

UCR COVID-19 Instructional Continuity Plan

Revision History

June 11, 2020: Original plan published.

July 7, 2020: (1) Section I clarified. All clinical courses are dictated by site-specific conditions and are not governed by this document. This includes clinical instruction in the UCR School of Medicine. (2) Additional course types added to table 1 for completeness.

July 30, 2020: (1) Committee membership updated. (2) Sections I and III clarified. Individual Study and other 1:1 unit-bearing activities may require face-to-face meetings if the instructor determines that a remote-only format is not feasible.

August 10, 2020: Updated to be consistent with state guidance issued on August 7. Courses with specialized indoor settings (e.g. labs and studios) allowed in phase 2.

Instructional Continuity Committee Membership

Tom Smith, Interim Provost/EVC and Professor of Education (co-chair)

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Definitions

- **In-person:** a course is “in person” if it has face-to-face meetings. Under normal campus operations, most courses are in-person.
- **Remote-only:** a course is “remote-only” if it has no face-to-face meetings. Spring 2020 courses are remote-only.
- **Remote option:** an in-person course has a “remote option” if students can effectively satisfy the course requirements without attending any face-to-face meetings.

Background

UCR COVID-19 Instructional Continuity Plan

This plan was developed with consultation and input from the Academic Senate, department chairs, deans, vice chancellors, the Registrar, Facilities Services, the campus Public Health committee and relevant administrators at other UC campuses. The goal of this plan is to provide a safe and effective teaching environment for the greatest number of instructors and students under modified campus operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, the plan is guided by three core principles:

1. Prioritize the **safety** of all members of our campus community
2. Extend **access** to education to the greatest extent possible
3. Create **flexibility** at both the individual and institutional levels

This plan is built upon the [Campus Planning Framework](#) and related protocols. Like the Planning Framework, this plan includes four phases for managing activities with phase 1 being most restrictive and phase 4 being least restrictive. Implementation of each phase of this plan relies on the campus first being able to meet the health and safety standards associated with the corresponding phase in the Planning Framework. Those standards address things like testing, tracing, quarantine and isolation space, cleaning of common areas, traffic rules for stairwells and elevators, staffing density in offices, training on PPE use and social distancing, and other precautions that apply to multiple facets of campus operations. ***If the campus is unable to meet the health and safety standards associated with a particular phase of the Planning Framework, or decides for any reason not to implement a particular phase, then the instructional plan associated with that phase will not be implemented.***

This plan is intended to be a living document. As public health recommendations regarding COVID-19 change, the standards in the document may change accordingly. For example, as conditions improve, larger sized gatherings may become allowable. If, and when, this happens, the applicable standards may be revised. ***Any such revisions will be sent back to the Public Health Committee for review and approval before any changes are implemented.***

During the 2020-21 academic year, we expect that the default instructional mode will continue to be remote-only, but this plan allows for the possibility of some classes to be taught in-person by exceptional approval. Importantly, ***in-person instruction will be offered only on a voluntary basis and must include a remote option to accommodate students who are unable or unwilling to attend face-to-face meetings.*** Individual Study and other 1:1 unit-bearing activities are exceptions, and may require face-to-face participation if the instructor determines that a remote-only format is not feasible. We anticipate having limited capacity to provide appropriate spaces for approved in-person instruction, so some prioritization will be needed. We expect that the prioritized courses most likely will be graduate courses and undergraduate laboratory and studio courses, as these tend to be smaller and/or particularly difficult to deliver effectively in remote formats.

This plan is organized into five sections. The first section presents the different phases of instruction, which are intended to be commensurate with the phases of the campus research plan. The second presents the responsibilities of the central campus administration or one of its affiliated units. The third presents the responsibilities of all individuals participating in in-person instruction (including faculty, TAs, students, guests, etc.). The fourth section outlines a process for soliciting proposals from instructors for in-person classes that would go through multiple levels of review before being approved. The fifth provides answers to some frequently asked questions (FAQs). ***Grading of student work is under the purviews of the Academic Senate and individual instructors, and is beyond the scope of this plan.***

I. Instructional Phases

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Table 1 shows the four instructional phases with allowed delivery modes by course type. Many cells in the table are either in-person/normal operations, remote-only, or governed by off-site conditions or another operating plan. These cases are relatively straightforward compared to cases where in-person instruction may be offered with precautions. These more challenging cases are denoted by the four blue cells in table 1, and are a main focus of this plan.

Phase 1 is the most restrictive instructional phase. In this phase, all instruction is remote-only, except possibly clinical and internship courses that are dictated by site-specific conditions and are not governed by this document. This includes clinical instruction in the UCR School of Medicine. Spring 2020 is an example of phase 1 instruction. Phase 2 is slightly less restrictive. In phase 2, courses with specialized indoor settings (e.g. labs and studios) and fieldwork may be proposed for in-person instruction with a remote option, and faculty-student interactions associated with individual study, thesis, practicum and similar 1:1 unit-bearing activities may occur in-person **without a remote option** if not feasible in a remote format. However, these interactions must comply with the health and safety standards in the Planning Framework. In phase 3, additional courses are eligible for in-person instruction with a remote option by exceptional approval. Phase 4 corresponds to normal campus operations.

Table 1: Instructional Phases and Delivery Modes by Course Type

Course type	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Lecture, discussion, colloquium, seminar, screening, workshop, demonstration, additional lecture	Remote-only	Remote-only by default; in-person with remote option by exceptional approval for specialized indoor settings only	Remote-only by default; in-person with remote option by exceptional approval	In-person (normal operations)
Laboratory, studio	Remote-only if feasible, otherwise not offered ¹	Remote-only if feasible; in-person with remote option by exceptional approval; otherwise not offered	Remote-only if feasible; in-person with remote option by exceptional approval; otherwise not offered	In-person (normal operations)
Fieldwork	Remote-only if feasible, otherwise not offered ¹	Remote-only if feasible; in-person with remote option by exceptional approval; otherwise not offered	Remote-only if feasible; in-person with remote option by exceptional approval; otherwise not offered	In-person (normal operations)
Individual study, thesis, practicum, consultation, term paper, tutorial, written work, extra reading	Remote-only if feasible, otherwise not offered	Remote-only if feasible, otherwise in-person 1:1 meetings ²	Remote-only if feasible; otherwise in-person 1:1 meetings ²	In-person (normal operations)
Clinic, internship	Dictated by site-specific conditions			In-person (normal operations)
Research	Dictated by the campus research plan			

¹ Instructors may access instructional locations for demonstration purposes; [Campus Planning Framework](#) standards and the [Return to Campus Guide](#) apply.

² [Campus Planning Framework](#) standards and the [Return to Campus Guide](#) apply to face-to-face meetings.

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II. Responsibilities of the Central Campus Administration

At least three months prior to the start of each term, the central campus administration will announce an intended instructional phase for planning purposes. This should give departments time to consider delivery options, instructors time to prepare materials, and students time to plan their course schedules and determine their living arrangements. The instructional phase may be revised downward, before or during an active term, if public health conditions worsen. The instructional phase also may be revised upward, before or during an active term, if conditions improve. However, ***the instructional phase will not be revised upward to phase 4 after the initial planning announcement.*** Switching to normal operations on short notice would create untenable situations for students who have already registered and established living arrangements away from campus, anticipating remote classes.

The central campus administration also has the following responsibilities:

- 1. UCR will not require any instructor to teach in-person.** The default delivery mode for instruction is remote-only. If a department chair or program director prefers a course to be taught in-person, the chair/director should ask the instructor of record if they are willing to teach in-person. If the instructor is not willing to teach in-person, the chair/director may consider whether the course could be reassigned to an instructor who is willing to teach in-person. If no qualified instructor is available who is willing to teach in-person, the course should be taught remote-only or else not offered. This principle also applies to Teaching Assistants (and anyone else serving in an instructional capacity). Therefore, instructors of record should assess the willingness of TAs and other essential personnel to teach in-person before committing to do so. No one will be pressured into teaching in person if they do not feel safe doing so. If qualified individuals cannot be found who are willing to teach in-person, the course should be taught remote-only or else not offered.
- 2. The Provost's Office will publish a course proposal form that contains the safety standards for in-person instruction.** The form will require the instructor of record to acknowledge and briefly describe their plan to comply with the standards. TAs and others serving in an instructional capacity also must acknowledge and agree to enforce the standards. The form also will solicit unmet resource needs and will include other relevant information such as available (active) classrooms and meeting times, and submission deadlines.
- 3. The Provost's Office will establish, regularly update, and obtain approval for a list of instructional safety standards that are consistent with all applicable laws, regulations and policies (including the UCR COVID-19 Planning Framework).** The current safety standards rely heavily on guidance published by the American College Health Association and are as follows:
 - a. Maximum number of in-person participants.** This is currently set to 30 persons.
 - b. Minimum amount of social distancing.** This is currently set to 6 feet. Seating in active classrooms will be either marked or removed to enforce parts (a) and (b).
 - c. Assigned seating and attendance tracking.** This helps to minimize virus spread and facilitate tracing in the event of a positive test. In addition, instructors are strongly recommended to avoid attendance-based grading to reduce pressure on students to attend class when they are not feeling well or should be isolating (e.g. due to symptoms or recent travel or other risky activities).
 - d. Required face coverings.** Every in-person participant must wear a cloth face covering.
 - e. Required use of hand sanitizer.** Every in-person participant must use hand sanitizer when entering the classroom.

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4. **Participants should report any public health concern to the central campus administration.** Concerns may be submitted via a survey link here: ehs.ucr.edu/coronavirus.

IV. In-Person Instruction Proposal Process

1. **Deans, department chairs, program directors and instructors work together to determine which courses they would like to propose for in-person instruction.** Instructors cannot unilaterally decide to teach in-person. In part, this is due to the limited ability of the campus to support physical instructional spaces with increased health and safety standards. Deans, chairs and directors must be involved to help prioritize courses for in-person instruction.
2. **The instructor of record completes the course proposal form and submits to the department chair or program director.** If the chair or director approves, they add a brief statement of support and submit to the dean. If the dean approves, they add a brief statement of support and submit to the Registrar for room assignment. The dean may solicit additional input (from the Public Health Committee, EH&S, Campus Counsel, etc.) before making a determination. Proposals will not be approved if they do not adhere to the instructional safety standards.
3. **The Registrar attempts to assign a room from the list of supported classrooms and notifies the dean, chair or director, instructor of record and Facilities Services of the outcome.** The Registrar will not change the meeting time that was originally assigned to the course in order to avoid creating scheduling conflicts for students.

V. Frequently Asked Questions

- **Where can I find the in-person course proposal form?**
 - o The form will be available later this month. It will be posted on campusreturn.ucr.edu/plans-and-protocols and an announcement will be sent to the campus.
- **If my proposal is approved, when does the approval expire?**
 - o Course approvals are good for the duration of the 2020-2021 academic year including summer 2021. However, face-to-face activities may have to be discontinued at any time if the campus administration changes the instructional phase (see table 1).
- **What are some suggestions for designing a remote option?** Departments and instructors have freedom to be creative when designing remote options. Some suggestions include:
 - o An instructor may choose to implement “dual-mode” or “mixed-mode” instruction, where some students attend in-person and others participate remotely. UCR has an online Master’s degree in engineering that uses this approach. This tends to require more work but it allows for relatively easy migration between modes as public and/or individual health conditions change.
 - o A course with a common lecture and multiple discussion sections may be “flipped” to deliver the lecture material remotely, while some discussion sections meet in person and others meet remotely. As with dual-mode instruction, this approach makes it relatively easy for individual students or the entire class to switch between modes during the term. This approach also can accommodate situations in which some TAs do not want to teach in-person.
 - o Similarly, a course with multiple lecture sections may offer some sections in-person and others remote-only. In this case, instructors should work to synchronize delivery of material and facilitate late add/drop requests across sections to accommodate changing student preferences.

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- An additional instructor may offer a second course remote-only for students who cannot attend in person, provided the department/program will accept the course as a substitute for the in-person course. This approach is less flexible and would seem to require that students register and commit to one course or the other, unless the instructors plan to facilitate late add/drop requests.
- A department/program may choose to waive certain in-person requirements.
- **If I choose to teach remote-only, does my class have to meet at the originally assigned time?**
 - Yes. Unless you choose to make your course asynchronous, it should continue to meet at the assigned time even though you will not be using your assigned room. This helps prevent scheduling conflicts for students.
- **If my professor is convening face-to-face meetings for my class, do I have to attend if I feel uncomfortable given the COVID-19 public health situation?**
 - No. All in-person courses must offer a remote option to accommodate students who do not want to participate in-person for any reason. Contact your professor and/or your academic advisor to discuss remote options.
- **When should students plan to be back in Riverside for normal in-person instruction?**
 - Unfortunately, we cannot predict exactly when we will be able to return to normal campus operations. UCR must comply with state and county guidelines, and the public health situation could remain unstable for many months. However, we will provide information as it becomes available to help students make informed decisions about their living situations. We expect that many students will choose to live in our community, especially those participating in research, so we will work to make on-campus services available to those students, to the extent possible. We also expect many students will choose to live elsewhere for a variety of reasons, so we will extend services remotely, as well.