

**From:** [Office of the MSU Provost](#)  
**Subject:** Information on Teaching and Classroom Protocols for Fall Semester  
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**MONTANA**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the Provost

Dear Faculty Colleagues,

The Center for Faculty Excellence (CFE) and Academic Technology and Outreach (ATO) have engaged faculty throughout the summer and will continue to offer workshops and post information that will be valuable for faculty as they make final preparations for the Fall. Today, we wish to provide additional important information to help you enjoy a successful Fall semester.

### **Campus Density Reduction Strategies**

Many of you will be teaching in blended modalities, meeting with a half or a third of your students on any given day. On days when students are not attending in-person they will engage with online materials or attend the class virtually. To attempt to reduce the density of students on campus, we encourage faculty to divide your classes alphabetically by student's last names. If all faculty teaching blended modality courses break them out into sub-sections alphabetically, where students with last names with letters near the beginning of the alphabet are meeting in class earlier in the week, we may reduce student density on campus.

Recognize that registration is an ongoing process. If the sub-sections in your blended course are near room capacity, you'll want to check your course list regularly and make necessary adjustments to the rotation through the end of the add period.

Be sure to reach out to your students before the first day of class and let them know which day of the week they should plan to attend class in-person and what they will need to do to participate on the other days.

### **Synchronous Remote Instruction**

Faculty who are teaching remote classes have the option to teach these classes asynchronously or synchronously. Consider that some students may find it difficult to go directly from an in-person class to a remote synchronous class. Even students with laptops may find it challenging to find a quiet place on campus where they can socially distance, access the internet and fully participate in class virtually. If you are teaching remotely and plan to deliver all or part of your course synchronously, please also plan to record those meetings using TechSmith

(<http://ato.montana.edu/technologies/techsmith/>), so that students may access content asynchronously in case they are unable to participate in real-time. See the CFE website

(<http://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/onlineteaching/supportingstudents.html>) for tips and techniques, best practices, and ways to support students.

Regardless of whether you are teaching in-person, blended or online, be prepared to accommodate students who have to miss class due to illness. You can do this through lecture capture and posting all course content in your Brightspace shell. These strategies will also help facilitate a transition to remote learning if a temporary or permanent transition is necessary during the Fall semester.

### **Shortened Semester**

Because of the shortened semester, your courses will be condensed by approximately a week (this equates to 2 hours and 34 minutes of instructional time and 5 hours and 8 minutes of non-instructional student work). To cover all of the course material, you will need to add some of your content online throughout the term to make up for the lost class time. You should also expect students to devote more time outside of class each week to their studies. Remind students they should prepare to spend additional time studying outside of class meetings because of the shortened semester.

### **Classroom Protocols**

Faculty are encouraged to have students fill out a seating chart on the first day of in-person classes and then have assigned seating for the class. This can help faculty identify students more easily and may help with contact tracing if necessary. Such assigned seating may be impossible in fixed seat classes where students will need to load seats from the center of rows outward to avoid climbing over one another to get to their seats.

The CFE website provides information about classroom protocols at <http://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/news/07-24-2020-COVID19guidance.html> Remind students of the importance of appropriate hand hygiene and suggest that they regularly review the list of COVID-19 symptoms on the CDC website <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html> and that they do not come to class if they are not feeling well. You and your students will have at your disposal the disinfectant and microfiber cloths included in the Clean Cat Kits.

All of us --students, faculty, staff and visitors-- are dependent on one another to keep the campus open and avoid a shift to remote learning. Wearing face masks in buildings, classrooms, and offices, maintaining social distancing and practicing good hand hygiene will help reduce risk on campus, help to keep our community healthy and allow us to have a successful Fall semester at MSU. The CFE has provided specific information to guide your response to students who show reluctance to wear face masks.

### **Prepare for Your Absence**

Faculty generally prepare for their absences from classes for conferences,

research, etc. in various ways, including finding someone to guest lecture, preparing alternative online materials or asking students to engage in an online discussion. Faculty also often teach through illness, and for those teaching in-person this Fall, that will not be possible. Faculty who feel ill should, like students, wait until they are well to return to campus. During an absence due to illness or quarantine, faculty should have a plan for their classes. As you begin the semester, work with your colleagues and department head to develop a plan to help each other cover courses (teaching buddy) or prepare materials in advance for online delivery.

### **Other Resources from CFE**

Recorded Workshops

<http://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/about/events/pastevents/videos.html>

Guidance Around COVID-19 related procedures

<http://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/news/07-24-2020-COVID19guidance.html>

Teaching and Learning Resources

<http://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/teaching/resources/index.html>

Research and Creativity Resources

<http://www.montana.edu/facultyexcellence/research/resources/index.html>

We will continue to make adjustments and to provide updates in response to changing conditions and in response to new developments and opportunities that will help us manage the situation as we fulfill our core mission of teaching, research and outreach.

Thank you for all that you do for MSU and most especially in planning your classrooms and instruction for our students.

Most sincerely,



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