

Woodring College of Education—Course Modality Policy (04-2023)

Woodring College of Education is comprised of programs and departments that offer degree programs and courses across a variety of locations in Washington state, including entirely online. Therefore, requests to teach courses in a modality other than Face-to-Face (specifically, Online, Online Summer Only, or Hybrid) within Woodring College of Education is going to be substantially different than colleges/departments that primarily serve the residential experience at Western. This memo applies only to requests for course modality approvals for new courses or courses that have been previously taught face-to-face.

GUIDELINES

When proposing new course modalities departments/programs should follow the guidelines identified:

1. Strategic Priorities- Does the proposed new course modality reflect the strategic priorities established in the Woodring Strategic Plan 2018-2025? The proposer/department should pay particular attention to Priority 2, Goal 1: Facilitate reflective active learning and high academic achievement of all students.
Proposer/departments should also determine how proposed course modality addresses Western's strategic goals:
 - Does the course offer students in Western's Locations and across the state an opportunity to engage and participate that otherwise not be possible? This addresses Western's goal of advancing inclusive excellence, specifically by expanding access to Western's programs to place bound and non-traditional students.
 - Subject matter expertise, particularly the possibility of providing students with access to specific faculty who might not be able to teach the class in an in-person format, can be a valid reason for proposing an alternative modality.
 - Was the modality selected to employ a research-based or innovative teaching and learning model designed to enhance the student learning experience? This is in line with Western's goal of enhancing academic excellence.
2. Determine if the proposed modality of the course impacts other courses in the major or program? Per NWCCU regulations, when a program has 50% or more of the curriculum delivered via distance, it needs to be classified as an online/distance program. Therefore, departments/programs need to have internal processes to ensure that the proportion of online courses in a program is regularly assessed.
3. Determine if the proposed modality of the course impacts accreditation, approval and/or certification of the major and/or program.
4. Determine if the proposed modality of the course impacts other associated majors, minors, or certificates. Departments should establish clear communication guidelines to inform and seek feedback from entities outside the department who might be impacted by changes in modality.
5. Determine that all pedagogical elements (objectives, learning activities, interactions, instructional materials, technologies, and assessments) are appropriate for the proposed modality and updated to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes.

6. Clearly identify forms of assessment and feedback that reflect regular (at least weekly) interaction with students. Particular attention should be paid to ensuring the registered student is the one participating in assessment activities.
7. Determine resources needed to effectively deliver this class in the modality requested. What resources are currently available to support the online instruction for this class? What additional resources will be needed and what is the plan for how they will be funded?

APPROVAL PROCEDURES

If (a) a modality change is sought for an existing course, or (b) a new course is proposed in an alternate (hybrid or remote) modality, faculty must complete and upload a copy of the Alternate Modality Proposal (Appendix I) to Curriculog. The modality proposal will be evaluated based on the Proposal Evaluation Rubric (Appendix II). Modality approval will be confirmed via the radio button in Curriculog. All discussion and approval of modality will occur at the department and college levels; ACC will not further consider course modality.

EXCEPTIONS

Ad Hoc Class Meetings: In face-to-face classes, faculty have the discretion to schedule a limited number of class meetings (e.g. 2-3) remotely for either pedagogical or scheduling purposes, such as to run a short online simulation or to accommodate faculty conference travel. Per ACC policy, in face-to-face classes, on-line class meetings are to be ad hoc rather than a recurring and regularly-scheduled component of the course calendar.

Summer Session: The College recognizes that many students move away from Bellingham or work during the summer, making remote classes more accessible and appealing. For this reason, completion of the Alternate Modality Proposal (Appendix I) is not required for summer classes. Note that this exception does not apply to courses offered for Summer Quarter (in those approved year-round programs).

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

Program: _____

Course Prefix & Number: _____

Course Title: _____

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](#)".

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

Requested Modality (may check multiple options): Hybrid Online-Synchronous Online-Asynchronous Online-Mixed synchronous and asynchronous
Revised [ACC Approved Modality Definitions](#)

Course funding model (check one or more): Self-Sustaining (OCE) State-Supported

Please answer the following:

1. Strategic Goals: The college expectation is that courses offered during the academic year will be offered in a face-to-face modality, supporting the character of the residential experience at Western. Alternative modality will be considered if it substantially meets Woodring's strategic priorities and Western's strategic goals listed below.

Proposer, please provide a rationale for the alternative modality based on the strategic goals

Considerations:

- Does the proposed new course modality reflect the strategic priorities established in the Woodring Strategic Plan 2018-2025? The proposer/department should pay particular attention to Priority 2, Goal 1: Facilitate reflective active learning and high academic achievement of all students.
- Is the course offered as part of a degree program aimed at serving regional educational needs? The online modality permits access to the course for place-bound and non-traditional students in underserved regions in line with Western's strategic goal of increasing impact in Washington State.
- Does the course offer students in Western's locations and across the state an opportunity to engage and participate that otherwise not be possible? This addresses Western's goal of advancing inclusive

excellence, specifically by expanding access to Western's programs to place bound and non-traditional students.

- Was the modality selected to employ a research-based or innovative teaching and learning model designed to enhance the student learning experience? This is in line with Western's goal of enhancing academic excellence.
- Does the modality provide an opportunity for drawing on instructors with specialized knowledge who are not available locally?

2. Will the proposed modality of the course impact other courses in the major or program?

Proposer, please describe potential impacts on other courses in the major or program:

Considerations:

- Per NWCCU regulations, when a program has 50% or more of the curriculum delivered via distance, it needs to be classified as an online/distance program. Therefore, departments/programs need to have internal processes to ensure that the proportion of online courses in a program is regularly assessed.

3. Determine if the proposed modality of the course impacts accreditation, approval and/or certification of the major and/or program.

Proposer, please indicate how (if at all) the proposed modality may impact the program accreditations or certifications:

Considerations:

- Course modalities may an element in state or national accreditations.
- Modalities may also be a factor in student certifications.

4. Determine if the proposed modality of the course impacts other associated majors, minors, or certificates. Departments should establish clear communication guidelines to inform and seek feedback from entities outside the department who might be impacted by changes in modality.

Proposer, please indicate the associated majors, minors, or programs with which you have communicated the proposed modality:

Considerations:

- Departments should establish clear communication guidelines to inform and seek feedback from entities outside the department who might be impacted by changes in modality.

5. How are the pedagogical elements (objectives, learning activities, interactions, instructional materials, technologies, and assessments) constructed to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes?

Proposer, please describe how pedagogical elements ensure desired learning outcomes:

Considerations:

- As part of the online course development process, support for online and hybrid course development is offered by the Western Online team.
- WesternOnline Course Design Indicators can be found here:
<https://wp.wvu.edu/westernonlineresources/design/id-review/>

6. How will assessment be carried out in the course? How will you address verification of student identity?

Proposer please explain how regular assessment activities will ensure that the registered student is the participant:

Considerations:

- NWCCU accreditation requires that effective procedures are in place to ensure that the student who registers in a distance education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the academic credit and that these procedures protect student privacy.

7. Determine resources needed to effectively deliver this class in the modality requested.

Please list additional resources that may be required:

Considerations:

- What resources are currently available to support the online instruction for this class?
- What additional resources will be needed and what is the plan for how they will be funded?
- NWCCU believes that educational quality is supported through continuing investment in technology and professional development for faculty as well as other academic, technical, and student support staff. Institutions are encouraged to provide professional development that is ongoing and includes attention to technology, instructional design, learning science, pedagogy, assessment, and methods of using data for improvement enhances quality.

Appendix II

WCE Course Modality Proposal Evaluation Rubric

This rubric will be used by the WCE Curriculum Committees (WCC and WGC) to evaluate and approve course modality proposals submitted by departments. A proposal needs to satisfy all the requirements listed below for approval. The review process allows for departments to provide improved or additional documentation to address criteria that the committee deems unsatisfied upon initial review.

1. Does the proposal include a complete syllabus consistent with ACC policy that includes course credits, meeting times, and a detailed weekly schedule? Yes No

2. Does the syllabus meet ACC credit hour guidelines for alternate modality courses (see [ACC Credit Hour policy](#))? Yes No

3. Course proposals should include a brief narrative addressing how the requested modality supports student learning. Which of the following best represents the benefits of this modality in terms of student learning?
 - A – The modality allows the use of new instructional techniques
 - B – The modality is expected to improve student engagement
 - C – The modality provides the opportunity for enhanced assessment and improved feedback
 - D – The modality was chosen to increase student access and broaden the demographic of students who can participate
 - E – The modality was chosen to provide access to faculty with specialized professional knowledge not available locally
 - F – The modality was chosen due to structural needs of the program (e.g., location of students during internships)
 - G -- Other

4. Has the proposal ensured that there will be little or no impact on other courses, programs, majors, certificates, or accreditation? Yes No

5. Does the proposal explain how the pedagogical elements (objectives, learning activities, interactions, instructional materials, technologies) are constructed to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes emphasizing important differences with face-to-face instruction? Yes No

6. Are additional resources needed to teach the course in the proposed modality? Yes No