



## OLLI Fact Sheet for Instructors

Updated January, 2023

Review this document for tips and information on teaching your OLLI course.

**Question: What the heck is OLLI, anyway?**

**Answer:** OLLI offers non-credit courses for (mostly) retired people.

Officially, OLLI – the **O**sher **L**ifelong **L**earning **I**nstitute – is a member-driven group that offers non-credit courses and other activities for lifelong learners, primarily those 50 years of age and older. OLLI’s motto is “Curiosity never retires.”

**Question: Anything special I should know about teaching an OLLI course?**

**Answer:** OLLI members enroll in courses to learn – but not to master a subject. They are generally engaged and educated people who appreciate having their memories refreshed about something they learned in the past, who value new insights and perspectives and who enjoy learning new facts and ideas. If you “assign” outside readings, members may ignore them. But to help them understand and remember, good handouts are always welcome. There is more about handouts below. And if you even dare to think about exams...well, just forget it.

Because you will meet with the OLLI class members only a few times, it’s probably not as essential to spend time building a community of learners as it is in a semester-long setting. OLLI students are engaged, and they will become that community almost instinctively.

And because most OLLI courses draw more than 25 students, it can be difficult to use an extremely interactive teaching approach. OLLI students are used to a primarily lecture format except in cases of hands-on activities. *They usually expect an informal lecture with visual illustrations and time for questions, comments and discussion.* That’s become the OLLI standard.

But visual aids are not an absolute requirement; if you are an accomplished lecturer/instructor who disdains such tools, we’re happy to have you anyway.

**Question: What else do I need to know?**

**Answer:** Many OLLI courses are taught multi-format with some students in the classroom and others attending on Zoom. Other courses are Zoom only or in person only. If you have already taught multi-format courses, you know it can require a few adjustments from the presenter.

You don’t need to know how to run AV equipment or a Zoom meeting to teach a Zoom only course or a multi-format course. An OLLI Zoom host is present in every course to handle that. In

the case of Zoom only courses, the Zoom host will probably be in a different location, so you can deliver Zoom lectures from home, even in your PJs (if you must). Whether Zoom or multi-format, the Zoom host will also monitor the Zoom chat for questions and comments and will relay them to you at the appropriate time.

In a multi-format course, try to remember to look at the classroom camera periodically and even to address the Zoom audience specifically from time to time. The Zoom participants will see the same PowerPoint or other projected visuals that the people in the classroom see, but if you choose to write on the whiteboard or use some other non-digital display, please talk with the Zoom host to remind them to adjust the camera angle for the Zoom students. And if you don't live in the area and/or can't be present in person, you can teach via Zoom to both in-person and Zoom participants. More on that coming up!

**Question: Any “housekeeping” I should be aware of?**

**Answer:** Well, yes.

All OLLI classrooms are equipped with computers and projectors if you wish to show visuals. Just bring your visuals on a USB flash drive (also known as a thumb drive). Someone on site will help you load them and will be sure that both the students in the classroom and those on Zoom can see them. (More information below.) Especially for your first time, plan to arrive 30 minutes before class starts, having made prior arrangements with your OLLI Zoom host and OLLI facilitator.

If you are teaching a Zoom only class from your home or office, you may choose to share your screen and show your visuals from your own computer. Or you may email the file to the Zoom host or facilitator and ask that person to share their screen and advance slides when you tell them to.

If you are planning to play video or music files from the internet, please put a link to the files into your PowerPoint to avoid potential problems and delays.

OLLI members usually have plenty of questions and comments. Before starting your class, let the members know if you would like them to hold their questions until times that you designate – at the midpoint, at the end or at several points throughout the presentation. If you prefer to take questions as they arise, please make that clear.

In the multi-format course, whether the question comes from someone in the classroom or someone on Zoom, *please repeat the question* before responding. It can be a challenge for people on Zoom to actively participate in the class, and it's a lot harder if they can't hear the questions being asked in the classroom. Consider, too, that the Zoom folks can become frustrated with extensive classroom back and forth.

Offer a five-minute break at approximately the midpoint of the 90-minute class.

If you are speaking about a controversial topic – and there are plenty of those these days – please remind people at the start that comments must be respectful of others and that no one

should monopolize class time. If the latter happens, suggest tactfully that the student may wish to continue the conversation with you after class.

**Question: Who is this person I see identified as a “facilitator”?**

**Answer:** Volunteer facilitators (who are OLLI members) develop courses that are one- to six- sessions in length on a given topic. The facilitator identifies potential instructors and is most likely the individual who recruited you to teach at least one of the sessions. As may have happened when you were seduced, the course outline is often a product of facilitator and instructor working together, especially if one person delivers all the classes.

Here’s what else facilitators do:

- Work with you and the OLLI program coordinator to reserve the time and dates and determine a location for the course – based on your schedule and considering other courses scheduled at your preferred date and time. The facilitator will notify you once the location has been determined.
- Ask for your help to complete the **OLLI Course Description Worksheet**, which provides the details needed to publish the course in the OLLI course catalog and online registration system. We appreciate your providing all requested information well in advance so the facilitator can meet the deadlines established by the OLLI office.
- Ask for your cell phone number and give you their own. Your number will not be published in the OLLI catalog, but if you and the facilitator have each other’s phone numbers, it can prevent last-minute disasters.
- Request a brief bio they will use to introduce you at the beginning of the first class.
- Help you determine the best delivery format for your course – multi-format, in person only or Zoom only.

**Question: Tell me more about the technology. What’s available? How hard is it to use?**

**Answer:** Not to worry! It’s not hard. We will take care of you.

- OLLI at UNL offers many of its courses in a classroom within the Newkirk Human Sciences Building (formerly the College of Education and Human Sciences Building) on UNL’s East Campus, 1650 N. 35th Street, Room 137. This room accommodates up to 33 people in person and has all the fancy equipment to allow others to attend via Zoom. And you don’t have to figure out how to make the system work. OLLI will provide a “Zoom host” who will run the technology for you.
- In addition, OLLI provides parking on the UNL East Campus. If you need a parking permit, please contact the OLLI office at 402-472-6265.
- The OLLI Program Coordinator will work with your facilitator to determine the best location for your course, considering your needs as well as other courses at the same date/time. The OLLI office makes all final decisions on course location.
- *PLEASE* arrive *at least* 15 minutes before the class to test the AV equipment for each lecture and arrive even earlier before your first session.
- If you want to test the classroom and equipment before the first day of class, just call the OLLI office 402-472-6265 to schedule a time.

**Question: What if I have handouts for the class?**

**Answer:** Please email all handouts to the OLLI office *at least one week* before the start date of the course and copy your facilitator. The OLLI office will email the handouts to the class as per your specifications.

If you develop handouts as you go along, in response to questions and comments from class members, email those to the OLLI office as well. The office will email those handouts to the class in as timely a manner as possible.

Please do not bring paper handouts to class (without also emailing them) if you're teaching in the multi-format fashion. We always ensure Zoom participants have the same information as in person participants – and at the same time.

**Question: What if I want to send some information to everyone in the class?**

**Answer:** If you wish to contact all members of the class via email, please send your message to your facilitator and to the OLLI office. The OLLI staff will send the email to the class.

**Question: What if it snows? What if I get sick and can't teach on a given day?**

**Answer:** If you must cancel a class or change a date or time for any reason, please contact your facilitator and/or the OLLI office as soon as possible. OLLI will notify the members. All is not lost. It is often possible to make up the missed day. These arrangements are made jointly by you, the facilitator, and the OLLI office.

In the event of bad weather, OLLI will cancel in-person only and multi-format classes and post information on the OLLI website ([olli.unl.edu](http://olli.unl.edu)). Or you may call the OLLI office after 8 a.m. Zoom only classes may take place.

If Lincoln Public Schools or UNL is closed or starts late due to weather conditions, OLLI cancels its courses and events. Rarely, OLLI may cancel its courses or events even if the schools are open.

**Question: Anything else I should know?**

**Answer:** OLLI members register ahead of time for courses, which are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. If your course is full, please do not grant a space to someone who approaches you personally with the request to join. If the course is multi-format or Zoom only, direct such lost members to register for the class on Zoom.

Members pay a modest fee for courses; the money is used to cover space rental and other programming costs.

With OLLI members being past 55 or so, not all hear as well as typical college students; therefore, one of the most common problems for OLLI students is not being able to hear the instructor. Especially if you typically need to use a microphone for your presentations or if you're leading an outdoor tour, contact the OLLI office to discuss equipment options.

**Many, many thanks for sharing your experience and expertise with OLLI!**