

# Encore Learning Virtual 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)
- **Zoom training** is available to all instructors. In addition to one-on-one training, Encore Learning conducts Zoom Instructor Hangouts before and during the semester. You will receive an email invitation in advance of each hangout session.
- **\*As a current instructor, you receive a complimentary annual membership, valid until 12/31/2026.**
- **\*Free registration for up to three courses this spring and three course next fall.** See below for procedures.

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

### General Information

#### Course Format

All virtual courses are held on Zoom. The staff host for your course will send you a Zoom link several days before your course begins. You will use the same Zoom link to join all course sessions. If you do not feel comfortable with the Zoom platform, please contact [courses@encorelearning.net](mailto:courses@encorelearning.net) and a staff member will share additional resources and coordinate training as needed.

Please log in to Zoom 30 minutes before the first class session and 15 minutes before each subsequent session. This extra time allows for sound checks, screen-sharing verification, and other pre-class preparations.

#### Virtual Class Aides (VCAs)

Every course is assigned a minimum of one Virtual Class Aide (VCA), with the usual practice being to assign two VCAs per class. VCAs are Encore Learning member volunteers who have received in-depth training in Zoom and will serve as your primary in-session assistants. All instructors will meet the VCAs assigned to your course at a technical rehearsal.

#### Technical Rehearsal

A technical rehearsal will be held approximately two weeks before your course start date. The purpose of the technical rehearsal is for you, with the assistance of the VCAs, to determine how you would like your course to be conducted. In addition to ensuring you are able to share your screen and can be heard and seen, topics to be covered include how Q&A will be handled, what, if any, material you will be sharing with the class, and when/if you would like a short break in each session. An Encore Learning staff member will coordinate this meeting.

## Class Materials

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.

## 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). The full course catalog is online. 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, September 8 at 10:00 A.M.** 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](#).

## 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. It is up to you whether you take intermittent breaks for questions or hold all questions until the end of lecture. Please advise your VCAs of how you wish to handle questions during the technical rehearsal prior to the start of classes.

Although most instructors encourage questions, we find that in the Zoom environment, some participants are less likely to ask questions, so the lecture time should be planned accordingly. You might also want to discuss the best way to encourage questions with your VCAs during your technical rehearsal.

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.

Encore Learning staff will handle all the recording logistics, if you choose to have your course recorded.

## **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.

## **Zoom Resources**

In addition to instructor-specific Zoom training sessions, Encore Learning offers the following resources on using Zoom:

- [Get Acquainted with Zoom](#)
- [Zoom Instructor Orientation](#)
- [FAQ for Zoom - including troubleshooting tips](#)
- [Sharing a PowerPoint Presentation in Zoom](#)