

Policy Regarding Online Undergraduate Courses at Hood College

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to make a swift and unforeseen transition to remote teaching and learning. Through this challenge, it became clear that part of the proverbial “lemonade” from the COVID lemons was the realization that a small number of undergraduate courses may lend themselves to online or remote delivery on a more regular basis. However, unlike a response that was forced by the restrictions of a global pandemic, a longer-term commitment to online teaching and learning at the undergraduate level during the academic year requires careful consideration and clearly defined parameters that are both mission-centered, and student-focused.

To be clear, Hood’s strength at the undergraduate level is and will continue to be delivering liberal arts and professional programs within a personalized classroom environment. Our small class sizes offer a highly engaging experience that recognizes the unique developmental challenges of undergraduates and strives to capture the holistic nature of a college education.

The College also recognizes the advantages of providing a small set of learning opportunities that are not restricted by time, place, or method of delivery. Hence the need to establish guidelines for developing and delivering quality undergraduate education in an online/remote environment on a limited basis. The responsibility for revising and approving these guidelines, as well as all individual courses, resides with the Curriculum Committee and, ultimately, the Provost.

The College also recognizes that there may be unforeseen outcomes of this process. Therefore, the efficacy of these guidelines and their outcomes will be subject to ongoing review and revision.

Below are the course modality definitions initially defined by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC), and consistent with the VA reporting standards. The guidelines presented herein address HYB, S-OL, and A-OL modalities defined below.

Definitions of Course Modalities (as designated in the Course Schedule)

- **TRAD** or traditional: 100% face-to-face, on-campus courses with an assigned room, and specified meeting days and times. Most courses at Hood are offered as traditional courses.
- **Non-TRAD** or nontraditional:
 - **HYB** or hybrid: A combination of on-campus and remote instructional modalities. Blended hybrid options include either: A) synchronous on-campus (noted as TRAD above) + synchronous online, or B) synchronous on-campus + asynchronous online. NOTE: No more than 49% of the course content can be delivered remotely.
 - **S-OL** or Synchronous Online: 100% online with assigned days and times for required weekly online meetings/activities. No on-campus meetings.
 - **A-OL** or Asynchronous Online: 100% online and asynchronous; no assigned, nor required, weekly meetings.

Guidelines (subject to ongoing review and revision by the Curriculum Committee)

Hood College emphasizes small classes and close, consistent contact with faculty members. Consequently, any form of remote teaching (HYB, S-OL or A-OL) should be offered for undergraduates for limited and intentional

reasons only, and with the approval of the department chair, Curriculum Committee and Provost, and must respect current course enrollment limits. **Proposals for all non-TRAD courses should be submitted to the Curriculum Committee, and Provost for final approval.** A-OL courses will only be considered in rare and exceptional circumstances. Additional guidelines include the following:

- The department must support the requested modality option for the course.
- Courses taken predominantly by first-year students including developmental courses will not be considered for asynchronous (A-OL) delivery. HYB and S-OL delivery may be considered on a limited basis per the guidelines below.
- Students are strongly discouraged from taking more than one non-TRAD course per semester as A-OL delivery (excluding summer). It is the student's responsibility to consider the financial aid ramifications. Advisers are encouraged to communicate this guideline during course selection.
- Proposals for courses or sections must be submitted to the Curriculum Committee each time they are offered.
- Any course being considered for non-TRAD delivery would ideally be one of multiple sections, course types, or categories (for example, Literary Analysis, or elective) to provide students with choice in modality. If multiple sections, course types, or categories are not available, proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- No more than 2 courses of an AC faculty member's annual undergraduate teaching load may consist of non-TRAD courses.¹ Part-time AC faculty members' ratios will be adjusted as needed.
- Faculty teaching HYB and OL courses must successfully complete the Certification of Online Instruction or Certification of Hybrid Instruction, offered by the Coordinator of Online Instruction.
- The HYB or OL version of a course should have and successfully achieve the same learning outcomes as its TRAD counterpart, though how students achieve those outcomes and the instructional strategies used to support student learning may be quite different.
- Double-numbered courses follow the modality of the graduate course.
- A department with a course that falls outside these guidelines may petition the Curriculum Committee and Provost.
- Acadeum course approvals are left to the discretion of the department but should be thoroughly vetted before adoption.

Process

NOTE: Course modality must be reflected on the schedule of classes PRIOR to student registration. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to the timing of the Curriculum Committee proposal relative to the publication of course schedules.

1. Instructor obtains department approval per departmental process for the non-TRAD course modality.
2. Instructor creates/modifies syllabus according to the checklist (see separate Appendix for reference).
3. Instructor successfully completes Certification of Online or Hybrid Instruction Training course the next time the training is offered or provides evidence of having passed a similar course. The Coordinator of Online Instruction will verify the completion of the Training course with the Curriculum Committee.
4. Instructor submits proposal and modified syllabus to Curriculum Committee for consideration.
5. If approved, Curriculum Committee submits proposal and modified syllabus to the Provost for review, along with a summary of the Committee's review of the course. If denied, justification will be provided in writing to the department and faculty member.

¹ Some faculty teach both undergraduate and graduate courses. This restriction applies to undergraduate workload.