

Topic: Decisions regarding Teaching in the Fall Semester 2020 -2021 - COVID-19 disease management

Dear students,

Dear colleagues,

On August 26, 2020, the Senate was called upon to make a decision regarding teaching during the Fall Semester 2020 - 2021 and the best possible management of the COVID-19 disease.

In brief, the following decisions were made:

1. All courses will start as scheduled on September 7, 2020 and will be conducted with physical presence and online simultaneously. More specifically:
 - a. Each audience will be divided into two groups. One group will attend the course physically and the other will attend the course remotely in real time. The two groups will take turns alternating between in person and distant learning.

It is understood that in cases where the needs of the audience, and at the same time the size of the audience and the room permit it, teaching will be carried out with physical presence only.

- b. There will be cameras in the classrooms and the lessons will be broadcasted live online (livestreaming method) for the students who will not be physically present in the classroom. Relevant information for the internet connection will be sent in time by the Information Technology Infrastructure Service.
 - c. The groups of students will be fixed for safety and health reasons and will be determined (after the completion of the registrations) by the Academic Affairs and Student Welfare Service (AASWS) in consultation with the Departments, if needed.
2. During the teaching of courses (with physical presence), all the health protocols and measures of physical and social distancing that have been announced by the Ministry of Health will be adhered to:

- a. Distance of 1 metre should be maintained between students.
 - b. Instructors should keep a distance of two meters from students.
 - c. The use of masks is mandatory for everyone. The instructor will be responsible for the implementation of the measure.
3. Instructors belonging to the vulnerable groups (as defined by the Ministry of Health) should submit relevant documentation to the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, so that special arrangements can be made for their courses.
 4. Students belonging to the vulnerable groups (as defined by the Ministry of Health) should submit relevant documentation to the Acting Head of AASWS, so that special arrangements can be made for their attendance.
 5. Regardless of the teaching method, midterm and final exams for all courses will be carried out in person.
 6. The teaching hours of the courses should be respected so that there is a reasonable amount of time in-between consecutive courses in the same room for proper disinfection / ventilation of the premises.

It is noted that instructors will receive separate briefing, and students will receive a follow-up announcement regarding teaching.

Dear members of the university community,

The management of the pandemic creates the need for the establishment of a new culture of hygiene and responsible behavior that should be respected by all. It is a matter of accountability, obligation and sense of empathy for the protection of the community, as well as our relatives and the society by extension. Our goal must be to set an example and model for the management of the pandemic; this is, after all, one of our roles as a university, as a vehicle of knowledge and positive influence.

The University of Cyprus is committed to taking all necessary actions towards safeguarding the access to education and teaching, as well as the smooth continuation of research in creative and alternative ways, with focus on the health and safety of its members.

We are aware that the situation remains volatile. We are following the developments closely and we are ready to adapt the curriculum at any time according to the conditions as they are constantly evolving. However, we all need to show the required understanding and patience, we need to comprehend the significance of these moments, but also the personal responsibility that each one of us has, in order for this semester to be completed successfully.

In light of this, I urge you all to follow the measures of hygiene and distancing both within the premises of the University, and during your social gatherings. For this reason, I urge you to move around the campus only when needed.

Likewise, in the context of the preventive measures for the management of the pandemic, the University of Cyprus will soon announce a program/system of sampling for the disease for the community, which will be carried out on a regular basis. Details will be given very soon.

I would like to emphasise that the university authorities, departments and services of the University of Cyprus are at your disposal to provide you with guidance concerning teaching in these special circumstances.

Dear students,

Dear colleagues,

I believe that COVID-19 has changed us, made us more humane, under an unprecedented situation. Distance actually brought us closer. This is the oxymoron of the pandemic, which reveals the generosity of people and their true nature, that is: to love, care, communicate and seek for new information and knowledge that will prepare them for the uncertain future. The only certain thing is the uncertainty of tomorrow and the certainty that with the knowledge and cooperation of everyone, we can move forward with more security, democracy and truth.

Each crisis is an opportunity for us to become more flexible and adaptable, to learn how to learn, and teach in creative ways.

Great new academic year to us all,

Kind regards,

Professor Tasos Christofides,

Rector