

## FAQs about In-person Teaching at FSU During COVID-19

### ***What enhancements and changes have been made to classrooms for in-person learning and will those continue into Spring?***

FSU implemented comprehensive changes to enable faculty to offer in-person classes in Fall 2020 and these efforts will carry into Spring 2021 and beyond until it is safe to relax them. These efforts include a mask mandate for students and faculty while inside campus buildings; enhanced cleaning protocols; and signs in buildings to remind occupants about social distancing, hand washing, and the mask policy. See this announcement and brief video for a look at a classroom and what FSU does to provide a safer learning environment: <https://news.fsu.edu/news/students-campus-life/2020/08/20/fsu-facilities-continues-enhanced-cleaning-efforts-as-fall-semester-approaches/> This picture was taken (with students' and instructor's permission) on the Panama City campus:



### ***Do all FSU classrooms have plexiglass to further protect the instructor?***

FSU investigated the use of plexiglass back in the summer and learned that it did not provide extra protection from airborne particles to justify installing it in all of the main campus classrooms. Moreover, plexiglass near the instructor would present another surface that could become contaminated and would require frequent cleaning, including by instructors at the beginning of each class.

## ***No one I know taught in person this Fall. How has it gone?***

Although it has certainly had its challenges, faculty have reported it to be a positive experience. Students are consistently described as “grateful” for being able to be in the classroom. Faculty have managed their class through whatever circumstances they faced, including making a temporary move to all remote learning for a week or two as the COVID-19 positivity rate spiked in September. Students and instructors wear masks and maintain social distancing, and there is no evidence of virus spread in classrooms. Here is what faculty are saying about the experience:

*“Teaching face to face this fall was the highlight of the semester. Never saw a single student without a mask, classrooms were equipped with supplies and always clean, and the appreciation shown by students was well worth the personal risk on my part.”*  
-Mark Zeigler

*“The overall teaching experience has been enjoyable and very positive despite some absences associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. All students have followed the rules—without my needing to remind them—about distancing properly, sanitizing their hands and their desk areas upon entry into the lecture hall, and wearing their face coverings at all times. The students have great attitudes and engage very well in our in-class discussions about organic chemistry.”*

-Ed Hilinski

*“The strength of our program is the ability to interact personally with the students. The F2F classes are much more engaged, which has created a more enjoyable experience for both the students and myself as the instructor.”*

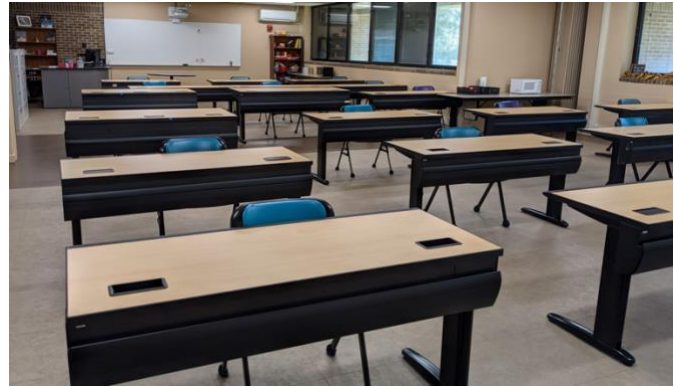
-Bob Garner

As for data, approximately 9,000 students are taking an in-person class this Fall. The Provost provided information to Deans on October 6<sup>th</sup> showing that 9 faculty had tested positive for COVID-19 through FSU’s testing site since August 4, and only 2 of those taught in person (and only one of those two was on the main campus). FSU posts information on testing on its dashboard (<https://fall2020.fsu.edu/>), which shows a campus positivity rate below 3% for the past 3 weeks.

## ***How many students would be in my in-person class?***

Social distancing of students and instructor is required for all in-person classes. Classrooms are marked by Classroom Support Services to show where students need to sit to maintain at least 6 feet distance from each other (see video here for a look at a classroom marked for socially distanced learning <https://news.fsu.edu/news/students-campus-life/2020/08/20/fsu-facilities-continues-enhanced-cleaning-efforts-as-fall-semester-approaches/>). A classroom will be assigned based on the cap for the course, which must be less than 50 students in order to be offered in-person (assuming all students attend on the same days).

Below are photos of different classroom setups from FSU Panama City that are similar to Tallahassee classrooms. In short, classrooms do look and feel different. All classrooms have been modified for in-person classes and those modifications may include separation of desks, removal of extra chairs, or marking areas for students to sit in order to maintain CDC social distancing guidelines throughout class meetings.



### ***What if a student in my class tests positive for COVID-19?***

Students are asked to report their positive test result to the Secure Assessment for FSU Exposure Response (SAFER) Team to ensure tele-health care and contact tracing. Contact tracing will determine whether anyone else in the student's life, including in an in-person class, was exposed and would need to be tested and isolate based on CDC guidelines. Guidance for students is found here, and this link can be included in your syllabus: <https://studentaffairs.fsu.edu/virtualfsu/student-life/>

### ***I usually teach a class of 70+ students. Can I teach in-person?***

Yes. One way is to offer a small in-person section (less than 50 students, and it could be much smaller) and a fully remote section that is co-listed with the in-person section. Students would sign up for one or the other section of your course; those in the remote section could not elect to switch to in-person due to social distancing requirements in the classroom. You can decide whether remote section students participate in the class either synchronously (via Zoom for live meetings) or asynchronously (via activities and modules on Canvas).

Another way to teach a larger class in person is to offer a hybrid course in which students are assigned a day to attend in person. For instance, if you teach Tues/Thurs and have 98 students, then half the class would attend on Tuesday and the other half would attend on Thursday. In this case, you will want to determine how the students who are not in class will receive the lecture material. An easy option is to record your lecture as you give it and then post it to Canvas for asynchronous viewing by the students who are out of class that day. You will need to think through how you will give exams as only half of your class can attend class at the same time, and you can work with the FSU Testing Center on options for exams for your in-person section students.



***I usually employ active learning in my classes, but will that be possible with social distancing requirements?***

Yes. Students can turn to face each other for short periods of time and still maintain their social distance requirement. Instructors should not move furniture around in their classroom though, so consult with your supervisor about your teaching techniques to see if there is a suitable room if you would like to offer an in-person course.

***What is a “hybrid” course?***

A hybrid class is any course that uses a combination of in-person and remote learning. Typically, a hybrid course would have at least one class meeting per week in person.

***What is the “Flex” model for in-person classes?***

The Panama City campus developed a flexible (“Flex”) model after Hurricane Michael severely affected their campus environment in 2018. The Flex model is, in essence, an in-person class with every class period taught from the classroom. The flexibility is with the student and whether they elect to be in the classroom in person or via Zoom. This model also works with the instructor Zooming in from a remote location to students who are in the classroom (which requires a TA to serve as facilitator in the classroom). This does not require much extra technology to accomplish and instructors who want to use this model will be given instruction and support prior to the start of the semester.

This photo shows a Flex class in Panama City (taken with permissions). It is important to note in the photo that students are attending the class in-person and on Zoom (as seen on the classroom screen display). The instructor engages with both in-person and remote students simultaneously.



***Do I have to hold office hours in person if I teach in person?***

No. Given the size of most faculty offices, it is not recommended that faculty meet with students in their office nor that students congregate in hallways while waiting to attend office hours. Faculty should continue to use Zoom for office hours.

***Do I have to teach in person for every class period?***

No. You can offer a hybrid course in which only some of the days are devoted to in-person learning. Typically, a hybrid course would have at least one class meeting per week in person.

***Do I have to “double teach” to in-person and remote students?***

No. Instructors for an in-person course must enable students who need to be out of class for any reason, including COVID-19 or isolation due to exposure, to make up their work and access relevant course materials. There is no obligation to “teach twice” to those in class and to those who need to be out of class for a short period of time. If students need to be out for several class periods due to COVID-19, instructors should work with their supervisor as needed to determine options. There are good resources available for instructors who want to teach in a flexible way to their in-person and remote students (see <https://odl.fsu.edu/online-instruction/flexible-course-delivery>). Students don't need a high-quality production to stay engaged from a remote location while they are in isolation – a simple cell phone camera is enough to enable students to Zoom into your in-person lecture. A Flex course provides the most continuity for students who need to be out of the classroom for some period of time and involves teaching material just once but to both in-person and remote students at the same time.

***Is it possible for my students to be in-person but for me to still teach remotely?***

Yes. If this is an option you are interested in, talk to your supervisor as this requires Dean's permission. If your TA is willing and able to facilitate the in-person lectures that you deliver remotely, and it is approved by your college, then you can structure your class that way. There needs to be someone with the in-person students during class days to ensure the technology in the room is working and to facilitate other aspects of the class. If you offer a hybrid class in which only some of the days are devoted to in-person learning, then your TA would only go to the classroom on those days.

***What if I offer an in-person course but all of my students would prefer to learn remotely?***

If all students in a course are uncomfortable with in-person learning, then an instructor should discuss this with their supervisor to determine what options would be appropriate. This could range from the instructor teaching from their classroom to students who are all remote to the entire course being switched to remote format.

***With the flu season coming, what would cause FSU to cancel in-person classes and make everyone “go remote” again in the spring?***

FSU is focused on being able to offer in-person learning in accordance with guidance from health experts and the CDC. The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff will continue to drive campus-wide decisions about campus-wide operations. The goal is to maintain campus operations, including in-person classes, for the entire semester by implementing all of the measures we know to be effective (mask wearing; social distancing; limiting sizes of groups; increased cleaning of high use spaces). See this announcement and brief video for a look at an FSU classroom and what FSU does to provide a safer learning environment: <https://news.fsu.edu/news/students-campus-life/2020/08/20/fsu-facilities-continues-enhanced-cleaning-efforts-as-fall-semester-approaches/>