

FL21 Update - Course Policies and Guidance

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Dear Colleagues,

If you're like me, you're having a hard time believing it's August already. And yet, here we are. As we near the start of fall term, I write with some updates and reminders for fall 2021 instruction. Much of the information is available in web form, so I'll link to new and updated materials as much as possible to streamline this email.

You can find reminders and updated information about what you can expect this fall [here](#). Much of this information has already been communicated, but I wanted to be sure you had it all in one place. As you may remember, working groups comprised of faculty, students, and staff developed guidance and updated course policies this summer. [This document](#) summarizes current guidance and offers a side-by-side comparison to last year, to make it easier for you to quickly see what has changed. I am highlighting some key points below -- but please consult [this guidance for fall 2021 instruction](#) and [these FAQs](#) for additional details. *Note: this information does not apply to courses in the School for Professional Studies, which are traditionally online; some of it may not apply in other schools/colleges, depending on accreditation restrictions and other context-specific situations.*

Course Modality Reminders

- In-person classes will not be offered in "dual-mode." This means students approved for fully online learning this fall will not simply "Zoom in" to in-person classes. Those students are being enrolled in alternative course options to allow them to learn fully online this fall.
- Courses originally listed as online are being or have been converted to in-person (unless you were approved to teach fully online this fall). The Registrar is working with your departments to finalize meeting days/times.
- Courses that are offered fully online this fall are expected to be designed asynchronously and in alignment with the University's [Online Course Design Rubric](#). Any exceptions to this must be approved by your dean.

Instructional Guidance and Course Policies

- We will continue to require in-person classes to include two temporary syllabus statements -- one on in-person attendance and one on face masks -- in their course syllabi. Both have been updated and approved by the deans. You will find them [here](#) under Required Syllabus Components. *Note: the syllabus statement for disability accommodations also has been revised, so please make sure you have the new version in your syllabi.*
- Students will continue to be expected to absent themselves from class if they develop symptoms of COVID-19 or are directed by a medical/public health professional to quarantine. However, given that our campus will be fully-vaccinated, we expect the number of students who need to isolate/quarantine to be lower than last year. Instructors will work individually with students in isolation/quarantine to determine the best ways for them to stay on track in class.
- All instructors should be prepared to pivot to fully online instruction, in the event that becomes necessary. If a pivot is required, courses must be offered in the University's new learning management system (LMS), Canvas. (Information about Canvas training and resources can be found [here](#).)
- Instructors also should work with their chair/director and/or dean to create instructional contingency plans (as required at the unit level).

Although we are all eager to move past the pandemic, it's clear we are still in the transition. Rising infection rates, particularly with the Delta variant, are obviously concerning. But the fact that the University community will be fully-vaccinated this fall means our public health leaders are confident we'll be safer on campus than in our surrounding communities. This gives me hope that our goal of a "closer to normal" experience this fall will be realized.

Of course, even when the COVID-19 crisis has passed, we'll never fully return to the pre-pandemic days in higher education. Many of you have told me how much you've learned during this time and have been asking about ways to capitalize on what we've learned. As we move into a period of academic strategic planning, we will absolutely tackle these and many other questions. Our future success depends on it.

Sincerely,

Mike Lewis, Ph.D.
Provost