

MSP FAQ about reopening campus

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Teaching Face-to-Face (F2F)

I said I would teach a face-to-face course in the fall, or do lab/library work on campus, but I am in a high-risk category and don't feel safe. What should I do?

Start by talking with your chair/head. If you can move your course online, or switch with a colleague who is happy to teach on campus, great. Otherwise, the HR Department has a centralized portal where you can request to work remotely rather than teach/work on campus. You should fill out this form if you or someone in your household is in a high-risk category, or if you expect to have young children at home and you cannot come to campus:

<https://www.umass.edu/humres/questionnaire>.

What happens if some of my students might not be able to return to campus -- because they are out of the country or at high risk of getting sick -- but are registered in my face-to-face course?

The Campus Reopening Plan says that students who cannot be on campus "should meet remotely with their advisor so their schedule can be adjusted to

only include fully remote courses." Anyone who will not be on campus (for any reason) should not be enrolled in face-to-face courses.

I am hoping to teach some of my classes F2F. Do I have a choice about this or did I miss a deadline for indicating this to my Department Chair or Dean?

Departments were surveyed about which courses were "essential" for face-to-face or hands-on learning. Only those courses identified as essential F2F are being offered online. If you want to teach your course F2F, and you know that your students will be on campus, tell your Chair or Dean -- they may be willing to make it happen.

My course is online but I'd like to meet with my students at least once this fall -- can I do that?

If you're teaching a small class and you'd like to meet in person with your students who are on campus, ask your chair/head about that possibility. As long as it is safe -- e.g., outside, with face coverings and appropriate distance -- students would appreciate being able to get together with each other and with you. If you need an indoor classroom space, that may be more difficult -- it is up to your college and EH&S.

What happens if a significant number of students in my F2F course can't attend classes in person because they are in quarantine or sick?

The same rules apply as when students get sick during any semester: faculty will be expected to be compassionate, to give students a chance to complete the required coursework if possible, and to give incompletes if necessary. If it becomes necessary to move the course online because students are not on campus, discuss that with your chair/head as soon as possible.

If students enrolled in an essential F2F class can't attend in person for a significant amount of time, will they need to withdraw or take an incomplete?

Yes, if a student cannot do the work that is required for the course, they should withdraw or take an incomplete.

Teaching Online

I want to teach a great online course in the fall. How should I start?

Many resources are available on campus -- we encourage you to start early and take advantage of these opportunities. Here are some ways to get started now:

- [Request your Moodle Course in SPIRE here](#). You can do this right now.
- Once you're in Moodle, you'll see that there's a "Flex Forward" course on the left-hand side. All faculty are encouraged to use this resource to help with course content.
- Use this [central web portal](#) to get resources to develop courses.

- The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) has resources for [Flexible Course \(Re\)Design](#) (this is mostly about pedagogy)
- University Without Walls (UWW) has a [central web portal](#) for developing online courses (this is mostly about how to use online technology).
- Ask for help or a consultation through the central help request using this [help request form](#).
- IT is offering a series of Instructional Technology Workshops, starting immediately. Register [here](#).

I see that the MSP negotiated “workload adjustments” for converting to a high-quality online course -- how will they work?

In the past, the MSP negotiated compensation for the effort required to create an online course. This year, the state would not agree to financial compensation, so we negotiated workload adjustments to compensate faculty for our additional effort this summer. If you create a high-quality online course, you will have your choice of three possible adjustments for each course:

- a) A future course release – timing to be determined with approval of the Chair in one of the following seven semesters;
- b) one year of sabbatical credit;
- c) one year of credit towards continuous appointment (for NTT only without altering the contractual review process).

Will my course qualify for the workload adjustment?

In general, if you are teaching a three-credit or four-credit course, with more than 12 students, and you had to put in significant effort to convert it to an online course, your course will qualify for the workload adjustment. If your class is very small and discussion-based (e.g. most graduate seminars), or if it is a one-credit or two-credit course, it typically would not be eligible for a workload adjustment. There are circumstances where the instructor has to put in extraordinary effort to convert a small class to high-quality online, and the administration will evaluate those situations on a case-by-case basis. Some intensive classes, such as clinical courses that require simulation software, or community engagement courses that require entire new curricula, will be eligible for the workload adjustment even if there are fewer than 12 students enrolled.

How is a “high-quality online course” defined and who determines if a course meets this definition?

MSP is working with the administration to agree on a definition and some guidelines for faculty. For now, instructors should think about what technologies and/or instructional materials will work for their students, and should have a well thought-out plan for teaching in a way that engages their students and clearly explains their workload and expectations. Anyone who puts in the effort to convert a traditional face-to-face course to online, or to create a new online course, should get the workload adjustments that MSP negotiated.

Do we need to document our efforts for how we have engaged with IDEAS and CTL? How much engagement is required for a workload adjustment?

In general, it is always a good idea to document everything around here. But we do not expect engagement with IDEAS or CTL to be mandatory -- some faculty have other resources to create excellent online activities, and that's fine. You know best what constitutes a "high-quality" course in your field, and you should do what works best for your subject and your students. We do encourage everyone to take advantage of existing resources on campus, to make the transition to online teaching easier and more satisfying.

How is one year of sabbatical credit defined?

One year of sabbatical credit means that you get two semesters in the sabbatical "bank" toward your next sabbatical. You can see details in [Appendix C](#) of the MSP contract.

As a new NTT faculty member, I would normally be eligible for review for continuous appointment after 3 FTE years. With a workload adjustment of credit towards continuous appointment would I be eligible after only 2 years?

Yes!

I am worried about the impact the workload adjustments are going to have in my department. There could be a large number of faculty qualifying for multiple course releases.

The administration was concerned about this too. Because the MSP recognized that too many course releases would be hard on certain departments, we agreed that course releases could only be used during a semester approved by the department chair/head, and we also agreed to spread them out over seven semesters so that everyone can't take their course release at once. Sabbaticals similarly must be approved by the administration and the chair/head or dean may ask you to delay by a semester or a year to meet student/program needs. But you are entitled to the credit in exchange for putting in significant effort this year.

When should we start discussing our workload adjustment with the department chair/head?

There will be a new field in the APWS system that will allow you to select your workload adjustment. Your selection will be officially documented, and you should keep a record of the course release, sabbatical credit, or credit toward continuous appointment.

Workload Adjustment Eligibility

If I transitioned a class online for the second half of Spring 2020 and am now converting that class fully online for Fall or Spring 2021 would it still count as a new conversion and qualify for a workload adjustment?

Yes. What we did during spring break was considered an emergency move to "remote" teaching -- we were not expected to create "high-quality fully online" courses (and we were not compensated to do so). If you teach the same course as a high-quality fully online course during 2020-2021, you will receive a workload adjustment for the additional effort required this summer.

How will one-credit honors seminars or first-year seminars work?

As far as we know, all of these courses will move online. We do not expect a full course release to be granted for these courses, which are small and discussion-based -- although we have asked for some type of additional compensation. We encourage faculty who are teaching first-year seminars to utilize existing resources, including external modules and campus librarians and staff, to supplement the curriculum and to make your life a little easier.

If my course is already multimodal or fully online, would I qualify for a workload adjustment?

Sorry, no. You should have received compensation for converting to multi-modal or fully online when you did that work, so you won't be entitled to additional compensation now.

If I have previously taught a course online, but it was substantially different (for example a few students through UWW versus now transitioning to a large university course online), would I still qualify for a workload adjustment?

If you are putting in significant additional effort to create a high-quality online course, you will receive a workload adjustment. If you taught a hybrid course before, or a course that was very different from the course you will be teaching this fall, that should count as a new high-quality online course. But we may have to look at the details and discuss these courses with the administration on a case-by-case basis.

I'm teaching a class I have never taught online -- however another faculty member has taught it online before. I am not reusing their materials -- I am generating a substantial amount of new, original content. Would I get a workload adjustment?

Yes. It doesn't matter if the course has been taught by someone else. If you are creating a new course, or converting a new course to fully online, you are eligible for the workload adjustment.

I am not converting a F2F course -- I am teaching a class for the first time. Will this count towards the workload adjustment?

Yes. If you are putting in the effort to create a high-quality fully online course, you are eligible for the workload adjustment.

I am converting a course to online and teaching it this summer (it was previously taught face-to-face last spring, but will not be taught in the fall). Can I get a course release?

Sorry, no. Summer courses are not "University session" and will not be eligible for workload adjustments.

Are there any class sizes that would not qualify for this workload adjustment? (e.g., small graduate seminars?)

Yes, small courses (grad or undergrad) with 12 or fewer students that are run as discussion-based seminars -- the same as you've taught in person, except on Zoom rather than in a classroom -- are not eligible for a workload adjustment. The principle is that if you do not have to put in significant additional effort to create new curricula, you are not entitled to a course release or sabbatical credit. If you do have to put in major effort to create the online course, that would make it eligible for the workload adjustment.

Workload Adjustment Options

If I am converting two classes to a high-quality online course this semester, will I receive a workload adjustment for each course?

Yes! The workload adjustments are per course. If you are planning to teach more than two courses, however, we would be concerned that it is a huge amount of work to convert three or four courses to high-quality online courses. If that is your situation, the department/college may want to cancel one of your courses and negotiate other ways of adjusting your workload. The MSP will be happy to talk with you if that is the case.

If I am unable to use one of the workload adjustments being offered (because I am leaving the university after next year) how much money would I receive?

Anyone who chooses the course release option and then leaves the university will receive \$7,000 per course release. This is the minimum pay for one course according to the MSP contract.

Are there any provisions for workload adjustments for Visiting Professors, NTT faculty with short-term appointments, or NTT faculty with appointments ending this Fall or Spring, who would not be able to use a course release or time towards continuing appointment?

Yes, everyone in the MSP bargaining unit is eligible for a workload adjustment if you do the work to create a high-quality online course. If you plan to leave the university, you should choose the course release option -- and if you cannot use the course release before you leave, you will receive \$7,000 per unused course release when you leave UMass.

Can NTT faculty get a year of credit toward a sabbatical?

No. NTT faculty are not eligible for sabbaticals so they cannot receive that credit. NTT faculty are eligible to apply for Professional Improvement Leave after six years at UMass; this provides a semester of paid leave but the process is not the same as a sabbatical. NTT faculty should choose either the credit toward continuous appointment (for newer faculty) or the course release option.

Clinical faculty have transitioned our clinic to telepractice. How can we receive adjustments for the immense change in workload and how does this compare to converting a course to online?

We're working on it! We have discussed this issue with the administration and we will let you know as soon as we have a solution for our clinical faculty.

Technology Assistance Funds

I have an old computer on the verge of death -- how can I get a replacement?

The MSP has negotiated a significant fund that includes computer replacements (the old MSP-negotiated computer replacement fund) as well as new technology needs. The announcement and request for applications will be posted next week (week of July 20, 2020)-- don't miss it! Priority will go to people who need a new computer/tablet for remote teaching and research. If you also applied for the computer replacement fund during the 2019-20 year, you will also have priority for these funds this summer.

I have very low speed internet access that will need to be updated to teach online in the fall. Can I get support for better home internet?

Yes. You can submit an application to the technology and computer replacement fund for enhanced internet at your home. This may be paid as a grant or stipend rather than a reimbursement; in that case it would count as taxable income. Watch for the application coming soon.

How do I access technology funds in order to address some computer software and/or hardware needs that will allow me to do my job better?

The technology funds will be announced shortly, and the application will be online. There will be a choice of computers and tablets. If you choose one of the pre-existing options, the university will purchase it and you can pick it up on campus. If you need a specific type of hardware/software, you can put in a special request and it will take a bit longer. As with any computer purchase with university funds, UMass will own the equipment, but you can use it at home.

Intellectual Property Rights and Academic Freedom

What intellectual property rights do I have when I am teaching over Zoom or remotely?

You retain the rights to all of your creative contributions to your courses, whether you are using Zoom, Blackboard, Moodle, or any other platform. You cannot be asked to give your course shell or any course materials to anyone else. No one may use any of your materials without your express permission. MSP members have strong intellectual property rights whether you teach on campus or online.

Do I have to teach my course synchronously? Do I have to use Zoom?

No. You don't have to use any specific software -- faculty should teach in the way that works best for your students. Faculty are encouraged to have some synchronous meetings to meet and engage the students. If you teach synchronously, you must use the time slot you were assigned, so that students do not end up with conflicting schedules. If you decide to hold just a few synchronous meetings and to use other methods to engage your students in between classes, that is fine. Consult with experts and use your best judgment in designing a great course.

Do I have to hold synchronous office hours? What if 50 percent of my students are in Asia or in another time zone?

Many faculty would rather hold a couple of synchronous office hours per week, so that you are not expected to be available to your students online 24/7. If you have many students in other time zones, it might work to hold some asynchronous "office hours." If you prefer other methods for responding to students and engaging with their ideas, and it works for you and for them, by all means go for it!

Childcare and Eldercare Assistance

What options are available for childcare or eldercare assistance?

The MSP has expanded our Childcare Assistance Funds to support faculty and librarians. For the first time, the administration will support elder care as well as childcare needs, for any faculty (tenure-track or NTT) or librarian. An application will go out shortly. We know that the funds will not be sufficient to cover all childcare needs but we are pleased that the administration has created this pool of funds for our colleagues who have young children at home.

What options are available for childcare leave, especially since there is insufficient availability of daycare and K-12 schools might be closed or operating on different schedules?

If you have young children at home because of COVID-19-related closures, you have two options. First, you can do your work from home. If you're unable to work from home, your second option is to take a leave for the semester. You do not have to take an unpaid leave; you can use the FFCRA (below).

How does the FFCRA work and how much compensation will I receive?

FFCRA will provide $\frac{2}{3}$ of your regular pay for 12 weeks, up to a maximum of \$12,000, if your children's daycare/school is closed because of COVID-19 and you have no alternative care. This is not enough, but it is better than taking an unpaid leave. You can learn more about the program here: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffcra-employer-paid-leave>. If you need to take the FFCRA leave, the MSP can help you navigate the process.

If we choose to not send children to school because of the high-risk environment will there be pushback from the university if the child's school is in fact open? What about people who have nannies or other childcare providers?

If you have children at home, you will have the option of working from home. You will not be eligible for FFCRA paid leave unless schools are actually closed and you have no suitable alternative. If you have a nanny or other childcare provider, you are eligible for subsidies from the MSP-negotiated childcare and elder care assistance funds.

How can we set reasonable expectations given caregiving needs at home?

The MSP is consistently advocating for reasonable, humane expectations for all members of the UMass community during this difficult time. The provost is in full agreement and has written standards encouraging personnel evaluations to take into account the challenges of the pandemic. We have negotiated automatic extensions for tenure and reappointment clocks last semester, and the elimination of SRTIs for last semester and the coming year -- we hope that these provisions will go a long way in relieving stress for many MSP members. At the

same time, we urge faculty to remember that students are also facing extraordinary challenges. By setting reasonable expectations for our students, we can also reduce the burdens on ourselves.

Dealing with Illness

What should I do if I am sick with COVID-19?

Any students, faculty or staff who are concerned about potential exposure to COVID-19 should contact the University Health Services Triage Advice Nurse at 413-577-5229 for further guidance. Employees with symptoms have the right to be tested at University Health Services. If you are concerned that you or another employee may be ill with COVID-19, please contact your chair/head as well as the COVID-19 Response Team at 413-687-2283 or COVID19HR@umass.edu. Their response will include, as appropriate, attention to an individual's health concerns, notification of potentially affected groups, and steps to manage and clean university facilities. To minimize the spread of the virus, employees who are ill with COVID-19 are advised to remain at home until cleared by their local public health department.

Will we need to share medical information in order to take a sick leave or caregiving leave?

Your medical and family information will always be confidential. Your department chair/head/dean does not have a right to any private information. If you need to take a paid sick leave or FMLA leave, you have to provide documentation to the Human Resources office, including the official FMLA form. HR will keep your documentation confidential.

Where can I find more information on applying for a sick leave or caregiving leave?

You can find all of the information on how to apply for a sick leave or caregiving leave, including information on FMLA and documentation you will need to fill out on our website: <https://umassmsp.org/work-life-policies/>. Please contact the MSP office if you need any assistance applying for a leave.

Health and Safety

How is it determined which faculty and librarians can work from home?

Faculty and librarians are assumed to be working from home UNLESS you have already agreed to teach or work on campus. The on-campus category includes, for example, some faculty with labs, studios, clinics, or animals on campus, and some librarians who work with archives and special collections.

If you have a condition that puts you into a high-risk category, can the administration deny you the right to work remotely?

No. If you are at high risk for COVID-19 complications, the university will make sure you can work remotely. If you are having trouble with this, please contact the MSP.

Will we need to share medical information to prove that we are at high risk or have a high-risk faculty member in our household?

We expect all MSP members will be working at home unless you specifically agreed to teach a face-to-face class, or to work in archives or special collections in the library. If you are asked to be on campus and you do not feel safe, please contact the MSP.

Is regular testing available for all on-campus staff, faculty and students?

Students will be tested when they arrive on campus. COVID-19 testing -- the virus test, not the antibody test -- will be available free of charge to staff, faculty, and students who show symptoms. Testing will not be available on-demand to asymptomatic individuals at this time.

If we are on campus teaching face-to-face, what is our right to know exposure risks including air quality, adequate ventilation and cleaning plans?

MSP members have the right to a safe and healthy workplace, according to the MSP contract and state law. The MSP, along with all of the other unions on campus, has asked for detailed information about air quality, ventilation, and sanitization plans for all spaces where our members will be working. Environmental Health and Safety is gathering this data and sharing it with the unions. If you have concerns about a particular workplace, please contact the MSP and we can ask for the information you need.

Are there isolation or quarantine spaces for faculty, staff and students who get sick?

Only students who live in the dorms will have access to isolation or quarantine space on campus. Anyone who lives off-campus -- students, staff, or faculty -- will be expected to isolate or quarantine at home if they are sick or exposed to COVID-19.

If I am teaching/working on campus, will I get Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)?

Yes. Instructors will be required to wear face coverings, which will be provided by the campus, through the college personnel offices. Laboratories may need face shields for faculty and/or students, which will also be provided. Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms.

Can I use my own office on campus?

Yes, you can use your own office as needed, unless it is a shared office without enough space for more than one person. Faculty and librarians will be expected to wipe down their items in their offices.

Parking**Parking Services currently says that pausing our parking is not an option.**

Yes, this is unfair. Parking Services has unilaterally decided to end the previous option of putting parking on hold when an employee will not be on campus. The MSP has filed a grievance demanding that this option be reinstated. No one should lose access to their current lot while working remotely because of COVID-19.

I already paid to renew my parking permit for the coming year, because I was afraid I would lose my parking spot! Now I don't plan to be on campus and I would like a refund.

If the MSP wins our grievance, you will be able to get reimbursed. Past practice was that if someone was on an approved leave and not coming to campus, they would receive a reimbursement for unused parking. That should certainly be true during this pandemic.

I haven't renewed my parking permit but I don't want to lose my spot -- what should I do?

If you're worried about losing your parking spot, go ahead and renew now: <https://www.umass.edu/transportation/purchase-permits>. You can choose payroll deductions to pay in installments. If MSP wins our grievance, and you don't need parking this year, you will be entitled to a refund.