

Faculty Guidelines for AY 20-21

Attendance Policies

COVID-19 has created unusual circumstances for our on-campus education in the fall semester. One of the things that will be a necessity will be the ability to trace the close contacts of those students who contract COVID-19 or are exposed to it. This public health imperative for our campus means that in each on-campus class faculty will need to:

- Either assign seating for the semester or keep a daily record of student placement in their classrooms; and
- Take attendance each day of in-class instruction
- File a student concern report or contact a Dean regarding any students who are absent from classes with no response or communication.

Classrooms

Faculty should know and understand [UR physical distancing protocol](#) and use this information to inform all classroom practices, including entering and exiting the classroom or lab space.

Faculty should ask any student not wearing a face covering to leave the classroom and should inform the appropriate dean's office (Westhampton, Richmond, Law, SPCS).

To facilitate physical distancing and a safe classroom space, faculty should:

- a. Develop a plan for entering and exiting the classroom to avoid crowding at the door(s)
- b. Encourage students to take their seats immediately
- c. Release students on-time to prevent clustering in the hallways
- d. Instruct students waiting in the hall to stand six feet apart

Faculty and students should disinfect frequently touched surfaces within classrooms, at the beginning and end of each class.

Quarantine and Isolation

If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or is exposed to someone with COVID-19 they will be moved to quarantine or isolation housing on campus and professors will be informed by the Richmond and Westhampton College deans (ABJ) or academic dean that a student is unable to attend class in person and their ability to complete the work of the class. While in quarantine or isolation students will have access to a laptop and internet as well as other resources and support services. If a student feels that they are ill or has been exposed to an infectious disease, they should be required to attend remotely.

- Faculty in the undergraduate schools will be informed by the Richmond or Westhampton College Deans about whether they can expect to receive work from the student.
- Law faculty will be informed by the Law School Dean's Office if a student is required to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19 and whether to expect to receive work from the student.
- Faculty should make every effort to accommodate the academic progress of these students. They will be able to participate in their classes remotely if they are physically able to do so.
- Students able to submit their assignments will only do so electronically, no students will be able to send written work from quarantine and isolation in hard copy.

Suggestions for students in Quarantine and Isolation

Faculty may want to consider some of the following strategies in advance for supporting students who are put in Quarantine and Isolation.

1. Consider alternate assignments that align with course learning goals (e.g. a paper instead of an exam) or methods and formats such as self-directed studies, projects, etc, in order for students to fulfil the goals of the course.
2. Consider alternate grade calculations that are not unduly burdensome (i.e. student misses one assignment but the rest of the assignments make up 100%; or planning for dropping every student's lowest quiz grade).
3. Be prepared to allow a student to take an exam while in quarantine or isolation if they are well enough.
4. Consider either avoiding graded group assignments altogether or being prepared for one or more members not able to work on project and to need an alternate assignment.
5. For advice on flexible testing strategies or ideas for new approaches on instruction or assessment contact the [Faculty Hub](#).

Students who are fully remote, in quarantine, isolated, or are missing class for other illnesses must be able to take their classes remotely. Instructors have the discretion to allow others to participate remotely for one or more class sessions with their permission.

Office Hours and Advising

Faculty are expected to meet with students via Zoom or phone for weekly office hours, consultations, advising sessions, independent studies and other necessary student-faculty interactions.

Academic Progress

Faculty should accommodate students who are in quarantine or isolation and make every effort to promote their academic progress as long as students are also making good faith efforts to progress.

Faculty should be receptive to incomplete (Y) requests.

Faculty should be more reluctant than usual to recommend that students withdraw from their classes. Such recommendations should be made only after consultation with the appropriate dean's office.

Absence Policy Guidelines

While maintaining consistency with School policy, faculty should implement absence policies that are sensitive to the current circumstances and create incentives for students who may be ill to avoid coming to class. Penalties for absences should be informed by the faculty member's view of the level of attendance necessary to make academic progress in the course.

Classes taken remotely while a student is sick (COVID or otherwise), in isolation, or in quarantine should not be counted as missed.

In situations of excessive absence due to illness, the V (Failure due to excessive absences) or the I (punitive incomplete) are not options; only a Y (non-punitive incomplete) or a W (withdrawal from the course) may be used. See grade policies [here](#).

When there are signs that students' absences might preclude successful completion of the course—either because of School guidelines or course requirements—faculty should contact the Richmond or Westhampton College Deans (ABJ) to initiate planning and advising.

Law School: Any student who fails to attend at least 75 percent of a course's required sessions or their equivalent (as determined by the professor, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Law School) and in conformance with the University's [Religious Observance Policy](#)) will not pass the course.

SPCS: SPCS policy permits absence from no more than 25% of all scheduled class sessions. Students exceeding this standard receive a grade of "V"(failure due to excessive absences) and no credit for the course. For Fall 2020, in situations of excessive absence due to illness, the V (Failure due to excessive absences) or the I (punitive incomplete) are not options; only a Y (non-punitive incomplete) or a W (withdrawal from the course) are options. The application of the attendance policy will be governed by the following parameters:

- Attendance expectations for classes should be defined by the instructor of record in collaboration with program chairs and in alignment with policies set forth by the University and SPCS.
- Faculty should understand the health and familial needs of the adult learners in their courses, particularly those who are in courses that are meeting face-to-face.
- Faculty teaching courses with face-to-face meetings should be prepared to develop other instructional modalities to ensure all students feel comfortable engaging and completing the course.

- Students experiencing difficulties or in need of accommodations should contact the Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs.

Students Reporting Illness

Students with symptoms of illness should contact student health immediately and not come to classes in person. If they are able to participate remotely, they should do so.

Student Health Services will not provide notes for students. However, if a student is put in quarantine or isolation the professor can expect to hear from a Dean of the law school, Richmond College or Westhampton College. SPCS faculty will hear from the Dean of SPCS.

Communication

Faculty are encouraged to be present to students across multiple forms of communication, for example e-mail, Zoom, in-person if appropriate, phone, chat rooms, etc.

Faculty are encouraged to respond to student queries as soon as reasonably possible, even if only to acknowledge receipt and name a time when the student can expect further communication.

Adapting Courses

Even for classes that are taught partially or completely online, there should be direct engagement between the professor and students each week. How much and what type should be guided by the needs of the particular class and the professional judgement of the faculty member. A rough guideline would be that direct contact time with students would at least equal the number of weekly contact hours of an in-person class. While faculty can interact with their students through a variety of means, faculty should aspire to the type of engaged student/faculty relationship characteristic of a Richmond education – one that includes individualized attention, classroom engagement, and classroom community.

All faculty members should prepare their classes to move to entirely remote should the need arise.

Faculty should avoid the physical exchange, distribution, or collection of materials whenever possible.

Faculty are strongly encouraged to make all of their assignments electronic and to engage in electronic grading. Blackboard has an assessment tool and also a plagiarism detector called SafeAssign that faculty may use for assignments. For assistance with Blackboard contact blackboard@richmond.edu.

Instructors should specify on their syllabus precisely what constitutes academic integrity. Instructors should explain verbally and in writing what is and is not allowable for use of resources for exams, online assignments, papers, etc. Instructors should consult the Student

Handbook for policies and the Faculty Hub for suggestions for establishing a climate of academic integrity and course design practices that minimize problems with academic integrity.

Students will find themselves working with many new digital tools and platforms. Faculty are strongly encouraged to use those tools and software packages that are supported by the University (Blackboard, Zoom, Box, e-mail). Faculty choosing to use non-University software and tools should expect to provide their own technical support to their students.

Suggested Additions to Syllabi

Faculty should include expectations regarding in-person attendance by students who have not been approved for full-remote learning or who cannot attend for COVID-related reasons. Faculty might use a statement such as the following which is adapted from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln,

We are facing a challenging situation in which all of us are called on to make a good faith effort to be flexible and to make decisions in the best interest of the community, including staying home when sick. Students who are sick should not attend class, will not be required to provide formal documentation from a health care provider, and will not be penalized for absences.

However, students must:

- *Notify instructors in advance of the absence if possible.*
- *Contact the Student Health Center if sick.*
- *Keep up with classwork and attend online class sessions if they are able to do so*
- *Submit assignments digitally on time whenever possible*
- *Work with their instructors to try to reschedule any missed assignments*
- *Stay in close communication with their instructors*

This attendance policy puts everyone on their honor. It requires that faculty and instructors trust the word of their students when they say they are ill, and it requires that students report the reason for their absence truthfully. Falsely reporting a reason for an absence is an honor code violation.”

Faculty should stipulate in their syllabi when they and how they will communicate with students.

Many classes will be recorded using Zoom and faculty may prepare video recordings of lectures or teaching segments using other software. Recordings of any type will be made available only to students registered for the course and should be used only for personal study by students enrolled in the course.

Faculty might consider using a statement like the following on their syllabi,

Students shall not:

- *Disclose, share, trade, or sell class recordings with/to any other person, organization, business, or institution; and/or*

- *Post/store these recordings in a location accessible by anyone other than the student, including but not limited to social media accounts.*

Students must also comply with any instructions or directions from their faculty regarding the use of such recordings.

Students are required to destroy any recordings that were made when they are no longer needed for the student's academic work.

Failure to abide by this policy will be a violation of the [Standards of Student Conduct](#); such issues will be sent to the appropriate University Conduct Officer.