DMU Replay title: **Distance learning or Blended learning**

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In theory, there is a clear definitional distinction between distance and blended-learning.

Distance learning courses are those on which students study remotely or ‘off-campus’, and do not attend any on-campus teaching.

Blended learning courses combine traditional classroom, or campus-based teaching with off-campus distance learning.

In practice:

Many courses described as ‘distance learning’ at DMU might more accurately be described as blended learning because although off-campus teaching may predominate, they still feature some on-campus or face-to-face teaching such as Study Days here at DMU.

But there are many other distance learning courses at DMU which are strictly distance learning. Some modules and programmes are strictly distance learning because they need to be so.

For example, some programmes are intended for delivery to international students who might be resident across several continents which obviously makes the on-campus or face-to-face study activities days, featured in blended-learning, impractical and/or unfair for those students not resident in the UK.

Another reason some courses are strictly distance learning is that they are CPD or short course training programmes that have been perhaps commissioned by, or developed in conjunction with, an external agency or private company who have required the course to be online, or distance learning, only.

A blended learning programme would typically include one or more study days for each module on the course. These study days will include those aspects of modules for which students would derive most benefit from face-to-face interactions with the module leader and fellow students. These will often include an initial ‘Induction’ study day near the beginning of the module or programme.

Students will often be asked to do some preparatory reading or other activity before their Study Days.

So does it strictly speaking matter how you describe your programme, i.e. whether you describe it as distance-learning or blended-learning?

Well, there’s at least one reason why it might matter, in terms of the services that different parts of the library provide. The library is able to provide a photocopy service and postal loans service to distance learners. However in terms of learning and teaching how you define the delivery method is not the most important thing. If a student is learning remotely then what is important is how you deliver that teaching not what you call it.

The Distance Learning Design team in CELT are able to advice on all aspects of distance or blended learning whether you are setting up a full programme or just a small bite-size module.