

UMKC Office of the Provost

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Fall 2020 Academic Planning Guide

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Scenarios and Planning Resources

Scenarios

Planning for the fall semester in the context of COVID-19 requires extreme flexibility. Three potential scenarios could be in place at the start of the semester, and all three scenarios could conceivably occur at any point within the semester.

- A. The status of COVID-19 in the Kansas City region is such that all stay-at-home and social-distancing restrictions have been lifted.
- B. The status of COVID-19 in the Kansas City region is such that all stay-at-home restrictions have been lifted but social-distancing requirements remain in place.
- C. The status of COVID-19 in the Kansas City region is such that all stay-at-home and social-distancing restrictions are in place or they are lifted at the start of the semester but reinstated later in the semester.

Planning Resources

[CDC Guidance for Colleges, Universities, and Higher Learning](#)

[Jackson County Public Health COVID Resources](#)

Course Design and Delivery Modalities

April 20, 2020 Guidance

Given uncertainty about multiple potential fall scenarios, on April 20, 2020 we issued the following guidelines for setting fall schedules:

- Courses that have previously been offered fully online (start to finish) should be scheduled for online delivery. *Instructors* who have not previously obtained online instructor certification must obtain certification by August 1, 2020.
- Courses that were converted to online delivery in spring 2020 that could be feasibly modified to be offered fully online in the fall (start to finish) or as hybrid courses should be scheduled as such. If scheduled for fully online delivery, the *instructor* should work with the Instructional Design Team in adapting the course effectively and must obtain certification for online teaching by August 1, 2020.
- Courses with clinical, lab, studio, or practicum components that cannot be fulfilled in an online format should be designed to create as much digital flexibility as possible. Examples include creating a contingency plan for condensing required in-person components to fit within a shortened semester with potential plans for 12-week and 8-week options were they to become necessary; adapting any course content that does not require campus presence to be online-deliverable; and designing in-person assignments in ways that would enable compliance with social distancing requirements if they were to be in place during the scheduled time of those assignments.
- Courses that have not previously been offered fully online and for which there is a strong preference for in-person delivery may be scheduled as in-person with commitment from the unit that the course will be modified prior to mid-August to be "*scenario adaptable*" aka "*format flexible*" defined as

- All course materials including syllabus, readings, assignments, lecture materials, and gradebook will exist in digital format and be uploaded to the Canvas course site;
 - A plan for alternate methods for lecture delivery, ensuring all lectures and lecture materials will be accessible to students asynchronously;
 - Class size and assignments must enable compliance with social distancing requirements if they were to be in place during the scheduled time of those assignments. Consider per section enrollment caps, scheduling students in small groups, etc.
- Any instructor adapting a course for its first-ever fully online delivery is encouraged to:
 - work closely with the instructional design team to create materials and assignments that will be effective in the online delivery mode
 - determine whether instructors for similar courses across the UM system may have digital materials they are willing to share (a common site for sharing course materials is under construction by the system eLearning group).
 - All units are encouraged to consider scheduling courses in the two 8-week sessions in lieu of the traditional 16-week session, where feasible. Although we cannot predict if/when we will need to shelter-in-place and offer fully online course delivery, offering more 8-week session courses could offer greater flexibility and make a future transition more manageable for students and faculty.

June 2020 Additional Guidance

Suggestions for Instructional Modalities

At present, the most likely scenario for the fall semester is that we will need to operate under strict social distancing regulations. We can also expect that a higher than average number of students and faculty will continue to have day-to-day situations that will impact their ability to engage fully in face-to-face instruction (e.g., probable K-12 schedule changes; high risk health conditions). As such, the guiding principles for the fall is that all courses need to be *accessible* and *format flexible* to allow for maximum engagement and responsivity in the event we need to transition to fully remote instruction at any point in the fall. Guidance for maximizing accessibility and flexibility, regardless of the course format is outlined below.

Fully Online Courses

In contrast to the quick and less-than-ideal adaptations we made in Spring 2020 to transition classes to remote instruction, our Fall 2020 situation is different and we expect that courses being offered fully online will meet the same expectations for quality and engagement that we have long held for online instruction. The expectations are provided in the [Quality Matters checklist](#). The UM System Office of eLearning (OeL) is offering summer courses in how to design online courses, with [4-week trainings](#) starting June 1, July 13, and August 13. The OeL is also offering a series of [ongoing training sessions](#) focused on specific topics such including a general Canvas overview, Teaching with Canvas assignments, quizzes, and grades, and sessions on specific tools such as VoiceThread, Panopto, and Proctorio.

Survey data from our own students tell us that they miss the personal interactions that occur in face-to-face classrooms and the accountability they feel when they meet on a set schedule. Given that feedback, the optimal design of fully online course this fall will include frequent

opportunities for synchronous engagement, including individual instructor-student meetings when feasible and/or frequent opportunities for groups of students to meet synchronously with the instructor, but scheduled in flexible ways that allow all students multiple options for accessing those opportunities.

Hybrid and Face-to-Face Courses

Many courses will be offered as hybrid/blended or hy-flex in the fall semester as a means to increase accessibility, flexibility, and reduce classroom demand. Both hybrid and fully-face-to-face courses must be designed as **format flexible** so that if we need to make a quick shift to remote instruction, it will occur as a seamless transition to an online experience for students that continues to be highly engaging and continues to meet all of the student learning objectives for the course.

The UMKC Faculty Affairs office will be delivering a [series on online sessions, including town halls, workshops, and panel discussions](#), to help faculty design their courses to be *format flexible*. The experts presenting these sessions will be UMKC faculty who have successfully implemented strategies to ensure that the online versions of their classes are highly engaging and effective.

As a matter of quality assurance and consistent with our UMKC Culture of Care, all instructors of hybrid and face-to-face courses in the fall will complete a short [checklist](#) documenting instructional strategies and confirming that the course is *format flexible*, fully ready to be shifted online if the need arises.

Expectations for Faculty Engagement

As expected in our UMKC Culture of Care, all faculty, regardless of instructional modality, should engage with their students during the academic term in ways that are respectful, timely, and supportive of student success. Details of faculty engagement practices should be included in the course syllabus and are outlined below; the full faculty engagement policy can be found in the [Provost Policy Library](#).

Attendance Verification Procedure

Per University Policy, all instructors will participate in the attendance (participation) verification procedure. Instructors will indicate students who have not attended (participated in) their course AND have not notified them of extenuating circumstances preventing attendance (participation) in initial sessions. In AY20-21 we expect that many students will need **flexibility in attendance** due to COVID. Faculty should plan for the verification of attendance through flexible means (i.e., **participation in an assignment/meaningful engagement in the course** vs. physical attendance).

Availability to Students

Faculty engagement will be achieved by encouraging and establishing availability to meet with students outside of their regularly scheduled instructional hours and include specific information about the process for establishing appointments.

Response Time

Faculty engagement will include setting expectations for an acceptable response time to student-initiated contact. The instructor's plan for responsiveness to student emails or voice messages should be clearly stated in terms of hours or days.

Feedback on Student Work

Faculty engagement will include communicating a reasonable plan for feedback on student work. The instructor's plan for feedback on student assignments and/or tests should be clearly stated in terms of hours or days. Grades, individual feedback, group feedback). Instructors must evaluate all student work with sufficient promptness to enhance the learning experience, and provide sufficient graded feedback early in the term and before the deadline for withdrawing from classes to enable students to assess their progress in the course. Any unanticipated circumstances that alter this plan should be communicated to students in the course.

Internships, Service Learning, Clinical Rotations/Practica, and Experiential Research

Internships, service learning, and clinical rotations/practica are not one size fits all. The nature of the discipline, accrediting body expectations, and community agency policies will determine if/how these experiences can be delivered safely in the fall. This [comprehensive guide](#) will help you determine how to design and deliver experiential learning opportunities for students based on multiple scenarios that we might face in the fall. The UMKC Office of Research has also issued guidelines for engaging graduate and undergraduate students in research as we repopulate campus this summer and plan for the fall; contact Vice Chancellor Liu (y.liu@umkc.edu) for more information about research-related guidelines.

Study Abroad and International Student Support

All study abroad programs are suspended until the UM System travel freeze is lifted. Study abroad programs will resume when the [CDC](#) issues guidance supporting such programming; the current CDC position supports postponing and/or cancelling study abroad programming.

International Students: We anticipate that international students will experience several challenges this fall including delayed visa processing, last minute enrollment due to visa delays, and a required quarantine upon arrival to campus. All international students who anticipate starting class after the end of the first week will be advised to consider delaying their coursework until spring 2020 or enrolling in online coursework that can be completed in one's home country.

Documentation of *Format Flexible* and Syllabus Components

Format Flexible Affirmation and Documentation

All hybrid and face-to-face courses are to be designed as *format flexible*, meaning they are ready to transition fully online seamlessly if needed. This [checklist](#) should be completed by the instructor and submitted to their Department Chair (or Program Director for programs outside of departments). Chairs/Directors will collect forms for all face-to-face and hybrid courses, compile into a single PDF, then email that PDF to the unit Dean. Completed forms are due to Chairs/Directors by August 21, 2020.

Syllabus Components

We are exploring options for automatic syllabi generators to make the creation of syllabi easier and to ensure that standard policies/communications are included in all syllabi. In addition to the [standard required syllabus components](#), and the information outlined in the [format flexible checklist](#) for face-to-face and hybrid courses, the following COVID-specific information should be added to **all syllabi**:

- Link to the UMKC COVID website for up-to-date information and FAQs: <https://www.umkc.edu/news/coronavirus.html>
- Contact information for Student Disability Services, should any student want to seek COVID-related academic accommodations: Scott Laurent: (816) 235-5696 or via email at laurentr@umkc.edu.
- Regardless of the course format, faculty should specify required and/or recommended hardware/software, such as webcams or access to certain browsers if using online proctoring services.

Additional Information:

Protocol if a student has COVID symptoms or test positive for COVID: forthcoming on <https://www.umkc.edu/news/coronavirus.html>

Use of Video: UM System is developing guidelines intended to provide guidance to faculty members considering the use of video (e.g., for proctoring exams) in their courses; those will be made available when finalized.

Masks: See the University policy on mask use: <https://www.umkc.edu/news/coronavirus.html>

Strategies to assist with contact tracing: Instructors are also strongly encouraged to assign seating in face-to-face classes to facilitate contact tracing should a student/faculty member become ill. Although attendance for face-to-face classes cannot be required, taking attendance to document who is present in face-to-face class sessions (including labs, SI sessions, small group break-out sessions) is encouraged.

Attendance, Academic Accommodations, and Instructional Continuity

Attendance

There are two guiding principles for attendance in the context of COVID:

1. Be student centered, understanding that students are facing many barriers including overall stress and health, care-giving responsibilities, and financial challenges.
2. Attendance policies need to be designed and implemented equitably.

Attendance Policy (COVID Modified Fall 2020): Students are expected to participate/meaningfully engage in classes, regardless of the class format. Faculty can require participation/engagement, but *cannot* require physical presence for face-to-face coursework. In order to comply with federal regulations associated with eligibility rules for federal financial aid, students not attending/participating a course during the first three weeks of the term will be administratively dropped from the specific course. Advance notice of attendance policies of academic units and individual instructors should be given, and such notice should be in writing. Students should notify instructors of excused absences in advance, where possible. Students who have an excused absence are expected to make arrangements with instructors for alternative or make-up work. Such arrangements should be made in advance of the absence, where possible. Instructors should accommodate excused absences to the extent that an accommodation can be made that does not unreasonably interfere with the learning objectives of the course or unduly burden the instructor. Attendance policies shall be applied in a non-discriminatory manner. Enrollment as a student is required to attend any class unless otherwise pre-approved by the instructor. Instructors are responsible for verifying student attendance and participation within the first three weeks (16 week course) through the Attendance Verification Survey (administered through UMKC

Connect) as well as maintain records of participation throughout the term so that the last date of attendance for students with recorded “F” or “W” final grades may be submitted.

CDC Guidance on Academic Accommodations

The [CDC](#) has issued guidance on individuals at increased risk of severe illness due to COVID. Reasonable accommodations should be made for such individuals, whether students or faculty, to engage in course delivery.

Accommodations for Students

Students requesting COVID-related academic accommodations should contact Scott Laurent at (816) 235-5696 or by email at laurentr@umkc.edu in the Student Disability Services office. Faculty should design courses expecting that an increased number of students will have academic accommodations and/or will not be able to attend class due to a variety of factors (e.g., care taking due to K-12 education delivery modification). Generally, all course material, regardless of course delivery modality, should be made available to students so that learning outcomes can be met. In cases where physical attendance is necessary (e.g., labs, performance), students who are unable to attend should be advised on alternate coursework/engagement opportunities to meet student learning outcomes.

Accommodations for Faculty

Reasonable accommodations will be granted in accordance with [Collected Rules and Regulations Section 600.080](#), Policy Related to Employees with Disabilities, and may include alternative work schedule or location, extension of telework, or enhanced precautionary measures. Faculty with a disability who are concerned about access to technology to support online/hybrid teaching are encouraged to reach out to Lacie Fox (l.j.mcclellan-fox@umkc.edu), our Employee ADA Specialist to discuss options.

Supporting Instructional Continuity for Students/Faculty Who Become Ill

We hope that no one in our UMKC community becomes ill this fall, but we must plan for that possibility. Department chairs should engage in contingency planning should an instructor become ill/quarantined and not be able to teach for a period of time. Similarly, faculty should be prepared to support students who become ill/quarantined and need remote access to course materials.

Classroom Assignments and Facilities

Capacity and Social Distancing

Our campus will follow CDC and local health department guidance on the number of individuals that can gather in a setting and on social distancing. For hybrid and in-person courses, the fall room schedule is designed generally on a 25% capacity model. Laboratory, performance, and courses that are critical to student retention should be prioritized for hybrid/face-to-face delivery.

Facilities Cleaning Protocols

Campus facilities will be working diligently to keep our campus safe and ready for students, faculty, and staff, including:

- Performing enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of all areas following CDC guidelines and using EPA approved disinfectants
- Bringing in more fresh air through air conditioning and heating systems

- Placing hand sanitizer dispensers at all entrances and other locations around campus
- Reducing occupancy of classrooms, elevators, restrooms, and other spaces to comply with Health Department social distancing guidelines.
- Providing daily disinfecting of public spaces and high touch surfaces
- Installing plexiglass protection barriers at reception areas and other spaces where close interaction occurs
- Placing signage throughout the campus to promote handwashing and social distancing

Libraries

UMKC libraries is implementing a phased repopulation and updates on library services can be found [here](#). At present, we anticipate that some sections of the library will fully reopen by the fall, but other sections (where social distancing is more difficult to enforce) will remain closed.

Faculty Training Opportunities

[UMKC Training Opportunities](#)

[UM System Training Opportunities](#)

Future Decisions for Consideration

The spring and summer 2021 academic scenarios will be finalized by September 2020. Ideas about how we can proactively modify the spring/summer semesters (timing, sessions, etc.) should be sent to telltheprovost@umkc.edu.