Learning & Teaching at Yale SOM

The following statements describe key aspects of what we anticipate delivering this fall. Though these are our current plans, we will need to remain flexible if and when conditions change. For questions about classroom technology, please contact: somit@yale.edu. For other questions about student life, please contact: som.aasl@yale.edu.

Current Status

Yale SOM plans to operate in a ‘hybrid’ mode in Fall 2020.

Key characteristics:

1. All courses will be assigned a classroom in Evans Hall and a biweekly time-slot. The occupancy limit of the classroom will be dictated by prevailing state and University health directives, and will be considerably lower than normal capacity.
2. Some professors will teach from the assigned classroom, others from a remote location via Zoom, and yet others may vary their location during the semester. Regardless of the professor’s location, the classroom assigned to each course will allow a subset of students to assemble in person.
3. Most courses will have some students participating only from remote locations via Zoom, some from distant time zones.
4. A/B schedules: Students located in New Haven and able to participate in person will each be assigned the designation ‘A’ or ‘B’.
5. Faculty teaching their courses from the designated classrooms will determine whether students attending in person should also be logged into the Zoom session from laptops/tablets, with speakers muted and headphones on. (When faculty are teaching from a remote location, all students, including those in the classroom, must be on Zoom.) Students should therefore bring their laptops and headphones to Evans Hall.
6. To keep classroom attendance strictly within mandated occupancy limits, and to de-densify the population in the common spaces of Evans Hall, students will not be allowed in the building outside their designated ‘in-person’ days as per the A/B schedule.
7. All students in Evans Hall will be required to wear a mask at all times and to maintain a minimum of 6 feet social distance from others, both inside classrooms and in the building’s common spaces.

Other considerations:

Cohorts & Learning Teams: For the full-time MBA program, we are organizing around five cohorts in AY 2020-21. Cohorts will be designed using the usual criteria for bringing diverse perspectives into the classroom; this is also true of learning teams. Students will be assigned to a cohort and will be expected to take all of their core courses with that cohort, as usual. There will be students who need to begin their instruction from a distant time zone; we do not yet know how many. For those students, we will offer some flexibility in the cohort to which they are assigned and, therefore, the schedule to which they are committed. A/B assignments made for first-year MBA students will attempt to hold learning teams constant to provide continuity in classrooms and learning activities. One difference to note, though, is that cohorts may be a bit uneven in size since the classrooms we’re deploying for core cohorts are not all equal in their capacity; the expected range will be between 64 and 72 students per cohort.

Class Schedules: In an effort to thin-out the population in Evans Hall, we are planning to begin classes a little earlier—8 am rather than 8:30—and will end later in the afternoon. The breaks between slots will be a bit longer so that classrooms can be cleaned and to provide more screen rest for those joining via Zoom. We will also stagger course schedules, between the core and electives, so demand on common areas and bathrooms will be reduced during breaks. The lunch period will be extended as well to provide substantial overlap between the core and elective schedules.

MBA core courses:

The classrooms assigned to MBA core courses will have adequate seating capacity to allow half the population of each cohort to attend the class in person while maintaining social distance. State or University regulations, however, may place a stricter limit on classroom occupancy. If this should happen, we will need to limit in-person attendance to a frequency less than once weekly. MBA learning teams will be kept intact within the ‘A’ and ‘B’ groups, and half the teams in each group will be swapped with each other in fall-2 to give each student the chance to interact with the rest of the cohort during the fall semester.

SOM electives and the course auction:

Enrollment in most SOM electives is mediated through the course auction. Because the physical occupancy limits of classrooms might change during the semester, we will operate the course auction with the following modifications:

- Course capacity and in-person attendance limit: The enrollment capacity for each course will be determined primarily by pedagogical considerations, and is likely to be greater than the number of students allowed in the classroom on the A/B schedule. This means that if enrollment exceeds the A/B capacity, some students will be required to take the class fully online, as described below.
- Clearing price and selection for in-person attendance: In each round of the auction, course capacity will be the total enrollment limit, not the A/B capacity. The clearing price for each round will be determined with respect to this capacity (as the first losing bid, per standard auction practice). If at the end of the auction, after the waitlist has been processed, enrollment exceeds the A/B capacity, an equal number of ‘A’ and ‘B’ students will be selected for the A/B schedule of in-person participation in descending order of the bid placed for the course in the round in which the bid succeeded. This bid amount, though it will not affect the clearing price, will determine the student’s chances of being able to participate in the course in the A/B schedule. Students not selected for the A/B schedule will participate in the course fully online. Though we will continue to welcome non-SOM students in our courses, only SOM students will be able attend the courses in person.
- We will inform you of your ‘A’ or ‘B’ designation after Round 1 of the auction concludes and before the first day of class. This assignment will determine how close the bid thresholds will be for the ‘A’ and ‘B’ subpopulations chosen for in-person participation in each course, and we will seek to minimize the gap between these selection thresholds in making the ‘A’ and ‘B’ assignments. Once the ‘A’ and ‘B’ assignments are made, they will stay invariant for the term, but your final status as either an A/B participant or a fully online participant in each course will be
made only at the end of the auction. After each round, we will inform you whether you can attend the next class session of the course in person or online.

- If you are assigned to fully online enrollment for a course, you will be allowed to remain in Evans Hall on your designated in-person day. This will be especially useful if you have an in-person class later in the day.
- GNAM courses offered through the course auction will be fully online, with no classroom assigned.

Community Contacts

Are you a student? Please send questions to: som.aasl@yale.edu
Are you a faculty or staff member? Please send questions to: somhr@yale.edu
Are you an alumnus? Please send questions to: yalesomalumni@yale.edu
Are you a recruiter? Please send questions to: som.recruiting@yale.edu