Recommended Guidelines and Resources to Address Short-Term Absences Fall 2021

The University has an obligation to ensure the continuity of instruction to meet the needs of students and to ensure satisfactory progress in their programs of study. Existing University policies and procedures, such as the Policy and Procedures for Non-Creditable Sick Leave for Faculty Members and Academic Regulations for Students' Absences, should primarily be followed. The COVID-19 pandemic may create special circumstances in which instructors and/or students are unable to attend classes in-person (e.g., 14 days of quarantine/isolation, illness, caregiving). This document offers institutional guidance on how to be flexible in addressing short-term absences related to COVID-19.

GUIDELINES

Instructors should do their best to always ensure highly engaging in-person learning experiences, especially while teaching courses that were originally planned to be face-to-face or blended. In special circumstances in which instructors and/or students are unable to attend classes in-person, we ask instructors to consult with their unit head on how to best proceed. Instead of altering the mode of delivery, we encourage instructors, to the extent possible, to leverage the creativity and innovation that was harnessed in recent semesters to provide flexible and adaptive learning opportunities. Instructors should also develop contingency plans to partially or fully pivot to remote instruction should the Prince George's County Health Department and/or University alter its COVID-19 guidelines in ways that impact in-person instruction.

Recommended alternative strategies If the **INSTRUCTOR** needs to be absent for less than 2 weeks:
1) Ask a colleague or Teaching Assistant to cover 1 or more classes in-person.
2) Shift to synchronous online presentations (e.g. 1-2 live class sessions over Zoom - maximum of 2 weeks).
3) Shift to an emergency asynchronous remote plan for very short, distinct periods (1 week maximum)

Recommended alternative strategies If **STUDENTS** need to be absent for less than 2 weeks:
1. Teach in person while also providing asynchronous, equivalent options (recordings) for off-site participation by students due to short-term absences.
2. Teach in-person and, if you are pedagogically and technologically comfortable, broadcast instruction (simulcast) by using Zoom in the classroom for students who are off-site.

RESOURCES

- A list of digital resources organized by course activity (lecture, labs, and hands-on activities) or by tools available in ELMS-Canvas may help instructors to communicate, share content, and assess student learning.
- TLTC is now offering a new Simulcast and Hy-Flex Faculty Learning Community for instructors who wish to collaboratively share and learn best practices for broadcasting instruction.
- The Undergraduate Catalog has additional guidance for instructors related to student attendance and participation in course activities.
- The university has established specific procedures for instructors and students who require COVID-19 Related Disability Accommodations.
- The Teaching and Learning Transformation Center or instructional designers in your college can help support instructors with course design and teaching practices. The DIT Learning Technology Design Team can assist with questions about instructional technology. Classroom configuration, resources and technical capabilities vary across campus. To request support or report issues, please reach out to classrooms@umd.edu.