



## **Clarification on the Process to Determine Course Modality for Fall 2020**

In March 2020, Auburn University mandated that all instruction transition to remote delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the spring semester, the University has worked diligently to pivot from remote courses back to on-campus instruction. Providing high-quality instruction is an integral part of our institution's mission and something we do best face-to-face. Recognizing this, we strongly encourage as much in-person instruction as possible this fall.

The University's key academic objectives for returning to on-campus instruction are:

1. Ensure that we meet the course learning objectives while also ensuring academic integrity through quality education. One way to ensure academic integrity is to provide students with educational opportunities that align with the course and programmatic learning outcomes;
2. Ensure that academic units meet all accreditation requirements both at the university and program levels;
3. Ensure the continued academic progress of our students.

Auburn's [A Healthier U](#) Reentry plan is based on the assumption that on-campus instruction is an integral part of our institution's educational experience. Based on state and federal recommendations established to help protect Auburn's faculty, students, and staff, the plan details significant measures that support this effort and our fall reentry.

Provided in the A Healthier U Plan FAQs, the academic plan states that courses will be offered through a mix of in-person and remote delivery, with the intent to offer as many in-person classes as reasonable. Classes will be offered through one of four modalities: (1) Face-to-Face, (2) Blended, (3) HyFlex, and (4) Online. Faculty will determine which instructional methods best align with the learning outcomes of their courses, and the chosen methods will be published in the University's scheduling systems by Aug. 1. By encompassing in-person instruction, Modalities 1, 2, and 3 support the University's decision to pivot away from the exclusive remote education that prevailed during the spring and summer terms.

The fundamental question for faculty in determining modality for a course should center on (1) the educational requirements (learning objectives) of the course and (2) the best modality to meet those requirements.

Faculty should start with the assumption that your course being taught in fall 2020 should be offered in a manner similar to its last offering, prior to the pandemic. Specifically, if the course was taught in-person previously, then it should be taught in-person for fall 2020. Please keep in mind that in-person includes face-to-face, blended, or HyFlex instructional modalities. Each instructor (including all professorial ranks, graduate students, adjuncts, and non-tenure-track faculty) should indicate their intended modality to their academic supervisor (chair, head, director, associate dean) by July 24.

Academic supervisors (chair, head, director, associate dean) may request further clarification of any courses considered for online instruction to ensure achievement of the academic objectives identified above. This clarification must be requested in the following manner:

1. Within 24 hours, the academic supervisor will contact the faculty member and request a meeting to discuss the selection of online for course delivery. The academic supervisor and faculty member should discuss and reach a mutual understanding of how the preferred modality will meet the course's student learning outcomes.
2. If a mutual decision cannot be reached, disagreement regarding online delivery exists, or alternative arrangements described below are not possible, the academic supervisor will elevate the case to the dean for review and decision. A decision from the dean's office should be made within 24 hours.
3. If conflict remains, the decision may ultimately be elevated to the Provost's Office by the dean. Decisions from the Provost's Office will be made within 24 hours and will be the final step in resolving the conflict.

It is important to note that alternatives may exist in terms of their fall teaching assignments. Alternative arrangements include:

1. Faculty members may, with their academic supervisor's approval, shift their teaching requirements (either partially or entirely) to a future term(s) to delay their return to on-campus teaching until after fall 2020.
2. Faculty may arrange for alternative course assignments with their academic supervisors.
3. Faculty who cannot perform their job duties due to a COVID-19 related issue, such as an underlying health condition or childcare, should consult [guidelines for the two categories](#) of leave announced earlier this year and contact their supervisor.

All decisions for the selection of modalities should be finalized by July 29 in order to meet the August 1 deadline to publish the modalities on the Registrar's website for students to use in the selection of, or modification of, their fall schedules.

July 17, 2020