

Info and Tips for Recruiting Moderators

Introduction

This module is designed to help OLLI volunteers when they are recruiting new OLLI moderators by providing answers to many of their frequent questions in documents that can be easily shared:

This first section, **“Info and Tips for Recruiting Moderators,”** is for you. It suggests how you might use the other parts of the module and offers suggestions from some OLLI members who have been highly successful at recruiting. We hope their tips will help you convince undecided or reluctant moderators to go ahead and submit a course proposal!

There are two documents you could send to potential moderators:

The **“Introduction to OLLI,”** includes a description of OLLI at UC, a generic version of OLLI’s “academic calendar,” and an explanation of the four available formats for OLLI courses. This document could be sent to a potential moderator who knows little about OLLI.

If your potential moderator seems almost ready to submit, you could send them a copy of **“How to Begin Teaching for OLLI.”** This document describes the **“Teach for OLLI Interest Form,”** which can be used during those times of the year when the actual course proposal forms are not available. It also summarizes the information needed to fill out the formal proposals for any of the four course formats.

Tips for Recruiting Moderators

Potential moderators may be interested in teaching a course but are hesitant to commit. They may feel they do not know what OLLI courses are like. Or they may be reluctant to accept complete responsibility for teaching a class. Here are ideas from experienced moderators for encouraging them.

- Invite them to attend an OLLI class before they commit to moderating. Program Director Cate O’Hara says:

You can invite a potential moderator to attend any of the one-time classes or any class offered in the large lecture hall. If you would like to invite someone to a more specific class (like, say, a small writing seminar), you need to check with the office so we can okay it with the moderator.
- Instead of a multi-week course, invite them to first teach a one-time class, such as a Wednesday Wow presentation.
- To spread out the responsibility of presenting, they could include a panel discussion.
- Or they could set up a ‘team-teaching’ type approach, with guest speakers for some sessions.

Ellen Frankenberg has been phenomenally successful at recruiting moderators. Here are her thoughts on recruiting.

My focus for recruiting moderators begins with my own friends, neighbors, and contacts from other organizations - those I know best. Some of the presentations I have been able to secure are:

- CCM faculty with singers for an upcoming production, and another presentation of new forms of electronic music.
- A naturalist presenting detailed photography/knowledge of a local nature preserve - the Arc of Appalachia.
- The newly appointed head of Interact for Health, on Cincinnati's health challenges.
- A Taft lawyer who leads worldwide fight to remove "forever chemicals" from our environment.

Pursuing good moderators, in my experience, is a process, not just a simple ask. Usually, it takes a couple of conversations to introduce OLLI, give potential moderators a copy of the catalog and encourage them to go to the web site. This process can take a couple of months, till their calendars/minds clear. I often must help them navigate the web site or volunteer to co-write their proposals.

I pursue potential moderators because that is the heart of OLLI and because I too enjoy interesting, informative presentations.

Deb Moy's successful strategy:

After identifying a potential topic (a segment on NPR, a news item, a topic from several internet sources, a non-OLLI program I attended, my other volunteer encounters, etc.), I search for the best person or organization to deliver it. My initial contact is always by email so that I can give the potential moderator an opportunity to digest my very brief local OLLI description and for what I'm asking. I link our website. I conclude by asking if they have interest in presenting on this topic and would like to know more, would they email me with a time that would be convenient for me to phone them. Ninety percent of the time, the response is positive and we go from there. Therefore, most of my contacts are through cold call emails.

A brief description of OLLI

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Cincinnati (OLLI at UC) is part of a network of 125 OLLI programs at universities or colleges in every state of the union. OLLI at UC's mission is to provide a broad program of educational and social opportunities for a diverse audience of mature adults.

During the recent 2022–23 school year, OLLI at UC offered 489 learning opportunities with an enrollment of 1639 individuals. The current catalog is here: www.uc.edu/about/continuing-ed/olli/register.html.

OLLI Programs have been supported by significant grants from the Bernard Osher Foundation, which help cover some of the operating expenses. The University of Cincinnati provides office and classroom space, tech support, and 3 full-time staff positions: a Director (Cate O'Hara), a Program Coordinator (Kristin Suess) and an Executive Staff Assistant (Debbie Looby). **The OLLI Office phone number is 513-556-9186.** Importantly, OLLI could not survive without the help of over four hundred volunteers who give courses, greet new students, and serve on the OLLI Board and committees.

OLLI's academic calendar*

	Deadline for course proposals	Registration for courses	Course dates
Fall	~ May 26	~ August 15	~ 9/18 – 11/10
Winter	~ September 29	~ January 3	~ 1/22 – 3/15
Spring	~ January 19	~ March 27	~ 4/22 – 6/14

*Exact dates change year to year.

Proposals must be submitted long in advance! (Note the roughly 4-month delay between submission of a proposal and the time when the course begins).

The four available course formats

“Multi-week” courses meet once a week for 2-8 weeks. Each session lasts for 1.25 hours.

“One-time, 1.25 hour” courses meet only once, for 1.25 hours.

“One-time, 2.0 or 2.5 hour” courses meet only once, on a Wednesday or a Friday, for 2.0 or 2.5 hours.

“One-time Special Events” (such as a visit to a museum, garden, or wine store) meet only once, with great latitude in day, time and location.

About 4 months before each new term, separate proposal forms for each format are posted on the OLLI website (www.uc.edu/about/continuing-ed/olli/teach.html), so when moderators wish to propose a course, they must first decide which format best suits their course concept, and then use the appropriate online form. (When the official proposal forms are not available, potential moderators can fill in the brief Teach for OLLI Interest Form on the same webpage, which is available year-round.)

How to Begin Teaching for OLLI

(Note that OLLI prefers to call its teachers or class leaders “Moderators” to emphasize the non-traditional and interactive nature of OLLI events).

If you are thinking about moderating a course for OLLI, there are two ways to get started.

One quick way is to fill out the brief “Teach for OLLI Interest Form” (pictured below), which is available year-round from a link on this webpage: <https://www.uc.edu/about/continuing-ed/olli/teach.html>.

The image shows a web form titled "Teach for OLLI Interest Form". At the top, there is an introductory paragraph: "The moderators who lead OLLI classes are all volunteers who share their knowledge with the OLLI community of older adult lifelong learners. If you are interested in proposing a future multiweek course or one-time presentation for OLLI, please complete the form below. Someone from the Curriculum Committee will be in touch with you about next steps. Thank you! OLLI runs on volunteer power!"

The form contains the following fields and sections:

- Name ***: Two text input fields for "First Name" and "Last Name".
- Phone Number ***: A text input field with a placeholder "(000) 000-0000" and a validation message "Please enter a valid phone number".
- Email ***: A text input field with a placeholder "example@ucsb.edu".
- How would you describe your class format? Select all that apply. ***: A list of checkboxes with the following options:
 - One-time presentation
 - Multiweek course
 - Fieldtrip
 - Mostly lecture/presentation with Q&A
 - Mostly discussion/seminar
 - Online (Zoom)
 - In person
 - Active (i.e. bicycling, hiking, walking, etc.)
 - Hands-on (i.e. arts, crafts, writing, DIY, etc.)
 - Single presenter
 - Multiple presenters
 - Other
- Briefly describe your idea for an OLLI class. ***: A large text area for a description.

At the bottom left of the form, there is a character count "0/100".

[Your completed form](#) will be forwarded to an appropriate Academic team member, who will get in touch with you to help you choose the best format for your course or presentation, and then help you prepare and submit a formal Course Proposal form.

The second way is to fill out one of the four formal course proposal forms, which are posted on the OLLI website (www.uc.edu/about/continuing-ed/olli/teach.html) about 4 months before each new term.

NOTE that these forms are only available for about three weeks at a time, so if you are already prepared to submit, but during a time when these formal proposal forms are not available, use the “Teach for OLLI Interest Form” described above. You will then be prompted to re-submit at the appropriate time.

The four course formats OLLI offers are:

“**Multi-week**” courses, which meet once a week for 2-8 weeks. Each session lasts for 1.25 hours.

“**One-time, 1.25 hour**” courses, which meet only once, for 1.25 hours.

“**One-time, 2.0 or 2.5 hour**” courses, which meet only once, on a Wednesday or a Friday, for 2.0 or 2.5 hours.

“**One-time Special Events**” (such as a visit to a museum, garden, or wine store), which meet only once, with great latitude in day, times, and location.

All four forms ask for:

The Moderator’s First Name and Last Name

The Moderator’s email address

The Title of the Presentation (Up to 75 characters, including spaces)

A Description of the Presentation (A single paragraph of up to 90 words that includes the name and position of the presenter).

A short bio of the presenter(s) (A single paragraph of up to 60 words, which will appear in the online catalog, but not the printed catalogs).

You also will be given the option to choose potential dates and times appropriate for each format; when you can be available to offer your course; whether you wish to offer it in-person, on Zoom, or hybrid; and whether you have any special equipment needs.

Thanks, and we look forward to your course!

If you have any questions about this process, please call your OLLI contact or the OLLI Office at 513-556-9186.