Western Libraries Modality Policy & Procedure

Preamble:

Western Libraries recognizes Western Washington University's (WWU) traditional identity as a residential, face-to-face, experiential university with robust faculty-student engagement. We believe our academic strength lies in our commitment to student-centered, inquiry-based learning, with authentic opportunities for student scholarship and research.

Western Libraries is committed to a culture of excellence, integrity, and leadership that inspires visionary thinking, critical discourse, accountability, and transparent practices. Additionally, Western Libraries serves as a unique and essential resource for all students; this includes learners at Western's satellite campus locations. Through inclusive and accessible collections, teaching modalities, curriculum-design, and other resources, the Libraries recognizes the need to expand access to courses, increasing persistence and graduation rates, and offering support for place-bound and non-traditional students. As such, credit instruction at Western Libraries' must be responsive to the learning needs of *all* students, and we are committed to offering accessible and inclusive credit courses for students across the state of Washington.

To accomplish this mission, Western Libraries offers a subset of courses in alternate modalities (e.g. Hybrid, Online). This document…
- …defines the modalities available to library instructors,
- …provides underlying rationales for determining course modality,
- …illustrates how to revise or propose a new course in an alternate modality,
- …and describes how Western Libraries Curriculum Committee (WLCC) will evaluate curriculum proposals.

Modality Options:

The table below defines the modalities available to library instructors and provides an underlying rationale for choosing a specific modality. **Hybrid, Online, and Self-Paced Online are all considered alternative modalities.**

Modality Categories for Course Approval	Scheduling Options	Rationale (use this space to indicate the value and potential application of each modality)
Face to Face	Instruction is accomplished through regularly scheduled in-person class meetings	Face-to-Face instruction facilitates engagement between students, place, and the libraries physical collections and archives.
Hybrid	• Hybrid: Courses that include both face to face and online instruction but have at least 25% face to face instruction • Hybrid ITV: Courses where students in one classroom or multiple classrooms in different locations engage through livestream instruction	Hybrid modalities may be used to enhance access for non-traditional students, facilitate digital learning activities, and connect with students at non-Bellingham-based campuses (for example, Everett). Hybrid modalities allow instructors to leverage digital technologies to enhance learning without sacrificing the robust faculty-student engagement of face-to-face learning.
Online	• Online - Synchronous: Courses that are delivered online and have real-time online meetings on assigned days • Online - Mixed Synchronous & Asynchronous: Courses delivered online with a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction • Online - Asynchronous: Courses that are delivered online with no real-time online or face-to-face meetings	Online modalities provide flexibility for working students, parents, and students living outside of Bellingham and/or attending satellite campuses. Online asynchronous course proposals must demonstrate the learning benefits of the modality in the context of the course content and learning objectives. Syllabi must address how student progression through course content is monitored and accessed.
Self-Paced Online	Courses also referred to as "correspondence" or "independent learning"	The library does not offer 'self-paced online' courses.

Approved by WLCC 5/17/2023

Modality Policy:

Curriculum and modality decisions should be based on frequent assessment of course outcomes, with emphasis on assessment across and between modalities. Library faculty, with oversight from the Western Libraries Curriculum Committee, carry primary responsibility for their curricula and curricular decisions. This responsibility includes decisions regarding course modality.

At Western, face-to-face instruction is the default modality and all other modalities (e.g. online, hybrid) are considered alternative options. To increase barrier-free access, reach beyond the Bellingham campus, and incorporate learner-centered practices, library faculty are invited to consider alternative modalities, as needed.

Alternative modalities must enhance assessment and improve communication between instructor and students. They must also meet one or more of the following criteria to be approved by Western Libraries Curriculum Committee:

- The modality allows the use of emergent, evidence-based instructional techniques.
- The modality is expected to improve student engagement.
- The modality creates a more equitable learning environment that improves student access and/or broadens the demographic of students who can participate.

Summer Session Policy: Western Libraries 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.

Student Identity Verification: Access to Online courses requires students authenticate through Canvas. As such, Western Libraries defers to WWU's Ethical Conduct with WWU Network and Computing Resources Policy, specifically point 1.2 which states: "Allowing or facilitating use of your unique computer/network identification or password by any other person is prohibited." All students are required to read and abide by the provisions of this user agreement. If a faculty member suspects a student is in violation of the user agreement, appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken as documented in the referenced user agreement.

Approval Procedure:

If an alternative modality (i.e. hybrid or online) is sought for an existing course, or a new course is proposed in an alternative modality, instructors must complete the Alternate Modality Request Form and attach it to the proposal in Curriculog. The Alternative Modality Request Form will be evaluated according to the Alternative Modality Approval Rubric. The modality approval process follows the same sequence as the general course proposal process.

Western Libraries Alternative Modality Request Form:

If an alternative modality (i.e. hybrid or online) is sought for an existing course, or a new course is proposed in an alternative modality, instructors must complete the Alternative Modality Request Form and attach it to the proposal in Curriculog.

Please complete all required sections of the form and attach it to the curriculum proposal in Curriculog. To request multiple modalities, a completed form will be required for each modality requested.

Requester Name & Department: _____

Course Prefix & Number: _____

Course Title:_____

Is this a new or existing course?   ☐ New Course   ☐ Existing Course

Requested Course Modality: ☐ Hybrid   ☐ Hybrid - ITV   ☐ Online – Synchronous
          ☐ Online – Asynchronous   ☐ Online - Mixed Synchronous & Asynchronous

Please answer the following questions:
- Why are you requesting an alternative modality?

- To what extent will the alternative modality support student learning?

- What types of formative assessment will be performed throughout the quarter to ensure that students are achieving the desired learning outcomes? How will these assessment opportunities differ from face-to-face instruction?

- Describe how the instructor will create and sustain, clear, consistent, and inclusive communication with students; this includes identifying when and how often students will receive instructor feedback and clearly identifying the tools and platforms that will be used to engage with students to support peer-to-peer and faculty-to-student engagement.

- Library classrooms are equipped with OWLs. Are additional resources required to effectively deliver the course in the modality requested? If so, can those resources be met by the Libraries?

Western Libraries Alternative Modality Evaluation Rubric

This rubric will be used by the Western Libraries Curriculum Committee to evaluate and approve Alternate Modality Request Form. 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's policy; this includes identifying course credits, meeting times, and a detailed weekly schedule? ☐Yes ☐No

2. Does the syllabus meet ACC's 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?

   ☐ The modality allows the use of emergent, evidence-based instructional techniques.
   ☐ The modality is expected to improve student engagement.
   ☐ The modality enhances assessment and improves communication between instructor and students in terms of feedback.
   ☐ The modality creates a more equitable learning environment that improves student access and/or broadens the demographic of students who can participate.

4. Does the proposal thoroughly explain how the pedagogical elements (objectives, learning activities, interactions, instructional materials, technologies) are constructed to ensure that students achieve the desired learning outcomes? ☐Yes ☐No

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

   a. If yes, can those resources be provided by Western Libraries? ☐Yes ☐No