

September 19, 2021

Update from the Vice Rector: opening of the 2021/22 academic year

Dear students,

We look forward with excitement to the opening of the 2021/22 academic year and are currently making final preparations. We welcome our new students and wish you all a productive and enjoyable academic year.

We are greatly encouraged by the fact that the new year will begin on time, despite the shadow of the pandemic and the inevitable uncertainties it brings to all decisions and activities.

As I wrote to you in my previous letter, I wish to emphasize that the university intends to conduct frontal instruction on campus. The great majority of classes will be held in the classroom, with both lecturers and students present.

This is not only an effort to resume our normal personal and academic lives, but also an attempt to provide you, our dear students, with a genuine academic experience at every level. Frontal instruction on campus is the core of the university's activities, based on a longstanding tradition of communal learning, productive interactivity, and direct academic discourse among students, and between students and their teachers. Shared learning enhances the social fabric of the student community on campus and contributes to both personal and social empowerment.

Our preparations for the new academic year closely follow the directives of the Ministry of Health. Just like you, we keep track of all developments related to the pandemic and will update our instructions and operations as needed.

The TAU campus has been designated a 'Green Pass area'. To enter the campus, classrooms, libraries, labs etc. we must all present a Green Pass or a negative Covid-19 test – valid as directed by the Ministry of Health. Masks must always be worn in classrooms and other indoor spaces on campus.

The Ministry of Health also requires us to provide distance learning options for courses in which this is feasible (for students who don't have a Green Pass or a valid negative Covid-19 test and cannot enter the campus). Since we believe that lesson recordings have a significant educational value in their own right, we will make them available to all students.

However, although as a general rule, the aim is for classes to be accessed through recordings, there will be classes that will be live broadcast via zoom without being recorded. Notice of live classes will be given to students at the beginning of the semester.

I wish to emphasize that practical training courses as well as laboratories and small discussion-based courses (like advanced-level seminars), in which students cannot learn or carry out assignments without being physically present, will be conducted on campus in the frontal mode, with no option for distance learning. All these courses will require

compliance with the Green Pass directives. Students who are sick or in isolation should contact their academic units for assistance in obtaining missed study materials.

In other classes where physical attendance is required by the units or lecturers (when this is specified in the guidebook or syllabus), the lecturer may check attendance at the beginning of each session and discontinue the participation of students who were absent without approval or some other justified reason, as specified in the bylaws. Students unable to come to campus because they don't have a Green Pass or a valid Covid-19 test should speak directly to the lecturer about their expected absence. In such cases distance learning will be made available as described above – through either live transmission or recordings.

Since, regardless of the pandemic and its constraints, we aim to examine and promote alternative teaching methods, some courses will be delivered online, and some will include digital elements – both synchronous and asynchronous, alongside hybrid teaching. Lists of these courses appear in the guidebooks published by the academic units.

In addition, we are taking the necessary steps to assist students at risk or who cannot be vaccinated, first of all by strictly maintaining a Green Pass environment for them. Whenever needed, students may ask the offices of their units for further clarifications.

Let me once again express my sincere hope that in the coming academic year we will resume our time-honored practices in teaching, learning, and research, enabling us all to restore the robustness and vigor of our campus community – which is such an important building block of Israeli society.

Taught programs that have international students who are presently barred by regulation from entering Israel, the program would have the option to change the teaching method in consideration of these students. Each program will notify its students of its specific policy.

I wish to thank the Student Union for its valuable assistance in the mission we have undertaken.

Wishing you all a healthy, productive, and successful academic year.



Prof. Eyal Zisser

Vice Rector