

Additional Information on the Soft Opening
From the Office of the Provost
August 13, 2021

As indicated in the [message](#) from the President and Provost on August 12, faculty currently scheduled to teach a face-to-face or hybrid class should engage the class in one in-person class experience each week for the first three weeks of class (ending September 11).

In-person experiences are opportunities for students to engage with faculty in-person during the scheduled class periods in the classroom. This may be accomplished in any number of ways, and this memo offers some options as well as best practices.

As a general recognition of the ever-changing landscape, we ask all faculty to open their BB shells in all classes (including online) by 5:00 pm on Friday, August 20 to establish a common resource point for students. If you have an online class, you can confirm that your class schedule will proceed as planned and is not subject to the “soft opening” and suggestions below. If you have classes with in-person components, you should post any revised plan in your BB shell as an announcement and send an email with that announcement to all registered students *no later than 5:00pm on Friday, August 20*. The announcement should include expected meeting days and any Zoom meeting info, and the syllabus should also reflect any changes for the first three weeks.

Some options to consider for the soft opening, though others are possible.

For all class structures including hybrid, particularly where crowding is a concern:

- Identify activities for the in-person period that are focused on class preparation and resources and move primary course content to the BB environment.
- Identify class meeting times as optional workshop or recitation times for specific topics or issues that are being addressed in other ways in the virtual space.
- For courses that meet for more than 1 hour and 15 minutes at a time, identify part of the class as synchronous online and the other part as an in-person workshop option. Or you could ask half of the class to come for the first half of the period and then the other students for the second half.

For classes meeting two times/week:

- Identify groups of students to come on different days each week where crowding is a concern.
- Schedule one class meeting each week as synchronous online and the other as in-person for all students.

As part of your planning, please design engagement strategies that will address the remaining weekly course content with assignments and activities that support the course learning outcomes and consider the intended contact hours.

Faculty may request classroom space capacities if they are interested in understanding current density for their courses; they should contact their department chairs and the Office of the Provost will work

with departments to provide the information if needed, as well as some alternate, larger rooms where possible.

All general UHD computer labs will remain open during this time; students can check out laptops and could find quiet places to engage with a synchronous class.

Below are some considerations as you make your decisions.

- If you split the class for in-person days, you could cover the same information during the in-person meetings with each group and then post content for the “other half” of the content as asynchronous online content.
- You could teach different material as scheduled each day and record the class and ask the other students to watch it. [This will work only in some of our classrooms.]
NOTE: if you are scheduled in one of the HyFlex classrooms found on our [HyFlex website](#) and would like to try to use this option to allow all students to join, please contact Nikhil Bhatt for a training before classes start and review resources here.
- For a 2-day/week class, if you decide to meet 1x/week with the whole class, try to have it be the same day each week (e.g., Tuesdays) for consistency.
- Be specific about all meeting times and locations and send email reminders at the beginning of each week about the plan. If you are splitting the class, list actual student names rather than saying “A-F” students attend on certain days.
- Be clear about what content on your syllabus will be covered during in-person meetings. Consider allocating activities that require demonstration or practice or collective engagement for the in-person meetings. Please check out our [CTLE website](#) for more information on flipped classrooms, particularly via the Magna videos.
- Consider minimizing in-class group work unless some distancing can be maintained.
- Be specific about what students should be doing outside of class each week (note that there can be work beyond the already planned “outside class work” to recognize the time that is not spent in class, unless you hold synchronous meetings). Consider this time for assigned readings, video review, writing, virtual group work, or discussion boards for the asynchronous time.
- Be very clear about how students can contact you by email and/or phone –see tips on [Syllabus Resource page](#) . Check your own email daily M-F and your BB shell for student engagements—information and circumstances change rapidly and the daily review will help mitigate confusion and anxiety. Acknowledge student contacts within 48 hours as expected for all faculty.
- Include in your messaging any information about technology needs for students and encourage them to contact uhdstudentaffairs@uhd.edu if they have technology needs. Please also see [our website on recommended technology and resources](#).
- Post links to virtual lobbies [virtual lobbies](#), [student resources](#), [student counseling](#), etc.
- You are welcome to promote safety protocols as per UHD recent communications.