



UNIVERSITY
OF WYOMING

Office of
Academic Affairs

Office of Academic Affairs

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**Guidance for Academic Unit Heads, Directors and Deans
Exceptions to COVID-19 Spring 2022 Plan: Course Delivery Modes**

December 10, 2021

COVID-19 Spring Plan: The University is committed to providing quality education that allows for a combination of in-person and online course modalities. The Office of Academic Affairs works with colleges and academic units to ensure that students are provided with instructional experiences, including class schedules and mode of delivery, that best align with the course content and enables students to make adequate progress toward graduation

Administrators should make every effort to ensure that classes scheduled for in-person instruction retain that mode of delivery. Although rare, there may be a situation that warrants an exception.

Exceptions to the COVID-19 Spring Plan:

If a faculty member is seeking an exception to any COVID policy element, like work on campus (including teaching in person), and this exception is based on the faculty member's *own* medical condition, they may initiate the process to be considered for an exception through the ADA process. Depending on the outcome of this review by HR, a change in mode of instructional delivery may be determined an appropriate accommodation.

If a faculty member is seeking time away from work, due to their own serious health condition or a serious health condition for a member of the faculty member's immediate household, they may qualify for FMLA leave. More information about requesting FMLA can be found on the HR website. This situation would likely necessitate deploying a back-up instructor to teach the class (in-person or online).

All other requests involving working remotely or a change in work schedule (including teaching modality) may be requested through the process provided by the [Flexible Work Arrangements](#) policy. NOTE: flexible work arrangements involving a change in instructional delivery mode should be discussed with the unit head in advance, but it should not be initiated until the Unit Head, Director and/or Dean have followed the standard practice for requesting a schedule

change (see below). Flexible work arrangements are a privilege and not a right. Therefore, requests for flexible work arrangements are not guaranteed.

Requesting a Schedule Change Following the Spring Schedule Deadline

The standard practice for requesting a schedule change when an unexpected and/or exceptional event necessitates a change after the schedule deadline, such as mode of delivery, the academic unit head (and not the faculty member) should submit a request to their Dean. If approved, the Dean will forward the request to the Vice Provost for education (Dr. Jim Ahern for Grad – 5000+ and Dr. Steven Barrett for undergraduate – 1000-4000) The Provost's office will review the request and make a final determination.

Requests must include a rationale for the last-minute change and demonstrate that alternative solutions for retaining the original course delivery method are not feasible.

If a determination is made to support the requested change in modality:

1. The Vice Provost will confirm approval and instruct the unit head and faculty member to initiate the [Flexible Work Arrangement Agreement](#),
2. The Vice Provost will work with the Office of the Registrar to make the necessary changes to the schedule, and
3. The faculty member communicates the change in delivery to students.

Academic Unit Head - Considerations Before Submitting a Request for Change in Class Delivery from In-Person to Online

1. First, determine if the requested change in modality is needed for the entire semester or for a limited time due to a specific circumstance. Faculty continue to have the ability to arrange for alternative learning/assignments on a limited basis, including guest lecturers, online assignments, outside-of-class assignments, etc. No request for change in modality is needed for short-term modifications (e.g., faculty returns from a conference held in a high-risk area and out of an abundance of caution chooses to teach remotely for a week or two).
2. If the requested change in modality is needed for the semester, explore additional precautions that can be implemented in the classroom to make a faculty member more comfortable with the in-person experience. For example:
 - a. Ascertain if there are larger alternate classroom spaces available that allow for social distancing by contacting Lynn Wheat (LWheat@uwyo.edu). She will also be able to obtain information about classroom ventilation, if needed. If an alternative space is available, the unit head or someone in the Dean's office can work with Lynn to reschedule the room.
 - b. Request additional high-quality masks for faculty [Academic Affairs has a new supply of KN95 masks available].
3. If no alternative space is available and/or other solutions found, an alternative instructor should be considered. Each department should have a back-up instructor plan in place before the Spring semester commences for situations where the primary instructor tests positive and/or needs to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure, and for situations when

last-minute health conditions warrant remote work. This plan does not need to be submitted to Academic Affairs but must be available upon request.

- a. If possible, in-person classes should be reassigned to a qualified instructor who can deliver the course using the mode of delivery originally scheduled. This may necessitate an adjustment to workload in the job description for an existing faculty member who picks up the class (e.g., increase in teaching load in Spring semester followed by a course reduction the following academic year) and/or for the faculty member who is unable to teach the originally scheduled class (e.g., a reduction in teaching load in spring and an increase in course load in the next academic year).
4. If all in-person options have been exhausted, synchronous online delivery may be appropriate.
5. A change from in-person to asynchronous online delivery should be the last option.
6. Mode of delivery should not be modified in situations where a small number of students are unable to attend in person; but instead, the instructor should consider hyflex options.

NOTE: Faculty should not go outside of this process to change their mode of delivery from what is in the posted Spring schedule. However, departments should ascertain that information in Banner is correct and up to date.

The Provost's Office will follow up with Unit Heads and Deans on any complaints to the Registrar and Dean of Students from students who report their class delivery method has changed from what was originally posted when they registered and/or is not accurate in the Course Schedule.