



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

Classroom and Attendance FAQs for Instructors
Fall Semester 2021 – Originally published 8/6/2021
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Course Delivery

Q: (REVISED) I am scheduled to teach an in-person class this fall. My plan is to meet some of the time in-person and some of the time via Zoom. Do I need to change the way my class is coded or notify my chair or dean of the change?

This change should not require altering the coding of the class to “online.” You should discuss your plans to meet via Zoom periodically with your chair/director or dean. You could also explore the possibility of changing to a pedagogically appropriate Flex delivery mode, which might reduce the number of students in the classroom, allowing for more social distancing. You will find sample syllabus statements describing how a Flex class operates [here](#).

Q: (REVISED) If I am unable to come to campus to teach my class due to illness or professional travel, is it OK to have the class on Zoom?

As always, if you are unable to attend your face-to-face class, please consult with your department chair or school director regarding acceptable options for conducting the course. Using Zoom to conduct the class if you are well enough to do so, assigning online activities, or posting existing recordings of lectures are among the options that can be exercised, depending on the circumstances. See [Faculty Handbook](#), Section 7, Absences (faculty) for more information.

Q: (REVISED) Is it OK to have my office hours on Zoom?

Yes, as long as students have the option of meeting face-to-face when requested. The instructor may choose a safe and appropriate location for any student meeting that needs to be held face-to-face.

Q: What about if I want to use Zoom just to accommodate students who are self-isolating?

Feel free to use Zoom to record or transmit face-to-face classes to accommodate students who are self-isolating or who are unable to attend class because of illness. It is

no longer required for instructors to provide this accommodation to students now that there are no remote classes.

Infection Prevention

Q: (NEW) How do I handle students who do not cooperate with the rules I put in place to promote a safe classroom environment?

Please see "[Instructor Guidance for Students in Classroom](#)" for detailed guidance about responding to a variety of situations. Students are expected to comply with reasonable directives from instructors, as long as the expectations are communicated clearly. If they do not comply, their behavior may lead to charges under the [Student Conduct Code](#).

Q: (NEW) May I use language from the August 9 memo from the President and Provost in my syllabus?

Yes; you may find the *Fall Semester Expectations for Campus* memo [here](#).

Q: (REVISED) I do not feel comfortable teaching in-person unless all of the students in the class are wearing masks. May I require students to wear masks?

Instructors can communicate that the University expects everyone to wear a face covering at all times when in any FSU facility, even if they are vaccinated. However, at this time, there is no local ordinance or state law requiring the use of face coverings. Thus, instructors may not require that students wear a face covering to participate in class. This holds true even if the instructor or students in the class have specific vulnerabilities. If your concerns cannot be resolved by communicating with the students, consult with your chair/school director about other ways to structure the class, including implementing the Flex delivery method.

Q: (REVISED) In my in-person class, we do lots of small group activities. May I instruct the students to respect the wishes of students in their small groups if they request that their classmates wear masks?

Instructors can communicate their expectation that students wear masks and may request that students respect the wishes of their classmates in their small groups, but they may not require students to wear masks. Handing out masks to students as they enter class can be helpful; your department staff should have some available.

Q: What do I do if a student refuses to participate in group activities because classmates are not wearing masks?

You may attempt to accommodate the student through distancing measures, self-selection to groups, or other means. Consult with your department chair or school director for additional ideas.

Q: Will classrooms still have Plexiglas shields and materials for sanitization?

Yes, the Plexiglas shields installed in academic year 2020-21 will remain, as will the instructor sanitization materials (wipes) in many of our classes. Departments may request more shields and cleaning supplies from Procurement.

Online Test Proctoring

Q: (NEW) May I conduct make-up tests for students remotely?

Yes; using either Zoom or Honorlock, you may provide remote testing opportunities to students who are not able to come to campus but are not too ill to take make-up exams. If the instructor intends to make this a blanket policy for make-up exams, a description of what means will be used (e.g., Zoom, Honorlock) should be included in the syllabus.

Q: I am teaching an online class that uses HonorLock to proctor exams. Do students in the class have the right to refuse to use HonorLock?

Disability accommodations, as interpreted by the OAS staff, are the only acceptable reasons for refusing to use Honorlock when its use is required in a class. Please try your best to prevent these complaints by informing students up-front, through your syllabus and by reminding them before the end of the drop-add period, that you will require tests to be proctored on Honorlock. Please use the [Office of Distance Learning \(ODL\) recommended language](#) in your syllabus, and please consult the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) if a student claims that a disability prevents them from using Honorlock.

Q: Am I still able to send my students to the Testing Center to take exams?

Because of reduced staffing levels, the Testing Center no longer provides proctored testing, except in cases requiring accommodations for a disability and other individual situations.

Q: Will the Testing Center continue to provide Scantron services and full test reports?

Scantron services will be offered by the Testing Center in the fall, yet instructors should be prepared to wait longer than in the past for the results of their exams.

Recent Legislation and other Classroom Issues

Q: (NEW) Whose responsibility is it to keep track of which portions of the class session may be recorded?

It is the responsibility of the student making the recording. Students who choose to record lectures must monitor their recordings and stop recording during periods of time when a class lecture is not occurring. It is not the instructor's responsibility, although instructors may make announcements regarding the issue if they choose to do so.

Q: Can faculty redefine lecture courses as discussion/seminar sessions which cannot be recorded?

There is no need to redefine or reclassify courses. As the law which allows recording class lectures has been interpreted, it is the type of activity, not the way the course is coded, that determines whether it can be recorded without permission. The following types of activities were excluded from student recording without permission in the guidance sent to academic units: lab or recitation sessions; student presentations (whether individually or part of a group), class discussions (except when incidental to a class lecture); academic exercises involving student participation; clinical practica and presentations that involve patient histories and other types of protected health information; academic exercises involving student participation, test or examination administrations; field trips; and private conversations between students in the class or between a student and a faculty member. Please rely on this list to determine whether students may record during a particular activity, not how the course is coded in the system.

Q: Will there be a mechanism for redress if students illegally post lectures/parts of lectures after legally recording them in class?

Yes; the [FSU Code of Student Conduct](#) has several provisions that could apply to this behavior, in addition to any potential legal consequences. Contact the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards or the Office of Faculty Development if you have any concerns.

Q: Does FSU have a policy or procedure yet for administering the "Intellectual Freedom and Viewpoint Diversity Survey" mandated in legislation?

HB 233 requires the Florida Board of Governors (BOG) to "select or create an objective, nonpartisan, and statistically valid survey to be used by each state university" and to publish the results of the survey at each institution by September 1 of each year, beginning in the fall of 2022. Once that survey is developed or selected, the BOG will provide guidance regarding its administration by the individual universities.

Q: Does the attempt to restrict the teaching of "critical race theory" or similar course content affect faculty?

There has been no recent change to current state law or university policy regarding academic freedom as exercised in the classroom. See the Florida State University [Policy on Academic Freedom](#).

Q: Should faculty whose areas require discussion of the history of racism and racial politics be concerned about what appears on their syllabi?

All instructors should ensure that their syllabi reflect the academic purpose and goals of their course accurately within the context of the [Florida State University Policy on Academic Freedom](#). Statements within the Policy regarding teaching include:

“Consistent with the exercise of academic responsibility, an instructor of record, . . . must have freedom in the classroom to discuss academic subjects. The university student must likewise have the opportunity to study a full spectrum of ideas, opinions, and beliefs . . .”

Class Attendance

Q: Are instructors permitted to require a medical excuse for students who miss class due to illness?

Yes, they are, yet it is not mandatory to do so. If you do require documentation for class absences, understand that if a student does not seek medical attention when they are ill, they will not receive documentation from University Health Services (UHS). Please do not send students to the UHS after they are no longer ill in order to get documentation.

Q: If a student sends an email saying they are sick and cannot attend class, do I have to make them see a medical provider for documentation in order to count their absence as “excused?”

Instructors are **not** required to request documentation in order to “excuse” an ill student. Students who resort to home self-care might not require medical care and thus will not have the ability to provide medical documentation. Please do not send students to the University Health Services (UHS) after they are no longer ill to get documentation.

Q: Can instructors accept proof of a positive COVID-19 test as an “excuse” for missing class, even if the student was not seen by a doctor at University Health Services or elsewhere?

Yes, students might receive a positive COVID-19 test from a pharmacy, local community center or other testing location (other than UHS or FSU). Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 is required to isolate (including not attending class) for at least 10 days from symptom onset, have at least 24 hours with no fever (without fever-reducing medication), and return only when other COVID-19 symptoms are improving.

Q: Are instructors permitted to require documentation if an unvaccinated student is exposed to COVID-19 and needs to quarantine?

Yes; however, documentation from students for the need to quarantine may be hard to obtain, because the student will likely only receive a phone call from contract tracing.

Q: May instructors require students who are quarantining or isolating (who are not ill or asymptomatic) to keep up with the course assignments?

Yes; students who are not feeling ill should be able to keep up with course assignments while quarantining or isolating, as long as the course material is available to them. If students develop symptoms, they might be unable to complete the assignments and should communicate with their instructors that they need flexibility with completing coursework.

***NOTE: Revised and new questions are placed at the top of the relevant section and are identified by (REVISED) or (NEW) notations.**

Other helpful information regarding Fall 2021 guidance for faculty and other instructors is found at: <https://www.fda.fsu.edu/fall-2021-guidance>.