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**A Learning & Teaching Research Collaboration**

***Understanding Students' preferences for Blended Learning approaches at Westminster Business School***

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**A Learning & Teaching Research Collaboration**

## **Section 1. Executive Summary (300-400 words)**

Blended learning is an educational approach combining the best practices from traditional face-to-face classes with online learning, which has been increasingly adopted in higher education as it enhances student engagement and the educational experience. However, the COVID pandemic accelerated the shift to different modes of teaching and called for new learning spaces through classes on campus, off-campus and online activities.

This "Students as Co-Creators" project investigated students' preferences regarding the design of blended learning modules at the Westminster Business School. This project used mixed methods; the data was collected by using an online survey questionnaire that was conducted between 1st April and 30th June, and semi-structured interviews were carried out between June 30th and July 20th. In addition, the data were obtained from 111 University of Westminster students via an online survey questionnaire, followed by ten semi-structured interviews.

Our findings from the quantitative data revealed that students believe blended learning modules should include a balanced mix of on-campus, off-campus, online, and independent study activities, with on-campus classes being the favourite among students, followed by a preference for off-campus activities such as field trips. Most participants believe blended learning activities positively impact student engagement. In addition, short videos are the favourite tool used in flipped classroom activities. The three most popular assessment types in blended learning were written assignments, such as reports and essays, presentations, and online quizzes.

Our interview findings show that participants believe off-campus activities, such as field trips, can enhance the sense of belonging and camaraderie among peers and should be incorporated throughout all years of study. Furthermore, they favour using digital tools like quizzes and games in on-campus classes to enhance engagement, suggesting that these activities be integrated into lectures and seminars for each module and that online classes be scheduled consistently within the same week(s) across all modules.

## **Section 2. Background and Aims (200-300 words)**

Blended learning integrates effective practices from both physical and digital environments (Office for Students, 2022). It is increasingly adopted in higher education due to benefits like improved lecturer-student interaction (Marie, 2021), cost efficiency (Rasheed, Kamsin and Abdullah, 2020), and higher student engagement (Lapitan et al., 2021). However, the rapid changes in teaching and learning called for new definitions of blended learning. For example, The Office for Students (2023) defines it as the use of in-person delivery and digital environment. Meanwhile, JISC (2020) understands blended learning as face-to-face learning and dynamic digital activities and content. Consequently, the current definition of blended learning combines face-to-face activities, on or off campus, and online activities. Moreover, the time that both learning activities are delivered can be synchronous, when students and instructors meet simultaneously, and asynchronous, when students access learning material at their own pace (Stanford, no date)

Within Blended Learning, the flipped classroom stands out by reversing traditional methods: students prepare with digital resources before class (Lapitan et al., 2021), and engage in interactive activities like discussions and quizzes during class (Rau et al., 2017). However, there has been limited research conducted on blended learning, necessitating exploration into its effects on student experiences through mixed methods (Nikolopoulou and Zacharis, 2023). This includes investigating its benefits and impact on student engagement (Rasheed, Kamsin and Abdullah, 2020), as well as the implementation challenges faced by students, teachers, and educational institutions (Rasheed, Kamsin and Abdullah, 2020).

This study aims to comprehend students' preferences regarding the design of blended learning modules to determine the best balance of physical and online activities that will enhance the learning experience at the Westminster Business School (WBS). To achieve this aim, this project will carry out a survey questionnaire to identify and measure students' preferences on key characteristics of blended learning and semi-structured interviews to have a deeper understanding of these preferences. The participants will be undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) students at WBS, and the SCC team hopes these findings will help the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation (CETI), the directors of teaching and learning and course leaders to improve the guidelines and training on module design.

## **Section 3. Methods (150-300 words)**

This project uses mixed methods by integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection and analysis as it offers distinct perspectives on the studied phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). For example, quantitative research offers a thorough understanding of a research problem using numerical data, charts, and statistical analyses (Malina, Nrreklit and Selto, 2011). Qualitative research lies in its ability to elucidate social processes, as well as to answer 'why' and 'how' questions within social contexts (Berg and Lune, 2012). Moreover, it is necessary to investigate the impact of blended learning on student experiences using mixed methods (Nikolopoulou and Zacharis, 2023) that will result in a research outcome that is more robust than using either method alone (Malina, Nrreklit and Selto, 2011).

In quantitative research, a survey questionnaire was used as a data collection technique to identify and measure important attributes of blended learning. The questionnaire had 30 questions and had two sections. The first one gathered socio-demographic information such as age and level of study. The second section focused on blended learning attributes. The questionnaire employed multiple choice and Likert scale questions and was conducted between 1st April and 30th June 2024. MS Forms was used to create the questionnaire, leveraging its user-friendly templates for quick design and secure data protection. The survey was distributed through the University of Westminster student email to all WBS course and module leaders. To encourage participation, students entered a prize draw for one of two £15 Amazon vouchers.

In qualitative research, semi-structured interviews were used as a data collection technique to have a deeper understanding of students’ preferences for blended learning modules. The themes identified included blended learning activities, a sense of belonging, the content of recorded videos, and teamwork skills. The interviews were carried out between June 30th to July 20th, 2024. The recorded interviews with subtitles were kept in Panopto to secure video recording storage and avoid data loss. Students could participate in a prize draw to win a £25 Amazon voucher; three winners were selected.

In research, it is important to understand the ethical considerations and take responsibility for ethical conduct during this process (Sieber and Tolich, 2013). For that reason, it was crucial to have an ethics form approved before data collection as it protects the rights and confidentiality of the participants. In addition, we completed an ethics form approved by the ethics committee at CETI with an ethics application number CETI-LTRC-2324-09. The research was classified as a Class 1 application.

The Participation Information Sheet (Appendix 1) was made available to all participants in the survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. This document helped participants understand the goals and objectives of our study as well as their rights in this process. Participants could withdraw from the study at any time, and the data was gathered willingly and anonymously. As proof that participants gave their consent voluntarily, a signed consent form (Appendix 2). It proves adherence to ethical norms and shields researchers from liability.

The survey questionnaire had 115 responses, but four were removed as they were duplicated. Of 111 responses, 81.98% (91) were UG students and 18.02% (20) postgraduate students. Figure 1 shows the response by the level of study, with 2nd-year students (34.23%) as the group that contributed the most. Most responses (59.46%) self-identified as female, and 38.74% as males.

### Figure 1: Survey questionnaire – participants’ level of study

## **Section 4. Results**

The survey questionnaire has yielded the following insightful findings:

### Figure 2: Students preferences on modes of learning

Students perceive blended learning modules should have a good range of on-campus, off-campus, online, and independent study activities, with the on-campus classes being the favourite among students, with 38.81% (104), but 25.37% (68) preferred off-campus activities such as field trips. The asynchronous online class is the third favourite, with 16.66% (50). Therefore, a fair combination of these classes would improve the student learning experience.

### Figure 3: Location when attending online classes

Figure 3 shows students’ preferences for the location when attending synchronous and asynchronous online classes. Most students preferred attending online classes from home, with 47.57% (98). In total, 51.95% of participants would rather attend online classes in different locations on campus. The second most favoured place is the University Library, with 20.39% (42).

### Figure 4: Technological tools in synchronous and asynchronous online classes

Figure 4 shows that when attending synchronous and asynchronous online classes, the three most popular technological tools that enhance their engagement are quizzes and polls (such as Kahoot, Poll Everywhere, and Mentimeter) with 25.51 (62), Microsoft 365 tools for co-authoring documents to improve efficiency and productivity such as MS word, PowerPoint and Excel with 23.87% (58), and short videos with 23.05% (56). Similar results are seen when students attend on-campus classes. This indicates that different technological tools are necessary to promote student engagement. Virtual / augmented reality is the least favourite technological tool, with 9.47% (23), although this tool has not been implemented fully at the UG level.

### Figure 5: Technological tools when completing an independent study activities

Figure 5 shows the student's preferences for the technological tools during independent learning activities. This is aligned with flipped classroom activities in which students can answer questions after watching a video outside the classroom, and these answers are discussed in the following on-campus class. Students preferred different tools such as short videos with 25.89% (73); then quizzes/polls and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) such as LinkedIn Learning courses and Google Career Certificates with 17.02% (48) each. The least popular is online whiteboards (such as Padlet), with 12.06% (34).

### Figure 6: Duration of recorded videos during an independent study activity

Figure 6 explores using recorded videos as part of flipped classroom activities, particularly students' perceptions of the optimal length for these videos. Reviewing the responses, 36.04% of participants (40) prefer a video that lasts between 6-10 minutes. Videos lower than 5 minutes were preferred by 22.52% (25), while 18.02% of the participants (20) preferred videos between 11-15 minutes. Together, students who prefer videos that last less than 5 minutes and between 6-10 minutes make up 56.56% of the responses. This indicates that student preference for watching recorded videos declines as video length increases, indicating a general preference for shorter videos to watch before classes.

### Figure 7: Assessment types in blended learning modules

Figure 7 shows students' preferences for assessment types in blended learning. The three most popular assessment types are written assessments like reports/essays with 22.57% (86), presentations with 15.49% (59), and online quizzes with 14.96% (57). It is noticeable when having presentations as assessments; students prefer live ones to video-recorded presentations (8.66%). In addition, students prefer other non-traditional types of evaluation that can be the subject of further analysis when implemented in modules.

### Figure 8: Blended learning activities enhance student engagement

Figure 8 shows the students’ perception of the impact of blended learning on their engagement. The majority of participants believe that blended learning activities have a favourable effect on students' engagement, with 78.38% strongly agreeing and agreeing with this perception, and 5.4% strongly disagreeing and disagreeing with the statement. This suggests that WBS modules should have a healthy mix of online, off-campus, on-campus, and independent learning activities.

The semi-structured interviews have yielded the following insightful findings:

Due to time constraints, not all the ten interviews were transcribed completely. Most interviewees were 2nd and 3rd year UG students who prefer on-campus teaching to synchronous online classes as they enjoy social interaction with friends and can focus more on classes. However, interviewees acknowledged that online classes are suitable according to students learning preferences and availability due to work and family commitments.

Participants agree that having off-campus activities like field trips can improve their sense of belonging and rapport with their peers, and it should be carried out in all years of study. For example, some second-year direct entry students mentioned that they did not know their peers when they started studying at WBS. Similarly, other students stated they did not know their peers when studying option modules in the second semester. Therefore, having a field trip may improve their networking and sense of belonging to the course.

Participants prefer to use some online activities in on-campus classes to improve student engagement. For example, students mentioned using quizzes and games (Kahoot and Poll Everywhere competitions). However, these online activities should be carried out in lectures and seminars in each module. Students suggest that if there are online classes, they should be scheduled for the same week(s) in all modules. Two students mentioned that on the same day, one module was delivered online and the other on campus, and they found it challenging to find a quiet place to attend the online class on campus as they did not have enough time to go back home to attend the class.

## **Section 5. Discussion (300-600 words)**

The students identified that a fair combination of the four blended learning modes (on-campus activities, online classes, synchronous online classes and independent study activities) would improve their learning experience. This finding is aligned with the new definition of blended learning (JISC, 2020). However, on-campus classes are the most favourite activity for UG and PG students (38.81%). The interviewees confirm this as they argue that students can focus more during lectures/seminars and enjoy having social interaction with their peers. The literature confirms this finding, as classes on campus are more engaging and interactive than asynchronous online sessions (Kumar *et al.*, 2021).

During on-campus and synchronous online classes, students prefer to use online tools that can enhance their engagement, including quizzes/polls (Kahoot Poll Everywhere and Mentimeter) with 25.51%, some collaborative tools using MS Office 365 (MS Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc) with 23.87%, and short videos with 23.05%. This finding is aligned with Kumar et al. (2021) on using digital tools in blended learning. However, online whiteboards such as Padlet, and virtual / augmented reality tools have lower preferences (18.11% and 9.47% respectively). One factor contributing to this result is that Padlet is a digital tool used more often at WBS; meanwhile, an augmented / virtual reality tool has not been explored at the UG level.

A popular independent study activity in blended learning involves using short video clips that students have to watch and then answer some questions that will be discussed during the on-campus class. Most students prefer a short video between 0-15 minutes (22.52% prefer less than 5 minutes; 36.04% prefer a video that lasts between 6-10 minutes, and 18.02% between 11-15 minutes). This demonstrates that longer videos will have a negative impact on student engagement, a finding supported by Smith (2014). More importantly, it is advisable to divide long videos into short clips (Lapitan *et al.*, 2021).

There is a need to use digital tools in assessment, including video presentations, e-portfolios and digital projects (Beckingham et al., 2022). However, in this project, the three most popular assessments are written assessments (22.57%), such as reports and essays, presentations (15.49%) and online quizzes (14.96%). Some interviewees pointed out technical issues in video-recorded presentations and their preference for social activities with their peers. Meanwhile, the less popular assessment type is exams (0.26%), which challenges the findings from Beetham and MacNeill (2023), who argue that open-book exams and time-limited assignments are popular in blended learning.

During this project, the SCC team was enthusiastic and supportive and was involved in the decision-making process. For that reason, it was decided to arrange and record the online meetings so that the team members could attend or watch them and use MS tools in 365 to collaborate in producing documents, including the participant information sheet, consent form, questionnaire drafts, interview themes, etc. Moreover, the team identified the tasks, deadlines, and allocation of activities.

Despite the good progress of this SCC project, there have been different limitations, including a small sample size in the questionnaire. Therefore, it is difficult that the results from 111 participants who completed the survey questionnaire represent the whole Westminster Business School population. Moreover, in the interviews, out of 38 students who volunteered to be interviewed, only 10 accepted the interview invitation. A factor contributing to this limitation is that the survey was shared at the end of the second semester when most students were on holiday and rarely checked their emails. Moreover, including students from different UoW colleges would be beneficial rather than only at WBS, as it will provide a holistic view. During the SCC project, one of the student partners decided to stop working on the project due to personal reasons. But on the positive side, another student partner was recruited. Another limitation is that there were issues when recording the online interviews. MS teams did not offer this functionality to UoW students, so students had to use other external tools such as their mobile phones and Zoom.

## **Section 6. Conclusions and Recommendations (200-300 words)**

The definition of blended learning in higher education has been evolving and calls for a combination of on-campus, off-campus, online, and independent study activities to improve the student learning experience. Moreover, to improve student engagement in blended learning, students should understand the purpose of this combination of learning activities, how they can engage, and the skills/competencies they can learn.

WBS students prefer on-campus learning activities as they concentrate more and benefit from social interaction with peers and lecturers, which enhances their sense of belonging and, therefore, their learning experience. However, students acknowledge that online classes are preferred by other students due to their learning preferences and other commitments, such as work.

In any learning activity in blended learning, lecturers should use digital tools, including quizzes/polls (using software such as Kahoot, Poll Everywhere, and Mentimeter), Microsoft 365 tools for co-authoring documents to improve efficiency and productivity, such as MS Word, PowerPoint and Excel, and short videos. Currently, the UoW offers institutional accounts for Poll Everywhere and Padlet, so lecturers should consider registering and using them.

Regarding the length of short videos, students tend to prefer videos between 5 to 10 minutes, and it is clear that their engagement is diminished if the video is longer. Moreover, lecturers can create short videos summarising key lecturers, revision sessions, assessment briefs, and welcome videos.

Students recognise the importance of developing a sense of belonging in blended learning modules. Some do not know their peers for different reasons, for example when taking option modules, studying in a large cohort, or being second-year direct entry students. Therefore, some activities help build this sense of belonging, including field trips and rotating the team members during seminar activities.

Finally, it is beneficial that all modules at the same level have scheduled synchronous online classes in the same week, as it will facilitate students' attendance at the sessions at home. Moreover, students prefer that students switch on their cameras in online classes.

## **Section 7. Dissemination (200-300 words)**

We hope to maximise the impact of our research and foster improvements in blended learning practices across the university by using the following practical and impactful methods:

In the short term, we will share the findings of this project with several key stakeholders, such as the Director of Teaching and Learning, course leaders, lecturers and the Students as Co-Creators team at the University of Westminster. We intend to write a blog that guides the development of a blended learning module that can be published on the CETI website or on prominent education platforms such [as Times Higher Education](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/campus), [WonkHE](https://wonkhe.com/), or [SEDA](https://www.seda.ac.uk/about-seda/). In addition, we will use social media platforms like LinkedIn to share our findings through posts and articles, targeting academic professionals and education enthusiasts.

In the medium term, we will partner with CETI to organise a presentation to UoW colleagues to showcase the recommendations on blended learning module design gathered from this research project. In addition, to reach a wider audience, we would like to record this video presentation and share it on different platforms such as YouTube, LinkedIn and X.

In the long term, as this research project involved undertaking a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, we would like to write an academic article with the research findings about blended learning guidance in higher education. The article can be published in some journals such The [International Journal for Students as Partners](https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/ijsap/index), and [SEDA – Educational Developments](https://www.seda.ac.uk/seda-publishing/educational-developments/).

## **Section 8. Reflection (200-300 words)**

Being selected to work on the Blended Learning project was an invaluable opportunity to understand the research process better, integrate my research skills and collect real-time data while working as a group.

There were many effective experiences in the research process. For example, the identification and distribution of the tasks within the SCC teams and setting the due dates for each task helped me in the timely completion of them. Another effective strategy we employed was creating a group chat in Microsoft Teams, which facilitated direct and quick interactions. This communication channel proved essential for exchanging ideas, addressing questions, and discussing our findings efficiently.

Another positive experience was the support and understanding from both my team members and academic partners, which was exceptional. I felt genuinely supported throughout the project, and the academic partners were exceptionally attentive, ensuring that our research experience for this project was continuously improving. Overall, this project was a beneficial endeavour, and I will carry the skills and lessons I acquired into future opportunities.

However, not everything went smoothly. Conducting the questionnaire and interviews during the holiday period, the refer/defer assessment submission presented a challenge in reaching out to candidates, resulting in fewer responses to the email invitations than anticipated, which was discouraging. To overcome this issue, next time, I would arrange the interviews earlier to balance a busy university schedule.

Another challenge was that a team member left this project. We understand that students have different commitments and priorities. Next time, an SCC project should have up to five student partners so that we can complete the interviews faster and reach more participants. Despite this setback, the interview process was fascinating and provided an effective means of gathering direct insights from students, leading to meaningful and impactful conversations.

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## Appendix 1 - Participant Information Sheet

**PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET - QUESTIONNAIRE**

TITLE OF STUDY:

**Understanding Students' preferences for Blended Learning approaches in Higher Education.**

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What is the purpose of this investigation?

**You** **are** being **invited** to take part in a **research study on Blended Learning in Higher Education**. In the last years, there has been a growing number of courses / modules using learning activities in the physical and digital learning environments in higher education, as they offer a flexible, affordable, and accessible way for students to improve their employability skills. Consequently, the University of Westminster has demonstrated increasing interest in adopting good practices in this form of delivery, which can be embedded in courses and modules, thereby meeting this growing demand, and improving the student learning experience.

**Blended learning** is an educational approach that **combines the best practices from the physical and digital learning environments**, accommodating students' individual learning needs and preferences and, thus, delivering a transformative student experience. This project will **review the importance** and **key attributes** **of blended learning activities** at the Westminster Business School by understanding students’ preferences. It will provide good practices and insights into the **optimal level of blending physical and online activities** that will **help the development of courses / modules** at the school and therefore improve student engagement and levels of success.

This research is being undertaken as part of the **students as Co-Creators programme**.

Why was I invited? Am I required to participate?

You are invited to participate in this questionnaire because as a student at university, this research affects you directly and we hope that you seize the occasion to state your own opinions on blended learning based on your experience and preferences. Which, therefore, might have an impact on how the future learning for students might alter. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to refuse or withdraw from the questionnaire at any time without any penalty. If you do decide to take part, you may withdraw at any point for any reason before submitting your answers by pressing the ‘Exit’ button/ closing the browser. In this research, there are no right or wrong answers as it is looking for honest opinions from the respondents.

What will happen if I participate? What should I do?

Participants need to complete a questionnaire with up to 30 questions. This research will be carried out from 1st April to 30th June 2024.

Please note:

* Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
* You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
* You have the right to ask for your data to be withdrawn as long as this is practical, and for personal information to be destroyed.
* You do not have to answer particular questions on the questionnaire if you do not wish to do so.
* Your IP address will not be stored. We will take all reasonable measures to ensure that data remain confidential.
* Your responses will normally be made anonymous, unless indicated above to the contrary, and will be kept confidential unless you provide explicit consent to do otherwise, for example, the use of your image from photographs and/or video recordings.
* No individuals should be identifiable from any collated data, written report of the research, or any publications arising from it.
* All computer data files will be encrypted, and password protected. The researcher will keep files in a secure place and will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.
* All hard copy documents, e.g., consent forms, completed questionnaires, etc. will be kept securely and in a locked cupboard, wherever possible on university premises. Documents may be scanned and stored electronically. This may be done to enable secure transmission of data to the university’s secure computer systems.
* The questionnaire data will be retained intact for a minimum retention period of three years after publication. After this, the data will be deleted or destroyed.
* If you wish you, can receive information on the results of the research. Please indicate on the consent form if you would like to receive this information.
* The student partners can be contacted during and after participation by email at [w1893656@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:w1893656@my.westminster.ac.uk); [w1931626@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:w1931626@my.westminster.ac.uk); and [w1874351@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:w1874351@my.westminster.ac.uk).
* If you have any concerns about your experience of taking part in the research, you can contact the academic partners Dr. Gustavo R. Espinoza-Ramos by e-mail at [g.espinozaramos@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:g.espinozaramos@westminster.ac.uk); and Dr. Setenay Dilek Fidler at [s.dilekfidler@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:s.dilekfidler@westminster.ac.uk).
* If you have any complaints or want to report any incidents, please contact the head of school (University of Westminster- +44 (0)20 7911 5000 ex: 66693.
* If you want to know more about the students as Co-Creators programme, you can contact [Studentpartnership@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:Studentpartnership@westminster.ac.uk)

**PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET - INTERVIEWS**

TITLE OF STUDY:

**Understanding Students' preferences for Blended Learning approaches in Higher Education.**

Student Partners:

* Drilena Ukperaj. [w1893656@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:w1893656@my.westminster.ac.uk). WBS. Level 5
* Diya Chhillar [w1931626@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:w1931626@my.westminster.ac.uk) – WBS. Level 5
* Mahima Singh [w1874351@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:w1874351@my.westminster.ac.uk) - WBS. Level 5

Academic partners:

* Dr. Gustavo R. Espinoza-Ramos. [G.espinozaramos@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:G.espinozaramos@westminster.ac.uk). WBS
* Dr. Setenay Dilek Fidler: [s.dilekfidler@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:s.dilekfidler@westminster.ac.uk). WBS

What is the purpose of this investigation?

**You** **are** being **invited** to take part in a **research study on Blended Learning in Higher Education**. In the last years, there has been a growing number of courses / modules using learning activities in the physical and digital learning environments in higher education, as they offer a flexible, affordable, and accessible way for students to improve their employability skills. Consequently, the University of Westminster has demonstrated increasing interest in adopting good practices in this form of delivery, which can be embedded in courses and modules, thereby meeting this growing demand, and improving the student learning experience.

**Blended learning** is an educational approach that **combines the best practices from the physical and digital learning environments**, accommodating students' individual learning needs and preferences and, thus, delivering a transformative student experience. This project will **review the importance** and **key attributes** **of blended learning activities** at the Westminster Business School by understanding students’ preferences. It will provide good practices and insights into the **optimal level of blending physical and online activities** that will **help the development of courses / modules** at the school and therefore improve student engagement and levels of success.

This research is being undertaken as part of the **students as Co-Creators programme**.

Why was I invited? Am I required to participate?

You are invited to participate because as a student at university, this research affects you directly and we hope that you seize the occasion to state your own opinions on blended learning based on your experience and preferences. Which, therefore, might have an impact on how the future learning for students might alter. Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to refuse or withdraw from the interviews at any time without any penalty. In this research, there are no right or wrong answers as it is looking for honest opinions from the respondents.

What will happen if I participate? What should I do?

Participants need to complete audio-recorded interviews. This research will be carried out from 1st April to 30th June 2024. Your participation will be tailored to your own preferences. We have different options which you can choose from at your own convenience and let us know by email at [G.espinozaramos@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:G.espinozaramos@westminster.ac.uk).

* Microsoft Teams (30 minutes max)
* The participant may request a not recorded interview, although the researcher may take notes.
* Happy to hear a suggestion from you if the above is not applicable for you.

Please note:

* Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
* You have the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
* You have the right to ask for your data to be withdrawn as long as this is practical, and for personal information to be destroyed.
* You do not have to answer particular questions either on questionnaires or in interviews if you do not wish to do so.
* Your responses will normally be made anonymous, unless indicated above to the contrary, and will be kept confidential unless you provide explicit consent to do otherwise, for example, the use of your image from photographs and/or video recordings.
* No individuals should be identifiable from any collated data, written report of the research, or any publications arising from it.
* All computer data files will be encrypted, and password protected. The researcher will keep files in a secure place and will comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation.
* All hard copy documents, e.g., consent forms, completed questionnaires, etc. will be kept securely and in a locked cupboard, wherever possible on university premises. Documents may be scanned and stored electronically. This may be done to enable secure transmission of data to the university’s secure computer systems.
* The transcripts, the recorded audio interviews and any other data will be retained intact for a minimum retention period of three years after publication. After this length of time the data is going to be deleted or destroyed.
* If you wish you, can receive information on the results of the research. Please indicate on the consent form if you would like to receive this information.
* The student partners can be contacted during and after participation by email at [w1893656@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:w1893656@my.westminster.ac.uk); [w1931626@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:w1931626@my.westminster.ac.uk); and [w1874351@my.westminster.ac.uk](mailto:w1874351@my.westminster.ac.uk)
* If you have any concerns about your experience of taking part in the research, you can contact the academic partners Dr. Gustavo R. Espinoza-Ramos by e-mail at [g.espinozaramos@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:g.espinozaramos@westminster.ac.uk); and Dr. Setenay Dilek Fidler at [s.dilekfidler@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:s.dilekfidler@westminster.ac.uk).
* If you have any complaints or want to report any incidents, please contact the head of school (University of Westminster- +44 (0)20 7911 5000 ex: 66693.
* If you want to know more about the students as Co-Creators programme, you can contact [Studentpartnership@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:Studentpartnership@westminster.ac.uk)

## Appendix 2 - Consent form

**PROJECT CONSENT FORM - QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Title of Study:**

Understanding Students Preferences for Blended Learning Approaches in Higher Education

Academic partners (researcher):

* Dr. Gustavo R. Espinoza-Ramos
* Dr. Setenay Dilek Fidler

Student partners (researcher):

* Drilena Ukperaj
* Diya Chhillar
* Mahima Singh

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| --- | --- | --- |
| I have been given the Participation Information Sheet and/or had its contents explained to me. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I have had an opportunity to ask any questions and I am satisfied with the answers given. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I understand I have a right to withdraw from the research at any time and I do not have to provide a reason. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I understand that if I withdraw from the research any data included in the results will be removed if that is practicable (I understand that once anonymised data has been collated into other datasets it may not be possible to remove that data). | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I agree to an interview being audio-recorded. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in reports or publications arising from this research | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I would like to receive information relating to the results from this study. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I wish to receive a copy of this Consent form. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I confirm I am willing to be a participant in the above research study. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I note that the data collected may be retained in an archive.  I note my data will be fully anonymized and may be reused as part of future research activities. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |

**Participant’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This consent form will be stored separately from any data you provide so that your responses remain anonymous.

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I confirm I have provided a copy of the Participant Information Sheet approved by the Research Ethics Committee to the participant and fully explained its contents. I have given the participant an opportunity to ask questions, which have been answered.

**Researcher’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PROJECT CONSENT FORM - INTERVIEW**

**Title of Study:**

Understanding Students' Preferences for Blended Learning Approaches in Higher Education

Academic partners (researcher):

* Dr. Gustavo R. Espinoza-Ramos.
* Dr. Setenay Dilek Fidler

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| I have been given the Participation Information Sheet and/or had its contents explained to me. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I have had an opportunity to ask any questions and I am satisfied with the answers given. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I understand I have a right to withdraw from the research at any time and I do not have to provide a reason. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I understand that if I withdraw from the research any data included in the results will be removed if that is practicable (I understand that once anonymised data has been collated into other datasets it may not be possible to remove that data). | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I agree to an interview being audio-recorded. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in reports or publications arising from this research | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I would like to receive information relating to the results from this study. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I wish to receive a copy of this Consent form. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I confirm I am willing to be a participant in the above research study. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |
| I note that the data collected may be retained in an archive.  I note my data will be fully anonymized and may be reused as part of future research activities. | Yes ❒ | No ❒ |

**Participant’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

This consent form will be stored separately from any data you provide so that your responses remain anonymous.

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**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_