



ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

**January 7, 2022**

**To: UCM Instructors**

**From: Erin Hestir, Chair, Graduate Council  
Holley Moyes, Chair, Undergraduate Council  
Chris Kello, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education  
Sarah Frey, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education**

**Re: COVID Instruction Reminders**

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Dear Colleagues,

Following the practice of other UC campuses, we plan to begin the semester with remote instruction, with a return to in-person instruction on January 31. There is a possibility for additional disruption to our in-person instruction as the situation with the omicron variant changes rapidly.

We would like to provide the following resources for instructors as you prepare your classes:

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTRUCTORS**

- All courses should have plans ready for pivot to remote instruction for an additional week, two weeks or possibly more.
  - Every course should have a CatCourses site.
  - During the first week of class, instructors should communicate via their CatCourse site to students relating where they would go for course information under remote instruction.
- To the degree possible, instructors should plan ahead so that they have a week's worth of course plans that could be enacted should they need to be absent.
  - If an instructor is symptomatic or tests positive for COVID, they should stay home and respond in the Daily Health Check. In addition to working with the CRC, the instructor should notify their department chair of their absence from class and discuss appropriate arrangements to provide a substitute instructor or other course coverage.
- Instructors are encouraged to continue to be flexible with absences and provide students opportunities to make-up for missed assignments or exams.
- Instructors **may not** require students to get a COVID test or show proof of negative COVID test. Similarly, instructors may not inquire about student vaccination status. These constitute personal health data.
  - Instructors **should not** contact the CRC about an absent student. The CRC cannot disclose health information of anyone on campus.

- If you are looking to verify absence related to COVID, instructors **may** request from the students copies of their correspondence with the CRC. This serves a dual purpose: (1) it is non-HIPPA data that can verify student absence and (2) this ensures the campus is aware of the student situation and working them through the proper health response protocols.
- Instructors are encouraged to consider recording their classes for absent students, as appropriate for the course pedagogy.
  - Please see [here](#) for more resources about class recording and other classroom technology.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR SYLLABUS**

- Remind students they should be completing the Daily Health Check
- Instructors should communicate to students expectations for where they would go for course information should the campus pivot to remote instruction in the future.
- During the first day of class and in the syllabus, you should discuss what students should do if they are absent.
  - Syllabi should include explicit instructions on if and how instructors would like to be contacted when students are absent.
  - Students should be encouraged to be proactive in making up for absences. When possible, students should not be waiting until they return to make-up for missed work. They can independently be doing readings, watching videos, getting notes from classmates, etc.
  - Students should be encouraged to find class buddies whom they can contact for notes and information should they miss class.
  - CatCourses sites could include a discussion forum for students to find class buddies and exchange make-up information.
  - Please be flexible with your make-up policies. Make-ups could include everything from extended deadlines, make-up exams, dropping lowest assignments/exam, letting final exam take the place of a missing assignment/exam, etc.
- Instructors are encouraged to check out this [page](#) for more tips on building a course syllabus.

For a snapshot of the most up-to-date information on campus policies related to COVID, please visit [here](#).

Thank you once again for all of the hard work you do to deliver excellent education to our students and for helping keep our campus safe.

Cc: Senate Office  
 Provost's Office  
 LeRoy Westerling, Chair, Divisional Council