WWU Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies

Course Modalities policy guidelines

Fairhaven's policies on course modality are anchored in four fundamental principles:

1. Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies and its programs recognize Western's traditional identity as a residential university with robust faculty-student engagement. Our academic strength lies in our commitment to student-centered, inquiry-based learning, with authentic opportunities for student scholarship and research. We are thus dedicated to centering that pedagogy for our students.

2. Fairhaven supports Western's commitment to access and inclusivity for students across the state of Washington and recognizes the value of providing courses that are accessible to diverse communities. This commitment may include offering a subset of courses in alternate modalities or in locations other than Bellingham.

3. Curriculum and modality decisions should be based on frequent assessment of course and program outcomes, with emphasis on assessment across and between modalities. At any given time, during the academic year, no more than 10% of the total of Fairhaven courses should be taught online.

4. Fairhaven has the responsibility for our curricula and curricular decisions. This responsibility includes decisions regarding course modality.

5. The instructor must have pedagogical reasons for teaching a course hybrid or online and the resources necessary to teach the course in that modality.

Modality Definitions
Face-to-Face Modality:

In FCIS: Face to Face (f2f) instruction is the assumed norm. Face-to-face courses, the dominant modality at Western, provide instruction through regularly scheduled in-person class meetings.

In f2f classes, online or alternative activities used in lieu of face-to-face instructional time are ad hoc rather than a recurring component of the course design. ACC states: "An instructor can… assign students an alternative activity to replace a classroom session on a limited basis, while still maintaining the face-to-face character of a course. These points are both in recognition of current practice."

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.

Moreover, in f2f 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.

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.

Synchronous: Online courses structured with **designated** meeting dates and times. Classes accessed and completed online through a web-based conferencing system (Zoom, GoToMeeting, etc.) at designated dates and times. Activities are based on a course schedule.

Asynchronous: Online courses structured with no specific meeting day/time. Classes accessed and completed entirely online through a web-based learning management system. Activities are based on an identified schedule, but work is completed on a student's own schedule. These classes require substantive teacher-student, student-student, and student-content interactions (discussion posts, multimedia projects, small group work, or mid-quarter check ins).

> Asynchronous recorded video lectures can count towards contact time 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 a third of the total contact time for the course.

In FCIS: Face 2 Face instruction is the assumed norm at Fairhaven, but pursuant to the CBA (16.10.01) faculty may teach online as part of their regular teaching load with the approval of the FCIS Curriculum Committee and FCIS Dean. Health/disability related accommodations granted through human resources are exempt from this policy. The maximum proportion of online courses in any quarter should not exceed 10% of college courses.

*Western's Teaching & Learning Co-op offers 1:1 consults with any faculty needing instructional design assistance for an online course – westernonline@wwu.edu.

Hybrid Course Modality:

Hybrid courses divide their instructional time between regularly-scheduled face-to-face class meetings and online instructional activities. Students have the expectation that some of their course content will be in person and some will be through full online participation. FCIS recognizes two kinds of potential hybrid courses in the Academic Year

- Students meet regularly in person (at least 50% of scheduled class time) and meet fully online, for example on Zoom, for the remaining meeting time.
- In a "blended" hybrid course students meet in person for at least 50% of instructional time and work asynchronously in the remaining instructional time.

  - What distinguishes blended courses from face-to-face courses with an online component is that "the online learning activities are designed to replace a significant amount of onsite learning activities" (Stein and Graham, 2020. *Essentials for Blended Learning: A Standard-Based Guide.* Taylor & Francis). In other words, s≈

In FCIS: AY hybrid courses must be 50% F2F.

Summer session policy:

Fairhaven 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.

- Face to Face (f2f) instruction is the assumed norm
- Hybrid also an option – at least 50% f2f
  - a.
    - i. Students meet regularly in person (at least 50% of scheduled class time) and meet fully online, for example on Zoom, for the remaining meeting time.
    - ii. Students meet in person for at least 40% of instructional time and work asynchronously in the remaining instructional time
    - iii.
- Online – can be synchronous or asynchronous or blended
  - i. In a blended course, students meet online synchronously for at least 40% of instructional time and work asynchronously for the remaining instructional time

- There is no limit on the proportion of online offerings in the summer term for faculty or college

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 online) modality, faculty must complete a Curriculog proposal and upload a copy of the Alternate Modality Proposal (Appendix I) along with the syllabi for the original approved modality and the syllabi for any modality update into the template as prompted. Please contact the Curriculum & Records Manager with questions about which Curriculog template is appropriate for the proposed modality request. Once launched by the faculty member, all discussion and approval of modality will occur at the college level; ACC will not further consider course modality.

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

Requestor Name: _____

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 and must attach syllabus for each option chosen): ☐ Hybrid ☐ Online-Synchronous ☐ Online-Asynchronous ☐ Online-Mixed synchronous and asynchronous

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

Please answer the following:

- What is the rationale for choosing this modality? How does the choice of modality support student learning and student access and/or Western's strategic goals?

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

- Describe how assessment will be performed to ensure that students are achieving the desired learning outcomes, emphasizing differences (if any) with face-to-face instruction?

- NWCCU accreditation requires that effective procedures be 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. Please describe what measures will be taken to ensure the registered student is the one participating in assessment activities:

- Are additional resources required to effectively deliver the course in the modality requested? If so, can those resources be met by the department?

Appendix II

FCIS Course Modality Proposal Evaluation Rubric

This rubric will be used by the FCIS Curriculum Committee 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 this proposal meet the definition of the request modality? ☐Yes ☐No
   a. **Face to Face (f2f)** provide instruction through regularly-scheduled in-person class meetings. 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.
   b. **Online Synchronous:** Online courses structured with **designated** meeting dates and times. Classes accessed and completed online through a web-based conferencing system (Zoom, GoToMeeting, etc.) at designated dates and times. Activities are based on a course schedule.
   c. **Online Asynchronous:** Online courses structured with no specific meeting day/time. Classes accessed and completed entirely online through a web-based learning management system. Activities are based on an identified schedule, but work is completed on your own schedule. These classes require substantive teacher-student, student-student, and student-content interactions (discussion posts, multimedia projects, small group work, mid-quarter check ins, etc).
   d. **Online Blended:** students may meet synchronously online for at least 40% of instructional time and work asynchronously online for the remaining instructional time (Summer Only).
   e. **Hybrid courses** divide their instructional time between regularly scheduled face-to-face class meetings and online instructional activities. There are at least three possible configurations of hybrid courses:
      1. Students meet in person at least half of the instructional time and synchronously on an audiovisual learning platform for the remaining instructional time.
      2. For an AY blended hybrid course, students meet in person for at least half of instructional time and asynchronously online for the remaining instructional time

2. Does the proposal include a complete syllabus for each request modality, including a syllabus from the original modality, consistent with ACC policy that includes course credits, meeting times, and a detailed weekly schedule? ☐Yes ☐No

3. Does the proposal include a complete syllabus for each request modality, including a syllabus from the original modality, consistent with ACC policy that includes course credits, meeting times, and a detailed weekly schedule? ☐Yes ☐No

4. Does the syllabus meet ACC credit hour guidelines for alternate modality courses (see ACC Credit Hour policy) and, if present, departmental guidelines? ☐Yes ☐No

5. 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 -- Other

6. 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

7. If it is self-sustaining, are there other sections using a state-supported model offered during the academic year? ☐Yes ☐No

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

8. Are there follow-up notes that need to be addressed?