

WWU College of Business and Economics – Course Modality Policy

This policy is not intended to conflict with the requirements of CBA Sections 16.10 or 22.15

The College of Business and Economics and its associated departments and programs recognize that our academic strengths lie in our commitment to student-centered, inquiry-based learning, with authentic opportunities for student engagement. We are thus dedicated to centering that pedagogy for our students. We recognize that these central principles are not restricted to a single modality, and we encourage innovative and creative teaching.

Section I: Principles

The College of Business and Economics' policies on course modality are anchored in four fundamental principles:

1. Commitment to substantive and regular interaction and contact among students and between students and the instructor of record;
2. A recognition that face-to-face instruction is the core modality for students in the College, and an expectation that any proposal for an alternate modality will offer a compelling educational or pedagogical rationale for that modality;¹
3. The need for a careful delineation in course proposals between “class time work” or “contact hours” (or its asynchronous equivalent) and “homework” (the expected work that all students are expected to do in order to prepare for their class or contact hours);
4. A distinction between courses taught during the regular school year (fall, winter, and spring quarters) versus the summer quarter, and maintenance of a higher bar—in terms of face-to-face contact—for courses that are taught during the regular school year, typically as part of a standard faculty load.

Departments carry primary responsibility for their curricula and curricular decisions. This responsibility includes decisions regarding course modality. Departments may adopt this policy or develop their own. If developing their own, departments must adhere to the criteria and expectations outlined in this document.

The principles outlined in this document apply to the delivery of all proposed and previously approved courses taught in online and hybrid modalities.

Section II: Definitions

Alternate modality

Any course modality that is not face-to-face.

Contact hours

As per [ACC's Credit Hour Policy](#), contact hours are a measure and means of demonstrating the amount of regular and substantive interaction between the instructor and the students. Activities

¹ This recognition is in line with the University's broader commitment to in-person instruction and interaction as the heart of Western's educational mission.

that contribute to contact hours must be required of all students in the class and involve substantive interaction between the students and the instructor

Face-to-face course modality

Instruction is accomplished through regularly scheduled in-person class meetings. Alternative instruction may be employed on a limited basis to meet varying pedagogical needs. In this case, an account of alternative instructional time should be documented in the syllabus.

Courses that maintain in-person instruction through regularly scheduled in-person meetings are considered face-to-face even if they regularly incorporate online tools as part of students' out-of-class responsibilities (e.g. homework). Assigning podcasts, or even faculty-produced asynchronous lectures for students to view in lieu of traditional reading assignments, does not require a hybrid modality course definition. For that reason, a "flipped" classroom— in which students view on-line lectures asynchronously and faculty use in-person instructional time for discussion or guided work— would still be considered "face to face" because it preserves in-person contact hours.

Hybrid course modality

Instructional time is divided between face-to-face and online. In-person meetings are required, but less face-to-face time is included in the regular course schedule, replaced by alternative instruction methods including online instruction. We expect that recorded video lectures, even when accompanied by additional substantive interaction on the lecture material, will account for no more than half of the total contact hours for the course. At least 25% of instructional time must be scheduled face-to-face. Courses with classroom-based instruction linked to classrooms in multiple locations (the ITV model) are considered hybrid.

Online course modality

Online courses provide instruction remotely through asynchronous and synchronous means. While these courses do not meet face-to-face, faculty are responsible for designing activities— whether synchronous or asynchronous—that maintain the College's expectations of substantive and regular contact among students and between students and the instructor of record.

Asynchronous recorded video lectures can count towards contact hours only when they are accompanied by additional substantive interaction on the lecture material. We expect that recorded video lectures, even when accompanied by additional substantive interaction on the lecture material, will account for no more than half of the total contact hours for the course.

Online course modality – summer only

The course is approved for the online course modality only in the summer quarter.

Regular and substantive interaction

For purposes of this definition, **regular interaction** is providing the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and routine basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course or competency; and **substantive interaction** is engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, and also includes at least two of the following—

- Providing direct instruction;
- Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
- Providing information or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency;
- Facilitating a group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency.

Section III: Process for Approving an Alternate Modality

As with the approval of traditional face-to-face courses, approval of hybrid and online courses is subject to review by the Curriculum Committee and final review by the University Academic Coordinating Commission. All proposals must meet the requirements outlined in the **Curriculum Committee Membership and Meeting Practices**, including appropriate approval and/or collegial communication for programs affected outside of the proposing department. The proposed use of an alternate modality must also meet specific criteria depending on whether the course is taught during the regular school year (fall, winter, or spring quarters) or summer.

Alternate modality for a course taught in fall, winter, or spring quarters

Proposals to offer a course taught during fall, winter, or spring quarters (new or existing) in an alternate modality must meet all of the following requirements:

1. An explanation of the function or method of the online components of the course. What can students expect to do online that will differ from the kind of work they'll encounter in person? For example, does the online component consist of interactive online training simulations? Does it consist of online small group meetings?
2. A compelling rationale for the alternate modality based on student learning. For a rationale to be compelling, it must demonstrate the distinct benefits which the online components provide for student learning and/or engagement. Moving part of a course's scheduled contact hours to an online modality must accomplish course learning objectives in a way that in-person instruction or class time does not or does not do as well.
3. Maintenance of educational quality. The proposal must demonstrate that the overall quality of the course as defined by departmental standards is being maintained. In other words, provide evidence that the "added value" from the alternate modality in support of a learning outcome does not diminish the overall educational experience.
4. Achieve desired learning outcomes. The pedagogical elements (objectives, learning activities, interactions, instructional materials, technologies, and assessments) are constructed to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.
5. Sufficient substantive interaction. The proposal should carefully outline how course components will ensure substantive and regular contact and provide evidence that the overall amount of work required of the student work is appropriate for the number of credits assigned for the course as per [ACC's Credit Hour Policy](#). The alternative modality must meet the expectations for Academic Coordinating Commission (ACC) syllabus requirements, including an accounting of course time that demonstrates regular and substantive interaction that meets the credit hour requirements for contact

- hours. Syllabi must include a clear listing of in-person and/or synchronous meeting times and a clear explanation of any time spent in asynchronous instructional activities.
6. An accounting of resource requirements. This should include a list of hardware, software, and other technology infrastructure tools required of the faculty instructor and students (e.g. Zoom account, laptop computer, stable internet connection, etc.).
 7. A well-defined plan for ongoing training²; Departments will need to require that all faculty teaching using an alternate modality stay up to date with technological and pedagogical advances through training that is applicable to their modality and pedagogical approach.
 8. An Alternate Modality Proposal Submission. All of the above requirements must be addressed while submitting Appendix I: Alternate Modality Proposal as part of the application. Attach this proposal to the application in Curriculog.

Alternate modality for a summer or graduate-level course

Proposals to offer a course that will be taught in the summer quarter (new or existing) or at the graduate level in an alternate modality must meet all the requirements above (1-8) with one exception: enhancing student access may constitute a compelling educational justification for an alternate modality.

Appendix I: Alternate Modality Proposal (include as an attachment in Curriculog)

Proposer Name and Department: _____

Course Prefix & Number: _____

Course Title: _____

Is this a new course or existing course? New Existing (Temporary or Permanent)

Requested Modality (may check multiple options): Hybrid Online-Synch. Online-Asynch. Online-Mixed Synch.

Course Level (check one): Undergraduate Graduate Both

Quarter(s) offered (may check more than one): Fall, winter, or spring Summer

Please answer or address all of the following, which correspond to criteria 1-6 in Section III of this document (see those criteria for more details):

² The training policy is intentionally vague and it will be up to individual departments to determine appropriate training for online modalities.

1. What are the online components of the course? What can students expect to do online that will differ from the kind of work they'll encounter in person? If the course is being taught in summer, describe how the course differs from its structure during the academic year.
2. What is the rationale for choosing this modality? How does the choice of modality improve student learning? If applicable, how is student access improved? Note: Enhancing student access may only be used as rationale for summer or graduate-level courses.
3. How will the overall educational quality of the course be maintained in the alternate modality? In other words, in improving some learning outcomes through the alternate modality, how are you sure you are not negatively impacting other outcomes?
4. How are the pedagogical elements (objectives, learning activities, interactions, instructional materials, technologies, and assessments) constructed to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes? How will student identity be confirmed for online assessments?
5. Describe how the course components will ensure substantive and regular contact and provide evidence that the overall amount of work required of the student work is appropriate for the number of credits assigned for the course.³
6. Please provide a detailed description of all resources needed to effectively deliver the course in the alternative modality requested and if additional resources will be needed beyond what the department currently has available.
7. Training: Please outline a brief training plan for how you are going to meet your department's requirements for staying up to date with technological and pedagogical advances applicable to your modality and pedagogical approach.

³ All courses, regardless of modality, must be in compliance with ACC requirements regarding credit hours, information included on syllabi, contact hours, and meeting times. Proposals must be specific about how time will be spent (i.e. in Zoom contact, in watching videos, or in face-to-face meetings) in conformance with the guidelines laid out in the "[ACC Policy on Credit Hours](#)"