Dear Graduate Students,

Fortunately, combatting COVID-19 has been more successful than anyone anticipated. Preparations for the fall semester are underway and hold the promise for a more normal campus experience. We expect all our indoor and outdoor spaces to be at full capacity and look forward to seeing everyone in person!

Preparing for Fall 2021

Updated Requirements for Thesis or Dissertation Defense

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Kent State University put a temporary policy in place for remote participation in thesis and dissertation defense during academic year 2020-2021. Beginning this fall semester, we will revert back to the existing policy for thesis and dissertation defenses. Under this policy, all members of a dissertation or thesis committee will be required to be in-person. If necessary, this policy allows for remote participation in instances where there is a compelling reason as to why the committee cannot be physically present, with prior approval.

COVID-19 Vaccinations

As a reminder, COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost to the Kent State community and family members at the DeWeese Health Center. Vaccines are our best path to return to normal this fall semester. We strongly encourage you to Flash Your Arm and get vaccinated. This is how Flashes Take Care of Flashes. Now is the time to get vaccinated so that we can all enjoy a healthy and safe fall semester! Please keep in mind that the university will continue to adhere to public health recommendations from federal, state and local health agencies to determine the best course of action for the Kent State community. For more information and to stay up to date, please visit Kent State’s webpage on COVID-19 Prevention Information.

New COVID-19 Protocols

According to the most current COVID-19 protocols, face coverings are not required to be worn by fully-vaccinated individuals – except in health care settings or when traveling via public transportation. We continue to ask non-vaccinated individuals to wear face coverings.

If you are an instructor, teaching assistant, or interact with students in another capacity, you may ask students to wear a face covering but cannot require them to do so.

It is our expectation that as a courtesy, anyone, if asked, would be willing to wear a face covering indoors to alleviate the concerns of those less comfortable around others who are not wearing face coverings. We hope that the Kent State community will be considerate and bear in mind the importance of our culture of care – Flashes Take Care of Flashes.
Preparing for Spring 2022

With Kent State University on its way back to pre-COVID conditions this fall, it is time to start thinking about spring semester 2022! We are expecting that next spring, Kent State will have a typical, pre-COVID semester. And it’s not too early to begin preparing for a fully in-person semester. We hope you are just as excited about things returning to normal as we are.

While we are anticipating a fully open campus with in-person events and classes, what should graduate student instructors and teaching assistants expect for Spring 2022?

- A vibrant campus filled with students, faculty and staff.
- A full array of in-person classes.
- Graduate student instructors once again able to meet with students, supporting student educational experiences and participating in students’ growth as citizens of the world.
- Graduate student instructors engaging and exchanging ideas with students and colleagues, providing mutual support and encouragement in the intellectual life of students and peers on campus.

Please note that for spring semester 2022, all graduate student instructors will be expected to be present and teach in-person as assigned.

At this critical time, please consider ways in which students can be fostered beyond the classroom.

Your presence on campus as a graduate student instructor allows students to connect, feel at home and, in the case of our traditional undergraduate students, transition from adolescents to adults. We encourage you to think of the fall semester as a bridge to the future your academic unit envisions at Kent State. This is an opportune time to consider the ways in which you want to incorporate what you learned during the pandemic into your courses and curricula. Think holistically about your courses, teaching style and the modalities in which you teach.

We realize that many people may be experiencing anxiety and stress regarding the return to campus this fall. If you need to talk, feel free to call 330-672-2487 or schedule an appointment online with Kent State’s Counseling and Psychological Services. Business hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. You can also review this updated list of available mental health resources.

Thank you,

Manfred H. M. van Dulmen, Ph.D.
Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of Graduate Studies