

Remote Course Delivery Policy	
Effective Date	October 2024
Review Date	November 2025
Subsequent Review	November 2028
Approval Authority	Senate
Implementation	Dean of Humanities and Dean of Social Sciences
Applies to	Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty Members

1 Rationale

To encourage vibrant exchanges and lively discussions, St. Thomas University strongly favours in-person instruction, as this is the mode of delivery that is most conducive to civil debate and dialectic reasoning. Therefore, the large majority of courses offered at STU normally take place in classrooms on campus. However, the institution recognizes that, in some instances, online course delivery may be beneficial to the student, the instructor, the department and/or the University. This policy provides a framework that specifies the criteria that shall be applied to determine which courses may be delivered online.

2 Framework:

The framework to determine which courses may be offered online is based on three broad categories based on whether the proposal for online course delivery is initiated 1) by a department or program, 2) by individual instructors or 3) by the University for “Early Start” or “First-year at home” options. The criteria used to approve proposals for online course delivery (all subject to Article 2.15.2 of the Full-time and Part-time Faculty Collective Agreements [2022-25]) are based primarily on the likelihood that these courses would provide greater flexibility for students who may not have easy access to our on-campus facilities; the potential for courses to appeal to large numbers of students (or prospective students); the instructor’s interest in teaching online; and departmental needs.

Not all criteria under any given category must be met for a course to qualify for online delivery. Each criterion is weighed and assessed according to standards of reasonableness and fairness.

These criteria apply to courses offered during the “Teaching Year” as defined in the Collective Agreements (2022-25), namely, September 1 to April 30.

Proposals for online courses from individual instructors and/or departments must be submitted to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic and Research) by December 1, for approval prior to the February 21 deadline for the upcoming Teaching Year (article 17.01.1 of the Full-time Collective Agreement [2022-25] and article 5.03.2 of the Part-time Collective Agreement [2022-25]).

After having received proposals from departments, the Provost and Vice-President (Academic and Research) will task the Advisory Committee to the Provost and Vice-President Academic and Research on Remote/Online Teaching with reviewing the submissions and making recommendations on which courses should be delivered online the following year.

The Advisory Committee will make its recommendations to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic and Research) by January 15.

The Provost and Vice-President (Academic and Research) will render a decision by February 1.

These criteria apply only to courses designed to be offered online. Courses offered in-person where students may be allowed by the instructor to join remotely are not subject to this policy.

Intersession/Summer Session courses may be delivered online at the request of the instructor.

Note that this policy does not apply to cases where individual instructors are seeking permission from the Office of Human Resources to teach online as a formal accommodation. In such cases, instructors must submit relevant documentation to HR for assessment.

It should also be noted that for all courses delivered online – either during the Teaching Year or the Intersession/Summer session and either approved under this policy or by the Office of Human Resources – student course evaluations will be conducted online.

Under exceptional circumstances, a course that has been approved for remote delivery may be converted to in-person delivery if deemed necessary by the Instructor, the Department, the appropriate Dean and the Provost and Vice-President (Academic and Research).

3 Criteria for each Category

Categories:

1. **Department requesting that one or more courses be offered online** These courses may be designed for synchronous or asynchronously delivery. Departments may propose various forms of hybrid delivery. However, instructors would be expected to hold synchronous office hours:

Criteria:

- i. The only qualified instructor for a course that must be offered is unable to teach in person for reasons other than a formal accommodation approved by HR (for instance, the instructor lives in a geographical area that makes commuting unmanageable).
- ii. The department or program provides a pedagogical rationale for offering the course online.
- iii. The department or program provides a rationale based on high student demand for online course delivery.

2. **Faculty volunteering to teach online** (not related to accommodations). These courses may be designed for synchronous or asynchronous delivery. Faculty may propose various forms of hybrid delivery. However, instructors would be expected to hold synchronous office hours:

Criteria:

- i. Approval of the relevant department or program.
- ii. Potential appeal of the proposed course for individuals beyond the traditional STU community, such as “Lifelong Learners” and students from distant geographical areas.
- iii. Faculty members may propose to teach either a three- or six-credit-hour course and at either the lower or upper levels. Normally faculty members would teach a maximum of one (1) course remotely per Teaching Year
- iv. When several faculty members in the same department or program are interested in online teaching, the department or program should establish a mechanism to ensure rotation of online course delivery. Departments may consult with senior administration to determine best practices for such mechanisms.

3. **“Early Start” program for high school students and “First-Year at Home” option for International (or out-of-province) students.** These courses should be designed for asynchronous delivery to facilitate access for international and high-school students. However, instructors would be expected to hold synchronous office hours.

Criteria:

- i. Potential appeal to high school/international students.
- ii. 1000-level courses with multiple sections.
- iii. 1000-level courses with high enrollments.
- iv. Courses that are unlikely to duplicate current high school offerings.
- v. Where applicable, enrolments in previous online iterations of the course
- vi. Approval of the home departments or programs