



# Seat Limits During COVID

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Email your completed presentation checklist to the Faculty Senate chair by their specified deadline.

## TYPE OF AGENDA ITEM

- Information Item (update on projects)
- Action Item
  - Evaluation, Promotion, Tenure
  - Professional Development (PIP, sabbatical, travel, workshops...)
  - Recommend procedure change by another committee or individual that does not require to the GP Manual
- Feedback request (for ultimate decision by another committee or individual)
  - Calendar and workload (scheduling, office hour, online, ...)
  - Course/program assessment (assessments, APR, ...)
  - Other:
- Policy or Procedure change that requires change to the GP Manual (requires approval by College Affairs or Academic Affairs)
- Other:

## Proposal Overview: *(continue on additional pages as needed)*

We propose that courses taught in the Remote format be limited to no more than 25 students.

While research on class size and student success in remote/synchronous online courses is ongoing, there is a body of research on course size in online classes. Such research supports the conclusion that class size is an important consideration. Class size can be a factor in a student's course experience and outcomes, as well as in an instructor's experience teaching a course (Lowenthal, Nyland, Jung, Dunlap, & Kepka, 2019). The reason for this is that class size is

positively correlated with the amount and quality of interaction between instructors and students in the course (Parks-Stamm et al., 2017). Both class size and the amount of instructor participation had a significant effect on student engagement in the course and that these factors were related to each other. In other words, smaller class sizes resulted in greater faculty participation and thus greater student engagement (Parks-Stamm et al., 2017). While research findings on optimal class size vary (Sorenson, 2015) (Taft, Perkowski, & Martin, 2011), some recommended size ranges appear repeatedly, ranging from 12-20 students. Classes within this range fostered the correct balance of interaction in the course — not so large that students feel lost and disconnected and not so small that there are too few opportunities for interaction.

What little I could find about class size and student performance in remote synchronous classes, focused on the impact of class size on synchronous discussions in which they can see each other on the screen. A small class size is a necessity in a synchronous environment because students feel more engaged with the material and more connected with their professors and fellow students when there are fewer faces on the screen. Too many faces on the screen results in decreased engagement and participation.

(<https://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/articles/2014/09/26/experts-say-class-size-can-matter-for-online-students>)

On the zoom platform currently used by the majority of COCC classes, 15 faces can appear on a screen simultaneously. Ideally, we should set remote synchronous class sizes at 15 to allow students to see each other on one screen. However, that may be fiscally impractical. A class size of 25 or lower could provide a balance between fiscal necessity and a class environment that promotes student and faculty engagement and interaction.

#### Citations:

Haynie, D. (2014). Experts say class size matters for online students. US News & World Reports. Retrieved from

<https://www.usnews.com/education/online-education/articles/2014/09/26/experts-say-class-size-can-matter-for-online-students>

Lowenthal, P. R., Nyland, R., Jung, E., Dunlap, J. C., & Kepka, J. (2019). Does class size matter? An exploration into faculty perceptions of teaching high-enrollment online courses. *The American Journal of Distance Education*, 33(3). 152-168. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08923647.2019.1610262>

Parks-Stamm, E. J., Zafonte, M. and Palenque, S. M. (2017), The effects of instructor participation and class size on student participation in an online class discussion forum. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 48: 1250-1259. doi:10.1111/bjet.12512

Sorenson, C. (2015). An examination of the relationship between online class size and instructor performance. *Journal of Educators Online*, 12(1), 140-159. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1051032.pdf>

Taft, S. H., Perkowski, T., & Martin, L. S. (2011). A Framework for Evaluating Class Size in Online Education. *The Quarterly Review of Distance Education*, 12(3), 181-197. Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.kent.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www...>