

Hyflex Course Development:

Considerations, Challenges, and Questions for Faculty

Prepared for Faculty at Fleming College

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1. Introduction

Fleming College is among several Ontario colleges actively developing courses for delivery in the hyflex format. As this model becomes more prevalent across post-secondary institutions, it is essential that faculty are well-informed about what hyflex delivery entails, the significant preparation required, and the questions they should raise with management before agreeing to develop or convert a course to this format.

This report provides an overview of hyflex course delivery, outlines the key challenges faculty face in developing these courses, and identifies important questions that should be addressed by administration prior to any faculty commitment. It also summarizes relevant collective agreement provisions and institutional research that support faculty in advocating for adequate workload recognition.

2. What Is Hyflex Delivery?

A hyflex (hybrid-flexible) course simultaneously offers three distinct modes of participation:

- In-person attendance
- Online synchronous attendance (live, real-time participation via video conferencing)
- Online asynchronous participation (self-paced, no required live attendance)

A defining feature of the hyflex model is student choice: learners can select which mode best suits their schedule, location, or learning preferences and may switch between modes from week to week. This flexibility is a significant student benefit, particularly for those balancing employment or living in remote communities.

According to Beatty (2019), the hyflex model was developed to maximize student access by removing barriers related to time and location, while maintaining a consistent and equitable learning experience regardless of the mode chosen. Although hyflex has been implemented at colleges and universities since approximately 2012, the logistical and pedagogical demands it places on faculty are frequently underestimated.

3. Development Complexity: Designing Two Courses in One

A common misconception is that converting an existing in-person course to hyflex requires only minor adjustments—such as uploading lecture slides to a learning management system (LMS). In practice, the process is far more complex.

Fleming's Learning Design and Support Team (LDST) held an information session on February 24, 2024, called [Designing Curriculum for Hyflex Delivery](#). One of the comments from the facilitator was that developing a hyflex course is comparable to designing two entirely separate

courses on the same subject matter: a face-to-face course and a fully online asynchronous course. Faculty must ensure that:

- All in-class activities, discussions, and group work have equivalents designed for asynchronous online participants.
- The online asynchronous component functions as a standalone, fully realized course module, not merely a repository of uploaded files.
- Assessment strategies accommodate all three modes without inadvertently disadvantaging any group of students.

The LDST session also highlighted the challenge of tracking and monitoring student progress across multiple participation modes simultaneously, as noted in their session materials (LDST Information Session, February 24, 2024):

"There is considerable time needed for designing and developing courses that meet all of the participation modalities, and you're essentially designing a fully online course as well as a face to face synchronous course. And then tracking and monitoring student progress across multiple participation modes is another consideration that you're not just dealing with synchronous students, but also keeping an eye on what's happening in your asynchronous course at the same time."

3.1 Assessment Challenges

In response to the rise of AI-generated assignment submissions, some faculty teaching face-to-face courses have shifted to in-class, pen-and-paper assessments. However, this approach is not feasible in a hyflex environment. Faculty must ensure that students in the asynchronous stream can complete equivalent assessments online, which may limit the range of available academic integrity strategies.

3.2 Group Work Challenges

Collaborative activities become significantly more complicated in a hyflex context. Creating stable groups is difficult when students may shift delivery modes from week to week. Faculty must design group work that functions equitably across all three modes, which requires substantially more planning than equivalent in-person group activities. Researchers studying hyflex implementation have noted that managing flexible group dynamics is one of the most frequently cited challenges by instructors (Maloney & Kim, 2020).

4. Key Questions Faculty Should Raise Before Agreeing to Develop a Hyflex Course

Before agreeing to develop or convert a course to hyflex delivery, faculty are strongly encouraged to discuss the following questions with their manager and to ensure that any agreements are recorded on their Standard Workload Form (SWF):

1. How much development time will be assigned for converting an existing course (in-person, hybrid, blended, online synchronous, or online asynchronous) to hyflex delivery?
2. How much development time will be assigned for developing a new course for hyflex delivery from scratch?
3. How much time will be allocated for required hyflex training?
4. What criteria is management using to determine which courses will be offered in hyflex format?
5. Will the current class size cap of 50 students remain in place for hyflex courses? If not, what will the revised cap be?
6. Will IT provide dedicated real-time technical support for professors during hyflex class sessions? For example, if an online synchronous student encounters a technical issue, will an IT staff member assist the student directly so that the professor can continue teaching without interruption?
7. What are the specific expectations for the online asynchronous component of a hyflex course, including required features, student engagement, and grading workload?

5. Collective Agreement Provisions

5.1 Letter of Understanding on Multi-Mode Adaptation

The CAAT-A Collective Agreement includes a Letter of Understanding (LoU) specifically addressing multi-mode delivery. The LoU states:

"Where a College directs that a section of a course be adapted for simultaneous delivery in multiple modes to the same section of students, the academic manager and the employee shall discuss the allotment of complementary function time for development either prior to, or concurrent with, the multi-modal (e.g. HyFlex) delivery. Their agreement regarding the allotment shall be recorded on the employee's SWF."

This provision, dated July 2, 2025 (original: September 23, 2022), makes clear that development time must be discussed and mutually agreed upon by the academic manager and the faculty member—and that this agreement must be formally recorded on the SWF. The

language of “agreement” implies a negotiated outcome, not a unilateral determination by management.

Faculty should be aware that the LoU also specifies that any disputes regarding its application, after exhausting the Workload Monitoring Group (WMG) process, shall be referred to Workload Resolution Arbitrator Michelle Flaherty.

It is important to note that the LoU describes itself as a temporary measure, pending the findings of the Workload Task Force (WTF). The Workload Task Force Report was released on September 3, 2024.

5.2 Workload Task Force Findings

Page 48 of the Workload Task Force Report presents survey results directly relevant to hyflex delivery. Among the key findings:

"Compared to an already developed in-person course, time for preparation, evaluation and feedback, and routine out of class assistance of students all increased on average for different modes of delivery. This was the case for when online synchronous, asynchronous courses, flexible synchronous, hybrid synchronous, and hyflex courses were compared to in-person courses. The responses identified comparable increases for each of the different modes of delivery, with the hyflex reported as requiring more time than the other modes of delivery."

This finding from the WTF Report provides important evidentiary support for faculty seeking recognition of the increased workload associated with hyflex development and delivery. Notably, while the report confirms that hyflex requires more time than all other delivery modes surveyed, it does not specify a precise number of development hours to be allocated—a gap that warrants continued advocacy by faculty and union representatives.

6. Hyflex at Fleming College: The Practical Nursing Program

Fleming College has introduced a Hyflex delivery option for its Practical Nursing program. According to Fleming's program website, the Practical Nursing Hyflex program is a two-year accelerated Ontario College Diploma that allows students to learn theory courses asynchronously online, while practical skills are developed through intensive weekend labs or real-world clinical placements close to home.

This program highlights both the promise and the complexity of hyflex delivery in a professional discipline: students gain geographic flexibility while the college must ensure that clinical competency standards are maintained across varied delivery modes. The program is delivered at Sutherland Campus and is approved by the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO).

For more information, see:

Fleming College Practical Nursing Hy-Flex:

<https://flemingcollege.ca/news/fleming-college-introduces-hy-flex-delivery-option-for-practical-nursing-program>

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Hyflex course delivery offers real benefits for student access and flexibility. At the same time, the development demands placed on faculty are substantial and must be honestly acknowledged and compensated through appropriate SWF allocations. Based on the collective agreement provisions, Workload Task Force findings, and broader research on hyflex implementation, faculty are encouraged to:

- Engage in frank discussions with their academic manager about development time before agreeing to develop or convert any hyflex course.
- Ensure that any agreement on development time is formally recorded on their SWF, as required under the LoU.
- Contact their union local if management refuses to discuss development time allocation in a meaningful way prior to delivery.
- Familiarize themselves with the WTF Report and the LoU as foundational documents when negotiating workload accommodations.
- Access available training resources and allow adequate time to develop the online asynchronous component to the standard of a fully standalone online course.

8. Additional Resources

The following resources provide further information on hyflex course design and delivery:

CAAT-A Collective Agreement (2024):

https://opseu.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/2024_Academic_Collective_Agreement_EN_Signed.pdf

WTF Report (OPSEU 562):

<https://www.opseu562.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Taskforce-Report-English.pdf>

Flexible Delivery at Seneca (OPSEU 560):

<https://opseu560.org/partial-load/update-on-flexible-teaching-model-hy-flex-flex/>

Hyflex at Durham (OPSEU 354):

<https://opseu354.ca/colleges-are-pushing-hyflex-model-of-teaching-but-is-it-good-pedagogical-practice/>

Teaching HyFlex: It's a Genre Problem (Faculty Focus):

<https://www.facultyfocus.com/articles/online-education/teaching-hyflex-its-a-genre-problem/>

York University: HyFlex Course Design Guide:

<https://www.yorku.ca/teachingcommons/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2021/11/HyflexDocumentMFM4.pdf>

Carleton University: Reflections on HyFlex Teaching and Learning (2024):

<https://carleton.ca/tls/wp-content/uploads/Recommendations-for-Hyflex-Report-2024.pdf>

Enhancing HyFlex Instruction: Best Practices and Case Study:

<https://metroworks.metrostate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=faculty-and-staff>

Community Discussion on Implementing HyFlex (Bryan Alexander):

<https://bryanalexander.medium.com/a-community-discussion-of-implementing-hyflex-in-the-real-world-4e06fa2ac130>

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York University Teaching Commons. (2021). HyFlex course design. York University. https://www.yorku.ca/teachingcommons/wp-content/uploads/sites/38/2021/11/HyflexDocument_MFM4.pdf