

# Encore Learning In-Person Instructor Guide

## Spring 2026



Encore Learning's academic courses form the foundation of our success and we **thank you** for your generous participation in our program. This guide should answer most of your questions, but we are always available to answer any questions you may have over the coming few months.

Encore Learning employs four part-time staff:

- Lora Pollari-Welbes, *Executive Director*
- Patty Rowland, *Administrator*
- Kerry Fraatz, *Academic Course Coordinator*
- Donna Banks, *Virtual Class Administrator*

Your primary contact should be through our **Course Coordinator** at [courses@encorelearning.net](mailto:courses@encorelearning.net).

### Your Benefits

- **You will have at least one student who will serve as your class aide.** (See below for more details)
- **You will receive parking validation for each class session.**
- **\*As a current instructor, you receive a complimentary annual membership, valid until 7/31/2026**
- **\*Free registration for up to three courses this spring and three courses next fall.** See below for procedures.

\* For multi-instructor courses, these benefits apply to instructors teaching more than one session.

### General Information

#### Class Media

**At least one week in advance of each class session**, please submit any materials you would like to share with students [directly to the Course Coordinator at courses@encorelearning.net](mailto:courses@encorelearning.net). (For some examples of class media, please see **Suggestions for Teaching Our Students** below). All registrants will be notified via email of class media having been posted.

For in-person classes at Mason: classroom document cameras at Mason can project books or anything you prefer not to scan electronically. If you have access to free photocopying services, feel free to bring your own handouts. We do not reimburse for external copy/print services, nor do we provide copy/print services in our office.

#### Class Aides

Every course is assigned a minimum of one class aide, with the usual practice being to assign two aides per class. Aides are Encore Learning volunteers recruited from course registrants. *Your class aides will contact you to exchange information (cell phone, best email address, etc.) at least one week prior to your first class session.*

The Class Aides serve as your principal point of contact. Aides provide parking information to you, take attendance, make general classroom announcements, and assist in audiovisual setup.

Class aides DO NOT have access to students' contact information and they DO NOT email/call students. If you wish to send an email message or share class materials/slides with your students, please send it to [courses@encorelearning.net](mailto:courses@encorelearning.net).

## **Safety Protocols**

Encore Learning follows the safety protocols of our host facilities. At this time wearing masks is optional, however this requirement could change at any time. Our [courses page](#) will reflect any current COVID protocols.

## **Audio/Visual (A/V) Equipment Requirements**

Please use the voice amplification devices provided in the room so that everyone in the class can hear you at all times. We have had a lot of feedback regarding this issue and are taking steps to ameliorate hearing problems for our members, including asking for your cooperation.

Mason classrooms are equipped with computers, internet access, and projection capabilities. Before your course begins, Encore Learning staff will contact you to review your A/V needs and confirm that your assigned classroom is properly equipped.

If you plan to bring your own laptop, the only connection provided at George Mason University is an HDMI cable; **Apple users must bring their own adapter.** Class aides receive training in basic audiovisual support. Please arrive to class at least 15 minutes before start to test the AV. Support from George Mason's tech staff is also available.

## **Visitors**

If there is a potential visitor to your class, we will notify you in advance and seek your permission. If you plan to bring in additional lecturers not noted in your course proposal form, please let the office know by emailing [courses@encorelearning.net](mailto:courses@encorelearning.net).

## **Parking - at George Mason University, Mason Square Campus (Arlington)**

Parking is available in the [underground Van Metra Hall garage](#) at GMU's Van Metre Hall (Mason Square campus in Arlington) accessible from Kirkwood Road. On the first day of class, you will receive a 3-hour validation for each session of the course you are teaching, as well as for each session of any course in which you are enrolled.

## **Online Course Information and Registration**

Encore Learning posts its course catalog and other information on class schedules on the Encore Learning website [www.EncoreLearning.net](http://www.EncoreLearning.net). Courses fill on a first-come, first-served basis and an automated wait list is generated.

***Instructor registrations for up to three courses are free of charge\*.*** You may log-in and [register for courses online as](#) soon as registration begins on **Monday, February 2 at 10:00 AM**. You have been set up in our system as a member but if you have never registered for our classes online, [please set up your password following these instructions](#) then review these [registration instructions and FAQs](#).

*\* This benefit applies to instructors teaching more than one class session.*

## **Course Enrollment**

Encore Learning staff will provide periodic updates on the enrollment status for your course. If you wish to know the current number of students enrolled at any time, please email [courses@encorelearning.net](mailto:courses@encorelearning.net).

## **Cancelling Courses**

Occasionally Encore Learning must cancel a course due to under-enrollment or a change in an instructor's circumstance. Normally, if the course enrollment does not reach 10 at least one week prior to the course start date, the course will be cancelled. You will be notified by our Executive Director if cancellation is imminent.

## Make-up Classes

If you experience illness or encounter a conflict requiring the rescheduling of a class, please send an email to [courses@encorelearning.net](mailto:courses@encorelearning.net) as soon as possible. This ensures sufficient time for the Academic Course Coordinator to notify students of the schedule change. To make up for a missed session, you can explore options such as adding an extra class session or extending the duration of remaining sessions.

## Reading Assignments

There are **no required** or *assigned* readings. Any *recommended* or *independent* reading assignments provided in the course proposal are listed in the catalog course description. Please note that Encore Learning neither provides nor orders books and is not in a position to guarantee the availability of texts suggested by the instructor.

## Suggestions for Teaching Our Students

It can be helpful to students if you supply summary notes or an outline of the course, a copy of your presentation, a glossary of names or uncommon terms, links to pertinent websites, and maps. Extensive handouts are not required. These documents may be shared on the course webpage by submitting them via email to [courses@encorelearning.net](mailto:courses@encorelearning.net).

In planning lectures, try to reserve some class time for questions and discussion. It is up to you whether you take intermittent breaks for questions or hold all questions until the end of lecture. These documents may be shared in course media by submitting them via email to [courses@encorelearning.net](mailto:courses@encorelearning.net).

For hybrid courses, we find that in the Zoom environment, some participants are less likely to ask questions. Consider coordinating with your class aides to find effective ways to encourage engagement and questions from virtual attendees.

Occasionally, there are students who have a tendency to monopolize the class discussion. Should this happen, instructors are encouraged to discuss strategies with the class aides to address the problem for future class sessions.

## Discrimination and Academic Freedom

To view Encore Learning's policies on discrimination and academic freedom, please visit <https://encorelearning.net/about/policies/>

### Discrimination

Encore Learning does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or national origin.

### Academic Freedom

Encore Learning, as a learning organization, subscribes to the principle of academic freedom wherein all views can and should be respected.

The definition of academic freedom is the right of educators to teach and discuss topics without restriction or interference by the educational organization. Instructors are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subject, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching their own personal bias on controversial matters that have no relation to their subject.

### Non-Attribution

Encore Learning subscribes to policy wherein, should an instructor request "non-attribution," Class Aides will provide notice alerting class members of such a request and that class members will be expected to honor such request.

## Civility

Encore Learning subscribes to a policy of civility in all communications: verbal and nonverbal, one-on-one and in group settings. Civility is a behavioral norm that is respectful and courteous. It includes consideration of others' concerns, backgrounds, and feelings.

It is expected that all members, staff, and instructors will be mindful of and abide by acceptable norms of behavior and respectful language. Examples inconsistent with this policy for the instructional environment, whether online or in-person, include the following: argumentative discussion, usurping authority from instructor, degrading phrases and words and dominating discussion with long or too many questions. Instructors and Class Aides will be provided guides and training, as necessary, to manage improper behavior.

## Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are an invaluable means for Encore Learning to determine member satisfaction with their courses. **Encore Learning distributes electronic course evaluations using Survey Monkey. Each student will receive a link to the course evaluation survey via email on the day of the last class session.** The Academic Programs Committee will review the results in detail and then pass the information on to the instructors. Typically, instructors receive this report 2-3 weeks after their course concludes.