

As we prepare for the potential disruptions that may again be caused this fall by the pandemic, including the absences caused by student illness or the need to quarantine and isolate, please consider the following. These suggestions are not to be considered as policy statements that apply equally to all faculty. Rather, they are broad guidelines intended to be interpreted and utilized as appropriate to different courses and different disciplines.

- Students will be informed not to expect course modality changes, and that any such decisions will come from the university and not from individual faculty members.
- We recognize many faculty members and instructors are concerned about teaching in-person. Those wishing to accommodate more physical distancing may work with department and dean's offices to switch to larger classrooms, if space is available. Utilizing a cohort modality might also be possible, but only if instructors make up for lost class time by delivering course content online. All such modality requests must be approved by the dean and the provost. In most cases, instructors cannot switch modalities in the absence of a medically justified formal accommodation documented through HR.
- While the chancellor's mask mandate remains in place, you can find tips on de-escalating confrontations in the classroom on the CITL resource page [here](#).
- There will be no changes to campus attendance policy other than to encourage flexibility. However, as we did last year, we ask all faculty and instructors to utilize a seating chart within Canvas for each of their courses. This will facilitate contact tracing if/when positive cases occur. As a reminder, Sean Ruppert in CITL [created a video](#) last year to explain how to set up the Roll Call and Seating Chart tools. Note that taking attendance is less important for contact tracing than simply utilizing a seating chart, especially in larger classes where taking daily attendance may be time-consuming.
- As happened last year, the university will assist students in informing instructors if they need to be absent due to COVID-19. Space has been reserved in Smith Hall for students who need to quarantine or isolate.
- If 50% of students are absent from class due to quarantine or isolation, instructors may consider a short-term "pivot" of their classes online for a period of no more than two weeks. Likewise, the same short-term pivot can be utilized if the instructor must be absent due to quarantine or isolation. The department, dean, and provost should be informed prior to any such short-term change in modality.
- Unlike last year, **we have not asked instructors to prepare asynchronous online alternatives for each in-person learning experience.** Instead, we will rely on existing campus policy, which requires instructors to provide "a reasonable amount of help in making up the work" that students miss due to excused absences. What constitutes "reasonable" in this context, however, is not explicitly defined and may vary by course, learning objective, assignment, and type of assessment employed. **The bottom line: As long as student grades are not suffering solely because they have to be absent due to short-term quarantine, isolation, or illness, then faculty should have the flexibility to figure out how to accomplish that end.** For example:

- In a course where students engage in activities during class for which they earn a grade, instructors may consider providing alternate assignments. These alternative options are not expected to be *identical* to the missed experience(s), but should strive to be as meaningful as possible in terms of enabling the achievement of learning outcomes.
- Instructors are encouraged to seek advice of departmental colleagues and the chair in formulating alternatives for students. Instructors of multiple-section courses with more than one instructor are strongly encouraged to discuss alternatives with fellow instructors to achieve equitable alternatives across sections.
- Instructors should provide students sufficient additional time to complete alternative assignments and understand that students who are ill or forced to quarantine may not be able to complete assignments within the period of convalescence.
- Wherever possible, accommodations and alternative options should be equitably assigned to all students in a course who have absences due to COVID.
- Wherever possible, course alternatives due to illness should not substantially change the grade schema for students. If changes are needed, they should not be imposed at the expense of a student's potential to achieve points. That is, wherever possible, due to illness, students should not be deprived of opportunities to acquire points available to other students.