

# Recommendations and Practices for Graduate Curricular Planning and Implementation for 2020-2021

## UCI Graduate Curricular Planning Sub-Committee to the COVID-19 Strategic Advisory Group to the Chancellor

Scott Bartell, Professor, School of Public Health  
Elizabeth Bennett, University Registrar  
Ryan Cherland, Institutional Research  
Paul Lampano, Deputy Registrar  
Michael McBride, Associate Dean, School of Social Sciences  
Michael Mulligan, Associate Dean Biological Sciences  
Ruth Quinnan, Executive Director for Academic and Student Affairs, Graduate Division  
Vincent Olivieri, Associate Dean, Claire Trevor School of the Arts  
Arvind Rajaraman, Chair of the Graduate Council, Professor, School of Physical Sciences  
Carroll Seron, Chair Emerita of the Graduate Council, Prof. Emerita, School of Social Ecology  
Chris Whytock, Vice Dean and Professor, School of Law  
Gillian Hayes, Dean of the Graduate Division (Chair)

October 2020

# **PRINCIPLES FOR GRADUATE EDUCATION DURING COVID-19**

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. **Public Health.** The health and safety of UCI employees and students remains our top priority. No faculty member, staff member, nor student should be compelled to be on campus while teaching and/or learning during terms impacted by COVID-19 in keeping with UCI campus-wide policy.
2. **Equity and Inclusion.** UCI is committed to equity and inclusion in its graduate programs. UCI is a public institution committed to the success of its large population of first generation, under-represented, and otherwise minoritized students.
3. **Educational Continuity.** UCI is committed to graduating a new class of graduate and professional students each year. Thus, our programs should adapt to ensure that all are making progress towards graduation in a timely manner.
4. **Instructional Quality.** UCI is committed to ensuring that all graduate students in our academic programs have the opportunity to learn and demonstrate the competencies necessary for their programs.
5. **Excellence in Graduate Education.** UCI is committed to delivering the highest quality graduate education and producing scholarship that sustains UCI's reputation for excellence and is consistent with our values.

## **STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES**

1. Decisions about testing, physical distancing, and course scheduling and delivery will be based on the best scientific, medical, and epidemiological evidence as interpreted by UCI experts, the Orange County Department of Health, and California and Federal guidelines.
2. Decisions about reopening educational environments should be made in consideration of all programs in all schools and the Graduate Division. No program should make decisions that interfere with the orderly progress of another program's curriculum.
3. Faculty, staff, and students will work together to limit the negative impacts of COVID19 as much as possible with known information at the time. At all times the well-being of the graduate student population will be at the forefront of guidance for 2020-2021 curricular and co-curricular activities.
4. Some instructional activities for graduate students are planned to be on campus with others remote in 2020-2021. In-person instruction may swiftly move to remote, consistent with public health guidance.
5. Due to limited space and facilities, assignments for educational and co-curricular activities that can only be conducted in person will be prioritized; graduation needs for advanced students and cohort-building for early students will be considered.
6. Some training requires physical proximity between individuals that is closer than that directed by physical distancing recommendations (e.g., clinical work, some performing arts). In those circumstances, the faculty in charge should follow specific protocols, approved by the Dean or Dean's delegate, with safety measures that are consistent with infection control guidelines (masks, gowns, gloves, face shields) for prevention of spread of diseases.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONTEXT**

1. All planned teaching activities must take into account the current public health context and respond accordingly.
2. Decisions about on-campus activities will be impacted by the latest evidence and expert recommendations regarding COVID-19, campus policies, and coordination with UCI Housing and best practice recommendations for accommodations.
3. Graduate education spans research, teaching, and learning. As such, major decisions regarding graduate research will come under the guidance of the Vice Chancellor for Research, graduate teaching under the dual guidance of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning and the Vice Provost for Academic Personnel, and graduate learning under the guidance of the Vice Provost for Graduate Education.
4. Regardless of the content of this document, the Chancellor retains ultimate authority for activities on the UCI campus.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

### **COMPLIANCE with CA, UC, and Campus Policies:**

1. All aspects of instruction at UCI should follow all applicable federal, state, and county public health directives and University of California policies. Therefore, plans should include adaptations and safety precautions consistent with public health guidance. In addition, all personnel are expected to follow all UCI health and safety guidelines, including all special or temporary COVID-19 requirements outlined in specific plans. The Campus Recovery Implementation Team will be consulted and will advise on all aspects of Graduate Education Planning and Implementation.
2. No disciplinary or retaliatory action, including grading decisions, shall be taken against personnel or students who choose to attend classes or perform work duties remotely during any quarter/semester in which physical distancing is recommended on campus for any portion of that academic term, or while personal or household factors continue to put them at higher-risk for contracting or suffering from COVID-19, or responding to the effects of COVID-19. Faculty will make their course offerings available to students who choose to attend remotely even in the case of in-person meetings whenever possible, and students will not be penalized for remote attendance. In the event that a course cannot be offered remotely, and a student cannot attend in person, other accommodations should be offered by the graduate program to ensure appropriate degree progress.
3. For in-person courses during the 2020-2021 academic year, once a plan for a course has been written by faculty and/or chairs and approved by the Dean (or Dean's designee), appropriate graduate counselors must have access to the syllabi and be able to help students think through choices about coursework given these circumstances.
4. Graduate Division, Office of the Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning, and Academic Personnel will work together to support graduate instruction across Schools and consult with Academic Deans to promote implementation of these principles and consult with Academic Deans regarding any difficulties.
5. UCI Graduate Division, Institutional Research, and/or Teaching and Learning will collect data on course learning outcomes, program learning outcomes, and degree progress per usual procedures. These data will be analyzed to improve the quality of online instruction as well as measure and report any disparities or other challenges that emerge from use of online instruction during this emergency.
6. Faculty, staff, and students who have concerns about these considerations should consult with the appropriate Graduate Program Chair, HR business partner, or AP personnel.

### **FACILITIES, FINANCE, AND HUMAN RESOURCES**

Regardless of what is in this document or what plans are approved by Schools, at all times, the campus will be expected to comply with local [Orange County public health ordinances](#), including but not limited to restrictions by age, health status, or other considerations.

This guidance is based on existing campus policy and practices and is expected to change as state and local government and campus directives. All in-person courses must adhere to the approved universal [syllabus from CRIT](#), and all fieldwork and practicum experiences for graduate courses must be approved by the School offering the course as part of the School's CRIT-approved Protection and Monitoring Plan.

**Training for graduate students and instructional staff:** All people teaching or learning on-site or as part of field work and practicums are required to view a training video entitled “Returning to Campus,” which explains what COVID-19 is, how it is transmitted, the steps we’re taking to reduce potential exposures, and what you can do to protect yourself and others. The video is available through the [UC Learning Center](#) and can be searched by title using the *Find a Course* function.

Instructors who do not complete mandatory training may be subject to disciplinary actions through their departments or Academic Personnel. Students who do not complete mandatory training may be subject to holds placed on their registration.

**Measures to control the spread:** Graduate program return to campus activity and return to fieldwork and practicum activities will be in accordance with prevailing state and local government public health directives and [campus directives](#). The best ways to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus are through frequent hand washing, use of face coverings, ventilation, physical distancing, self-screening for symptoms, viral testing for those with symptoms, and contact tracing and supported isolation of individuals testing positive. As we return to campus:

- Individuals will comply with UCI’s Daily Symptom Check Executive Directive (<https://uci.edu/coronavirus/executive-directives/index.php>).
- Custodial services will continue with appropriate cleaning schedules depending on traffic.
- Supplies including hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray, paper towels, disposable gloves, and washable face coverings will be provided centrally to returning groups. Schools should supply additional resources to students and instructors going into field sites as appropriate.
- Signs and other reminders encouraging physical distancing will remain in place.
- All members of the UCI community will wear face coverings as required by UCI’s Face Coverings Executive Directive (<https://uci.edu/coronavirus/executive-directives/index.php>) and [orders](#) from the Orange County Health Agency.

**Graduate Student Resource Needs:** Due to the unique nature of graduate student coursework and scholarship, graduate and family housing, and graduate student personal lives, graduate programs should make efforts to support their continuing funding, working, and living at UCI.

- Graduate Division, the Registrar, and Finance and Budget will work together to ensure that all students who fit the criteria laid out by [UCOP for residency for tuition purposes](#) are billed appropriately.
- Measures will be developed to ensure that students with children can attend class. Measures MAY include emergency childcare, remote learning, and/or funding to support in home childcare support.
- Alternate funding will be provided for people at high risk who cannot perform their previously assigned GSR or TA duties. These funding streams may include reassignment to remote TA duties or other remote work. Given the vast majority of undergraduate courses will be conducted remotely for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, the impact of these concerns are expected to be minimal.
- Departments should seek opportunities to connect graduate students with remote speakers as part of remote seminars just as they would for on campus visitors who physically travel to campus.

- Departmental, School-Based, and Central “travel awards” for graduate students will be converted to “conference awards” to support remote attendance and conference fees as long as conferences are not offered in person. Because travel expenses will not be needed, more “Conference Awards” may be awarded at a lower value than “Travel Awards” support more students.
- Writing, professional development, and career development support for graduate students will be offered in a remote format for as long as physical distancing and other related public health restrictions are in place.
- In recognition of the need for many students to learn new research methods that are more amenable to remote research, departments are encouraged to offer additional and different methods courses. Students will also be encouraged to take advantage of opportunities through the UCI Division of Continuing Education, such as the existing partnership with [Udemy for Business](#), as well as additional targeted partnerships to be developed.
- UCI, including UCI Libraries and academic Schools, should help ensure that graduate students have adequate quiet study and online teaching and learning space with reliable WIFI access, to support the continuity of their education, research, and teaching. Students living in Graduate and Family Housing may request ethernet adapters and cabling from Graduate Division at no cost. Students living off campus may request to borrow wireless hotspots through Graduate Division or their departments, but these are only available on a limited basis and will need to be returned.

## EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCOMODATIONS

1. **Inclusion.** We must strive to rise to our principles in all coursework, degree progress, professional development, and co-curricular activities in terms of equity, diversity, inclusion, and appropriate accommodations.
2. **Non-Discrimination.** Decisions about which personnel will return to the campus, when and for what teaching operations must be made in accordance with [UCI's non-discrimination policy](#).
3. **Accommodations.** Personnel may need reasonable accommodations, which can be facilitated by UCI [Disability Management Services](#). Authorized Officials, faculty members and students should carefully consider the needs of employees and/or students with current disability accommodations or those who will require new accommodations, whether for disability of other reasons.

## GRADUATE COURSEWORK

1. **General Principles.**
  - a. Faculty members, Graduate Program Directors, and Department Chairs should be prepared for their AY2020-21 graduate instruction to move between online and in person in response to changing circumstances.
  - b. We must be timely and decisive despite unknown contexts. Faculty and staff should work together to make the schedule for each quarter in AY 2020-21 known as quickly as possible. Any courses for Winter Quarter 2021 or Spring Semester 2021 requested to be taught in person must be finalized by **November 15, 2020**, and for Spring Quarter 2021, they must be finalized by **January 15, 2021**. After this date, **courses may move from in-person or hybrid to online but may not move from online to in-person nor hybrid**. Notwithstanding the foregoing, School of Law courses will be approved and scheduled in accordance

- with the procedures and calendar established by the School's Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Registrar.
- c. There will be a point person in each School who will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of these procedures. This person should have authority to implement priorities and planning within the School, as well as working with other Schools. Likely individuals to fill this role are the Dean, Associate Dean, or other Graduate Education focused administrator.
  - d. Coursework that includes fieldwork or practicum experience must be accounted for in each School's curricular implementation and return to campus plans. CRIT should be informed of these plans but already-approved plans do not require reapproval merely because fieldwork or practicum coursework is added.
2. **Course Formats.** Graduate programs should encourage and support faculty in the design of courses in line with research-based best practices. Various formats of instruction may be considered, such as:
- a. Fully remote.
  - b. Dual delivery (e.g., Flipped classrooms, predominantly face to face with option for remote when necessary, staggered schedule with split sections).
  - c. In-person in small sections with appropriate physical distancing. Courses using this approach must still accommodate students who cannot or choose not to attend in person, should such students enroll.
3. **Scheduling and Course Assignment.** Courses may not be rescheduled within the same term (in terms of date and time) except in extreme circumstances. Physical course rooms may be moved, and in fact, likely will be moved in response to physical distancing recommendations. Courses may be cancelled or rescheduled to a different term by departments. Schools should submit a prioritized list of courses they would like to offer in-person to support the work of the Registrar in allocating rooms. Courses submitted in August should be updated by working with the Registrar's office and School schedulers to ensure that Winter Quarter 2021 and Spring Semester 2021 courses to be offered in-person are identified no later than **November 15, 2020**, Spring Quarter 2021 by **January 15, 2021**.
- a. Current expectation of 18-40% capacity, depending on furniture and room layout, in rooms in which instructional activities will be held. Each School Dean who is interested in holding any in-person activities in new spaces (e.g., not traditional classrooms, conference rooms, outdoor spaces) should put in a Purchase Order through Facilities Management to have the space "walked." Schools or Departments should send a representative to 'walk' the non-traditional space with Facilities Management personnel to confirm intended usage. Unless public health experts indicate the need to update them, "walks" from Summer 2020 are sufficient for Winter and Spring 2021, and need not be repeated
  - b. Schools will support sharing classroom space with the goal of supporting maximum flexibility in scheduling for as long as physical distancing is recommended on campus. Schools will designate approaches appropriate for prioritizing for their disciplines and share these priorities with scheduling authorities on campus.
  - c. Instructional staff participating in classroom teaching must meet state and campus public health standards that may include restrictions for older instructors, instructors with predisposing health issues, or living with someone with a health concern. Instructional staff, including ASEs, who cannot perform duties in person must be accommodated using remote teaching or reassigned to another course with no penalty, financial or otherwise.
  - d. Each school must determine caps for numbers of students in classrooms of different sizes at a given time in accordance with disciplinary concerns, public health

guidance, ingress/egress logistics (including time and space needs), and the classroom setting. A campus-wide cap of 60 students for graduate courses remains in place for Winter and Spring 2021.

- e. Full cleaning between classes, if deemed necessary, will require “blocking” the room for every other course time; such gaps will be prioritized for larger classes.
  - f. Assigned seating should be used whenever possible and appropriate to support physical distancing during classes and between classes with appropriate accommodations for people with disabilities.
  - g. Long-term curricular planning for cancelled/rescheduled courses must take into account how students will make progress in their degrees, particularly given that the entirety of 2020-2021 now makes use of these adapted approaches.
  - h. School schedulers will need additional time to work through schedule changes, to be flexible in accommodating faculty requests given campus-wide concerns, and help central scheduling with prioritization. All requests for in-person courses for Winter Quarter 2021 or Spring Semester 2021 must be received by the Registrar’s office by **November 15, 2020**. All requests for in-person courses for Spring Quarter 2021 must be received by the Registrar’s office by **January 15, 2021**. School of Law courses will be approved and scheduled in accordance with the procedures and calendar established by the School’s Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Registrar.
- 4. Grading**
- a. We expect courses to be graded using the same processes and standards as in traditional years. However, faculty should be ready to implement greater flexibility depending on context.
  - b. Incompletes have one full year to be replaced by a grade by Senate Regulation, or will become Fails. Exceptions can be made through the Office of the Registrar and Graduate Division on a case by case basis.
- 5. Syllabi.** For courses with in-person class sessions, faculty will be required to include links to the [syllabus language created and maintained by CRIT](#).

Faculty should be prepared to discuss with students:

- a. Considerations for equity, diversity, inclusion, and appropriate accommodations, including accommodations related to public health best practices, and avoidance thereof.
  - b. Adherence to best practices and policies put forth by CRIT, EHS, and other strategic advisory groups on campus taking into account federal, state, and local guidelines and [campus executive directives](#).
  - c. Facilities, including the various [initiatives and policies undertaken by EH&S](#).
  - d. Coordination, including asynchronous approaches for those in vastly different time zones or with caregiving responsibilities.
  - e. Plan for going remote should it become necessary.
- 6. Fieldwork and Practicum Courses.** School plans should include guidelines for graduate research or coursework offered by the School involving outside organizations (i.e. fieldwork and practicum courses). Interdisciplinary programs involving fieldwork or practicum courses shall follow the guidelines for fieldwork and practicum courses contained in the plan of the primary School or unit hosting the program. During the 2020-2021 school year, courses with work expected at sites external to the University of California should:
- a. Provide all students who request them remote completion opportunities.
  - b. The member of the faculty who has been dean-designated to address coursework per 1.C above for the School or Schools involved should request and review the

external site's Covid-19 response plan and should approve student participation at the site only if the site's response plan is consistent with UCI requirements for on-campus instructional activity or directly regulated by local, state or federal government authorities. .

- c. Inform CRIT that these courses have been approved and the field sites in use.

## TERMINAL DEGREE CONCERNS

1. **Public Exams.** All “public” exams will continue to be conducted remotely with [appropriate security in place](#). As possible, committees can consider having the student and small faculty committee co-present, bearing in mind that all parties may still opt out of an in-person event. Regardless of the student and committee choice, the larger audience should remain remote as long as physical distancing recommendations are in place.
2. **Major Exam Flexibility.** Graduate programs are strongly encouraged to be flexible regarding exams that represent major milestones in a graduate student's career (e.g., Comprehensive or Qualifying Exams, Advancement to Candidacy, Thesis Defenses). Exam timing may be extended, exams moved from closed to open book, and changing of deliverables from public performances to other modalities are all temporary changes that may be made within the discretion of the graduate program during quarters impacted by Covid-19.
3. **Research Courses and Research Activities.** Graduate research coursework and activities shall be bound by individual faculty research protocols that have been approved by the School and Department processes. Ultimate approval and authority for research activities rests with the Vice Chancellor for Research.
4. **Graduate Scholarship.** Graduate students who need space on campus and away from home to work on their scholarship, even if it does not require access to specific physical resources, should be accommodated as space and public health considerations allow. The longer that restrictions are in place, the more Schools are encouraged to find locations for students to work outside of their homes with a strong emphasis on their continued well-being in terms of the pandemic, mental health, and academic progress.