## CTCLINK COURSE MODALITY

## Data Governance Committee Proposal, November 2023

### Background & Introduction

Washington’s statewide system of 34 community and technical colleges is at its best when it leverages its collective strength. Whether pooling resources, knowledge, or data, our strength as a system exceeds that of any single institution. As we consider shared funding, policies, priorities, regulations, and accreditation, it is necessary to compare relevant and consistent data across colleges.

Methods for coding course modalities have varied widely over the last two decades.

This proposal seeks to define a system of coding to reduce inconsistencies by further clarifying how courses should be coded per modality. Consistent data will result in reliable and statistically valid findings and reports.

### Why now?

The onset of COVID-19 restrictions drove systemwide discussions about course modality and how colleges could more accurately communicate course modality (i.e., modes of course delivery) to students as they search for classes. The terms “asynchronous” and “synchronous” became common when describing course modality.

When in-person COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, it was evident how much our educational delivery methods had expanded and students are left struggling to decipher when, where, and how a class is taught and the in-person versus online requirements. This proposal aims to clarify course modality in ctcLink for students, staff, and faculty.

### Data Governance Guiding Principles

* Keep it simple. Simplicity makes data easier to track, validate and to find coding issues.
* Consider the effects of the decision to modify criteria from multiple perspectives including the student, college, district, SBCTC, and national viewpoints.
* Understand the purpose. Is the data used to report externally, for state-level analysis, college-level analysis, or funding decisions? Is it used nationally?
* Implementation timeline. Consider how the timing of change impacts how the data is used and viewed. Implement changes beginning in summer quarter whenever possible.
* Consider the effects of the change on trend analysis and historical reporting.
* All recommendations and decisions should be fully documented to include the intent, purpose, definition, and impact. They should also be accompanied by a diagnostic evaluation of why there are issues with the current definition, how the data were represented under that definition, and how the data would look under the new definition.

### What are Instruction Modes?

The Instruction Mode data element in ctcLink is one factor of course modality. Instruction Modes were configured in ctcLink primarily based on the Legacy Distance Education codes. The last revision to Distance Education coding was implemented in 2010. Now, 13 years later, there is a strong business need to update the categories of distance education to reflect current course modality.

The systemwide Data Governance Committee formed a Course Modality Subcommittee in January 2023, meeting monthly and then weekly and determined the following primary uses of Instruction Modes:

* Communicate to the student what they can expect if they register for the class
* Class Search
* Local, state, and federal reporting, such as IPEDS
* Charging class fees

The subcommittee compiled a list of usages from each college for each of the currently active Instruction Modes available in ctcLink and used this information to guide the development of this proposal.

### Subcommittee General Considerations

During the development of this proposal, much consideration was given to the impact any changes may have on students, reporting, or the charging of class fees.

The subcommittee aimed to be flexible in the Instruction Modes definitions to minimize the impact of change. For example, the subcommittee did not want to be prescriptive about how a college charges fees (i.e., at the class level or through term fees).

See the subcommittee member list in [Appendix A](file:///G:\ctcLink%20Communications\Data%20Services\DGC%20Course%20Modality%20Proposal%202023-08-22%20DRAFT.docx#_Appendix_A).

Class Financial Aid Eligibility

The subcommittee considered the impact of changing Instruction Modes on Financial Aid eligibility. The initial goal was to identify which Instruction Modes were not financial aid eligible. However, Instruction Modes are not the only factor of financial aid eligibility; other class and program attributes factor into this eligibility and it was determined not to provide guidance in this area within this document or coding matrix.

Reporting Instruction Modes

When reporting data using Instruction Mode during the implementation year and beyond, group the information as represented by the “Reportable As” indicator in the [Instruction Mode Coding Matrix](#_Proposed_Instruction_Mode) for consistent reporting across all colleges.

### Course Modality Terms Glossary

Course Modality

* Represents the where, when, and how the class is delivered.
* From a data perspective, course modality is a combination of:
  + Instruction Mode (for example: Online or In-Person)
  + Class Location
  + Facility ID
  + Meeting patterns
  + Class start and end dates
  + Class Notes (displayed to student during class search)
* Students use these fields to filter the class offerings, except for class notes. The system prevents the student from registering for overlapping classes which creates a challenge when instructors are unable to accurately depict what is happening in the classroom. Example: If a class is built with a specific meeting pattern, but is actually delivered in a flexible mode, this could conflict with other class offerings in which the student would like to enroll.

Distance Education

* Legacy data element (SBCTC-MISC-1 in SMS and DIST\_ED in the Data Warehouse).

Instruction Mode

* A data element in ctcLink Campus Solutions (INSTRUCTION\_MODE).
* Required for each class and designates if the class is taught fully or partially at a distance.
* Used for federal reporting such as IPEDS and NCS.
* Students use this field to search for classes that meet their scheduling needs.

Synchronous Instruction (scheduled)

* Instructor-facilitated learning which happens in real-time with instructors and students. Students are expected to gather at a specified day and time, in a virtual or physical space, with the instructor based on a predictable and scheduled basis.

Asynchronous Instruction (unscheduled)

* Instructor-facilitated learning with no specified meeting times and days. Students complete assignments, group projects, quizzes, discussions, and other activities following set deadlines. The instructor provides regular, substantive interaction.
  + Some asynchronous classes require students to come to campus (or some other pre-determined location) for proctored tests or other in-person activities.

HyFlex

* HyFlex, short for Hybrid-Flexible, is a course design method and teaching approach designed to better accommodate student needs by combining online and classroom-based components.
* HyFlex describes a single class offered in multiple instruction modes and the student determines which instruction mode meets their needs. They may change instruction modes during the quarter.
* Students may take the class asynchronously online, synchronously in person, or synchronously virtually (Zoom).
* Often up to the instructor to decide which modes are available.
* This proposal uses the term “Flexible” as a synonym for “HyFlex.”

### Proposed Course Modality Enhancement Request

This proposal includes two requests. The first is a configuration change to update the INSTRUCTION\_MODE coding schema and provide global definitions of each. The second is an enhancement request to add helper text on the Class Search pages to clearly communicate to students what each instruction mode means to them. Each part is described in more detail in the following sections.

#### Proposal #1: Revised Instruction Mode Coding Schema

The Data Governance Committee proposes the following configuration changes of the INSTRUCTION-MODE data element in PeopleSoft Campus Solutions. **It is not requested nor recommended to change Instruction Modes on any previously offered or current quarter classes.**

The Data Governance Committee subcommittee will provide an Instruction Mode Coding Guidance to include guidance and examples.

| Instruction Mode | Definition (for staff, not viewable to students) | Instruction Mode Code | Reportable As |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Online Scheduled | An online class where instruction takes place synchronously (virtual meetings held at specific days and times noted in the class schedule) using internet/web-based tools.  The class may include activities held asynchronously (without a set time to attend).  Remote proctored exams are an allowable activity for this instruction mode. | OS | Online |
| Online Scheduled w/In-Person | An online class where instruction takes place synchronously (virtual meetings held at specific days and times noted in the class schedule) using internet/web-based tools.  In-person activities such as assessment, exam, and/or orientation are required for class completion.  The number of in-person activities must not be greater than the number of credits enrolled, e.g., a five-credit class is limited to five in-person activities. If the number of in-person activities exceeds the number of credits enrolled, the class should use the Hybrid Instruction Mode.  The expectation of in-person activities must be included in the class notes and the meeting pattern added to the schedule, when known. | OW | Online |
| Online Asynchronous | A class in which all required instruction occurs online asynchronously (without a set time to attend but within a specified time frame) using web-based tools.  There are no required real-time (synchronous) class meetings; however, the instructor may choose to offer optional hours and other activities where attendance is not required.  Remote proctored exams are an allowable activity for this classification. | OA | Online |
| Online Asynchronous  w/In-Pers | A class in which all required instruction occurs online asynchronously (without a set time to attend but within a specified time frame) using web-based tools.  Scheduled in-person activities (assessment, exam and/or orientation) are required for class completion.  The number of in-person activities must not be greater than the number of credits enrolled (e.g., a five-credit class is limited to five in-person activities). If the number of in-person activities exceeds the number of credits enrolled, the class should use the Hybrid Instruction Mode.  The expectation of in-person activities must be included in the class notes. | OB | Online |
| In-Person | A face-to-face class with scheduled meeting times which does not require the use of web-based tools. | P | In-Person |
| In-Person (Web Enhanced) | A face-to-face class with scheduled meeting times which requires the use of web-based tools. | WE | In-Person |
| Hybrid | A class that displaces some, but not all face-to-face instruction time with web-based tools.  On-site or remotely-proctored exams are allowed for this classification. | HY | Hybrid |
| Flexible | A class in which the student can choose to attend face-to-face or take the class using a mix of online scheduled or online asynchronous. Students may switch between modes throughout the term.  The class must include at least one of the following instruction mode combinations:   * In-Person and Online Asynchronous * In-Person and Online Scheduled * In-Person, Online Scheduled, and Online Asynchronous   The exact mix of modes must be included in the class notes. | FL | Flexible |

| Instruction Mode | Definition (for staff, not viewable to students) | Instruction Mode Code | Reportable As |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Self-Paced | Conducted asynchronously online. Students use web-based tools to follow a syllabus, list of required readings, and instructions on how to complete lessons. Instructors grade assignments and give feedback online.  Uses same FTE calculations as all other instruction modes. | OZ | Online |
| Individualized Instruction | One-to-one instruction in which a student meets individually with an instructor according to a mutually agreed upon schedule and plan.  This instruction mode may include internships, personalized tutoring, or specialized content classes where students collaborate with faculty or staff to develop individualized learning agreements and/or learning outcomes.  May also include practicums, co-ops, or service-learning activities. | IS | Individualized Instruction |
| Other | A class that uses other modes of delivery that do not fit within the listed instruction mode categories. | Z | Other |

### Summary of Proposed Changes

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Current Instruction Mode | Proposed Change |
| Correspondence | Retire |
| Hybrid | No Change |
| Independent Studies | Rename to Individualized Instruction |
| Interactive Television | Retire |
| Online | Split into four categories:   1. Online Asynchronous 2. Online Asynchronous w/In-Person Activities 3. Online Scheduled 4. Online Scheduled w/In-Person Activities |
| Optional - F2F or OL | Rename to Flexible |
| Other | No Change |
| In Person | No Change |
| Tele-course | Retire |
| Tele-class | Retire |
| Washington Online | Retire and replace with “System Shared Classes.”  It is also proposed these classes be tracked through the use of Course Attributes and removed from Instruction Mode. |
| Self-Paced | New |
| Web-Enhanced | Change description to “In-Person (Web Enhanced)” |

#### Proposal #2: Enhancement to Class Search Pages

The Data Governance Committee proposes the following helper text be added to the Class Search pages to assist students making the appropriate decisions when registering for classes.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Instruction Mode | Helper Text Viewable by Students During Class Search |
| Online Scheduled | An online class where instruction takes place synchronously (virtual meetings held at specific days and times noted in the class schedule) using internet/web-based tools.  The class may include activities held asynchronously (without a set time to attend).  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |
| Online Scheduled w/In-Person | An online class where instruction takes place synchronously (virtual meetings held at specific days and times noted in the class schedule) using internet/web-based tools.  In-person activities such as assessment, exam, and/or orientation are required for class completion.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |
| Online Asynchronous | A class in which all required instruction occurs online asynchronously (without a set time to attend but within a specified time frame) using web-based tools.  There are no required real-time (synchronous) class meetings; however, the instructor may choose to offer optional hours and other activities where attendance is not required.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |
| Online Asynchronous  w/In-Person | A class in which all required instruction occurs online asynchronously (without a set time to attend but within a specified time frame) using web-based tools.  Scheduled in-person activities (assessment, exam and/or orientation) are required for class completion.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |
| In-Person | A face-to-face class with scheduled meeting times which does not require the use of web-based tools.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |
| In-Person (Web Enhanced) | A face-to-face class with scheduled meeting times which requires the use of web-based tools.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |
| Hybrid | A class that displaces some, but not all face-to-face instruction time with web-based tools.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Instruction Mode | Helper Text Viewable by Students During Class Search |
| Flexible | A class in which the student can choose to attend face-to-face or take the class using a mix of online scheduled or online asynchronous (non-scheduled). Students may switch between modes throughout the term.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |
| Self-Paced | Conducted asynchronously (non-scheduled) online. Students use web-based tools to follow a syllabus, list of required readings, and instructions on how to complete lessons. Instructors grade assignments and give feedback online.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |
| Individualized Instruction | One-to-one instruction in which a student meets individually with an instructor according to a mutually agreed upon schedule and plan.  This instruction mode may include internships, personalized tutoring, or specialized content classes where students collaborate with faculty or staff to develop individualized learning agreements and/or learning outcomes.  May also include practicums, co-ops, or service-learning activities.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |
| Other | A class that uses other modes of delivery that do not fit within the listed instruction mode categories.  Please see the Class Notes for additional information related to the specific class. |

### Feedback Received on Proposal

The Data Governance Committee solicited system-wide feedback in October, 2023, prior to voting. Most commissions and councils responded with feedback. Below is a summary of the common feedback received including the subcommittee’s response.

* Feedback: Too many nuances that will be confusing to students,

Subcommittee Response:

* The nuance is intentional, if the variance of class offerings is not described in the Instruction Mode, we lose the opportunity to communicate the nuances to the students.  By having additional instruction modes, we are able to provide a clearer description of what is happening in the class room.  An example are the four options for Online, they allow the students to make better decisions when registering for classes.
* Students will only see the Instruction Modes in Class Search that have been used on the classes at that institution during the term searched.
* The instruction modes are configured globally, but a college has the option of choosing which to use. Only the instruction modes that are associated with the classes offered by your college during the quarter will show in the student’s search.  For example, colleges can opt to use either In-Person (Web Enhanced) or In-Person, or a combination of both.
* The committee attempted to include flexibility whenever possible to reduce the overall impact of any change on course/class builders and college’s class fee structures. One of the first tasks the subcommittee undertook was to gather usage information for each existing Instruction Mode code and used this information to guide their discussions. For example, many colleges only use the Web Enhanced instruction mode for all In-Person classes. Class fee structures were configured based on this coding. Eliminating Web Enhanced would require those colleges to recode all Web Enhanced classes to In-Person.
* Feedback: Students won’t know what Asynchronous means.

Subcommittee Response:  The committee understands the need to provide additional information to students beyond what is included on the Class Search page or Class Notes and has added to this proposal [a request to add helper text on Class Search pages](#_Proposal_#2:_Enhancement).

* Feedback: Provide additional information about what instruction modes are eligible for VA.

Subcommittee Response:

* Eligibility requirements change.
* The use of the individual codes may differ by college.
* The listing of instruction modes are the “menu” of options, and it’s the college’s responsibility to work with the student to align with any requirements.
* Feedback: The “with in-person" options should be hybrid.

Subcommittee Response:  Adding “with in-person” options allow for those cases in which the class is not offered both synchronously and asynchronously, but does require an in-person activity. Differentiating these cases from Hybrid allows for more consistency in coding and reporting across all colleges.

* Feedback: Self-Paced – Why does it not generate state FTE?

Subcommittee Response:  This reference was removed from the proposal. Determining the class funding source should follow the policies in the [SBCTC Policy Manual Chapter 5.20](https://www.sbctc.edu/colleges-staff/policies-rules/policy-manual/chapter-5).

### Additional Resource will be Provided

The subcommittee is finalizing an Instruction Mode Guidance document to provide additional context, examples and guidance to college staff as a resource for implementation.

The subcommittee is collaborating with the Course and Class Community of Practice (CC-COP) group to offer a Questions and Answers open webinar.

### Proposed Implementation Timeline

After receiving initial feedback, the DGC discussed postponing the implementation year to 2025-2026; however, such a delay would negatively impact students. This implementation timeline is admittedly aggressive, but by implementing this coding schema sooner, rather than later, the DGC affirms its commitment to keeping students in the forefront.

* The remainder of the 2023-2024 academic year will be considered the development year
  + October 2023: DGC will gather system feedback by Oct. 20th; analyze the feedback and finalize the proposal.
  + November 2023: Proposal presented to the ctcLink Working Group (unless feedback indicates a significant issue that must first be resolved)
  + January 2024: Finalize ctcLink configuration and supporting queries and update QRG’s
  + Beginning February, 2024: Colleges will revise class instruction modes to align with new coding practice and should be completed in time to align with the 2024-2025 Academic Year class schedule publication date.
* 2024-2025 Academic Year: Implementation Year
  + The new Instruction Mode coding schema will be in place and available for reporting.

# 

# Appendix A

## Course Modality Subcommittee Members

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Name | College/Organization | Representing |
| Carmen McKenzie | SBCTC | SBCTC and DGC |
| Michael A. Brown | SBCTC | eLearning/Open Education |
| Eva Smith | Edmonds College | ITC |
| Teya Viola | Cascadia College | Course and Class building/maintenance |
| Jenifer Aydelotte | Shoreline Community College | Course and Class building/maintenance |
| Iulia Zavodov | Bellevue College | Curriculum Management |
| Steven Danver | Columbia Basin College | Baccalaureate Leadership Council |
| Lynn Clements | Edmonds College | Instruction/Schedule Development/Enrollment Requirements/25Live |
| Hannah Lovett | Everett Community College | eLearning |
| Aimee Pope | Wenatchee Valley College | CS - Instruction, Curriculum, Class Scheduling/Coding |
| Laura A Wooster | Walla Walla Community College | Assistant Director in Admissions |
| Kevin Bowersox-Johnson | Seattle Colleges | eLearning - District Level |
| Rose Madison | Everett Community College | Local Security Admin |
| Kathy Chatfield | Clark College | eLearning and Instructional Design, Online Degrees |
| Anne White | Pierce College | Admissions and Registration Council (ARC) |
| Sukirti Ranade | Bellevue College | eLearning Department |
| Mark Baumann | Seattle Colleges District | Campus Solutions |
| Gwen Bloomsburg | Walla Walla Community College | Center for Integrated Learning (including eLearning) |
| Bethany Jennings-Kelly | Peninsula College | Class scheduling in ctcLink |
| Sarah Griffith | Lower Columbia College | eLearning |
| Marc Lentini | Highline College | eLearning/educational technology |
| Sheila Northrop | Tacoma Community College | Instructional Design |
| Dawn Hawley | Bellingham Technical College | eLearning/Library/Tutoring |
| Kyra Sims | Community Colleges of Spokane | Institutional Research |
| Sue Riddle | Olympic College | eLearning |
| Emily Coates | Highline College | Institutional Research |
| Kyla Garcia | Community College of Spokane | Institutional Research |
| Name | College/Organization | Representing |
| Betsy Zahrt Geib | Bellevue College | eLearning/Instructional Designers/Academic Affairs |
| Jeremy Winn | Grays Harbor College | eLearning |
| Heidi Ypma | Bellingham Technical College | Instruction Commission |
| Lia Homeister | Renton Technical College | Research and Planning Council |
| Liz Mueth | Edmonds College | Curriculum and Scheduling |