RVC Blended Learning Strategy

(Updated 2025)

1/ Introduction and aims

- To meet RVC's vision to provide student-centred, flexible, and inclusive learning experiences for our students, which supports the face-to-face teaching that is integral to the practical nature of our courses with the best of digital learning opportunities and resources to consolidate learning.
- To underpin the university pillars of outstanding education and student experience which result in highly skilled graduates with a love of lifelong learning
- To extend the global reach of our programmes in order to deliver our medium and long-term objectives and to drive up our competitive advantage in an increasingly challenging environment.
- To respond to a fast-changing world, where our graduates need be confident in their digital skills in order to be successful in future employment.
- To sustain our financial position, our teaching and learning must be aligned to the metrics and measures we need to run the RVC effectively and efficiently.

This strategy supports our strategy for Teaching, Learning and Assessment, and Student Experience (LTASE, 2023) and the RVC's Strategic Plan in order for the RVC to continue to provide innovative teaching and learning for its community of students wherever they are studying. This strategy recognises that RVC's definition of blended learning interconnects with many areas of the RVC and that no strategy can be implemented without an understanding of how these areas will be affected. Its implementation is aligned to our Access and Participation plan (APP); our TEF submission (TEF); to strategies for the development of our Infrastructure (Digital and Physical), to our Data and Technology Strategy and to the Student Voice Strategy. All strategies at the RVC are underpinned by a commitment to create an environment for sustainable wellbeing as part of a whole-university approach which will be further developed as we work towards the University Mental Health Charter Award in 2026.

2/ What does Blended Learning mean at RVC

The RVC is committed to creating opportunities for learning as part of a wider social activity in our community. The physical campus (classrooms, clinics, labs libraries, study areas) provide ways for students to study collaboratively or individually through the integration of social learning spaces into our varied campus layouts. Our use of a wide variety of digital tools and resources which complement learning, aims to ensure that RVC's digital environment provides opportunities to interact with course teams, to revise, to develop confidence in a range of future-focused digital skills.

Blended learning at RVC aims to combine the best of onsite teaching with learning activities that take place in a digital environment, while providing opportunities to learn socially through communities of practice

RVC's blended learning approach includes a mix of teaching approaches, delivery modes and learner styles. The 'blend' can mean different places for learning (onsite and digital); different

scheduling (synchronous and asynchronous), different pace (class and self-paced) and different types of instruction (expert led, social/group, individual).

The practical and vocational nature of many of the RVC's courses mean that face-to-face learning is key to acquiring the necessary professional skills. This is blended with a variety of digital activities.

Blended learning is:

- **Student-centred active learning** to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to apply professional skills in their future careers through activities that involve active construction of meaning by learners.
- **A 'blend' of onsite and digital learning** opportunities and approaches designed to achieve the learning outcomes through active engagement in the co-construction of knowledge.
- **Learning as part of social activity in groups**, working collaboratively and with tutors whether onsite, on placements or online. When learners are co-located either in a physical or digital space they learn by interacting and observing others. This experience helps to build social and emotional skills whilst building shared meaning and understanding of problems and solutions.
- **Flexibility of time and place** with opportunities for self-paced learning (where appropriate) so students can study in the classroom, on campus, at home, in the library, at a placement or partner location to suit individual learning needs and schedules while achieving the overall programme learning outcomes and class-paced structure of the course.

3/ Principles of blended learning

Our six guiding principles for blended learning inform how we will achieve the strategy.

1. **Active and engaging learning**
   - Learning activities (both class-paced and self-paced) are designed in ways that promote active learning (Bonwell and Eison, 1991) to achieve the learning outcomes.
   - Active learning pedagogies provide ways for learners to co-construct knowledge through different types of authentic interactions with content.
   - The digital aspects of blended learning are more than simply passive access to content – students are actively involved in tasks such as quizzes, forums, Padlets, wikis, blogs, formative assessments, portfolio development, reflection, etc to consolidate concept. The instructor has a visible and active role in planning the learning and technology is used to enhance the achievement of the learning outcomes and the student experience.

2. **Flexible learning resources - onsite or digitally.**
   - Providing opportunities to make choices about how learners use learning materials enables them to personalise (to suit their learning preferences and backgrounds) aspects of their course. This degree of flexibility in how learning resources are used helps students to balance study with work and family commitments, their commute to campus and other potential demands on their time. Providing elements of student choice in how they use resources supports students to take ownership of their own learning.

- Flexible learning resources offer learners choices over when they engage with learning materials within the overall structure of the course (Jones-Devitt, 2020). This means learners can progress with some selected aspects of their course content digitally (self-paced), while other types of teaching, such as practical elements and lectures, will be class-paced (timetabled).

3. **Inclusive and accessible approaches to learning to support diverse learning styles and preferences**

- Ensuring learners are well-prepared to work in diverse and complex environments by eliminating barriers to accessing learning, whether onsite or digital, regardless of learner differences and backgrounds.
- Developing scaffolded and supportive learning designs for blended learning using the principles of Universal Design for Learning to ensure all students can participate, interact and collaborate effectively in groups while recognising their diverse needs.
- Ensuring that all students are supported to have reasonable adjustments (where appropriate) to allow them to fully engage with assessments.

4. **Evidence-based approach that uses data to improve student outcomes and to maintain teaching quality.**

- A data-driven approach to understanding student engagement using learning analytics to track continuous quality improvement of teaching materials and to support interventions where needed to improve successful student outcomes.

5. **Building learning communities to support the social aspects of learning in all modes of interaction).**

- A balance between learner-learner; learner-tutor and learner-content interactions for learning opportunities that take place both in onsite spaces (social learning spaces, lecture halls, library) and digitally.
- Constantly creating a social context for learning that recognises the importance of group collaboration and interaction (synchronous and asynchronous) as well as individual self-paced study in order to support reflection and the construction of knowledge.

6. **Uses technology to enhance interaction and to build confidence in digital skills.**

- Digital technology is an enabler – not an end in itself. It can be used in innovative ways as part of the course design to interact and communicate. It provides new ways to build community and collaboration as part of the overall student experience with their course, teaching staff and classmates
- In fast-changing workplaces digital skills are a critical aspect of future-focused employability skills. By using a wide range of digital tools and tasks as part of their course of study it supports students to develop digital skills including:
    - **Information Literacy:** The ability to find, evaluate, and use digital information effectively.
    - **AI Literacy:** The ethical and responsible use of AI tools to support learning and creativity.
    - **Communication and Collaboration:** Using digital tools to communicate, collaborate, and participate in online communities.
    - **Digital Content Creation:** Creating and editing digital content, including text, images, and video.

- **Safety and Security:** Understanding and practising safe online behaviors, including protecting personal data and online identity.
- **Problem Solving and Critical Thinking:** Using digital tools to solve problems, make informed decisions, and think critically about online information.

4/ Measuring Success – How will we know we are achieving these principles?

We will measure our success using both internal and external methods:

- **Student feedback** (e.g. Student Voice Strategy; You said… we did, Course Reps, DLCs, etc)
- Internal student surveys and student panels
- Use of Student Panels to support curricular change and future developments.
- External measures such as the NSS, PTEs and TEF award.
- An understanding of **student engagement** using learning analytics.
- **Successful student outcomes** in terms of attainment, continuation, completion and progression and Graduate Outcomes for our alumni.
- **Increased access and addressing risks to equality of learning opportunities** for students from diverse background and with specific needs using the APP plan.
- Feedback from external examiners, accrediting bodies and our regulator (OFS)

5/ Glossary of terminology

Term or Acronym	Description
Accessibility	Accessible learning ensures that all students can equally access the learning materials and experiences whether they are onsite digital learning accessed through LEARN the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).
Active Learning	Active learning (Bonwell and Eison 1991), provides opportunities for learners to construct knowledge through different types of authentic interaction with content (onsite or digital) that aligns to learning outcomes and involves more than simply passive access to content.
Asynchronous learning	Asynchronous learning refers to aspects of course content that are designed to be used by students outside of course contact hours. Student can access and complete activities flexibly within the overall timetable for the course. These activities can be scheduled or done at a time which suits the student. Asynchronous learning activities at the RVC include using lecture capture for revision; digital learning interactions, self-guided lesson activities, virtual forums and Padlet boards, formative online LEARN quizzes, and exchanges across discussion boards.

Blended Learning	Blended learning at RVC aims to combine the best of onsite teaching, with learning activities that take place in a digital environment, while providing opportunities to learn socially through communities of practice. RVC's blended learning approach includes a mix of teaching approaches, delivery modes and learner styles. The 'blend' can mean different places for learning (onsite and digital); different scheduling (synchronous and asynchronous), different pace (class and self-paced) and different types of instruction (expert led, social/group, individual). The practical and vocational nature of many of the RVC's courses mean that face-to-face learning is key to acquiring the necessary professional skills. This is blended with a variety of digital activities.
Class-Paced	A course is structured around a set timetable which includes when topics are taught and for all assessments. All students on the course progress through it according to this timetable.
Data Driven	Data is considered to have value in and of itself. Having the right insight into the information available to you can lead to worthwhile and new processes, goals and outcomes.
Digital Learning	Learning which is mediated through an online environment and which may take place either synchronously (live) or asynchronously. It is not determined by a physical location and may include audio and visual recordings, video, live streamed lectures and Q&As, presentations, podcasts, forums, online interactive learning objects, quizzes and notes.
Digital Skills	This refers to a range of transferable skills that enables both students and staff to use a variety of tools to communicate and, interact effectively in the digital environment (ex. Video conferencing, activity creation and interaction). It also includes the ability to differentiate the quality and usefulness of the content of third-party online materials. The Digital Skills Journey and the Digital Learning Champions promote student engagement with digital skills development.
Equality Act 2010	A legal framework to require the exercise of certain functions to be with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and other prohibited conduct and to increase equality of opportunity.
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information from individuals who live in the UK.
Inclusivity	Inclusive learning opportunities support all students to achieve the highest successful outcomes. It recognises and promotes the importance of

	diverse learners' voices and enables participation through scaffolding and effective communication strategies and the removal of barriers.
Interactive Learning Objects	A wide variety of interactive activities that require student input and can be accessed through LEARN including: computer assisted learning (CAL), Interactive quizzes (Moodle or other) formative assessments, SCORM packages, video recordings and reflection/quiz, forums, Padlets, etc.
Learning Analytics	Learning analytics refers to the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about the progress of learners and the contexts in which learning takes place (Sclater and Mullan, 2017).
Lecture Capture	Lecture capture is a technology which enables the recording, storage and delivery of materials (Ibrahim et al, 2021) At RVC Lecture Capture refers to the digital recording of live lectures in teaching spaces, in real time, using Panopto. Recorded content is subsequently published, archived and can be accessed remotely via the Virtual Learning Environment (LEARN). RVC's Lecture Capture Policy outlines roles and responsibilities for staff and students.
Onsite teaching	Learning that takes place in a physical onsite space on any of the RVC campus spaces, rotation or placement locations, or at any of our partners' physical spaces.
Personal Capture	At RVC Personal Capture refers to the digital recording of lecture concepts or content in 'chunks' made using Panopto. Teaching staff make their recordings at their desktop and then subsequently publish the recording to be accessed remotely by students via the Virtual Learning Environment (LEARN). These can be used as supplementary content to the whole group lectures.
Personal data	Any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ("data subject"). An identifiable person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an identification number, location data, online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that person.
RVC Blended Learning Rubric	An externally benchmarked framework of teaching strategies and design considerations for staff to use to develop and incorporate blended learning activities into their module or strand. The quality standards define baseline and enhancement actions which provide a consistent approach to blended learning across a wide range of student learning opportunities in RVC programmes. The rubric is currently being updated.
RVC Supported technologies	RVC provides a number of centrally supported technologies a part of the digital infrastructure for learning and teaching. They are accessible to staff and students using an RVC username and password.

	These technologies are centrally maintained, developed and supported by the professional service teams at RVC including LEARN, Exams, Library and IT. More information on RVC's supported tools can be found in the Learning and Teaching Toolkit in the Staff Hub on LEARN. The centrally supported technologies allow for data streams to be developed which can be used as part of learning analytics and which provide institutional data to various stakeholders.
Scaffolding	Scaffolding is an instructional method (Vygotsky, 1978) which provides support to learners in the form of text, facial, visual or verbal cues and feedback which direct students to engage with specific experiences or key concepts and learning opportunities as part of creating their individual learning journey. This roadmap can assist students in making decisions on sequencing of learning activities (self and class-paced), exploration of additional materials and strategies for revision and consolidation.
Self-Paced	Students can choose a suitable time to participate in a learning activity. This is also referred to as self-directed learning.
Student outcomes	Student outcomes can be measured and quantified in many ways across the student lifecycle. This may include access to education prior to enrolment and employability post-graduation. During the on-course part of students' learning the term refers to the attainment of the learning outcomes of that level, typically validated through the assessment of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies, successful progression through the levels of the programme and the final level of degree classification. Success in these areas can be related to engagement.
Synchronous teaching	Synchronous teaching, or 'live' events, are where students and instructors come together in a physical space or digital space to: a) foster learning through social interaction; and b) to provide opportunities for students to practise the key skills needed to achieve learning outcomes. In the physical space learning is aided by social interaction which creates a sense of community and belonging for learners. Methods of synchronous onsite learning include lectures, small group teaching, directed learning, practicals and tutorials. In the digital space, methods of learning include video conferencing (Teams, Zoom), online feedback sessions, and live-streaming lectures. All learning activities are part of the overall planning of a class-paced course but provide different modalities for learning activities.
Virtual Learning Environment (VLE):	Centrally provided and supported learning platform and supporting technologies – at RVC our VLE is commonly referred to as LEARN.

Contact

Developed through the Blended Learning project group. For more information on this strategy, or other concepts discussed in this document, please contact Director of Learning and Wellbeing.

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Section responsible for policy maintenance and review	Learning and Wellbeing
Contact	Michele Milner Director of Learning and Wellbeing