



## How to Facilitate an OLLI Course

As an OLLI course facilitator, your job is to plan and organize the course. That includes:

- Identifying a topic and enlisting an instructor.
- Working with the instructor and OLLI program coordinator to schedule dates, times and delivery method.
- Serving as emcee for the course, introducing the instructor and welcoming class members.
- Taking care of administrative details like rosters and sign-in.

### **Where do I start to find a topic for a course?**

#### **Join a curriculum team**

The OLLI Curriculum Committee is divided into eight topical teams: Arts, Contemporary Issues, Health and Wellness, History, Language and Literature, Lifestyles, Religion and Science. Your fellow team members can help you develop course topics and find people to teach the courses. And you can do the same for them.

#### **Besides that, you can:**

- Jot down topics you're curious about.
- Pay attention to the news for potential topics OR expert presenters. The process can start from either end.
- Get ideas from friends or other curriculum team members.
- Review the summaries of ideas submitted through OLLI course evaluations, located on the OLLI SharePoint site. Contact the OLLI program coordinator for access.

*Tip for finding topics and speakers:* Anyone can subscribe to *Nebraska Today*, a twice per week email newsletter from which you can learn about UNL faculty who are doing research or teaching classes that may be adaptable to an OLLI course. Then you can contact the faculty member featured there to explore the possibility of their teaching for OLLI. To subscribe to the newsletter, just fill in your email address on this page: <http://news.unl.edu/newsrooms/1/subscribe/>.

Also, UNL Communications can help you find the right speaker for a particular topic. See **Expert Contacts at UNL Communications on the OLLI website under the Committee Resources tab** for contact information

All **documents referred to below and in red font** are available on the **olli.unl.edu** website on the "Curriculum Resources" page, located at the right side of the red bar, and via this link: <https://olli.unl.edu/curriculum-resources/>

#### **You have a topic in mind. Now what?**

- Propose your idea to your fellow curriculum team members and get their input. You do not need their official approval, but they can often help you find resources.

- Consider how many sessions (from one to six) would be ideal to cover the topic.
- Determine which OLLI term you would like to schedule the course.
- Work with the OLLI program coordinator to identify dates and times and the appropriate term.
- Work with the program coordinator to determine the best delivery method: in-person only, Zoom only or multi-format.
- Identify an instructor or multiple instructors as appropriate.
- Send an email to the instructor, introducing yourself and explaining what OLLI is and what you're asking for. (Sample language below.)
  - *I am a member of OLLI, the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UNL. Briefly, OLLI offers noncredit classes for retired people. We have more than 1,500 members and offer more than 70 different courses in each of our five terms; each term lasts six weeks.*
  - *I am writing to ask if you would be willing to teach a course on XXXXX. (May add here how you heard about this person and topic.) We are currently planning courses for Term X, which runs from DATES HERE.*
  - *OLLI courses can be one 90-minute session or six 90-minute sessions or any number in between. I hope you would be willing to teach NUMBER OF SESSIONS classes on TOPIC. I would like to suggest these DATES/TIMES. I am sorry that OLLI does not offer payment to its instructors, but that practice allows us to keep our fees low and our learning opportunities accessible.*
  - *Please let me know if you're willing to consider this and what fits best into your schedule. It's important to reserve the day/time slots as soon as possible. Then later we will put together a course description for the OLLI catalog.*
  - You may need to negotiate with the instructor regarding number of sessions and dates/times. This can be a lengthy process that requires all of your skills as a polite nag. Be sure to let the instructor know that virtually all OLLI courses begin at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. or 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.
  - Once you and the instructor have agreed on the dates and times the course will be offered, email the OLLI program coordinator to reserve it on the schedule or "grid."
  - ***Reserve your spot as soon as you and the instructor have set the dates/time. Do NOT wait until the Course Description Worksheet deadline to reserve dates and times for your course.***
  - Here's what you'll need to reserve a slot on the schedule/grid:
    - Working title for the course.
    - Calendar dates, including day of the week/time of the day.
    - Name of facilitator.
    - Delivery method – in person only, Zoom only or multi-format.

### ***Completing the course description worksheet***

The worksheet is available on the [olli.unl.edu](http://olli.unl.edu) website under Committee Resources.

- Ask the instructor for a title (42 characters or fewer) and course description (150 words or fewer) to include on the worksheet.
- Ask the instructor for a brief bio you will use to introduce them.
- BE SURE to send the instructor the **OLLI Facts for Instructors** document to provide background on OLLI and useful tips for teaching an OLLI course.
- Let the instructor know OLLI members appreciate a course that includes a visual component.
- Send the instructor **Pointers for PowerPoint Presentations** for slide preparation tips.

- If the instructor needs help creating the PowerPoint, offer to help them yourself or encourage them to contact the OLLI program coordinator for assistance.
- Ensure the instructor knows the font size should be big enough to read from the rear of an auditorium and that they should summarize content, not just read the slides.
- In the rare instance that the instructor plans to use a visual presentation program other than PowerPoint, be sure to notify the OLLI program coordinator ahead of time. Google Slides is also a good option.
- Encourage the instructor to plan a five-minute break near the middle of their presentation.
- Ask the instructor whether they will take questions throughout or prefer participants save questions until the end. Let the instructor know that in Zoom-only or multi-format courses, the Zoom hosts monitor the chat and orally ask the Zoomers' questions unless the instructor requests a different procedure.
- Either the instructor or you, the facilitator, must tell the class clearly at the start of each session how they should ask questions or make comments.

***Don't forget this step:***

BE SURE to exchange cell phone numbers with the instructor in case you need to get in touch with each other at the last minute. Panic ensues if you cannot communicate in an emergency.

- You can assure the instructors that their phone numbers will not be published in the catalog. They're for OLLI's internal use only.
- You'll also need every instructor's email address and the title/credentials that qualify the person to teach the course. All that goes on the OLLI Course Description Worksheet.

***Now you're ready for the OLLI paperwork.***

- Refer to the [Planning Schedule](#) for paperwork deadlines.
- Submit the [Course Description Worksheet](#) to the OLLI program coordinator before the published deadline – as soon as your instructor is confirmed and your catchy-but-accurate name and course description are ready.
- Include each instructor's name, title and contact information, including email and cell phone number.
  - Please complete the [Course Description Worksheet](#) yourself if you are able to do so. This is not something the OLLI program coordinator should have to do.
- Facilitators may recommend or request to the OLLI program coordinator that a certain room be reserved but should **not** make arrangements with a facility; OLLI staff is responsible for scheduling facilities for all OLLI courses and events. Check for your course location when the catalog comes out; then let your instructor know where the course will meet.
- Occasionally, additional fees will be necessary to cover the cost of facilities, equipment use and/or supplies. Work with the OLLI office regarding additional fees, then be sure to include these additional costs on the Course Description Worksheet.
- A course syllabus is not required, but if your course is multiple sessions *and* uses multiple instructors, a syllabus can be helpful for the participants. If you decide to distribute a syllabus, please use the [Course Syllabus Worksheet](#) posted on the OLLI website under the [Committee Resources](#) tab. Please consult the Planning Schedule for due dates (usually two to three weeks before the first day of class). Submission at the same time as the [Course Description Worksheet](#) is a best practice.
- Within the ***Syllabus***:
  - Include a course title and a one- to two-sentence description for each week's class.

- Use the appropriate format; there's one for single instructors and a different one for multiple instructors. See the OLLI website's **Committee Resources page** for the different forms. If the course uses multiple instructors, you may wish to have the instructors write the descriptions of their own sessions.
- BE SURE to use the OLLI format rather than whatever format the instructor provides you.
- The OLLI office will email syllabi to course participants before the first day of class.
- If an instructor offers handouts, email them to the OLLI office at least **one week prior** to the first class session. All handouts are emailed, whether the course is in person only, Zoom only or multi-format. Discourage an instructor from bringing paper handouts, catalogs, brochures, etc. with them for multi-format courses.
- Many instructors are willing to share their PowerPoint slides with the class at the end of the course. Please ask the instructor to email them to you and then forward them to the program associate in the OLLI office. The material will be emailed to everyone who was registered in the course.

***The OLLI office will automatically register you for the course(s) you are facilitating.***

### ***What do I do as the course gets closer?***

*A week or more before the first class session:*

- Email (preferable) or call the instructor to remind them about the coming class session – including dates, times and location – and offer help as needed. If the course includes a Zoom component, be sure to copy the Zoom host on this message.
- Verify you've exchanged cell phone numbers. Remember, this could save you and the instructor from last-minute panic.
- Remind the instructor to bring visuals on a portable USB flash drive (also known as a memory stick or thumb drive), NOT on a separate laptop. Ask them to email their PowerPoints to themselves as backup.
- Even if you already sent the "OLLI Facts for Instructors" and "PowerPoint Pointers," send them again.
- If the course will be offered in the Human Sciences Building on East Campus, be prepared to answer instructor questions about parking. One week before each term begins, OLLI staff will email detailed parking instructions to all instructors teaching a course in the classroom on East Campus.
- **Connect with the assigned Zoom host** and determine if there are any items to discuss among the three of you (Zoom host, you the facilitator and the instructor) such as a PowerPoint presentation, any videos to be shown, any polls or breakout rooms to be used and so forth. This step is a MUST to ensure your Zoom host is adequately prepared to provide technical support.
- Ensure all handouts and/or syllabi have been emailed to the OLLI program associate for electronic distribution to everyone registered.
- Check with the OLLI office for any updates/announcements.

### ***What do I need to do when the course actually starts?***

- Facilitators will receive their "Facilitator Folder" via email the Monday before the OLLI term begins. It includes:
  - **A "live" link to the course roster.** This link is current as of the day/time you click on it. Print it as close to the first class session as possible for the most accurate roster. Return the roster to the OLLI office after the last class session.

- Be sure that those attending in person check off their names on the roster. At the end of the course, return the rosters to the OLLI office. In the case of a multi-format or Zoom only course, the Zoom host will keep track of the number attending each session on Zoom and will submit that information to the office after the last session.
- **A facilitator instruction sheet** for the delivery format of the course (in person, Zoom or multi-format). This will help you know, in detail, what to do in the classroom on the first day of the course, the last day and the days in between.
- **Wording for a thank-you to the instructor** that you can send via email after the completed course. It includes the invitation to the instructor to take a free OLLI course. In addition, stop by the OLLI office and pick up a little red notepad, and present it as a physical gift to the instructor at the last class of the course.

### ***What if someone attends who isn't on the roster?***

Ask if that individual is an OLLI member or a guest of a member.

If the individual is an OLLI member:

- Have them handwrite their name on the roster, and contact the OLLI office. Office staff will determine next steps (validate registration or collect a course fee).

If the individual is a non-member guest of an OLLI member:

- Find out the name of the OLLI member who invited them to a class session as a guest.
- Ask that OLLI member if they had pre-approval from the OLLI office (which is required for guest attendance at an OLLI session).
  - If pre-approved, ask the guest to simply write their name on the bottom of the roster and the name of the OLLI member who invited them.
  - If not pre-approved, contact the OLLI office for next steps.

### ***What if someone gets hurt or sick during a class session?***

The OLLI office must be informed of any potential liability. Any incident/accident which occurs during an OLLI class/event MUST be reported to the OLLI office. A facilitator should never hesitate to dial 911 regarding a medical incident during an OLLI class. An accident report form (available at OLLI office) should include the information listed below and be completed on the day of the accident/incident or, at the latest, the next day.

- Student name, address, email and phone number
- Time, date and location of incident/accident
- Facilitator name, address, email and phone number
- Description of the nature of the incident/accident, what caused it, and what could have prevented it from occurring.
- Any additional comments

### ***Anything else?***

Just enjoy the experience of sharing knowledge and ideas with your fellow OLLI members. OLLI would not exist without a substantial and varied slate of course offerings. And the course offerings would not exist without volunteer facilitators like you. You are the heart of this organization. Thank you for all you do!