

## ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION PARAMETERS: EQUITY AND MISSION AY 2020–21

While teaching and learning decisions properly fall to the faculty and academic leaders in the spirit of shared governance within our university, academic units should adhere to these parameters for academic instruction in order to ensure equity, keep the university compliant with accreditation requirements, and carry out the teaching and learning mission of the university in the safest and most robust ways possible.

Note: academic instruction is undertaken by many members of our community. All references in this document to “faculty,” “instructors” and “instructional faculty” should be understood as comprising tenured and tenure-track faculty, instructor-track faculty, lecturers, GPTIs and TAs.

### **1. Prioritize equity and the most pressing needs of students when creating or changing course scheduling and course assignments.**

- Prioritize the courses that advance students in their degree progress and are in most demand.
- Ensure maximum access to courses for students who must take classes at a distance by balancing teaching modalities (in-person vs. entirely remote/online course delivery) across the entire semester’s worth of curriculum. In particular, make sure that classes essential to making progress in the major are available in remote/online modalities.
- Prioritize in-person instruction for courses with academic outcomes that are extremely difficult to measure or achieve virtually, such as performance, studio, laboratory, field, practicum and clinical experiences, and for courses where in-person instruction is crucial to student success (e.g., WRTG 1150).
- Reassign instructors as needed, but attend to the needs of faculty whose teaching positions are less protected. Tenured faculty and instructors on longer-term contracts, and those with more extensive experience teaching in different modalities, should take the lead in switching to different classes or new modalities, to protect their more vulnerable colleagues (untentured faculty, lecturers on short-term contracts, GPTIs and TAs).
- Be flexible in determining faculty teaching loads given the unit’s teaching needs and faculty member circumstances.
- Ensure that all categories of faculty teach in each of the sessions, in all of the different and expanded class periods, and in multiple modalities; take into consideration factors such as health, age, gender, income, race and ethnicity, family situations, commuting situations and rank (tenure-track, GPTI, TA, tenured, instructor-track, lecturer, etc.) when planning who will teach what, how and when.
- Understand that we cannot do things the way we have always done them; think creatively; do something new rather than trying to fit what was done before into a new or different structure.

### **2. Attend to the needs of specific populations of students and faculty.**

- Be aware of [State of Colorado orders](#) and of CDC guidance regarding which [populations are at higher risk for COVID-19](#).
- Make sure that class arrangements will work for special student populations, such as veterans, international students, students with disabilities, and students at higher risk for COVID-19.

- Make sure that class assignments will work for special faculty populations, such as faculty with disabilities and faculty at higher risk for COVID-19.
- Be sensitive to the differential impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on members of different communities. For example, keep in mind that COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting lower income groups, communities of color and the elderly.
- Recognize equity challenges for students requiring resources, such as access to computers and internet, without costly or burdensome administrative requirements.

### 3. Adhere to regulatory and accreditation requirements for all instruction.

- Follow state of Colorado [Department of Higher Education](#) academic rules.
- Fulfill the [required contact hours](#) per credit hour.
- Fulfill the federal requirement that each of our classes must include “regular and substantive” contact between the instructor and students, for both synchronous and asynchronous classes, on a predictable and regular basis. Faculty should *engage students in teaching, learning and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion*.
- Follow the Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) [Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education \(On-line Learning\)](#).
- Provide transparency to students about course modality options by identifying classes clearly at the time of enrollment, or as soon thereafter as possible for classes whose modality is changed due to implementation of these recommendations. Classes should be identified as “online” (offered entirely asynchronously), “remote” (offered entirely synchronously), “in person,” or a hybrid of in-person/online, in-person/remote, or remote/online. For hybrid classes, the class syllabus should clearly identify the schedule of how students will participate in each class session. Carry out the modality as planned and as scheduled in the syllabus unless an emergency requires the campus to change all course delivery modalities.
- Organize hybrid models with at least 50% synchronous class time for faculty and students.
- Insofar as possible based on institutional or professional accreditation requirements, eliminate limits on the number of online or remote classes students are allowed to count toward graduation.
- Document changes made in instructional format in order to meet accreditation requirements and to provide guidance for future instructional plans.

### 4. Prioritize the academic mission.

- Hold our academic and institutional missions at the forefront of all we do.
- Remember that it will be necessary to compromise and sometimes make sacrifices to help meet our academic mission. Faculty class assignments may need to be changed. Some courses may not be offered in AY 2020–21 in order to free up space and instructional personnel for more pressing needs.