

Guidelines for Synchronous and Asynchronous Teaching Options in FHS

Synchronous, in-person, classroom teaching is the default teaching mode for FHS/SFU.

Nevertheless, FHS strives to offer flexibility in delivery when it supports student learning. This document defines various course options and the criteria used to decide when they are appropriate.

Synchronous Course Options:

Standard course: A standard course in FHS typically offers 3 hours of synchronous, face-to-face contact time, which may be buttressed by a one-hour tutorial per week. SFU has a [policy](#) governing scheduling options for all synchronous, undergraduate courses. FHS prefers in classroom, full semester delivery for 100-level courses. Being in person and on campus is important for first year students in making a successful transition to SFU and to cohort formation.

Remote, synchronous teaching: Remote, synchronous teaching occurs when a standard course is taught synchronously, in person, via a virtual platform, rather than synchronously, in person, in a classroom. If an instructor would like to consider teaching **more than two classes remotely**, they must work with CEE on the design of their course. In addition, instructors are required to submit a request for consideration to the appropriate graduate/undergraduate committee.

FHS prioritizes the following **criteria** in deciding when remote, synchronous teaching is appropriate:

1. The number of class sessions the instructor proposes for remote, synchronous format
2. The case for why increased synchronous, remote teaching enhances pedagogy or otherwise benefits students
3. Instructor's access to appropriate equipment that replicates classroom experience (N.B. There is no additional budget to support instructor purchase of equipment needed for synchronous, remote teaching).
4. The role of the course in the curriculum
5. The number of courses that are already being offered in the remote, synchronous format
6. Fit within overall program/degree goal
7. Unless accommodations are required as outlined in GP40 and GP26, permission will not be granted for partial or full remote, synchronous instruction based on personal reasons or convenience.

Please note: Our graduate programs (MSc, MPH, & PhD) are *in-person* programs, where forming a cohort is important. Because of this, decisions regarding when synchronous, remote teaching is appropriate for graduate courses will include an evaluation of overall program goals and how synchronous, remote teaching might facilitate or curtail overall program goals.

Experiential Learning Field Courses: Field courses are intensive learning experiences stemming from instructor's partnership(s) and are typically taught in person, completely off campus. Field courses are offered in a condensed format and receive extra resource support from the faculty. Applications for field courses require extensive, detailed plans (including students' travel, accommodation, and safety measures if applicable). International fields schools must also receive approval from the Senate Committee on International Activities.

FHS prioritizes the following **criteria** in deciding whether or not to support a field course:

1. Field courses are governed by written contracts between faculty members and their partners
2. Field courses are approved for a finite length of time (e.g., 3 years)
3. A detailed budget associated with a field school must be submitted and FHS budgetary concerns must be taken into account in determining feasibility
4. Articulation with FHS strategic plan
5. Equity issues, including costs of field schools for students, must be taken into account when considering feasibility
6. Scheduling concerns must be taken into account in determining the feasibility of field courses
7. Instructor's ability to teach in upper and lower levels and core courses must be taken into account in determining the feasibility of field courses

Synchronous and Asynchronous Option

Blended course: SFU defines a blended course as a course where at least one quarter and no more than three quarters of the synchronous, face- to-face class time is replaced with asynchronous, online learning. The SFU registrar assigns blended courses their own designation. As with online courses, instructors must consult with SFU CEE in preparing pedagogical approaches and online content. Please note that CEE may require 6-12 months lead time before a class is ready for to be scheduled as blended. FHS will also accept attendance and completion of a CEE Blended Learning Workshop in preparing pedagogical approaches to online content.

FHS prioritizes the following **criteria** in deciding whether or not a blended course is appropriate:

1. A pedagogical rationale and the student experience support increased asynchronous learning over synchronous learning in course

Asynchronous Option

Online course: SFU defines an online course as an asynchronous course that takes place via a virtual platform (e.g., Canvas). FHS expects that online materials are highly interactive and professionally produced. For online classes to be well-structured, meet their learning goals and be engaging for students, production of an online FHS course must happen in conjunction with CEE. Please note that CEE normally requires 6-12 months lead time before a class is ready for to be scheduled as online. FHS staffs online courses the same as it staffs standard and blended

courses (i.e., a full-time instructor, TA support as per policy). The registrar has a separate designation for online courses. Please note, due to challenges to academic integrity, reliance on exam-based assessments (e.g., closed-book multiple choice and/or true false testing) is not appropriate for classes that do not have in person, proctored testing.

FHS prioritizes the following **criteria** in deciding whether or not an online course is appropriate:

1. FHS routinely faces gaps in identifying appropriate course instructors
2. Course presents a bottleneck to degree completion
3. A pedagogical rationale and the student experience support asynchronous learning over synchronous learning in course
4. Fits within overall program/degree goal

Approval procedure

Instructors should approach the director of the appropriate standing committee (i.e., UGSC, PPAC, MPC) and the ADE with ample notice should they desire to teach a course outside of the synchronous, in- person, weekly classroom teaching that is typical for the majority of classes.

Application Deadline - Applications should be received by the relevant committees no later than 2 terms before the intended changes are to take place.

Application Requirements - Applications must include:

- ✓ Syllabus
- ✓ Assessments (or clear concept/description of assessments) covering how and to what extent the learning objectives and core competencies of the course are met
- ✓ Change to tutorial structure, if applicable
- ✓ Support letter from instructor providing pertinent information on how an application meets criteria and how the new design and structure of the course supports student learning. Additionally, outlining the extent of collaboration with CEE, if applicable

Applications will be reviewed by the relevant standing committee and the EPC using the full criteria listed in this document.