



OFFICE OF
THE PROVOST

Important Policy Reminders for 2024-2025

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Please note the following from the [2024-2025 academic calendar](#):

Spring Semester

- Start of Classes: January 13
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day: January 20; no classes
- In-Service Day: February 11; no classes
- Spring Break: March 8-16
- Service Day: April 10; no day classes
- Easter Break: April 18-21
- Last Day of Classes: May 2
- Semester Exams: May 5-8
- Undergraduate Commencement Weekend: May 9-10
- May Development Week: May 12-16
- Approved Cross-Cultural Courses: May 19 – June 6

FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES

USE OF CANVAS

Effective use of the University's Learning Management System (LMS), Canvas, is an effective tool for supporting student success. All faculty must publish their courses in Canvas, orient students to their course site, post their course syllabus as an accessible file (.pdf) on their Canvas landing page (and also in "Files"—see "Syllabi Collection" below), and post additional resources in the site as appropriate. Use of modules and the gradebook feature is also expected. The "Faculty Support & and Resources" Canvas site, to which all teaching faculty should have access, offers a wide range of resources for delivering course content for both virtual and physical classroom spaces. If you do not have access to this helpful Canvas site, contact Tech Support at techsupport@messiah.edu or ext. 4444.

SYLLABI – REQUIRED ELEMENTS

A list of all required elements for Messiah University syllabi can be found in Section 8, Part I, of the *COE Handbook* (see “Syllabi, Course”). While departments/programs can require more elements, they cannot require fewer; that is, the requirements outlined in the *COE Handbook* are the minimal requirements for a complete syllabus. Syllabus statements that are required verbatim (e.g., statements to Title IX, FERPA, etc.) can be found in Section 8 of the *COE Handbook*. They are also available on the Faculty Support & Resources Canvas site, as is a syllabus template that ensures the inclusion of these elements.

SYLLABI COLLECTION

The University must retain copies of syllabi for each course taught to ensure that degrees and transfer credits are recognized by other institutions. We have an automated system for collecting syllabi directly from Canvas. To facilitate this collection process, all faculty must do the following:

- (1) upload the course syllabus to the course’s Canvas site as a PDF file; the file must be located in the top-level folder of “Files,” not a sub-folder;
- (2) name the file as you prefer, as long as the name includes “yllab” and ends with “.pdf” (for instance, “CIS191syllabus.pdf”, “Fall2024syllabus.pdf”, or “SyllabusFall2024.pdf”).
- (3) Remove all other syllabi, including ones from previous semesters, from the top-level folder of “Files.”

FACE-TO-FACE CLASSES AND FACULTY ABSENCES

Faculty members who teach face-to-face courses or synchronous online courses are expected to meet with their students at the scheduled times. Face-to-face classes are to be taught in person (not remotely) unless the faculty member is unable to be present due to illness, emergency, or a prearranged absence (e.g., for a professional conference). In the case of anticipated absences, faculty members should notify their supervisors well in advance and make appropriate coverage plans according to the faculty absence policy outlined in Section 6A of the *COE Handbook*. Faculty members should notify their students via their course Canvas page when they need to cancel class at the last minute due to illness or emergency.

CONTRACTUAL TIMELINE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ranked Faculty (Term-Tenure Track Faculty, Clinical Track Faculty, and Lecturers) are under contract from the Monday of the week before fall classes begin through the week after commencement (August 19, 2024, through May 16, 2025). Since Ranked Faculty are under contract one week prior to the beginning of fall classes and through the week after commencement, they are required to be present for professional responsibilities, such as Department meetings, School meetings, General Education development sessions, Community of Educators/School/Department retreats, etc. during this timeframe.

ON-CAMPUS ATTENDANCE

Ranked Faculty are not required to be on campus and have no official responsibilities during summer break and student recesses including: Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, and Easter Break.

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICE

Beyond the responsibility of meeting with classes, Ranked Faculty have responsibilities related to institutional service (e.g., advising, department meetings, committee meetings, search committees, etc.).

- If a Ranked Faculty member is not teaching any courses in a given term, he or she is expected to meet his or her other on-campus professional responsibilities unless the faculty member is on an approved leave or fulfilling an off-campus institutional/professional responsibility.

COMMUNITY OF EDUCATORS EXPECTATIONS

Full members of the Community of Educators are required to march in Convocation and Commencement and to attend Fall COE Retreat, Fall and Spring In-Service Days (for programming in their area), and May Development Week activities. Any request for an excused absence must be approved by the faculty member's School Dean.

FINAL EXAM SCHEDULES

- Final exam periods are an important and integral part of the semester. **The exam schedule is set by the Registrar's Office each semester. Faculty members must follow the [published schedule](#).**
- Faculty members are required to conduct a significant evaluative experience/exam or some other educative experience during this time. Faculty should design their courses in a way that preserves the integrity of finals week. Minimally, this means that faculty should (1) be cautious about the amount of work they assign students in the week prior to finals week, and (2) schedule final exams or other semester-ending experiences during finals week.
- Students are expected to attend their final exam period at the scheduled time. Any student having more than eight credit hours of final examinations in one day may request a change in his/her final schedule by emailing the Registrar's Office. It should be noted that travel arrangements are not sufficient reason for exceptions to the exam schedule. All student requests for rescheduling exams must be submitted to the Registrar at least one week prior to the first day of final examinations. Upon the Registrar's approval of the request, the student may contact their instructor to reschedule the exam at a time mutually acceptable to both the instructor and the student.

CALENDAR/SCHEDULE COORDINATION

All employees are expected to use their Outlook calendars to assist with scheduling meetings in a timely fashion. If you have problems with Outlook, please contact Tech Support at techsupport@messiah.edu or ext. 4444.

ONBOARDING TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Faculty members who are utilizing teaching assistants (TA's) in connection with a course are required to onboard their TA's via a Dynamic Form developed for this purpose. The form (a) provides clarity on the appropriate use of TA's; (b) trains TA's on issues of confidentiality; (c) secures the department chair's approval of the TA being hired; and (d) alerts Tech Support to give the TA the level of Canvas access they need to do their work. To initiate this process, the faculty member should go to Falconlink and type in "Onboarding a TA." It should be clear what to do from that point on. Students who work as Supplemental Instruction leaders will be onboarded by the SI Coordinator, Kristin Runyon, who will launch this form. Questions about this onboarding process should be directed to Tech Support at techsupport@messiah.edu

INCLEMENT WEATHER/CAMPUS CLOSING

In the event of weather conditions or other unexpected emergencies, the University may announce and implement a campus closure or delayed opening. The University will communicate this news to students and faculty via email, text message alert, the University website home page, and a Canvas banner announcement. If campus is closed or delayed and your class is scheduled to meet during that delay or closure, the faculty member may determine how best to proceed with the course to successfully maintain the integrity of the learning objectives. This includes the following options:

- holding class synchronously online at the scheduled time
- delivering asynchronous online instruction
- arranging for make-up opportunities after campus reopens.

Regardless of the method chosen, faculty must communicate clearly and proactively with students on the Canvas course site. This communication should be timely; generally within an hour of the delay/closure announcement and always before the class was scheduled to meet.

Note that when campus is closed, a faculty member may not hold a class session on campus.

DELAYED CAMPUS OPENINGS

A delayed campus opening or campus closure does not impact the schedule of courses. For synchronous class meetings (in-person or online), instructors should follow the regular class schedule, even in the case of a delayed opening. For example, if class normally meets on MWF 11:00 – 11:50 AM, then in the case of a delayed opening or a closure, if the instructor chooses to have a synchronous online class meeting, it will occur 11:00 – 11:50 AM. It is important for student success and clarity of messaging that each instructor post all changes in class plans as a Canvas announcement. Though email or other communication is also effective, these other forms of communication should be in addition to, and not instead of, communication in Canvas.