In order to clarify and address questions about Saint Mary's teaching and learning modalities, Academic Affairs has provided expanded definitions of the University's policies for both in-person and on-line teaching and learning modalities.

These definitions are based on consultation with Deans and academic administrative teams, and have been approved by the Educational Standards Committee at the College and the Academic Policy Committee at the Schools of Graduate and Professional Programs.

Definitions of Two In-Person Modalities: In-Person and Blended

In-Person Learning

"In-Person Learning," historically called "Traditional" or "On-ground," refers to courses that are designed to be taught 100% in a classroom setting. In these courses,

- Instructors and students interact with one another in the classroom at scheduled days and times
- Students are expected to physically attend class
- While the course is taught in person in a classroom at a scheduled time and day, instructors are encouraged to make use of online resources such as scheduled Zoom office hours and/or assignment submission links
- The course site (Canvas), including but not limited to syllabi, course materials, grading, discussion questions, and formal assignments, should be completed and loaded 1-2 weeks prior to the first day of the term/semester.

Blended Learning

"Blended" courses use both online and in-person learning experiences, with some in-class time being replaced by asynchronous online learning experiences (such as activities and assessments that are delivered via the learning management system). The degree or amount of "blending" in the course is determined according to the following scale:

1-24%	Lowest
25-49%	Medium
50-74%	High
75% and more	Online Course (See Definitions Below)

Substantial instruction/interaction should occur weekly during the course (whether in person or online). During scheduled online, asynchronous learning of one of the following should occur:

- student-to-student learning activity (examples: discussion board, online group projects, peer review of work with guidelines from the instructor);
- student-to-instructor (examples: online instructor lecture module, feedback on work, scheduled online conferences);
- student-to-interactive content (example: the Library's eBrarian modules, proctored examinations).

An individual reading, assignment, or activity provided as homework (without an accompanying exchange of ideas within the class) should not be the only activity in which a student is engaged during an online meeting.

Syllabi for Blended classes should make clear which class meetings are online and what the expectations are for engagement during those weeks. The Canvas course site (including but not limited to syllabi, course materials, grading, discussion questions, and formal assignments) should be completed and loaded 1-2 weeks prior to the first day of the term/semester.

Definitions of Three Online Learning Modalities: Online, Remote, and Emergency Remote

Online Learning

"Online learning" refers to courses that are designed to be taught 100% online, asynchronously, and are coded as "online. "

- This instructional mode allows students to engage in the class at any time of day so long as certain deadlines for the completion of work are met each week.
- Students are not required to meet for scheduled simultaneous sessions.
- While limited use of synchronous sessions may occur (see guidelines for synchronous sessions below), online learning is designed to allow students to participate asynchronously. This modality is especially appropriate for students who are in different time zones from the instructor, such as international students, and students who need increased flexibility with their schedules.

- Asynchronous online courses typically rely on tools such as pre-recorded lectures and discussion forums. However, substantial instruction/interaction should occur weekly during the course (see guidelines below) through chat-rooms, discussion threads, and other means.
- Online courses have been approved by the program director/chair and, for graduate/BS completion courses, by the curriculum committee.
- The Canvas course site including but not limited to syllabi, course materials, grading, discussion questions, and formal assignments should be completed and loaded at least 1-2 weeks prior to the first day of the term/semester.

The following will assist staff and faculty:
- [Guidelines for Synchronous Sessions in 100% Online Courses](#)

Remote Learning

In an online synchronous remote course, both students and instructors participate online at the same scheduled day and time.
- Remote learning is designed primarily for synchronous instruction and can be conducted via video conferencing with some asynchronous elements.
- Students and instructors are required to meet simultaneously on a set schedule for a specified amount of time (note that no more than 2 hours at a time of online synchronous sessions are recommended).
- Synchronous sessions may be supplemented by the use of asynchronous activities and assessments, delivered via the learning management system.
- Substantial instruction/interaction occurs weekly during the course at the regularly scheduled course times.
  - Similar to "blended" courses that use both online and in-person learning experiences when teaching students (see above), in remote learning, synchronous online meetings may be either replaced or supplemented by asynchronous online learning experiences.
- The Canvas course site, including but not limited to syllabi, course materials, grading, discussion questions, and formal assignments should be completed and loaded at least 1-2 weeks prior to the first day of the term/semester.
- A plan/schedule for any synchronous sessions should be delivered on or before the first day of the course.

Emergency Remote Learning

During times of crisis (e.g., pandemic, natural disaster, civil unrest, and so on.), instructors respond not only by shifting their courses to an online delivery mode but by also **extending a further sense of care to our students and attempting to build a community that can work together to confront situation-specific learning challenges.**

- See "A temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances," with the intention of returning to the original mode of instruction, from [The Difference Between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online](#).
- Faculty members determine the best way to instruct and access resources temporarily, keeping in mind the challenges that students might be experiencing during a crisis. See ["Teaching in Times of Crisis"](#) for helpful resources and approaches.
- Emergency remote learning may or may not have synchronous sessions. If synchronous sessions are held, they should occur at a specific posted time and should not be rescheduled. Synchronous sessions do not have to meet for the full block of time scheduled, as an on-ground session would.
- Substantial instruction/interaction must occur weekly, with at least one, one-hour synchronous session held weekly (instructors should keep in mind the capacity for student engagement online and offer no longer than two-hour synchronous sessions at one time).
- The instructor assigned to the course offers engaged instruction in a revised format, appropriate to the emergency. This may include revising assignments and due dates, shifting class discussions to online discussion boards, and so on.
- Students enrolled in the course continue to exchange ideas with one another and with their instructor via online discussion forums, zoom meetings, and other means.
- An emergency remote course will return to its original delivery format when the crisis is over.

For All Modalities:

All courses-- in-person, blended, online, and remote-- must include engaged instruction occurring each week where an exchange of ideas occurs within the class. Instruction should include one of the following:
- Student-to-student learning activity (ex: in-class on online discussion, group projects or activities);
- Student-to-instructor (ex: lectures, synchronous activities);
- Student-to-interactive content (ex: Library's eBrarian modules, simulations, lab work).