

2023-2024 COVID-19 and Classroom Instruction

The following policies are intended to guide instructional practices for the 2023-2024 academic year so that they are conducted in as safe a manner as possible while still allowing for meaningful face-to-face instruction. All instructors and students are expected to comply with these protocols. Please note that these policies are subject to change based on national, state, and local guidelines and the state of the pandemic.

Masks

All students and instructors have the option to wear masks while going to class, transitioning between classes, and during face-to-face instruction. Regardless of virus transmission levels, some courses may require all students to mask due to the health needs of one or more people in the classroom. The instructor will notify students of any adjustments to the standard masking policy.

If the masking policy presents a health or related challenge to a student, then the student has the option of enrolling in courses that can be delivered virtually for the entire term. These students should work with their advisors to determine appropriate courses for their schedules. Note: International students must also seek permission from the Designated School Official (DSO) before enrolling in a virtual course.

Office Hours and Visits

All instructors and students are expected to follow the masking policy during office hours and visits and practice social distancing. Instructors can hold these meetings virtually at their discretion.

Virtual Class Attendance

In the case of virtual instruction, students are considered to be present when they participate in a class at its designated time (synchronously) through the course's web-conferencing platform. At the discretion of the instructor, students may also attend virtual class sessions outside of their designated time (asynchronously). In these cases, students can attend by engaging with the materials from the class session (e.g., recorded lectures, presentations, detailed notes) and posting feedback on their learning in a manner defined by their instructor.

Instructors will provide temporary online instruction to any student in a face-to-face course who is required to self-isolate or quarantine by the University. Students in face-to-face courses do not have the option to choose online instruction unless they are listed in an official notice from the Vice President for Campus Life.

It should be noted as well that some larger spaces on campus can be reserved for the administration of exams. Please contact Alli Vanstelle (vanstelleak@lakeland.edu) by email to inquire about reservations at least two weeks in advance of any event. To process requests, Alli will need the course name, the maximum number of people (students and instructor) that will be occupying the space, and the specific start and end times of the session.

Course Planning

As we discovered in previous semesters, the pandemic can quickly change the way we deliver our courses and interact with our students. While we are unable to predict what turns the public health crisis may take over the upcoming semester, we can prepare for the possibility of change. To this end, we encourage all instructors to do the following:

- To the extent possible, instructors should design courses and instructional materials in a way that they can easily move to the Online LIVE format if necessary.
- In consultation with your Division Chair or Dean, discuss a contingency plan before the start of the semester for delivering your courses in case you become ill. Such a plan could include pre-recorded lectures and presentations, discussion board questions, and assignments that can be uploaded to Blackboard and made available at a time you deem appropriate.
- Identify alternative options for students to complete experiential learning coursework in the case that their internship, practicum, and co-op placements change. Last semester, some students were able to complete their placements through project-based learning experiences. Be sure to consult with the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Readiness before making any changes.
- Set a clear communication plan with your students. Be sure students know how to contact you if they have questions about a course, how to view their grades on Blackboard, where to receive feedback on their work, what file formats are acceptable for submitting assignments, and how they check their attendance status. Such a plan will be important for students as they complete the term virtually and for those students who are attending courses that use the cohort model.

Policy Compliance

Compliance with these policies is the responsibility of all members of the campus community (students, faculty, and staff). In cases where students are unwilling to follow COVID-19 policies, they will be asked to leave the classroom, with the option to return as soon as they agree to follow safety protocol. If the situation becomes disruptive or recurs, then instructors should contact the Student Conduct Coordinator (simondr@lakeland.edu). They also should notify their supervising dean of the situation.