



Course modality definitions (in the SIS 2022W onwards)

In the SIS (and in the future in Workday Student), courses are comprised of one or more Sections, each made up of a number of Activity Types (ATs) that comprise the learning opportunities for students (e.g., lecture, lab, tutorial, seminar etc).

This note outlines the 4 modality descriptions that will be used for ATs in the SIS. Note: A field exists in the SIS to denote, “in-person attendance required” at the course level (e.g. course is comprised of a lecture that is online and a lab that is in person, hence in-person attendance is required for the course).

1. **Online**

- Learners do not need to attend in person to complete learning outcomes for the AT.
- Learning activities are not tied to learners being in the same physical locations.
- This modality encompasses what was previously called ‘distance learning’ to reflect modality rather than location of learners (previously many ‘DE’ learners were actually based on campus)
- Sometimes, equivalently referred to as ‘remote learning’ (though some use that to describe ‘what we did during COVID’, emergency remote instruction, as distinct from online learning.)
- Learning activities may be wholly or partly synchronous^[1], asynchronous^[2] or a combination of both.
- Synchronous learning activities in this modality will be scheduled but do not need a room. Asynchronous learning activities will not be scheduled nor need a room.

2. **In-person**

- Learners do need to attend [some / all] elements of the AT in person to complete learning outcomes for the course
- Most will be campus-based, but some of the learning activities may take place outside campus facilities e.g., health care provider sites, community locations, field schools etc.
- AT is defined by a sequence of synchronous, in-person learning activities (often on a regular schedule)
- May incorporate online digital resources, materials, activities that are intended to supplement / augment (but not substantially replace) the in-person learning activities, usually as asynchronous components, e.g pre-class videos, online readings, quizzes etc
- ATs using these online tools and resources are technology-enhanced, but are fundamentally still in-person courses.
- This modality incorporates pedagogical approaches such as flipped classroom approaches that provide asynchronous content made available prior to scheduled synchronous sessions, using subsequent class time to deepen understanding of concepts and ideas.



3. Hybrid

- Learners do need to attend some activities in person to complete learning outcomes for the AT, but not all activities take place in person
- Synonymous with the term blended learning.
- Learning activities are a mixture (a hybrid) of on-campus / in-person learning activities and online activities, such that the online activities contribute to some significant fraction of the total credit value or credit hours, in a pattern / course design that is determined by instructors.
- The online activities may be asynchronous, synchronous or a combination of both.
- For activities with a “Hybrid” Mode of Delivery please work with Scheduling Services to determine your room booking requirements
- For the question of ‘how much is enough to designate something as ‘hybrid’? would suggest ‘normally 20% or more of AT sessions / credit hours’ (sensitive to context, rather than a fixed rule)

4. Multi-access learning

- Based on how the AT is intentionally designed by instructors, learners may choose (or their locations may dictate) whether they attend in person or online to complete learning outcomes for the AT.
- One example would be a specific combination of in-person learning and online learning options co-existing within the same AT, giving students choice as to how they engage with a course, and options to change this mode of engagement throughout the course.
- Another example would be the distributed cohort programs (eg the undergraduate medical program), where cohorts join either in person or online, dependent on their location.

^[1] ‘Synchronous’ / ‘Asynchronous’ refer to characteristics of learning activities in a particular modality, not tied to the modality itself.

^[2] **Synchronous learning activities** are those learning activities that happen at the same time for the instructor and the learners, facilitating real-time interaction between them. **Asynchronous learning activities** do not necessarily happen at the same time for the instructor and the learners, facilitating self-paced learning.



Further notes

Class recordings. The provision of class recordings (or not) does not dictate AT modality. The provision of class recordings is an instructor / department choice in materials provided to support student learning during the course, reflecting factors including course design, pedagogical approach, program requirements. The provision of such recordings (or not) is best articulated in the course syllabus, not in the SIS, to avoid the misapprehension that an AT with class recordings equates to 'a course that can be taken online'. Work is currently underway (through the Centre for Accessibility) on the legal requirements for students with accommodations as to what is required to be put in place (with further updates on this work coming to ADs in the future).

Section modalities. Only ATs are formally labelled with one of the 4 modalities outlined above. However, there is a natural and inevitable tendency for the same descriptors to be used colloquially to describe course sections (e.g. "I am taking two hybrid courses this Semester"). The following rules will cover the majority of instances:

- If all ATs in a course are online, the course section is 'online' as well (this is the circumstance where the SIS field 'In-person attendance?' is set to 'No')
- If all ATs in a course are in-person, the course section is 'in-person'.
- If the course section is a mixture of online and in-person ATs, then the course section is 'hybrid' (e.g. a section with online lectures but in-person labs).

There are other less frequent combinations, including:

- If a course contains a hybrid AT, the course section is 'hybrid'.
- If a course contains all multi-access ATs, the course section is 'multi-access'.
- If the course contains a multi-access AT combined with another modality, this second modality will define the course modality. (e.g. a multi-access lecture AT combined with an in-person lab AT, the course section is 'in-person')