

Fall 2020 Semester – Faculty FAQ

The University has published both an [employee](#) and [student](#) fall 2020 repopulation guide that can be found on the Coronavirus webpage as well as additional locations on the University's website. This FAQ extracts some information from those guides for ease of reference and also includes additional information specific to faculty. Please refer to the full repopulation guides for more complete information.

Academic Calendar

The start and end date of the academic calendar is not expected to change and can be found [here](#). However dates such as drop/add, registration and advising may be altered to provide students greater flexibility and support. Any changes will be communicated.

Teaching Modalities

The fall 2020 course schedule has been updated to adjust to COVID-19 uncertainties. These schedule changes were done to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff and in adherence to public health guidelines. The schedule includes a combination of fully remote courses as well as hybrid options. Please see full descriptions of the modalities on [Registrar's web page](#). In order to improve student success during the upcoming semester, students will need information directly from the faculty regarding how each individual course will be instructed including when they are expected on campus as well as when they need to be available for synchronous online class meetings. Students should have that information before the first class meeting.

Faculty should be prepared to move instruction completely remote at any time throughout the semester.

Classroom Protocols

Face Coverings - Everyone on campus is required to wear a face covering when indoors. This includes **classrooms**, public restrooms, open office and common spaces, hallways, meeting rooms, and other indoor spaces. Face coverings are also required outdoors when six-foot physical distancing cannot be maintained. They are not required in private offices and work spaces. All employees and students will receive a Fitchburg State branded face covering. If a student requires a medical accommodation regarding face coverings, they should be referred to Disability Services.

Social distancing - The Office of Environmental Health and Safety has evaluated all spaces on campus to determine maximum capacity using the six foot social distancing protocol. All courses having a face-to-face component on campus are being assigned to classrooms appropriate for the number of students enrolled and/or the hybrid modality being used. All spaces on campus including classrooms will have maximum capacity posted. Furniture is not being removed from classrooms, so you may need to guide students to sit with appropriate social distancing.

Eating – No eating or drinking in classrooms is allowed. Students may eat outside and in other areas such as lounges and meeting rooms, as long as social distancing and occupancy limits are observed.

Cleaning - Capital Planning and Maintenance staff will be responsible for maintaining, cleaning and disinfecting classrooms, office spaces, restrooms, break rooms, etc. Cleaning items will be available in classrooms and other spaces. Employees may use the items to disinfect shared spaces, equipment, and technology. There will not be cleaning in between classes.

First Class meeting – Faculty are encouraged to review classroom protocols with students on the first day of class.

Course Syllabi – As faculty prepare course syllabi there are two considerations that are emerging as best practices that faculty may want to consider.

It may be helpful to add some text in your syllabus referring students to the expectations and protocols outlined in the student repopulation plan that they must adhere to that help reduce risk and promote a healthy environment.

It is university practice that faculty establish reasonable attendance policies at their own discretion in the absence of a university wide attendance policy. It is also the case that we all share the responsibility to maintain a healthy campus this fall, and students along with staff and faculty are being asked to conduct daily COVID-19 symptom monitoring and to remain home if they are experiencing symptoms. **Please consider this new variable as you construct course attendance policies.**

Technology

Classroom podiums - Classroom podiums are being equipped with cameras (if they are not already). Keyboard covers are being installed, which allow for easier disinfection. Keyboards and mice may be sprayed and wiped clean before use. Cameras will be attached to the monitor (keep in mind that the microphone works best when aimed at the speaker). Turning on the Google Meet “noise cancellation feature” under “Settings” will help reduce background noise when speaking. All faculty members are encouraged to use their laptops in the classrooms to reduce personal exposure and the need to disinfect podium systems.

Google licenses – Full Google Enterprise licenses have been purchased for the campus. This allows all faculty members to record their presentations using Google Meet.

Personal voice amplifiers – Personal voice amplifiers are in the process of being secured for all faculty teaching on campus. Information will be forwarded to department chairs on how these will be disseminated.

Handheld cameras - Portable video cameras have been purchased and are available for checkout in the library. These are available for use for faculty to record labs or create other video when a laptop camera or cell phone camera may not be desirable to use.

Getting help - To reduce contact and help maintain social distancing, the IT helpdesk located in Conlon will be closed to walk-up customers. To obtain fastest help, use any of the methods found on our website: <https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices-services-directory/technology/help/> . Our staff located off-campus will help you remotely and if they are unsuccessful, you will be provided a link to make an appointment for visiting the helpdesk when

convenient. If you have a classroom emergency, contact the helpdesk at x4500 and choose the classroom emergency option.

Resources for online teaching – Training videos have been developed by Digital Learning and Information Technology staff. Please click [here](#) for Remote Teaching and Learning Resources and [here](#) for additional resources through Digital Learning.

Microsoft Office - One note about MS Office - we often get questions from students who can only afford a Chromebook but are asked to submit Microsoft Office files for their coursework (there is no version of MS Office for Chromebooks). Students can save Google Docs as Microsoft Office files by selecting that option under “File” in Google Docs. Note there may be some slight formatting changes that occur because of the export process. Both Google Docs and MS Word can save files as .pdfs as well.

Department specific requests - Some departments have made specific equipment or software requests. These are in the process of being reviewed and/or ordered. Please check with your department chair with questions.

Advising

Faculty may hold their office hours and advising sessions with students remotely via technology.

Library Resources

The library will be open to members of the Fitchburg State community but not the general public. The space has been reconfigured to facilitate social distancing. Additional protocols are in place to ensure the health and safety of its staff and patrons. Research support for your classes, including live and asynchronous options for information literacy instruction, will be done predominantly online and can be requested at <https://fitchburgstate.libwizard.com/f/instructionrequest>. Interlibrary loan services will be up and running in the fall. The library is currently exploring a process to move print reserves to the online environment; more information about this will be forthcoming. The vast majority of library resources are available online and discoverable at the [library web page](#).

Students Issues

Lack of technology – Systems are in place to assist students with technology needs related to their academic coursework. Similar to the process adopted in spring 2020, a request form will be made available to department chairs that can report students needing technology.

Feeling sick – Students, like all Fitchburg State community members, are being asked to conduct daily symptom monitoring. Students experiencing symptoms **will notify their professors** as well as the Student Affairs Office (or Residential Life for residential students) that they will not be in attendance. Additional student guidance is in the student repopulation plan.

Support Services – All existing student support services are still available either remotely or in-person. Individual offices will have details on accessing services on their web pages so students should be encouraged to seek out the services needed.

Learning Online - All students have access to a Student Introductory Course under “My Courses, No Term Assigned” in Blackboard. There is a lot of very useful information in this Introductory Course, and additional resources will continue to be added.

Meetings

Staff, faculty, and students should continue to use technology for meetings. If necessary to meet in-person, no more than 25 people may gather in one place per current guidance and all must adhere to social distancing requirements. Face coverings guidance should be followed.

Restroom Capacities

The University is not allowed to limit the number of individuals in a bathroom. People are expected to be respectful of each other and maintain proper social distancing at all times.

Testing

Fitchburg State will be conducting COVID-19 surveillance testing, in partnership with the Broad Institute. The university will be testing a randomized sample of members of the Fitchburg State community (students and employees) each week to track trends of the spread of the virus, if any. In addition, the university has partnered with the ACTION Center of Community Health Connection in Fitchburg for students (and employees if desired) to be tested if they have been exposed to COVID-19. Conversations with union leadership are being planned and more specifics regarding the process for testing protocols will be forthcoming.

Food Service on Campus

There will be no *dining in* availability. Service in Holmes Dining will include a variety of prepackaged takeout items, as well as meals served in takeout containers, sides, snacks, desserts and beverages served in takeout containers. Multiple pickup locations will be available for express pickup around campus including McKay Cafe and North Street Bistro. The BOOST mobile app can be used for ordering.

Students returning to campus from out of state

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts issued new travel restrictions effective August 1, 2020, instructing travelers arriving to Massachusetts to self-quarantine for 14 days or have a negative COVID test result within 72 hours of arrival to Massachusetts. If a test result cannot be completed prior to arrival, travelers must self-quarantine until a test can be taken. Travelers from Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, New Jersey and Hawaii are exempt from these restrictions. The university is closely monitoring these travel restrictions and how they may impact students arriving for the fall semester.

MSCA Fall 2020 COVID-19 Agreements and Understandings

Fall 2020 agreements and understandings were reached by the Employee Relations Committee in June and are provided here at this link to the MSCA web site. [MSCA fall 2020 COVID-19 Items](#)