

In 2015, the Task Force on Flexible Education report stated: *“Flexible education at SFU encompasses the ways in which the university community collectively and individually designs and provides relevant and community-engaged academic programs in response to changing student needs.”* The Task Force noted that flexible education is much more than technology-enabled learning (such as online and blended course options) and encouraged a more holistic view of how flexible approaches could promote experiential learning, and thus improve the student experience.

After a year of emergency remote teaching, there is great interest among faculty members in applying what we’ve learned to teaching for the future. We’ve learned that our students appreciate the flexibility of learning remotely and asynchronously, but also value the connection of synchronous learning, and miss in-person experiential learning opportunities. As we consider supporting faculty and students in new teaching and learning endeavors, it is helpful to clearly define the terminology that is commonly used to describe flexible learning, and the specific terms we use at SFU to define particular course scheduling patterns. This list includes both the terminology used for course scheduling options at SFU, and some other common flexible education practices that are sometimes confused with one another.

- In person = face-to-face. At SFU these include D (Day), E (Evening), and other section designations. All course components (lectures, labs, tutorials, etc) are in person, on one of our three campuses. Student learning may be supplemented with materials in Canvas, our learning management system, but these online resources do not impact the amount of class time.
- OL = Online. Course is taught fully online by a faculty member (or sessional instructor). Normally fully asynchronous, SFU will pilot scheduling some synchronous course components in 2022. Synchronous activities reduce flexibility for students and so will need to be carefully considered within the pedagogical goals of the course. OL courses are replacing C (Correspondence or CODE) courses taught by Course Supervisors. The transition of CODE courses to the Faculties will be complete by Fall 2023.
- B = Blended. Course has a combination of in-person and online components, and the online components replace in-person class time. For instance, a class with three, 50-minute in-person class periods a week might transition to having one 50-minute in-person lecture, with the remainder replaced by well-integrated, pedagogically appropriate online activities. Or, all lectures would transition to being online, but labs or tutorials remain in-person. Online components should only be asynchronous to support flexibility for students. SFU will pilot B courses in January 2022. (Note that some programs may also be considered blended, although we don’t designate this officially at SFU. An example is a program consisting primarily of online courses, with an additional short but intensive face-to-face component.)
- Flipped classroom. Not a formal scheduling designation at SFU, this pedagogy is used by many instructors. It normally applies to courses where students are expected to learn some content on their own through assigned readings, online modules, or videos, and in-class time is spent in active learning including problem solving, team work, or discussion of the content students have studied beforehand. There is no reduction of in-person time to compensate for the expectation

of additional online learning. This distinguishes the flipped classroom approach from blended courses, which do not increase total workload or time commitment expectations for students.

- Hyflex (sometimes just flex). Not a formal designation at SFU, this term is used where students can choose from multiple options for any given class period, including attending in-person, via synchronous streaming, or by watching recordings later. Although Hyflex provides flexibility, it can lead to presence disparity for students and teaching challenges for faculty.
- Hybrid. Not a formal designation at SFU, this term is sometimes used instead of flex, flipped, hyflex, or blended. We don't use the term because of this lack of clarity in usage.