

Additional information and suggestions on course instructional modalities

Our goal for Fall 2021 instruction is to resume as much in-person instruction as possible. In the fall 2021 instructional plan described in the message to schedulers and executive officers, we outlined a scenario where classroom capacity would be utilized at 50% of nominal room limits. We recognize that the 50% limitation will make in-person instruction a challenge for some courses. For example, to achieve a full in-person experience, doubling the number of sections to accommodate 50% enrollment per section might not be feasible due to space constraints or instructional resources.

However, there are a number of ways in which 50% capacity can be utilized in order to maximize in-person opportunities for students. We encourage creativity and innovation, taking advantage of lessons learned over the last year.

General considerations:

- The University has considerable classroom space available, but instructional space utilization is inefficiently distributed. It is important that we utilize space throughout the entire day and over the entire week. Not every class can be offered at 11 a.m. MWF. Consider offering courses at different times, including evening sections.
- The goal is not necessarily to move every course back to full in-person instruction. It is important that we utilize lessons learned from the last year regarding the benefits and opportunities with online and hybrid learning.
- Due to many ongoing challenges related to the pandemic, a fraction of our students are likely to be unable to attend classes in-person. This includes international students unable to travel to the United States, as well as students with health risks related to Sars-CoV-2. As a consequence, you should think carefully and creatively about ways that some courses can be offered as “hybrid” or “dual mode,” serving mostly in-person students with some remote.
- There are ways to divide student participation by day or by section without increasing the amount of instructional time. This might be accomplished utilizing lecture-capture tools to supplement an in-person class session.
- One advantage of dividing students by time (e.g., 50% attend Tu, the other 50% attend Th) is that a transition to “business as usual” instruction, 100% classroom capacity, could be achieved very quickly within the semester if conditions warrant.
- We are actively planning to provide instructional support again in Summer 2021. In the Summer 2020, this took the form of the Online Teaching Academy. We are currently developing programming and resources for Summer 2021.
- A number of committees are actively considering instructional planning and modalities for the Fall 2021 semester. Your input to these efforts is welcome.

Large courses (enrollment greater than 200 students)

- Large lecture sections could be handled by:
 - Provide lecture content online.
 - Divide the class for in-person lecture (e.g., ½ Tu, ½ Th.)
- Laboratory and discussion sections could operate on an alternating schedule, where ½ of students are in class for each session. A mixture of in-person and online sections (e.g., 6 in-person, 2 fully online) could also be considered.
- We do not recommend the use of “overflow” rooms for additional seat capacity. Students report that they would prefer content to be available online rather than to sit in a classroom that does not include the instructor.

- Departments should consider finding ways to make high-priority “gateway” courses available to students for in-person instruction. Courses that are important for the success of freshmen students, for example, might be broken into smaller sections to ensure face-to-face learning.

Mid-sized courses (enrollment between 40 and 200 students)

- In some cases, mid-sized courses might be able to be offered “normally” in a larger room. For example, a course with 75 students could potentially be offered in a classroom that regularly seats 150 students.
- In other cases, to encourage maximizing in-person, active learning opportunities for students, attendance could be broken up by day, or the number of course sections increased.
- Courses with explicit hands-on activities such as laboratories or performances could also divide students by time. For example, a course with a weekly 100 minute lab might have each student in lab for 50 minutes along with another 50 minutes of external work.

Small courses (enrollment below 40 students)

- Most smaller courses can be offered as normal. With additional classroom space becoming available in the Fall 2021 semester, a course with 30 students can very likely meet in-person in a classroom that seats 60 students.
- For classes that cannot be offered normally, many of the points relevant to mid-sized courses apply to small courses as well.