

**AY 2020–2021 (AND BEYOND) ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION:
GUIDANCE FOR COLLEGES, SCHOOLS, DEPARTMENTS, AND PROGRAMS
FROM THE ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION IMPLEMENTATION TEAM**

Edition 9: March 5, 2021

Topic: Planning the Fall 2021 Class Schedule for More In-Person Instruction

Relevant Due Dates for Chairs, Directors, and Academic Schedulers: Update Classes in Campus Solutions by March 22, 11:59 PM

Please email this entire edition of guidance to your faculty, your graduate students with teaching appointments, and your academic support staff

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What's in this edition of guidance, and what's coming next

This edition of guidance focuses on implementing the return to more in-person classes in fall 2021, including class instruction modes and scheduling/rooming classes. We are aware that the shift to more in-person teaching raises a number of other questions; these will be addressed in later editions.

Update: COVID-19 conditions and classroom capacities for fall 2021

As announced by Provost Russ Moore and Chief Operating Officer Patrick O'Rourke on [Feb. 24](#) and [Mar. 1](#), ***we plan to offer the majority of courses in person in fall 2021.*** This decision is based on the latest

pandemic projections, safety measures we've already taken such as increased ventilation in our classrooms, and anticipated vaccine availability and uptake in our community.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, our scientists have been modeling transmission risk within our classrooms to help campus develop guidelines that ensure a safe teaching and research experience across campus. These implemented guidelines, combined with regular COVID-19 screening, have helped result in no instances of COVID-19 transmission in our classrooms that we are aware of over the past 12 months.

Our scientists have continued to incorporate newly available data, such as vaccination and infection rates within Boulder County, to determine safe classroom densities for fall 2021, while simultaneously maximizing in-person instruction and interaction for the benefit of our students. The data indicate that, by implementing 3-foot hexagon physical distancing within our classrooms and continuing our masking protocols, campus will be able to increase in-person classroom capacity significantly without increasing the average risk of infection within our classrooms. These data suggest that we will be able to continue having no cases of COVID-19 transmission traced to classroom or laboratory transmission as we increase fall classroom occupancies.

Our scientists' work uses the very conservative estimate that by August 2021, immunity in our campus population, acquired through vaccination or natural infection, will range from 50–75%. Working with this baseline assumption, we can increase our classroom capacity significantly, as long as we continue to use the COVID-19 mitigation protocols and classroom efficiency practices we have used during the academic year (AY) 2020–21.

The classroom capacity list is [here](#) and will be updated regularly. This list will also be linked from the [Academic Scheduling web page](#).

This table describes classroom occupancy, protocols, meeting patterns, and scheduling that will be used for fall 2021, compared to AY 2020–21.

	ACADEMIC YEAR (AY) 2020–21	FALL 2021
CLASSROOM OCCUPANCY:	Total number of seats usable across all classrooms: 27% compared to pre-COVID	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number of seats usable across all classrooms: ~88% compared to pre-COVID Most classrooms that are <100 students and have movable furniture will be close to pre-COVID capacities (~90% of normal classroom capacity) Classrooms >100 students and classrooms with fixed seating will have lower densities (~65% of normal classroom capacity)

	ACADEMIC YEAR (AY) 2020–21	FALL 2021
PHYSICAL DISTANCING BASIS:	8-foot hexagon model	3-foot hexagon model
MAXIMUM CLASSROOM OCCUPANCY (INCLUDING INSTRUCTOR/S):	50 persons for any classroom	224 persons for our largest classroom
MASK PROTOCOLS IN CLASSROOMS:	Masks are required; no eating or drinking in classrooms	No change from AY 2020–21
CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY:	Expanded to add more access to technology for remote teaching	Classroom technology is being evaluated and revised for ongoing improvements; see the classroom capacities list for ongoing updates
CLASSROOM VENTILATION:	Teaching spaces equipped with a MERV13 in the ventilation system or HEPA filter air cleaner within the space or both	No change from AY 2020–21
CLASSROOM CLEANING AND DISINFECTION PROTOCOLS:	Enhanced cleaning; disinfection wipes in rooms	No change from AY 2020–21
CLASS MEETING TIMES AND PASSING PERIODS:	Meeting times altered to accommodate 20-minute passing periods to reduce hallway density	No change from AY 2020–21
USE OF CLASS DAY TO MAXIMIZE CLASSROOM AVAILABILITY:	Use the full class day, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.–10 p.m.	No change from AY 2020–21
CENTRAL CONTROL OF CLASSROOM SCHEDULING:	Departments given priority for some classrooms, but scheduling control is centralized	No change from AY 2020–21
USE OF NONTRADITIONAL SPACES FOR CLASSROOM SPACE: (INCLUDES DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOMS, LIBRARIES SPACES, AUXILIARY SPACES [UMC, ATHLETICS, REC CENTER, ETC.], AND HOTEL ROOMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All campus spaces prioritized for classroom use • Department conference rooms, Libraries spaces, and auxiliary spaces used for classrooms • Hotel spaces rented for classroom use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All campus spaces remain prioritized for classroom use • Department conference rooms will be used for classrooms • Libraries spaces and auxiliary spaces will be used for classrooms if needed, and otherwise transitioned back to support other campus needs • No hotel spaces rented for classroom use

Work with your faculty and academic schedulers: revising the fall 2021 schedule of classes

Instruction mode

While we will offer a majority of fall 2021 classes in person, we will still offer remote (synchronous), online (asynchronous), and hybrid classes. As in spring 2021, the determination of instruction mode for fall 2021 will be made by departments and programs, subject to approval by the dean. Chairs and directors should work with their faculty and academic schedulers as they make these determinations. *All decisions on instruction mode must prioritize quality pedagogy and student need.*

Classroom capacity will still be an issue in fall 2021, even if it's much less problematic than in AY 2020–21. Although the total number of usable seats in fall 2021, across all our classrooms, will be ~88% of the pre-COVID number, that doesn't translate into each classroom having 88% of its pre-COVID capacity. Individual classroom occupancy is variable depending on its size, shape, and furnishings (fixed vs. movable seats).

Which classes should be in person, and which should be remote/online?

- **Lecture classes with more than 224 students.** These classes must remain remote or online.
- **Lecture classes of 100-224 students.** These classes may be in person, and we would like to see a number of in-person offerings in this category. However, even with 3-foot distancing, there are about 50% fewer classrooms with this capacity than pre-COVID. You will need to prioritize which classes to offer in person in this category. Some guidelines:
 - Designate lower-division classes for in-person instruction. These will likely be taken by first-year and sophomore students who have a particular need for an in-person college experience, given three past semesters of remote learning.
 - If there are multiple sections of a class in this category, consider offering some sections in person and some sections remote/online, so students can choose their preference.
 - Offer more classes during non-peak times to maximize classroom availability throughout the day and to increase your chance of securing instructional space for your designated in-person sections.
- **Recitation sections offered in conjunction with large lecture classes.** These should be mostly in person, but if there are multiple recitation sections, consider offering one or more of the recitation sections remotely for those students who seek online/remote options.
- **Classes of fewer than 100 students.** Generally speaking, these classes should be offered in person.
 - If there are multiple sections of a class in this category, consider offering one or a few sections in remote or online mode for those students who seek online/remote options.
 - Keep in mind that in-person classes, even smaller ones, will need to be scheduled across the full teaching schedule (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.–10:00 p.m.) in order to find desirable rooms.
 - If you need to prioritize classes in this category for in-person teaching, prioritize lower-division classes, project-based classes and capstone classes.
 - See below for lab, studio and performance classes.
- When determining whether a class should be offered in person vs. remote or online, consider whether that class's pedagogical methods align with a given delivery mode. Teaching remotely

in AY 2020–21 has taught us that some pedagogical methods adapt well to remote or online teaching, and others do not.

- Also consider student need and demand for particular classes to be remote or online. For example, some courses required for degree completion may be good candidates for remote or online instruction, so that students who are finishing just one or two classes for graduation can take those classes while beginning a job elsewhere.

Which classes should be hybrid? What kinds of meeting patterns should be used for hybrid classes?

- Because classroom capacity will be vastly expanded, we expect there to be far fewer hybrid classes needed in fall 2021 than in AY 2020–21. Examine your hybrid classes to see if they should be shifted to in-person instruction.
- Any hybrid classes that remain should be offered in this mode for sound pedagogical reasons, or because they meet student needs and further student success, or both. For example, there may be high student demand for a particular class to be taught both in person and remotely.
- **Important: as of fall 2021, we are discontinuing hybrid classes with “rolling attendance.”** “Rolling attendance” means that a class size is larger than the room capacity, and the students attend in person on a rolling basis: a TR class of 40 students where 20 can attend in person on Tuesday and 20 on Thursday, for example. Feedback from students and instructors alike has been quite negative on this type of attendance model, which can be confusing and which encourages students never to attend in person, or to attend when they’re not scheduled to do so. Any exceptions to this guideline must be approved by the dean.
- A hybrid in-person/remote or hybrid in-person/online class must meet one of the following definitions. Courses currently designated hybrid in-person/remote or hybrid in-person/online that do not meet one of these definitions must be moved either to entirely in-person, or to entirely remote or online.

EITHER

- The course is simultaneously in person and remote for every class session, with the instructor in the classroom. Instructors teaching in this mode must teach in the classroom even if most or all of the students are remote, and instructors agreeing to teach in this hybrid mode agree to this stipulation. Use of a Tech Co-pilot (including TAs or LAs trained as tech co-pilots) is highly encouraged.

OR

- The course is taught in person at least one class session per week, with the other day(s) remote or online. The in-person and remote or online day(s) are the same from week to week, on a regular pattern. ***Please note that this attendance pattern is extremely wasteful of classroom space, since the classroom can sit empty on the “non-in-person” days of the week.*** Departments/programs are highly encouraged to schedule these types of classes in pairs or clusters using the same room during the same meeting pattern. For example, on a TR 8:00-9:15 a.m. meeting pattern, one class can use the room on Tuesday and one on Thursday.
- Any course that meets only once a week cannot be hybrid. It must be entirely in-person, entirely remote or entirely online. This normally includes lab sections or recitation sections that meet once a week; any exceptions for lab or recitation sections must be approved by the dean.

Classrooms for high-touch in-person classes

Lab and art studio classes

Most lab classrooms and art studio rooms will likely be at or near pre-COVID capacities. Departments/programs that use these rooms were directly involved in setting their AY 2020–21 COVID capacities, due to the specific requirements and equipment of classes taught in these rooms. These departments/programs should do the same for providing the updated capacities at 3-foot distancing. Contact the [Office of Space Optimization](#) for assistance with determining the capacities of these spaces.

Performance classes: theatre, dance, music

The classroom capacities listed in Campus Solutions are for typical, seated lecture and discussion classes. Increased distancing protocols may apply to performance classes. As they did for AY 2020–21, the Department of Theatre & Dance and the College of Music should work with Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Resource Management [Emina Begovic](#) to determine classroom capacities for performance classes.

Classroom scheduling steps

- Room capacities in Campus Solutions have already been updated by Academic Scheduling to reflect revised room capacities with 3-foot distancing.
- Update access in Campus Solutions will remain open until **Mon., Mar. 22, 11:59 p.m.** Department and program academic schedulers should use this time to:
 - Add class sections as needed
 - Cancel existing class sections
 - Change designated class instruction modes
 - This includes changing classes to in-person mode as appropriate
 - Re-evaluate the **seat capacities** for in-person classes based on updated classroom capacities and make adjustments as appropriate
 - If a class section will have **saved seats** for new student enrollment during the summer, re-evaluate as necessary. Assistant Deans will need to submit their adjustments to Academic Scheduling using the Saved Seats Request form. Forms are due to Academic Scheduling on **Fri., Mar. 19 by 5:00 p.m.**
 - Add/change instructors, as needed
 - Add/change class notes, including appropriate preset notes corresponding to instruction modes
 - Assign department-scheduled spaces and department-priority spaces to classes
 - Academic Scheduling may need to work with you to make adjustments to maximize availability in those spaces such as adjusting class times, looking at spaces that would be a better fit, etc.
- Note that the standard class meeting times from AY 2020–21, with 20-minute passing periods, will continue to be used.
- Academic Scheduling will begin batch rooming in May.
- Flexibility will help with fulfilling classroom needs. If you want a particular classroom, be flexible in the meeting pattern request and the time of day for the class. If you want a particular meeting pattern and/or time of day, be flexible about the classroom space.

Work with your instructional personnel: teaching assignments and instruction modes

The goal for fall 2021 is to offer the majority of our classes in person. Each class's instruction mode should be determined according to college/school and department/program priorities, based on pedagogical reasons and on student needs. Instructor preference is not the primary factor in determining instruction mode.

All instructional personnel should be treated equitably in assigning them to classes/sections in various instruction modes. Please work with your graduate student teachers (TAs, GPTIs) the same way you do with your tenure-track faculty, instructor-track faculty and lecturers.

If a class is designated in person and the assigned instructor is not willing or able to teach in person, the dean and chair/director should work with the instructor to follow either the [Faculty Reentry Decision Tree](#) or the [TA & GPTI Reentry Decision Tree](#), as applicable. These decision trees, which were established by the campus in June 2020 to assist with instructional personnel concerns about returning to campus, are still in force.

Tell your instructional personnel: instructional matters not yet finalized for fall 2021

Academic calendar

In AY 2020–21, the academic calendar was altered to decrease opportunities for student and faculty travel. We do not currently anticipate needing such alterations for fall 2021, and it is likely that we will return to the traditional fall academic calendar. However, a final decision regarding the fall 2021 academic calendar has not yet been made. The campus will announce more information regarding the fall semester, including the academic calendar, on or before Wednesday, March 24.

In-person office hours (faculty, GPTIs, TAs, advisors)

Even with 3-foot distancing, typical office spaces for faculty/instructor/GPTI/TA and advisor offices may not be suitable for office hours with students because of ventilation needs related to COVID-19. The campus must continue to prioritize classrooms and common areas, not offices, for increased ventilation and air filtration. Assume that office hours will need to be held remotely until further notice.

The Office of Undergraduate Education is also specifically developing guidance regarding office considerations for advising staff.

Other instructional matters to be finalized

Look for upcoming guidance about other matters that will be affected by the shift to more in-person learning, including:

- Undergraduate and graduate exams and defenses
- Scope of the Tech Co-pilot program
- Accommodations for students with disabilities
- International students' concerns

Deans, chairs, and directors: if you have suggestions for guidance topics, please contact [Katherine Eggert](#), Senior Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment.

Tell your instructional personnel: summer 2021 instruction

As announced by Provost Russ Moore and Chief Operating Officer Patrick O'Rourke on [Feb. 24](#) and [Mar. 1](#), classes for summer 2021 will proceed as planned with a mixture of in-person, hybrid and remote/online instruction. No changes to instruction mode should be made at this time.

Students began to register for summer classes on Mar. 3. As is always the case, deans and associate deans of the colleges and schools will work with departments and programs to adjust summer class offerings as needed, based on enrollment.

Guidance editions: past editions, forthcoming editions, questions and requests

Past and current editions of Academic Instruction guidance and their supporting materials are available [on the Academic Affairs website](#). New editions of Academic Instruction Implementation guidance will be published in 2021 as needed to guide faculty, staff and students in any necessary changes to current instruction and in planning for future academic terms.

Please continue to send questions, requests for clarification and requests for further guidance. Your communications are welcome and help shape our decisions about instruction and instructional support and our recommendations to campus leadership. Individual faculty and other instructional personnel should direct questions to their chairs and directors. Deans, chairs, directors and school/college administrators should send all queries and requests regarding Academic Instruction implementation to [Katherine Eggert](#), Senior Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment.