

School of Data, Mathematical, and Statistical Sciences (SDMSS)

College of Sciences

Office Hours Policy

(Passed on September 4, 2026)

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes minimum office hour requirements and guidelines for all instructional personnel within SDMSS (tenured, tenure-earning, instructors, lecturers, postdocs, visiting faculty, adjuncts, and GTAs serving as instructors of record). Throughout this document, 'course' refers to a standard 3- or 4-credit-hour teaching assignment.

2. Weekly Office Hour Minimums & Allocation

- **Base Requirements:** To ensure equitable access across course loads while avoiding time fragmentation, Instructors of Record will schedule minimum weekly office hours based on the total number of assigned courses as follows:

- **1 Course:** 2.0 hours per week
- **2 Courses:** 3.0 hours per week
- **3 Courses:** 4.0 hours per week
- **4 or More Courses:** 5.0 hours per week

Note: All scheduled office hours must be interactive and synchronous. General email monitoring does not count toward required live office hours. All scheduled office hours must be made available to all students enrolled in any course taught by the instructor during that term.

- **Modality Allocations:**

- **In-Person Courses:** Faculty assigned to teach in-person courses must hold at least 50% of their total required office hours in person.
- **Online / Mixed-Mode Courses:** Faculty assigned exclusively to online or mixed-mode courses must hold a minimum of 1.0 hour per week in person on campus to accommodate students desiring face-to-face assistance. Remaining required hours may be held virtually via UCF-approved platforms (e.g., Zoom, Teams).
- **Dual-Modality Access:** Dual-modality access (e.g., offering virtual access alongside in-person office hours) is permitted and encouraged for online or mixed-mode courses. Faculty may provide a standing virtual link or offer virtual access during scheduled office hours upon student request.

- **Summer Term Exemption:** Instructors of Record teaching summer courses delivered entirely online may hold office hours entirely online.

3. Scheduling, Timing, and Location

- **Operating Window & Distribution:** Office hours should primarily be scheduled across at least two different days per week during normal university operating hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM). For in-person or mixed-mode classes, instructors are required to schedule at least one office hour session on class days.

- **Large Class Location Flexibility:** For instructors teaching high-enrollment courses (e.g., 50+ students) where standard individual office spaces are insufficient, in-person office hours may be held in open school spaces, vacant classrooms, or designated learning/tutoring centers upon coordination with the Main Office. All approved alternative office-hour locations must be specified in the course syllabus in accordance with university requirements regarding the communication of office-hour information.
- **Evening Extension (Post-5:00 PM):** To support working graduate students (e.g., MS Statistics, PhD Big Data Analytics) and late afternoon/evening programs, office hours may extend past 5:00 PM under the following conditions:
 - Post-5:00 PM hours must either directly precede or directly follow a scheduled evening class or GTA activity.
 - Evening office hour blocks should not exceed 1.0 consecutive hour per session.
- **By Appointment:** All course syllabi must state baseline office hours and include language regarding additional availability. To manage expectations, syllabi should state:

"Students may request a meeting with the instructor outside of regular office hours in case of scheduling conflicts. The instructor will make every reasonable effort to accommodate such requests; however, additional appointments are offered at the instructor's discretion and subject to availability."

4. Communication, Cancellations, and Governance

- **Reporting:** Office hour schedules, room locations, and virtual access instructions must be submitted to the SDMSS Main Office, posted outside physical office doors, and published in course syllabi and Webcourses prior to the start of each semester. For security purposes, actual meeting links/URLs should be published within Webcourses rather than posted on physical doors.

Note: Seminar/Colloquium Adjustment Window: Faculty whose office hours depend on finalized school seminar or colloquium schedules may post provisional office hours for Week 1, provided the final schedule is published in Canvas and submitted to the Main Office no later than the end of the first week of classes.
- **Cancellations & Adjustments:** Instructors are expected to hold scheduled office hours consistently. Recognizing that routine professional conflicts arise:
 - **Routine/Short-Term Adjustments:** For one-time meeting conflicts, minor time shifts, or routine schedule adjustments, instructors must notify students via Webcourses/Canvas as far in advance as possible and offer an alternative virtual or in-person makeup time where feasible. Formal Director approval or sick leave documentation is not required for routine adjustments. If a physical in-person office hour is cancelled entirely, a quick courtesy notice should be sent to the Main Office so administrative staff can assist walk-in students.
 - **Extended Absences:** Multi-day or extended absences (e.g., conference travel, medical leave, or sustained schedule disruptions) require prior approval from the School Director and coordination with the Main Office to ensure appropriate instructional coverage and student communication.
- **Exceptions:** Reductions or permanent structural adjustments below required weekly minimums, require prior written authorization from the School Director and notification to the College of Sciences administration