

Post-Pandemic Instructional Modality Definitions (Moving Past MTU FLEX)

Introduction

In March 2020, Michigan Technological University, along with other higher education institutions, shifted from a mainly face-to-face instruction model to a temporary “at-a-distance” model. This was achieved partly through widespread faculty training and centralized support of online tools for instruction. Through summer 2020, fall 2020, and spring 2021, new course-delivery modalities were adopted and courses have been taught in a variety of formats to accommodate social distancing and other pandemic-related restrictions.

In an effort to codify instructional modalities as we move toward a post-pandemic educational environment, the following document is submitted as a recommendation. These definitions will provide both instructors and students a framework of expectations and allow the University to develop appropriate support systems, communications, and strategies for the ways that courses and programs will be offered.

Background

Michigan Tech’s Current Public-Facing Instructional Modality Definitions:

Published in [Michigan Tech University’s Senate Proposal 52-20](#):

Online Course / Instruction: Courses intentionally designed for online delivery.

Remote Course / Instruction: Courses containing some synchronous component, initially designed for face-to-face instruction but moved online due to temporary external factors.

Published at Michigan Tech’s MTU Flex [Academic Experience FAQs page](#):

Learning will take place face-to-face (F2F), by remote instruction, or through a combination of the two.

The modality options for spring 2021 instruction [were]:

F2F: Every scheduled class period is held in person. Instructors will have a plan to serve students who cannot attend in person for any reason.

F2F-SPLIT: In-person class sessions will be scheduled regularly. However, a student’s in-person attendance may be staggered due to COVID-19 classroom capacity limits. Instructors will have a plan to deliver course content and materials to students who are not able to attend a session in person.

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F2F-ONLY: Every scheduled class period is held in person. No remote instruction will be available to students. Instructors will develop a plan to ensure all enrolled students are able to attend in person.

Remote: Every scheduled class period is held remotely. Remote attendance is required for these synchronous class periods; however, the course may also include asynchronous content, which can be completed at any time.

Online: No scheduled class periods are held. Class instruction, activities, and assignments are completely remote and asynchronous, and can be completed at any time.*

*Note that this final statement, while useful during the pandemic, is not entirely accurate because online course requirements must be completed within a semester. These courses are not correspondence courses which can be completed at any time.

Recommended Definitions of Course-Level Instructional Modalities

Note: Students should expect to spend at least 45 hours of effort for each course credit, regardless of instructional modality.

In-Person Instruction¹

Instruction is delivered in person on a regular schedule for all class meetings. While computers and other internet technologies may be used for class activities, these courses are primarily delivered face to face in a classroom setting on campus or another specified location. On-campus/on-site attendance is required.

Blended – In-Person Instruction¹

Instruction includes at least one weekly in-person scheduled component that will meet face to face. Other instructional components may use technologies to supplant some, but not all, face-to-face instruction, reducing the time physically spent on campus/on site. These courses are not intended for distance learners as some on-campus/on-site attendance is required.

Remote Instruction¹

Instruction is delivered live and synchronously using internet and/or other distance delivery technologies such as Zoom during scheduled class meeting times. Class attendance is expected. No on-campus/on-site attendance is required. These courses are intended to provide distance students access to a live and interactive experience.

Blended – Remote Instruction¹

Instruction includes at least one weekly component that will be delivered synchronously using internet and/or other distance delivery technologies such as Zoom. Other course activities will be completed asynchronously. No on-campus/on-site attendance is required.

Online Instruction¹

All course activity is conducted asynchronously using internet and/or other distance delivery methods. There are no in-person sessions and no requirements for on-campus activities. Online instruction consists entirely of online elements that facilitate the three critical student interactions: with content, the instructor, and other students. These courses are not self-paced; most assignments will have due dates, and group assignments may require synchronous meetings with group members. Online courses must be completed according to how they are scheduled within the academic calendar.

¹ Instructional-modality definitions adapted from [OLC Definitions of E-Learning Courses and Programs Version 2.0 April 4, 2015](#)

Recommended Definitions for Program-Level Delivery Modalities

On-Campus Program

There are courses included in this program that are delivered in the “In-Person” or “Blended – In-Person” instructional modalities as defined in this document. The degree/credential can only be completed with significant on-campus/on-site activities.

Low-Residency Program

A majority of the courses in this program are available in the synchronous “Remote Instruction” or asynchronous “Online Instruction” modalities as defined in this document; however, in-person educational activities will be required. Residency requirements vary by degree/certificate.

Remote Program

All courses in this program are available in the synchronous “Remote Instruction” or asynchronous “Online Instruction” modalities as defined in this document. A student is not required to be on campus/on site for any component of the degree/certificate.

Online Program

All courses in this program are available in the “Online” instructional modality as defined in this document. A student is not required to be on campus/on site for any component of the degree/certificate.