FAQs About Fall 2020 Undergraduate Classes for Students and Families

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

When will the Fall 2020 semester take place?
The Fall 2020 semester will begin on Monday, August 17, and the last day of classes will be Friday, November 13. The last day of finals will be Friday, November 20. This schedule will allow the semester to be completed and students to return home before Thanksgiving.

Are there any other changes to the academic calendar?
To accommodate the Labor Day holiday (Monday, September 7), students who have classes scheduled on Mondays will have an extra “Monday” of classes on Saturday, August 29. Other dates such as the deadlines for withdrawing from classes and registering for Spring 2021 will be revised appropriately.

Will the registration process for incoming students be affected by the new fall schedule?
The processes by which first year students and transfer students register for classes will remain unchanged. More information about that is available through this website: https://www.sandiego.edu/new-toreros/.

QUESTIONS ABOUT FALL 2020 COURSES

Will classes be in person or remote learning?
Most classes will be held in a mixed delivery mode with students attending classes in person on some days and remotely on others. This will ensure that students have in-person interactions with faculty. We plan to live stream class meetings and also make them available asynchronously. Some classes, including most LLC and TLC classes, will be delivered fully in person, and will accommodate students who cannot come to campus. Others may be entirely online. The reason for this proposed model is to lower the density in the classrooms and provide all of our students the comfort of knowing they are learning in an environment where we are observing and practicing recommend social distancing protocols.

How will I know how a specific class will be taught?
We are working to make that information available on the class schedule. You should assume that classes will have mixed delivery modes, and that all class sessions will be available online.

I’m a continuing student who already signed up for Fall 2020 classes. Will my class schedule for Fall 2020 be changed?
Classes will be offered at the daily starting times when they were originally scheduled. It will not be necessary to change your schedule.

What will happen to the USD Summer Sessions?
We are reviewing the summer schedule to determine what changes might be needed for students to complete their summer classes prior to the start of the fall semester. The goal is to offer all scheduled summer classes and finish by August 14 instead of August 21. This plan may require increases in class duration or other schedule modifications. We plan to announce the revised calendar by May 15.
QUESTIONS CONCERNING HEALTH AND SAFETY

How will physical distancing in classes be managed?
USD is working with County health officials to ensure that classroom and other spaces are safe. For example, we will shorten meeting times by 10 minutes per class to increase the time between classes. This will allow safer transition of students between classes and allow disinfecting of classrooms. We will also reduce the number of students in most classrooms to allow physical distancing as recommended by government officials. We expect that people will wear face masks in common areas. Other guidelines will be shared as they are developed.

What if the pandemic dissipates over the summer only to return in the fall? How will classes be impacted?
Government health officials caution that a resurgence of the coronavirus is likely during the flu season. In California, flu season is generally later than in the rest of the country. The revised schedule with an early start and completion before Thanksgiving is intended to minimize the impact of flu season. To accommodate the possibility that the virus may return unexpectedly early, two transition weekends will be included in the Fall 2020 calendar. If it becomes necessary to stop teaching on campus, the shift to fully remote teaching will occur around those weekends. If cancellation of some days of class are needed to accommodate the transition, additional Saturdays may be used to deliver classes or there may be additional asynchronous learning modules.

What steps will USD take to reduce the risk of a community member contracting COVID-19? What if an on-campus member of the University community tests positive for COVID-19 or has the symptoms of COVID-19?
We will follow State, County and other appropriate health guidelines on how to deal with such outbreaks. Additionally, we are planning to have quarantine spaces for people who have been exposed but are asymptomatic.

QUESTIONS FOR NEW STUDENTS

When will orientation take place for new students?
We anticipate that orientation will begin on Thursday, August 13, but we are still working on a revised orientation plan that will address move-in, orientation, and other activities for new students. Details will be provided in the coming weeks.

How will these changes affect the Living Learning Communities (LLCs) for new first-year students and Transfer Learning Communities (TLCs) for new transfer students?
All new students will continue to participate fully in an LLC or TLC. To make these experiences as rewarding as possible, we plan to have most LLC and TLC classes taught entirely in person. Students who are unable to be on campus during the fall semester may be placed in LLC/TLC classes designed for students to participate remotely.

OTHER COMMON QUESTIONS

What if I can’t attend USD in person this fall? Can I still take all of my classes?
Some students may prefer to remain at home during the fall semester for a variety of personal or wellness reasons. Those students can enroll in USD classes and will be expected to participate fully in class activities.

Can I defer attending admission to USD until Spring or Fall 2021? Will I keep my scholarship?
You should consult with your admissions counselor to gain a full understanding of the consequences of deferring your attendance.
Since many classes will include a remote learning component, what is the value proposition for a USD education in this new environment?
As the youngest independent university among the top 100 universities in the nation, our students study and collaborate in an inspiring and intimate setting. Small class sizes ensure that students have direct access to our award-winning faculty. Our contemporary Catholic values and liberal arts education help to develop ethical leaders and compassionate citizens with a global perspective. We remain dedicated to educating confident, original thinkers who are ready to make a positive difference in the world. Our high-quality instruction with our distinguished faculty will be further enhanced as 125 classrooms across campus are being upgraded with the latest technology. Faculty are being further trained to deliver high-quality instruction remotely. Whether through remote learning or engaging with students in person, many campus offices are available to serve students. The fall semester will include live streamed classes from faculty, and most classes will include an in-person element. Students will continue to earn USD academic credit and make progress toward their highly valued USD degree.

Are there any exciting changes on campus that we can expect for the fall semester?
Yes! The Copley Library renovation is on track to be completed this fall, and will provide places for active learning, teaching, collaboration and research, as well as spaces for classes, group projects, discussions, events and exhibits. Among the many new offerings are 38 small group study rooms, individual seating for 1,000 users and a lounge/reading room. As one of the most beloved spaces on campus, the Mother Hill Reading Room will remain unchanged.

The Learning Commons — a new two-story, 36,000 square-foot building adjacent to Copley Library — is also on track to open in Fall 2020. It gives students modern, flexible classrooms that feature updated room designs, cutting-edge technology that enhances collaborative learning experiences as well as nine collaborative study spaces and 13 classrooms.

I am an international student. How will these changes affect my attendance at USD?
International students should work with their counselor in the Office of International Students and Scholars to ensure that they will be able to attend classes in the fall in San Diego, or from home.

In the time since I received financial aid information from USD, my family’s circumstances have changed. What should I do?
If your family has experienced change in finances, please review and submit the 20/21 Special Circumstances Appeal form. For additional assistance, email the Office of Financial Aid at onestop@sandiego.edu.