

Guidance for Winter Term 2021

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As we approach the deadline (10/22/20) for constructing the timetable for winter term, we wish to provide information and guidance to instructors, departments, and programs as they deliberate the shape of their curriculum. We assume winter term will be the same as fall structurally, but recognize that the trajectory of the pandemic could change this very quickly.

This guidance is informed by the work of many of the task forces, working groups, and committees informing Dartmouth's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Provost, Dean of Faculty of the Arts and Sciences, and the Dean of Engineering have approved and support these recommendations and considerations. These guidelines complement a separate document detailing the categories used in the timetable, sent to each department by your liaison in DCAL or ITC.

A Changing Dartmouth:

This academic year brings new teaching challenges reflective of our newly dispersed student body: we are no longer just a residential college, but simultaneously have remote students as well. This creates challenges that require different solutions for different groups, some of which are in tension with one another. A unifying goal we all share is to provide the best student learning experience we can - the challenge is to do so for all of our students equitably. We highlight several specific situations and constraints for consideration:

- Students with disabilities, who live in different time zones, and/or have different levels of technological access report difficulties with courses that have required synchronous activities scheduled at specific times. Asynchronous modes of teaching work particularly well for them and they gravitate towards entirely asynchronous courses as a way to best meet their educational needs and excel in their studies.
- On-campus students appreciate the opportunity to (safely) interact face-to-face with their instructors and one another. They appreciate and pick courses with either formal or informal in-person activities.
- Some international students need at least one course with an on-campus component to maintain their student status and keep their visas.
- Students appreciate opportunities to interact and work with one another and choose courses where interaction is explicitly expected, training is provided, and the interaction produces outcomes relevant to their learning. Different course structures offer these opportunities both synchronously and asynchronously.

We wish to provide more of these types of opportunities as uniformly as possible to give students the most flexibility in pursuing their educational goals. As in the fall term, instructors retain the discretion and flexibility to craft their courses as they see fit and are not required to

choose any one mode or type of offering - this guidance is aimed at helping faculty appreciate the lessons as well as the constraints we see in looking at all the offerings across campus. We continue to revise our central site - teachremote.dartmouth.edu - with best practices, training, and Dartmouth specific examples, making it an excellent place to start.

Space constraints:

The protocols we have in place to help ensure campus safety during the epidemic severely constrain the space available for in-person course activities. Our best estimate places availability at about 1/18th of the usual fully residential capacity. Consequently,

- Classes cannot have in-person meetings with more than about 30 students and the number of those spaces is very small.
- Space constraints mean that on-campus space requests may not be able to be met and, if met, may not satisfy the time or location requests instructors indicate.
- If space requests exceed availability, the registrar will prioritize classroom uses as follows: (1) Entirely on-campus offerings, (2) Lower level courses presented as remote w/ required on-campus components, (3) Higher level courses presented as remote w/ required on-campus components, and (4) Courses with ad-hoc or optional on-campus activities.

Specific Goals:

We encourage departments and programs to discuss these factors across their curriculum, tempered by their faculty's own constraints and concerns, to help ensure equitable opportunity to their disciplines. To this end, we articulate specific goals to consider as you make decisions about winter. These goals are informed by both the information above and guidance from the Provost, the Dean of Faculty, and the Dean of Engineering.

- Increase formalized opportunities for interaction around learning.
- Extend opportunities for student-instructor and student-student interaction for all populations.
- Increase the number of courses that have some face-to-face opportunity for on-campus students. In particular, at least some of these offerings should allow international students to satisfy their requirements for on-campus interactions.
- Increase the number of entirely asynchronous courses.
- See these adjustments across the curriculum offered in the winter term.
- Courses within a single department or program should be spread across many of the available time slots.

As constructing a teaching schedule is essentially a zero-sum exercise, these increases come at a cost in the reduction or modification of other course presentations. We ask that the departments and programs will rethink some courses within the current most common mode - remote courses with some synchronous components.