

Important Fall 2020 Information for AUHs, Faculty and Advisors

Office of the Provost

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To: fac-aa-response-l@listserv.jmu.edu <fac-aa-response-l@listserv.jmu.edu>; 'pt-fac-response-l@listserv.jmu.edu' <pt-fac-response-l@listserv.jmu.edu>;

Importance: High

Dear AUHs, Faculty and University Advisors:

As you know, our students will have access to their course schedules beginning on July 21st. They have been able to view their schedules all summer and most will know that section times and mode of delivery have changed.

We have received numerous requests from AUHs and Academic Advisors about how to respond to the anticipated influx of questions from students who are going to want to change their schedule to accommodate desires to be online or face-to-face or both.

We want to acknowledge the tremendous amount of work you've been doing since March to not only complete the spring semester, but to also facilitate the planning and implementation of a Fall schedule that provides our students with the educational experiences they need to make progress towards their degree. In order to do that, AUHs have supported faculty who are planning for multiple scenarios of course delivery and responded to their health and safety concerns. Thank you for the tireless commitment you've made over the past five months to address these and so many other factors that are part of designing and implementing the fall semester programming.

There's no question that students are going to be asking for changes to their schedules. At the end of this message, you can read the message that is being sent to students today to enlist their partnership in understanding the complexity of the decisions and changes that have been made. For those that have questions, we are directing them to the AUH of the discipline related to the specific course and/or their Academic Advisor.

If you are planning to be away from the office for any extended amount of time over the next four weeks, please identify someone who can respond to student questions on your behalf and list contact information for that person in your away message.

We've also developed a decision-tree to assist you with your response to students whether they are asking to switch to an online mode or face-to-face mode:

1. **Question 1:** Is there another section of the course that is being offered in the mode the student is requesting?
 1. If YES, ask the student to enroll in that section if there are seats available. If the section is online and it is full consult with AUH to see if it's possible to increase enrollment. If the section desired is face-to-face, work with AUH to see if it's possible for student to be added to a waitlist.
 2. If NO, proceed to **Question 2**.
2. **Question 2:** Does the student need the course in the fall in order to make timely progress toward graduation?
 1. If NO, encourage the student to wait and take the course in a future semester.

2. If YES, continue to **Question 3** If you're an Academic Advisor you will likely need to connect the student with the AUH at this point.
3. (NOTE that there may be some ambiguity about what constitutes "timely progress."
 1. The clearest case would be a student graduating in December who must have that course to graduate, followed by a student who needs a prerequisite course in order to start taking other courses in the major.
 2. AUHs will need to exercise some discretion here, with input from the student's advisor when appropriate).
3. **Question 3:** Is a course substitution or waiver a programmatically justifiable option to allow the student to fulfill this requirement?
 1. If YES, allow the course substitution or waiver.
 2. If NO, then continue to **Question 4**.
4. **Question 4:** Does the nature of the course allow an entirely online experience? (Certain studio or lab courses may not work 100% online).
 1. If NO, tell the student they will need to wait until they can take the course in person.
 2. If YES, speak with the instructor to see if it's feasible to provide entirely online instruction to this student, seeking to minimize the added workload for faculty whenever possible.

Not all requests can be accommodated. We are relying on the expertise of faculty and Academic Unit Heads to allow for flexibility when it is possible and to advise students clearly about reasons why flexibility may not be possible in certain circumstances.

If the student has any questions about their tuition and fees, please refer them to the University Business Office (ubo@jmu.edu).

Thank you for your sustained effort and commitment to prepare for the fall. We know that the workload has been extraordinary and this is another responsibility on top of so many others.

Sincerely,
Heather

Dr. Heather Coltman
Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs

Important Message to Students Regarding Fall 2020 Course Schedule

On July 21st, you will have access to your course schedule for Fall 2020. Please preview your schedule by logging into [MyMadison](#).

I want you to know that our team of faculty and staff have worked tirelessly over the past several months, leveraging their expertise to create a dynamic and successful fall semester with their primary goal of facilitating the learning process and helping you stay on track as you progress towards graduation. Their efforts truly demonstrate how much they have your interests at the core of their preparation.

Faculty have designed a collection of in-person, hybrid, and online courses so your academic needs can be met in the safest manner possible. Your academic schedule likely includes a combination of face-to-face and online courses. We recognize that you may be taking a course remotely that you wish could be face-to-face or perhaps you may need to meet face-to-face when you'd prefer to be remote. This is the result of the complex array of decisions that we have had to make this summer.

If you have questions about your schedule, now is the time to reach out. The best way to get the answer you need is by contacting your academic advisor, the department head or program coordinator. All of us are committed to working with you between now and the first day of classes to help you understand our reasoning behind the mode of delivery for every course and determine what options may be available for you. Your academic advisor's name and contact information can be found in [MyMadison](#). The department for a course can be found by searching for the department name and accessing the list of faculty/staff for that department.

If you have a disability for which you need to request accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at disability-svcs@jmu.edu to make your request. If you are new to ODS, please follow the instructions found at "Getting Started with ODS" located here: <https://www.jmu.edu/ods/getting-started.shtml>.

We invite you to be open to changes at JMU this fall, and to trust that the course structure for the fall is driven by our efforts to provide you with a high-quality educational experience while attending to the health and safety of our entire community. The success of the fall semester depends on each of us doing our part. What makes JMU great is the way our students step up to be the drivers of their education – now more than ever, we need your partnership and your commitment.

We can't wait to see you back on campus in just a few weeks!

Dr. Heather Coltman
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs