**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 (CBE) 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 three 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;[[1]](#footnote-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);

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. The definitions of various alternate modalities can be found below as per the WWU [Catalog](https://catalog.wwu.edu/content.php?catoid=20&navoid=5651#course-modalities-instructional-method).

**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 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.

**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.

Proposals to offer a course 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 percentage of the course content is online? 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 (which includes engagement) of the intended student demographic. The intended student demographic must be associated with a specific initiative/program of CBE. For a rationale to be compelling, it must demonstrate the distinct benefits which the online components provide for student learning of the intended demographic. 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 or enhancement of educational quality. The proposal must demonstrate that the overall quality of the course as defined by departmental standards is being maintained or enhanced. 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.) as well as any technological or pedagogical training required for the instructor to effectively teach the class in the alternative modality.

7. 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.

**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):

1. What are the online components of the course? What percentage of the course content is online? 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? What is the intended student demographic? For example, for the Everett Hybrid MBA program, the intended demographic is fully employed managers living in the Everett region. How does the choice of modality improve student learning (which includes engagement) for the intended student demographic?
3. How will the overall educational quality of the course be maintained or enhanced in the alternate modality?
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.[[2]](#footnote-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.

**Appendix II: Course Modality Proposal Evaluation Rubric**

This rubric will be used by the CBE Curriculum Committee to evaluate and approve course modality proposals submitted by departments. A proposal needs to satisfy all the requirements listed below for approval. If a proposal is not approved, the rubric will be returned to the department as justification for denial and to provide guidance on how it can be improved. The review process allows for departments to provide improved or additional documentation to address criteria that the committee deems unsatisfied upon initial review.

1. The proposal includes a clear explanation of the function or method of the online components of the course.

​☐​Yes  ​☐​No

If not, how can it be improved?

1. The proposal presents a compelling rationale for the alternate modality based on student learning.

☐​Yes  ​☐​No

If not, how can it be improved?

1. The proposal clearly demonstrates that the overall quality of the course as defined by departmental standards is being maintained or enhanced.

☐​Yes  ​☐​No

If not, how can it be improved?

1. The pedagogical elements of this class are constructed to ensure that students can achieve the desired learning outcomes.

☐Yes ☐No

If not, how can they be improved?

1. The proposal clearly meets ACC credit hour guidelines for alternate modality courses and includes a complete syllabus consistent with ACC policy that includes course credits, meeting times, and a detailed weekly schedule.

​☐​Yes  ​☐​No

If not, how can it be improved?

1. The proposal clearly describes all resource requirements for effective delivery of the course in the alternative modality.

​☐​Yes  ​☐​No

If not, how can it be improved?

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. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 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*”* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)