

**Guidelines for Considering a Change in Instructional Modality
from In-Person to Online-Only or Hybrid
UWM – Spring 2021**

The Scenario Planning Work Group has recommended that Spring 2021 follow the same instructional delivery formats as in Fall 2020. For Fall 2020, deans, associate deans, department/program chairs, and instructors determined the mix of in-person, hybrid, and fully online courses. This flexibility worked well by giving instructors a choice while still providing a robust, in-person curricular array.

In Fall 2020, some instructors decided to convert their in-person course(s) (fully in-person or hybrid) to a fully online format. With the information these requests have provided, we are providing more detailed guidelines for Spring 2021 to govern changes to delivery mode. Justifications to change an in-person course's mode of delivery after the start of the Spring 2021 semester will require justifications following these guidelines and processes.

Guidelines and Process

1. The authority to approve changes in modality after the start of Spring 2021 semester is a collaborative dialogue between the instructor, the department chair, associate dean, dean, and provost's office. Once a modality is published in PAWS, students use that information to schedule their semester, with many choosing in-person instruction as their preferred delivery format. We encourage academic units, to the best of their ability, to maintain the originally planned instructional delivery mode and continue the mix of modalities for licensure and accreditation purposes, pedagogical factors, as well as student preference. These factors as well as those following are part of the dialogue in changes to modality. In addition, we recommend for courses where licensure, accreditation, and federal requirements for international students require in-person instruction that back-up instructors be assigned to that course in case a staffing issue arises.

2. Instructors should anticipate that their in-person classes will have one or more students who become infected with COVID-19 during the semester. Having a single case of COVID-19 is not sufficient justification for changes to mode of delivery. Having isolated cases of COVID-19 over the course of the semester also is insufficient justification for changes in mode of delivery. The university will monitor outbreaks within classes and initiate changes in modalities for affected classes.

3. Factors justifying temporary or permanent changes in instructional modality after the start of Spring 2021 semester include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. **Outbreaks:** Instructors who are teaching in-person courses in which an outbreak has occurred may request a change to mode of delivery. How "outbreak" is defined varies by class enrollment. As a general rule, an "outbreak" occurs when 15 percent of a course's enrollment becomes infected within a two-week period.
- b. **Student Migration to Online:** Instructors whose course has both in-person and online delivery may request their course be fully online when approximately 80 percent or more of the actively enrolled students are no longer regularly attending the in-person option.
- c. **Pedagogy:** Instructors may request change in modality for pedagogical reasons.
- d. **Course Requirements:** Courses whose accreditation, licensure, or pedagogy require in-person instruction may be considered for changes in modality. However, such changes will require increased justification that all students and program needs are served by the change in modality. Increased scrutiny will also occur for in-person courses with international student enrollments, since visa requirements may require these students to be enrolled in in-person courses.

- e. Health: Instructors who have changes in their health situation since the start of the semester may request a change in modality to accommodate these health changes. It is recommended that instructors with existing health conditions that are risk factors for coronavirus opt to teach purely online. For courses where in-person instruction is required for international students, licensure, or accreditation, changes to modality will be considered only after all back-up instructor options are exhausted.
- f. Close Contact, Infection, or Care-Giving: Instructors who have been identified as a close contact, become infected, or have a family member who requires care can request a change in modality. As in 4.e., back-up instructor options should be considered first.

4. Process for requesting a change in modality for Spring 2021:

- a. Instructors teaching in-person who wish to move their class to fully online should first contact their department chair, associate dean, and/or dean to discuss the situation.
- b. In collaboration with the department chair, associate dean, and/or dean, the instructor should provide detailed justification for moving the course from in-person delivery to online only or hybrid. In addition to addressing the above factors, instructors should include the course and section number, current enrollments, student attendance at in-person sections, anticipated impacts on students in making the change, and any other relevant facts related to the course.
- c. Department chairs, associate deans, or deans should submit the instructor justification to Stephen Schmid, schmids@uwm.edu. In addition, the submitter should indicate whether they and other leads in the academic unit support the change in modality request.
- d. After review by the Monitoring Core Team and approval of the Provost's Office, the submitter will be informed of the decision. The Registrar's Office will initiate any changes to the course modality in PAWS and the students' tuition.