

COURSE COMPONENT AND INSTRUCTION MODE DEFINITIONS

To support transparency and consistency across the University, Queen's has adopted a shared set of definitions for course components and instruction modes. These definitions help students, instructors, and staff understand how courses are structured and delivered. They promote clearer communication among students, instructors, and academic administrators, and support decisions related to course planning, registration, and delivery.

Developed through a broad consultative process led by a working group of the Senate Committee on Academic Development and Procedures (SCADP), the definitions reflect a shared understanding of teaching and learning practices at Queen's. They build on existing systems already in use and are designed to balance consistency with the flexibility required to support a wide range of instructional approaches.

The definitions were approved during the 2024–25 academic year. They are used in the Academic Calendar and other official platforms to describe the key elements of courses offered at Queen's and serve as a reference point for course planning, registration, and student support.

Course Components

Clerkship:

A clerkship takes place in the final two years of medical school and provides students with a wide range of clinical experiences to prepare them for future practice. The clerkship includes clinical rotations in core disciplines, classroom-based learning, and elective opportunities. Students work in hospitals, clinics, and other clinical settings, gaining hands-on experience in patient care under the supervision of experienced physicians. This training helps students develop their clinical skills, professional attitudes, and understanding of different medical specialties.

Clinical:

A clinical component involves working with clients who receive professional services from students under the supervision of a faculty member or delegate. Learning is focused on the analysis and treatment of cases.

Demonstration:

Demonstrations are supplementary to lectures and involve presenting to students a practical technique or skill, such as laboratory skills, clinical skills, performance art, or fieldwork techniques.

Field Studies:

Field studies involve hands-on learning experiences conducted at sites off-campus. They connect classroom learning with real-world observations and data analysis, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings.

Indigenous Land-based:

Indigenous land-based learning involves experiential activities rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching, emphasizing spiritual, cultural, and relational connections with the land. This approach is Indigenous-led or meaningfully incorporates Indigenous knowledge under the guidance of Indigenous knowledge holders. It emphasizes observation, reflection, and participation, alongside subject-specific goals, and challenges learners to identify their roles and responsibilities with and to the natural world, fostering relationships with the land. Indigenous land-based learning may refer to both the physical location where these activities occur and the broader geographical, cultural, and historical contexts they encompass, serving to challenge colonial narratives and reclaim Indigenous knowledge systems.

Internship:

Internships are supervised, career-related positions designed to offer learners the opportunity to gain experience while applying academic skills in a professional setting and developing workplace connections. Supervision is typically provided by a professional supervisor at the internship site and an academic supervisor. The length of this internship can vary. May be unpaid or paid.

Laboratory:

Laboratories, or labs, take place in spaces that enable students to observe, participate, experiment, and practice course concepts. Labs emphasize hands-on learning, allowing students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings through experimentation and interactive activities. They generally meet once a week or once every two weeks.

Lecture:

Lectures typically take place in classrooms or lecture halls where the instructor and / or other members of the instructional team deliver(s) course material to students. These sessions meet one to three times per week and usually have a large student-to-instructor ratio.



Practicum:

A practicum is a placement at a site related to the field of study. Learners engage with practical, theoretical, and research applications relevant to the topic or site to develop new knowledge in collaboration with professionals. Supervision is typically provided by both an academic supervisor and a professional supervisor at the placement site. May be unpaid or paid.

Project:

A project involves carefully planning specific objectives, deliverables, and timelines to achieve a particular goal. Students engage in independent or group work to develop and complete a project that demonstrates their understanding and application of course concepts. The course typically includes regular progress meetings with the instructor and / or other members of the instructional team.

QUIP Internship:

Queen's Undergraduate Internship Program (QUIP) are paid, supervised, career-related positions designed to offer learners the opportunity to gain experience while applying academic skills in a professional setting and developing workplace connections. Supervision is provided by a professional supervisor at the internship site with academic oversight. QUIP internships last 12 to 16 months.

Reading:

Reading involves a broad literature survey or an in-depth study on a topic, typically requiring significant independent work under the supervision of a faculty advisor with expertise in the subject field. These courses generally have individual or small group settings. The format usually includes regular meetings with the instructor and / or other members of the instructional team.

Research:

Research involves students creating new knowledge or synthesizing and analyzing existing knowledge in innovative ways to generate new concepts, methodologies, and understandings. Research courses typically involve individual or small group work, with regular meetings with the instructor and / or other members of the instructional team.

Seminar:

Seminars are held in rooms that facilitate interaction and encourage in-depth discussions and active participation from all students. These sessions typically meet once or twice a week and usually have a low student-to-instructor ratio.

Studio:

Studios focus on executing practical skills and design projects, usually taking place in rooms equipped with specialized tools such as audio-visual recording devices, theatre technical gear, fine art tools and materials, or engineering design equipment. Studios emphasize creativity and hands-on learning, fostering an environment where students can explore and develop their artistic, technical, or design abilities. They generally maintain a low student-to-instructor ratio.

Thesis Research:

Thesis research involves substantial original research and analysis or creative production, culminating in a final thesis. This research contributes to the knowledge of the field of study and should be appropriate in scope and significance to the degree sought by the student. It typically requires significant independent work under the supervision of a faculty advisor with expertise in the subject field. *Graduate students must follow any relevant SGSPA policies for their thesis research.

Tutorial:

Tutorials are complimentary to lectures and focus on clarifying, applying, and extending lecture content. Tutorials emphasize problem-solving and the application of concepts. They generally meet once or twice a week.

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Modes of Instruction

Asynchronous online:

(noting as "online course" is defined in the collective agreement, this definition is non-binding)

Asynchronous online courses are specifically designed for delivery via the internet, requiring learners to follow a structured plan. In some instances, flexible synchronous elements may be present. Students can complete these courses without needing to be on campus. Final assessments, if applicable, may be proctored online or in-person as stipulated.

Blended:

Blended courses combine in-person and online learning activities, with a meaningful portion of the course facilitated online. The online components are typically interactive and asynchronous. In-person sessions are scheduled at specific times and complement the online activities to provide a cohesive learning experience. If applicable, proctored final assessments are written on-campus.

In-person:

In-person courses are a mode of teaching where the instructor and / or other members of the instructional team and students are all simultaneously present in an on-campus learning space or approved alternative location at scheduled dates and times. If applicable, proctored assessments are written on-campus.

Remote:

Remote courses are a temporary solution to ensure instructional continuity during unforeseen disruption and are delivered via the internet. These courses may include scheduled synchronous sessions or asynchronous components, at the instructor and / or other members of the instructional team's discretion for the duration of the interruption. Final assessments are scheduled depending on the nature and duration of the disruption.

Synchronous online:

Synchronous online courses are facilitated entirely via the internet with students and the instructor and / or other members of the instructional team meeting in real time. These courses include scheduled live sessions where participants interact simultaneously using digital platforms. This modality allows real-time engagement and immediate feedback. Final assessments, if applicable, may be proctored online or in-person as stipulated.

Asynchronous learning refers to course components where students and the instructor and / or other members of the instructional team engage with the content, and each other, at different times. There are no live, real-time sessions, allowing students to access materials, complete assignments, and participate in discussions on their own schedules within a prescribed timeframe.

Synchronous learning refers to course components where students and the instructor and / or other members of the instructional team interact in real time. This includes live sessions such as lectures, discussions, and collaborative activities, where participants are in-person or online, as specified, simultaneously at scheduled times.

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