

August 26, 2026

TO: All Faculty, Deans, Department Chairs, and Program Directors

FROM: Ramprasad Balasubramanian, Provost and VC for Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Fall 2026 Faculty Instructional Responsibilities

Dear Colleagues,

I encourage you to make use of the following information when preparing for and teaching your courses. These guidelines describe best practices that promote meaningful educational experiences. Each semester, these guidelines and expectations are distributed to reaffirm their importance to our students, the faculty, and the University.

OFFICE HOURS

All full-time faculty members must schedule, post, and keep regular office hours. A minimum of four office hours per week is required, in-person on three separate days. Additional office hours should be scheduled by appointment as needed. Faculty members should be available during course registration periods to meet with their advisees to discuss course selection and progress toward degree completion, which may require additional hours and availability at that time. Part-time lecturers must make themselves accessible to students outside of class hours to discuss course-related issues.

COURSE SYLLABI

Faculty members shall provide a syllabus for each course that they teach. The syllabus should be available no later than the day of the first class meeting. Please see [Guidelines for Syllabus Development](#).

Faculty teaching a course approved for a University Studies requirement are reminded that the course Master Syllabus serves as a guideline to meet the intended goals of the course. Faculty teaching these courses should base their own course syllabi on the Master Syllabus. Most importantly, course syllabi should include the learning outcomes for that University Studies Cluster requirement, and they should include the assignments described in the Master Syllabus, or alternatives that are equally effective at teaching and assessing the learning outcomes. To check whether your course meets a University Studies requirement, please visit the [Approved Courses page](#). For questions on the Master Syllabus, please contact Dr. Matt Sneider, Director of General Education (msneider@umassd.edu).

As per the [Blended Teaching Policy](#), faculty are expected to adhere to their published modality and teaching schedule. Any deviations from that schedule should be approved by the Chair and College/School Dean.

ROSTER VERIFICATION (due 9/25/26)

To comply with federal regulations, it is imperative that the Registrar's Office is notified of students who never attended nor participated in course activities to determine their status at the university. An email with the details of what counts toward participation will go out soon, and faculty will be asked to complete their roster verification from **September 18th through September 25th**. Timely submission is critical to be in federal compliance and to avoid student billing and financial aid issues.

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MIDTERM PROGRESS REPORTS (due October 23rd)

To help students understand their standing and progress in a course, faculty are strongly encouraged to submit midterm progress reports by the requested deadline. This is especially critical in lower division courses (100 and 200-level) so students can meet with their advisors and make informed decisions about course withdrawals and planning for courses in subsequent semesters.

FALL COURSE MATERIALS (due October 26th)

[The Higher Education Opportunity Act](#) requires that students be made aware of any required course materials at the time of registration. To comply with this Act, faculty can select course materials using the Bookstore button on their list of courses in COIN or they can email Kate Buck directly (kbuck@umassd.edu). Please note that the same process must be followed if no course materials are needed or all materials are OER or will be provided by the faculty. If you taught the same course in Fall 2025, your course materials adoption will roll over to Fall 2026.

FACULTY MISSING CLASSES

The Department Chair must approve all planned absences for legitimate professional or personal reasons in advance. In such cases, the instructor is responsible for arranging makeup classes or providing alternative instructional activities. When an illness or unforeseen emergency results in the cancellation of a class or change in class modality for any given day, the instructor should notify the Chair (and the Department Administrative Assistant) as soon as possible and arrange for notices to be posted informing students of the cancellation or change in modality. In all cases, the Chairperson should inform the Dean of all faculty absences. In the event of an HR-approved extended absence of the instructor, the Chair is responsible for arranging continuing instruction in the course.

FINAL EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

Faculty members have the [obligation to restrict the administration of final examinations](#) to the scheduled examination period.

The [final exam schedule](#) for the Fall 2026 semester is December 11th- December 17th.

Please note that Thursday, December 10th, is a Study Day. Final examinations may not be administered during the last week of classes or on Study Day.

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

Wednesday, September 2, 2026	First Day of Classes
Monday, September 14, 2026	Last day to add, drop, or audit
Friday, September 25, 2026	Roster Verification due
Friday, October 23, 2026	Midterm Progress Reports due
Friday, November 13, 2026	Last Day to Withdraw from a course
Wednesday, December 9, 2026	Last Day of Classes
48 hours after last day of classes or final	Last Day for Incomplete request to be filed
72 hours after the final exam (Sunday December 20)	Final Grades due

GRADES

Faculty members are required to submit their grades through COIN grade rosters within **72 hours after the course's last class or final exam**. **THIS INCLUDES GRADE ENTRY FOR THESES, DISSERTATIONS, INDEPENDENT STUDIES, ETC.** Submitting final grades on time is critical for student success, financial aid, establishing academic standing, and degree certifications. The Registrar cannot process the Academic Standing of students without all course grades being posted. Students on Academic Caution, Academic Alert, or Academic Dismissal are also in jeopardy of losing their financial aid awards if appropriate appeals processes do not occur in a timely manner. Student ratings will not be released to faculty until 95% of university-wide grades are submitted for the semester.

LOCATION OF CLASS AND MODALITY

Faculty may not move their class to a different room without the approval of the Registrar. Faculty seeking a room change should contact their Chair and/or Dean's Office, who will contact the Registrar. Faculty shall not



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change the course offering modality without the Dean's written approval.

Thank you for your cooperation in supporting and adhering to these practices. I wish you the best for a productive semester.