



Process for Exceptions to Traditional Instructional Modalities for Spring 2021

Spring Semester 2021 Overview

During spring 2021, the university's key academic objectives for instruction will remain focused on:

1. Ensuring the continued academic progress of our students via an educational experience they expect and deserve;
2. Ensuring that the university meets course learning objectives while also ensuring academic integrity through quality education;
3. Ensuring that academic units meet all accreditation requirements, both at the university and program levels.

Auburn's plans for the spring semester are founded on the assumption that on-campus instruction is an integral part of our institution's educational experience and can be accomplished safely by upholding important campus protocols and procedures. In spring 2021, the university will continue to observe state, federal, and institutional safety measures that protect the university's faculty, students, and staff. These protocols include physical distancing, daily health checks, limited classroom capacities, and indoor face coverings, among others.

The university's spring 2021 academic plans request that faculty be prepared to offer in-person instruction as the institution's primary teaching modality. In response to faculty and student feedback during fall 2020, the university refined its [teaching modalities](#) to (1) more clearly indicate how courses are delivered and (2) achieve the shared academic goals of course engagement, flexibility, and student expectations.

Strategic efforts to provide more in-person instruction, combined with the university's physical distancing protocols, may require colleges to add more course sections to accommodate smaller classes in larger rooms. Course offerings and associated modalities will be published in the university's scheduling systems before student enrollment opens on November 11, 2020.

Exceptions to In-Person Instruction

It is understood that some faculty may require necessary accommodations or have strong pedagogical reasons for teaching online or blended courses. Exceptions to in-person instruction (specifically courses where less than half of the contact hours are delivered in-person) must be discussed with an academic supervisor and approved by the dean. Academic supervisors (chair, head, director, associate dean) may request further clarification of online or blended courses to ensure the successful achievement of the aforementioned academic objectives.

Requests for exceptions should observe the following:

1. Faculty wishing to transition their teaching modality to online or blended due to non-pedagogical reasons are not obligated to share medical information with the academic supervisor or dean.
2. Rather, faculty members who need accommodations due to their personal disability/medical condition should contact the AA/EEO office at 844-4794 to request accommodations.
3. Accommodation request forms can be found on the AA/EEO webpage here: <http://auburn.edu/administration/aaeeo/forms/index.php>. The AA/EEO office will work with the faculty member to determine a reasonable workplace accommodation and notify the academic unit accordingly.
4. If conflict between the dean and the faculty member remains, the decision may be elevated to the Provost's Office by the faculty member as an appeal of the dean's decision. Please send your appeal directly to [Emmett Winn](#), Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, via email at winnjoh@auburn.edu. Please attach the original request and all communications related to the denial. Decisions from the Provost's Office will be the final step in resolving the conflict.
5. The deadline for appeals is November 20th or within 7 calendar days of receipt of the request denial if that denial occurs after the November 20th deadline.

It is important to note that alternatives may exist in terms of spring teaching assignments. Alternative arrangements include:

1. Faculty members may, with their academic supervisor's approval, shift their teaching requirements (either partially or entirely) to a future term(s) to delay their return to on-campus teaching until after spring 2021.
2. Faculty members may arrange for alternative course assignments with their academic supervisors.
3. Faculty who cannot perform their job duties due to a COVID-19 related issue, such as an underlying health condition or childcare, should consult guidelines for the two categories of leave and contact their supervisor.