

Message from the Committee on Instruction about Course Modalities

(Approved at the October 29, 2020 meeting)

Dear Colleagues,

Now that the decision about winter and spring terms has been announced, you will need to select the modalities for your upcoming courses— just as you did for fall courses in the summer. In addition to the four course modalities used this fall, we've added a fifth—the “mixed modality”—which was announced at the October faculty meeting.

It's important that you choose a modality that best fits the course as you plan to teach it. Students will be choosing courses based on modality, and it will affect their decision to reside on campus.

No less important, the University needs to be able to account not only for which courses are taught in each modality, but to know accurately for each student which modalities their courses are taught in. The Higher Learning Commission, our accreditation agency, has authorized us to offer courses online. But we may not offer degrees online without further authorization. This means that students may not take more than 50% of their courses remotely for their degrees. Though it's unlikely that any of our students will approach that proportion of remote courses, we nevertheless need to accurately track the modalities of the courses they have taken.

We reproduce the definitions of course modalities at the end of this message, but mention some nuances:

- For in-person courses, you should expect to meet regularly at the assigned time for all class sessions. If the enrollment of a course exceeds the capacity of available rooms, we will ask you to teach it as a hybrid instead.
- A hybrid course meets in-person for some of its class sessions. All enrolled students should be meeting in person for some sessions of a hybrid class. You may choose to meet remotely for some sessions; you may divide the class up so different portions of it meet in-person for some of its sessions. But remote students may not be enrolled in a hybrid course except as an exception based on the guidelines issued by Instruction. If you wish to teach a course which students may take either remotely or in-person, please select the new “mixed” modality for your course.
- If you are teaching an asynchronous course, you may have optional class meetings. But these should not be required. Further, in order to assure equity, we ask that you schedule these optional meetings at a time that all students can attend— ideally by polling students in your course and/or offering different times for them.
- Finally, if you change the modality of a course during the term please notify Peter Blitstein and Angi Long. The modality listed in the course schedule must reflect the way you have actually taught the course.

As a reminder, here are the definitions of the modalities:

An in-person course meets at regularly scheduled times according to the daily schedule entirely in-person. Some students may participate remotely as exceptions.

A remote synchronous course meets entirely remotely at some or all of its regularly scheduled times according to the daily schedule.

A hybrid course meets in-person and remotely at regularly scheduled times according to the daily schedule. It combines the use of in-person class meetings and remote class meetings. Students in these courses should expect to meet in-person during some but not all of the scheduled times. Instructors will decide how students will be divided across the meeting days each week. Some students may participate entirely remotely as exceptions.

An asynchronous course has no regularly scheduled meeting time and is conducted online.

A mixed-modality course meets at regularly scheduled times according to the daily schedule. Students may take these courses either in-person or remotely. Such courses will be scheduled in classrooms with the necessary technology to permit remote students to participate simultaneously with students taking the course in-person.