

University Policy 3006: Course Modality Policy

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

Policy Procedure: N/A

Related Law, Policy & Guidelines:

- [University Policy 2207: Inclement Weather/Emergency Closure](#)
- [University Policy 3014: Distance Education](#)
- [Faculty Handbook section 2.10.4: Faculty Absences from Class](#)

I. **Scope:** This policy applies to faculty teaching all for-credit undergraduate and graduate courses. This policy does not apply to individual student requests for temporary accommodations in a class.

II. **Policy Statement:**

This policy governs course modality and when temporary changes can be made to course modality. Courses must be taught in the modality and on the days and times listed in the university schedule. Course modality may only be changed for the entire class temporarily for one of three reasons:

1. **Pre-planned absences:** When faculty need to be absent from class for a pre-planned professional obligation (e.g., attending an academic conference), faculty members must make arrangements in advance and notify their local unit administrator (LAU). In these cases, faculty members should either move their class to a different modality (e.g., move an In-person class to a Synchronous or Asynchronous format for that class period) or arrange for a qualified colleague to assume their teaching duties temporarily (see [Faculty Handbook 2.10.4](#)).
2. **Sudden illnesses or other emergencies:** In cases of absences due to sudden illnesses or other emergencies, faculty must notify their local unit administrator. In these situations, faculty may move their class to a different modality, arrange for a qualified colleague to temporarily assume their teaching responsibilities, or cancel class if the previous options are not feasible.
3. **Inclement weather and other campus closures:** When campus is closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies, Synchronous and Asynchronous online courses may continue as planned. Additionally, faculty may move their In-person, Hybrid, or HyFlex courses to either Synchronous or Asynchronous online modality during a campus closure to allow for instructional continuity. Instructors must communicate their plans for campus closures in their syllabi and must also email students about the plan to move to an alternate modality after the campus closure has been announced. Instructors should be aware of weather-related contingencies that may impact students' ability to attend online

and allow appropriate flexibility.

Instructors must comply with any academic accommodations approved by Disability Services for students in the class with respect to any course modality change. Any course modality changes that are planned for more than two weeks need to be approved by the local unit administrator and must be updated in Banner. In the case of extended emergencies, the Provost may authorize changes in the modality for all courses for a longer period of time.

III. **Definitions**

Asynchronous: Asynchronous online courses do not have a required time in which students and instructors must meet; however, asynchronous courses may include optional, live meetings or office hours. While there are regular deadlines, schedules of coursework are flexible. Information regarding proctored exams and/or the use of webcams must be outlined in the course syllabus.

Hybrid: A course in which a pre-determined proportion of the class is delivered using at least two alternating modalities (asynchronous online, synchronous online, face-to-face) on a planned schedule. For example, a course might meet in-person one day and synchronously online another day (Hybrid 1), in-person one day and asynchronously online for the remainder of the week (Hybrid 2), or synchronously online one day and asynchronously online for the remainder of the week (Hybrid 3). Meeting times for face-to-face and synchronous sessions must be noted at the point of student registration and should be consistent over the course of the semester.

HyFlex (Hybrid + Flexible): A course in which some students are attending face-to-face while others are simultaneously attending synchronously online. In a HyFlex model, all students engage with the same learning outcomes, assessments, instructional materials, and participate live in the same class sessions, regardless of modality in which they are enrolled.

In-person: In-person courses meet in a physical classroom on campus on specified days and times.

Synchronous: Synchronous online courses specify a required time during which instructors and students meet live, using supported video conferencing platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Zoom). Required meeting times conform to standard patterns associated with face-to-face classes and must be noted at the point of student registration.

IV. **Responsibilities:**

Faculty are responsible for (1) teaching their courses in the modality in which they are scheduled, (2) communicating their plans for course modality changes during campus closures in their syllabus and in an email to students any day that their class is impacted by a campus closure, and (3) contacting their LAU administrator any time they change their modality for a class session, except when that modality change is due to a campus closure.

LAU administrators are responsible for (1) ensuring that faculty teach their courses in the modality scheduled, (2) documenting any temporary modality changes due to the reasons outlined in this policy, and (3) communicating the expectations outlined in this policy to faculty and the procedures for performance management that will be used to address violations of this policy.

V. **Compliance:**

Faculty who change course modality or cancel class for reasons that are not outlined above may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

VI. **Amendments:** Amendments to this policy should be approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President. This policy will be reviewed every three years.

VII. **Dates:**

Approved:

Effective: