Guidance for Academic Unit Heads, Directors, and Deans
Course Delivery Modes
November 7, 2023

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.

Requesting a Schedule Change Following the Fall or Spring/Summer 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. Deadlines for requesting changes to allow for publication in the schedule are:

- Summer – January 15
- Fall – February 28
- Spring – September 30

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.
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.

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 may arrange for alternative learning/assignments on a limited basis. Examples of these arrangements include but are not limited to guest lecturers, online assignments, outside-of-class assignments, etc. No request for change in modality is needed for short-term modifications.

2. 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).
   a. Each department should have a back-up instructor plan in place before the academic year/semester commences for situations where the primary instructor 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.
   b. 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).
   c. If all in-person options have been exhausted, synchronous online delivery may be appropriate.
   d. A change from in-person to asynchronous online delivery should be the last option.
   e. 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.

Note: 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. 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 (as described above). Flexible work arrangements are a privilege and not a right. Therefore, requests for flexible work arrangements are not guaranteed.