

# GUIDANCE FOR COURSE DELIVERY DECISION-MAKING

**BCIT**

—  
THE BRITISH COLUMBIA  
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY.  
**EDUCATION  
FOR A COMPLEX WORLD.**







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BCIT Learning and Teaching Centre

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# PURPOSE

This document is intended to support decision-making regarding course delivery options ranging from fully face-to-face to fully remote and online.

## Assumptions

1. Most courses will be able to return to in-class teaching, either in full or with some physical distancing.
2. Some programs may want to continue or expand some elements of online or digital learning as a result of their experience during the pandemic.
3. Some students will want more flexibility in accessing their courses, following their experiences during the pandemic.
4. Decisions about mode of delivery will be made primarily by the School in consultation with the respective departments.
5. When necessary, Schools will obtain guidance and assistance from LTC staff in making these decisions.
6. Schools would like a consistent and research-informed process to assist in deciding on appropriate modes of delivery.
7. Shaping a new technology enabled teaching and learning process presents a unique opportunity to move forward more quickly with BCIT's eLearning strategy, as well as starting or implementing a long term vision for teaching and learning in each department.

# THE COURSE DELIVERY CONTINUUM

There is not a simple distinction between fully on-campus and fully online or distance learning.

In-person and online learning are becoming increasingly integrated and new designs are constantly emerging.



← **blended** →

**face-to-face**   **classroom aids**   **flipped**   **hybrid**   **fully online (distance)**

← **no technology**                      **(delivery)**                      **all technology** →

## DEFINITIONS

### Face-to-face (f2f)

- On-campus experience with instructors and learners together in physical learning spaces (classrooms, shops, labs). Increasingly though, this may include the use of digital learning materials in class/on-campus, such as video, simulations or virtual reality (classroom aids)

### Blended

- A mix of f2f learning and online activities inside the same course. There is a wide variety of blended learning models, including:
  - **Regular in-person classes**, plus work set for additional online study; the number of in-person classes may be reduced to allow extra time for online work. This can be spread out across a course, or the on-campus component may be concentrated within a couple of weeks or a summer semester
  - **Flipped classroom**: lectures are recorded and viewed online; students come to class to for in-person questions/discussion and further online work around the lecture, or for hands-on practical work
  - **Hybrid**: a deliberate mix of in-person and online teaching to make best use of each.
  - **Other**: new combinations are constantly being added

### Fully online (distance)

- Fully online courses until recently were mainly asynchronous (using a Learning Management System, e.g. Learning Hub) and were specially re-designed for online learning ('classic' online). In recent years though a lot of deliberately designed online learning has moved to or included synchronous delivery using video conferencing and streaming tools such as the Virtual Classroom, based on the traditional lecture, combined with an LMS, usually for student follow-up work.

### Hy-flex:

- Each learning session and activity is offered in-person, synchronously online, and asynchronously online. There are at least two versions:
  - **Flexible- Hyflex**: Students register for the term for either in-person OR online learning but cannot switch between the two.
  - **Choice**: Students can decide how they will participate and can switch between in-person classes and online learning at their own discretion for each class or activity.

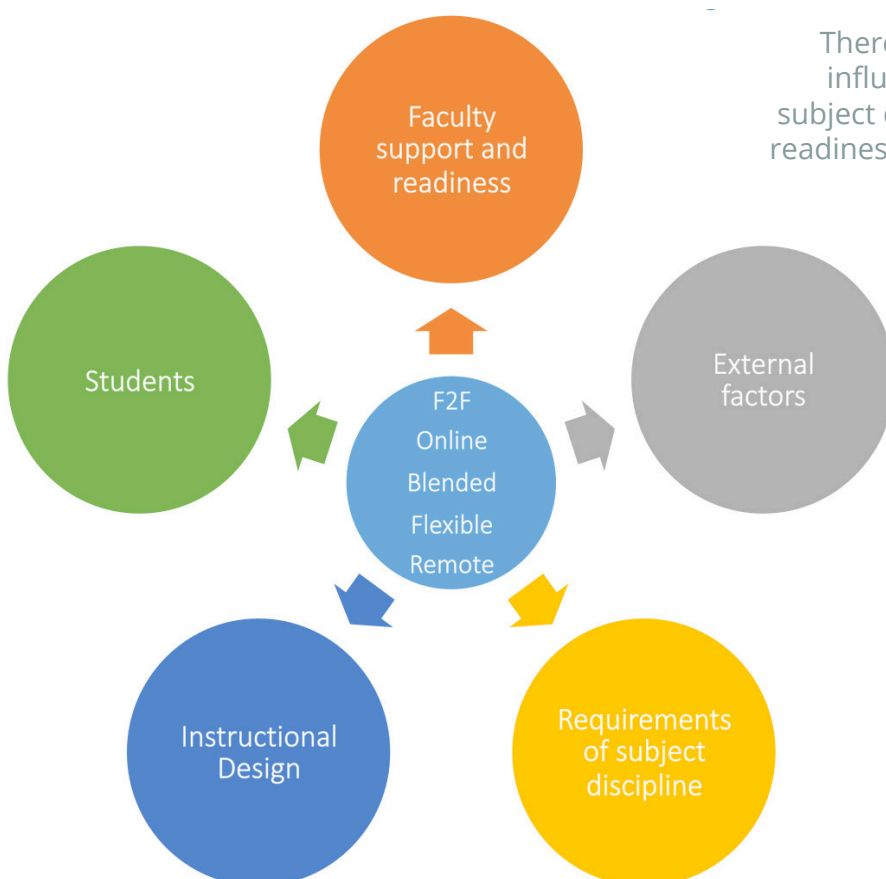
## DECISION-MAKING

Deciding which is the most appropriate mode of delivery is a complex process.

There are many variables and drivers that will influence decisions, such as the nature of the subject discipline, the needs of students, and the readiness or experience of faculty with e-learning and blended learning.

In such a complex situation, hard and fast rules for decision-making are generally inadequate, as they don't reflect the unique context of each course or program.

This document presents a set of guiding questions that decision-makers can work through, to ensure that they have considered all relevant criteria to enable decision-making according to specific contexts.



# MAIN DRIVERS

Students	
Questions	Considerations
<b>What are the age groups of your students? And has there been a change since the pandemic?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Straight from high school? Then they may want the full campus experience.</li> <li>▪ More mature students? Then they may prefer the flexibility of fully online learning, or maybe more concentrated but limited periods of time on campus [e.g. two weeks of intense lab-work] with the rest done online.</li> </ul>
<b>Is the bulk of your enrolment part-time or full-time students?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If part-time, then they may be looking for flexibility and may want courses that combine some on-campus experiences with online learning.</li> <li>▪ If full-time, they may be looking for a campus experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Geographical location: what distance are students from campus?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students facing a long commute generally prefer more online learning.</li> </ul>
<b>What is the percentage of International and out-of-province students enrolling in the course or program?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students may not be able to travel to BC in time for the fall semester.</li> </ul>
<b>Will students have access to reliable access to the Internet?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access to broadband, and the ability to pay for data and computer equipment, will be a problem for some students [25% or less].</li> </ul>
<p><i>Student needs are one of the major drivers to be considered in deciding on mode of delivery. It would be wise to consult with students about their preferences and requirements for mode of delivery in specific programs.</i></p>	
Requirements of Subject Discipline	
Questions	Considerations
<b>Looking at a program in general, what courses could be moved online and what courses should remain f-2-f?</b>	A good rule of thumb is to consider offering introductory courses with a greater component of f-2-f sessions and a smaller mix of online learning. Higher level courses can rely on higher student self-efficacy and if appropriate can include a bigger component of online learning, if not 100% online.
<b>To what extent do students need access to specialist equipment that is accessible only on campus?</b>	If students need physical access to specific equipment then you may want to consider a f-2-f delivery, or a blended delivery if some theory can be provided online.
<b>To what extent must faculty be present in-person to provide guidance or feedback in using equipment?</b>	If faculty presence is required for guidance when using equipment, then this may be a strong consideration for a f-2-f delivery.



<b>Can some of the content be delivered online, such as teaching theory, or using video for demonstration of equipment or processes, thus cutting down on the time needed in the lab or workshop?</b>	If this is a possibility, then you may want to consider a blended delivery, integrated with lab or workshop sessions f-2-f. In this situation, it is highly recommended that the online component is carefully designed to ensure alignment with the f-2-f experiential sessions.
<b>Can some of the content be assessed online?</b>	If so, then offering online examinations and/or assignment submissions may be a consideration. This may require exam and question re-design, meaning an investment upfront, but will lighten faculty time in marking and keeps all assessments digitally stored in one place within the course.
<b>If assessment is f-2-f, are there enough facilities and invigilation processes according to Public Health orders?</b>	This is something that you may want to take into consideration as you are making decision to move back to on-campus teaching.
<b>What is the split between content delivery and assessment and skill development?</b>	Content delivery and assessment can be done online, skill development should probably be delivered in a lab environment. Consider what activities could be done on line to provide practice and feedback, and which can only be done on-campus.
<b>How important is social or collaborative learning?</b>	Many students learn better in a social environment, and in some courses, the ability to work collaboratively is an essential skill within the discipline. Social and collaborative learning is quite possible and effective online, but it needs to be designed differently from in class.

*Student learning preferences are another major driver of decision-making.*

## Faculty Support and Readiness

Questions	Considerations
<b>How experienced are the faculty in online learning, other than emergency remote learning?</b>	What is likely to drive most decisions on mode of delivery is the readiness of faculty to move to more online learning, in terms of prior training or experience.
<b>What is their level of proficiency with online learning in their teaching practice?</b>	Many faculty now have a better idea of the strengths and limitations of online learning, and what needs to be done to improve it, at least from the often-rushed experience of emergency remote learning.
<b>What have they learned from their experiences when teaching remotely?</b>	If they have successfully developed an effective online course, faculty may consider continuing with that delivery mode and focus on enhancements. If they have only taught remotely using a video conferencing system, then maybe a return to f-2-f teaching is advisable until achieving further skill development in online teaching.
<b>Have faculty enjoyed their online teaching experiences and are they willing to continue?</b>	If so, then consider moving to online and/or blended delivery, with a focus on developing faculty skills in online teaching and content design.

<b>How much time will faculty have to prepare for teaching in the chosen delivery mode?</b>	This will determine the extent of the return to traditional campus-based teaching or whether we incorporate some of faculty experience in online learning from the pandemic, or whether we re-think teaching to make better use of online learning. Hiring staff in August to teach in September will very much restrict any innovation in teaching.
<b>Class size: are there restrictions on physical class sizes due to public health guidelines?</b>	If Public Health orders recommend avoiding large in-person lectures, then online or blended delivery modes will help minimize these large gatherings.
<b>Can large classes be either delivered online or designed differently?</b>	This is good timing to reflect on the design of large lectures and consider moving some or all of the content online or to blended environment where students can participate in smaller application driven learning experiences (flipping the classroom)

*One of the major drivers that will influence the mode of delivery will be the imagination and skill of faculty in re-thinking their teaching and how online learning, or digital tools (such a simulations, games or virtual reality), might transform or improve the learning outcomes for their students. Faculty readiness and willingness to teach online in one form or another will be a major determinant of what a return to campus will look like.*

## Instructional Design

Questions	Considerations
<b>How much technical and practical support can faculty get in designing online courses for September?</b>	Consider the time they will have to work with the Learning and Teaching Centre. In most cases, a move to online learning requires some re-design of the teaching. If faculty have time, and are interested, consider referring them to an Instructional Development Consultant (IDC), or discuss the possibilities with your School Liaison.
<b>What are faculty needs? Help with course design? Help with technology tools? Is this support available, and if so, how much would be needed/ available between now and September?</b>	In most cases, a move to online learning requires some redesign of the teaching and up-front preparation is usually necessary. Consider a conversation with the IDC team at the Learning and Teaching Centre to see what supports can be made available between now and September.
<b>How could the use of technology improve existing learning outcomes or lead to more appropriate learning outcomes for students?</b>	Lecture load may need to be reduced to enable students time to study online, freeing up time for the faculty to provide feedback on activities and other support.
<b>Is course assessment well adapted to online learning following the changes made during the pandemic?</b>	Faculty may require some time and support to help them re-design assessment strategies for online learning that ensure the integrity of the assessment process. The IDCs can assist.

*While some additional help may be available, ultimately, faculty will need to work within their current understanding of good course design and this will help shape decisions about the most appropriate mode of delivery.*

## External Factors

### Questions

**Are you required to meet requirements from professional accreditation agencies?**

### Considerations

Some of these requirements may include a minimum of contact hours of in-class 'seat' time. These requirements will drive decision-making about transitioning to online and blended delivery models as programs need to keep their accreditation. However, an alternative is to look at student study loads in terms of hours per week spent studying. Thus, on a three-credit course, a student would be expected to study for eight hours a week, including both in-person and online learning, and the course would be designed to accommodate that.

*Certainly, it may be important to have discussions with employers' councils, accreditation or other external agencies to ensure that any proposed changes in delivery mode are understood, accepted and hopefully welcomed.*

## MAKING DECISIONS

There are many factors or drivers that will impact on the decision as to the most appropriate mode of delivery for any particular course or program. One way of tackling such complex decisions is for decision-makers to think about the various questions and issues raised in this document, and then arrange to meet with an Instructional Development Consultant in the LTC, to exchange ideas and suggestions about the appropriate mode of delivery for courses in their respective programs.

The E-Learning Coaching course in The Learning Hub (TLH) includes many resources to support the transition to an online or blended learning environment, and IDCs are available to facilitate discussion groups in TLH for faculty and administrators to address some of the decision-making issues, alternatives and best practices for course delivery.

E-Learning Coaching Course:  
<https://learn.bcit.ca/d2l/home/645423>

## QUESTIONS?

Contact the Learning and Teaching Centre

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