



## Developing a Sustainable and Transformative Blended Learning Strategy at SMU

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**Domain:** Assessment & Pedagogy

**Challenge Area:** Teaching Effectiveness & Impact Measurement

**Status:** Established Best Practice (validated and replicable practices)

**Implementation Complexity:** Medium

Singapore Management University (SMU) implemented an institution-wide Blended Learning (BL) strategy as part of its Digital Learning Strategy to enable curriculum ambidexterity and future-ready teaching and learning. The strategy combines two complementary approaches: guided development of strategically identified BL courses at the school level, and flexible managed BL opportunities for all instructors. Supported by learning designers, technologists, robust quality assurance processes, and targeted faculty and student development, the initiative ensures consistency, innovation, and academic rigor. Within 1.5 years, BL adoption tripled, receiving positive student feedback, strong learning outcomes, and a scalable model for sustainable teaching and learning innovation.

### Practical Implementation

This best practice was applied through the systematic implementation of an institution-wide BL strategy under its Digital Learning Strategy. Rather than ad hoc adoption, SMU introduced two coordinated approaches.

At the school and programme level, selected courses were strategically identified for guided BL development, supported by learning designers and technologists to ensure consistency, scalability, and quality, particularly for large-enrolment courses. In parallel, all instructors were empowered to innovate through managed BL opportunities, allowing up to one-third of a course to be delivered online, with consultation and resources provided on demand.

To ensure sustainability and academic rigor, SMU embedded robust quality assurance processes, including peer review of BL proposals, enhanced course evaluation instruments, and continuous monitoring of digital platforms. Faculty capability building was supported through structured development programmes, while students received targeted support to succeed in blended environments. Incentives and risk-mitigation measures further encouraged adoption.

Collectively, these practices enabled rapid, high-quality scaling of BL across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, enhancing both teaching effectiveness and student learning experiences.

### Impact Indicator

The impact of SMU's institution-wide BL strategy was measured through a combination of quantitative indicators, qualitative feedback, and longitudinal evaluation mechanisms to ensure both effectiveness and academic rigor.

At the course level, students enrolled in BL courses were required to complete enhanced course evaluation surveys that included BL-specific items in

### Enablers

- **People and Capability Resources**
  - Learning Designers to support course redesign, learning alignment, and blended pedagogy
  - Educational / Learning Technologists to advise on tools, platforms, and digital workflows
  - Faculty Champions and Peer Reviewers (e.g. Associate Deans, coordinating groups) to review BL proposals and share best practices

addition to standard teaching evaluation questions. These surveys captured student perceptions of learning design, engagement, clarity of online components, and overall learning experience. Trend analysis across multiple terms was conducted to monitor changes in sentiment and identify areas for improvement.

To complement survey data, qualitative insights were gathered through student interviews and focus group discussions, providing deeper understanding of how BL design influenced learning behaviours, engagement, and flexibility. These findings were synthesised and reported to senior management at the end of each term to inform institutional decision-making. Comparative analysis was also undertaken by benchmarking BL course evaluation scores against conventional non-blended courses. Results showed that BL courses achieved slightly higher average ratings across evaluation items, suggesting that learning quality was maintained or enhanced.

In addition, a Net Promoter Score (NPS) was used as a holistic indicator of student advocacy, enabling SMU to track overall satisfaction with BL experiences over time. At the institutional level, adoption and scale were measured through implementation metrics, including the number of instructors teaching in BL mode, the number of BL courses offered, and the total student enrolment impacted per term. Within 1.5 years, a three-fold increase in BL adoption demonstrated successful scaling of the strategy.

To safeguard academic standards beyond immediate perceptions, SMU initiated a longitudinal study examining the impact of pre-requisite BL courses on student performance in subsequent courses. This longer-term evaluation ensures that learning outcomes and academic rigor are sustained, reinforcing the robustness and credibility of the best practice.

- IT and Digital Learning Support Staff for platform support, monitoring, and analytics
- Library and Student Support Staff to design student-facing digital learning workshops
- **Faculty Development Resources**
  - Structured faculty development programmes (e.g. modular, bite-sized online courses)
  - Workshops on blended pedagogy, assessment design, and active learning online
  - Self-help resources, guides, and instructional videos
  - Consultation clinics for course design and technology use
- **Digital Learning Infrastructure**
  - Learning Management System (LMS) supporting blended delivery
  - Video creation and editing software
  - Online polling and engagement tools
  - Online collaborative platforms for group work and discussion
  - Video conferencing tools for synchronous online sessions and guest speakers
  - Online assessment and proctoring tools (where applicable)
  - AI-enabled learning tools (e.g. AI tutors for asynchronous learning support)
- **Physical Infrastructure**
  - Self-recording studio booths or dedicated recording spaces
  - Hardware for video capture (cameras, microphones, lighting)
- **Quality Assurance and Evaluation Tools**
  - Clear BL guidelines and proposal templates
  - Peer review processes and approval workflows
  - Enhanced course evaluation instruments with BL-specific items
  - Student interview and focus group protocols
  - Dashboards or reports for monitoring tool usage and adoption trends
- **Incentives and Policy Enablers**
  - Teaching workload flexibility (e.g. reduced contact hours)
  - Risk-mitigation measures (e.g. temporary exemption from course evaluation scores)
  - Institutional recognition of teaching innovation