

Additional Information about Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 Course Scheduling

January 28, 2021

Guidance for higher education institutions to return to pre-pandemic patterns of course scheduling and delivery comes from the NM Higher Education Department under the direction of and in coordination with the Governor of the State of New Mexico and the NM Department of Health. Both the Moderna and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines received emergency use authorization from the federal Food and Drug Administration; this authorization limits mandatory vaccination requirements. The distribution of vaccines is managed by states and not by individual institutions. UNM neither has control over nor certainty about what the actual status of the pandemic, vaccination campaigns, and public health conditions will be when Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 terms begin. Yet we must nonetheless plan schedules for these terms.

While the initial guidelines for Summer 2021 encouraged a return to more face-to-face (F2F) classes, we now think it wise to plan Summer 2021 as we did for Summer 2020. Please schedule classes with the assumption that F2F classes will need to be at 25% of fire code classroom occupancy and plan for a significant proportion of remote delivery or F2F plus remote courses, especially for the first Summer 2021 session (June 7, 2021-July 3, 2021).

For Fall 2021, we can plan (provisionally) to return to a regular (or pre-COVID-19) mix of course delivery modes. In scheduling Fall 2021 classes:

- classrooms can be filled to regular occupancy (not 25%);
- many face-to-face or in-person courses should be available to our students, preferably at a range of times and days, not disproportionately on TR between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., and preferably on-pattern rather than at individualized times; classes should be spread broadly over the week to allow students to find the courses they need without conflict;
- in our return to a more simplified language for scheduling, "online" will mean remote courses that are fully integrated into UNM Online (online.unm.edu) and that can be identified by students as online when searching the course schedule. "Hybrid" will include what we currently understand as: Face-to-Face plus remote arranged or Face-to-Face plus remote scheduled; we will avoid including any remote arranged courses in "Hybrid". For online or for hybrid, faculty will need to specify course logistics and days/times. While we have proposed that the \$100 Online Max fee for "online" courses be eliminated, this proposal is still under consideration, so we cannot yet say if there will be a separate Online Max fee.

Please recognize that instructors offering any course as online or hybrid will need to demonstrate that they have designed regular and substantive interaction with students into their instruction, per National Council for State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) which governs online courses and programs, and per Higher Learning Commission university accreditation requirements. It is important too for departments and instructors to recognize that fully asynchronous courses present engagement challenges, especially for first- and second-year

students. If instructors plan to offer asynchronous online courses, they need to plan communication and engagement strategies carefully, preferably in consultation with staff at the Center for Digital Learning. While some of our students have welcomed the flexibility that online learning can provide, the lack of community and connection has been a severe barrier for many.

Thank you for the work you are doing to ensure that UNM continues to offer a strong range of courses and that we do so in a way that engages students and supports them in completing their degrees.



Dr. Pamela Cheek, Associate Provost for Student Success, and the team in Academic Affairs