AND NUTURING** resulting from UNM Online's digital advertising efforts. Share qualified leads with the college/school.
- **SUPPORT** departments in their business and community outreach efforts and recruitment planning.
- **DISTANCE EDUCATION COMPLIANCE.** UNM Online will compile and share information on distance education regulation requirements and act as a resource to ensure colleges/schools comply with required data disclosures.
- **COMPILE AND SHARE DATA.** UNM Online supplies online and AOP-specific [analytics](#) for programs preparing for [Academic Program Review](#). Email unmoanalytics@unm.edu to request access to private data dashboards UNM Online manages and to inquire about APR data requirements.

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CONSENT FORM

An [AOP Consent Form](#) represents the college's/school's agreement to the terms of this Memorandum of Understanding. It addresses a program's loan and stipend agreements, the cadences for course development and offerings, and other conditions. Signing the form is an acknowledgement that the program's dean, or comparable leadership, is aware of and will monitor the cost impact of AOP instruction on the rest of the college's/school's operations.

UNM Online, the Center for Teaching and Learning and the college/school shall together work in good faith to meet the milestones and deliverables laid out in the MOU. Should the college's/school's best efforts not result in good progress against milestones and applicable funding, investments may be withdrawn and redistributed to programs better positioned to move forward.

Progress toward AOP enrollment goals and the ability to operate as a self-sufficient program, separate from traditional campus offerings, will be formally reviewed – during the [Mid Cycle Check-In and Site Visit stages of an Academic Program Review](#) – at which times the unit's dean or Academic Affairs may require MOU revisions or recommend Accelerated Online Program withdrawal.

Email inquiries to aop@unm.edu.