

## Frequently Asked Questions

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## COVID-19

Q: What policies does the McAuliffe Center have in place for reducing the spread of COVID-19?

A: The McAuliffe Center is strictly following all state (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-updates-and-information>), local, and university guidelines regarding face coverings, social distancing, indoor gathering sizes and more. According to these guidelines, currently all guests are required to wear face coverings while indoors. We will continue to update our policies to align with these changing guidelines.

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## Discounts

Q: Is there a discount for booking multiple programs?

A: Yes, if you book 4 or more programs, you will receive a 10% discount. When you enter your quantity of programs on our online payment system, the discount will be calculated.

Q: My school/organization faces financial hardship. Are there scholarships or sponsorship opportunities?

A: Certain groups may qualify for funding, however, we have limited sponsorship funds and funding is not guaranteed. You can find current sponsorship opportunities here: <https://cm-center.org/sponsored>.

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## Contract

Q: Who is the person who must sign the consent form?

A: The consent form must be signed by the school's dean or principal.

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## Registration

Q: How do I register for McAuliffe Center Programs?

A: Please click on the Program Request form link on our in-person programs page and complete the form. Once we receive the form, we will send you registration documents to complete. Please send the completed forms within 10 days of receipt by email to [jklova@framingham.edu](mailto:jklova@framingham.edu)

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## School Programs - General Questions

Q: My group is not a school group. Can we book a program at the McAuliffe Center?

A: Yes! Our "[School Programs](#)" are also great for out-of-school-time groups, afterschool programs, day camps, scout groups, clubs, community organizations and more. In most cases, the program fees and policies (regarding group size, chaperones, etc) are exactly the same for school groups and other groups. One type of group that is most welcome but may require

different consideration is an all-adult group. If you are not sure where your group fits in, contact us at [cmc@framingham.edu](mailto:cmc@framingham.edu).

Q: What time do your programs start?

A: STANDARD SCHEDULE (For Mission + Planetarium for 2 groups):

Challenger start times: 9:00am (group A) & 11:30am (group B)

Planetarium start times: 9:00am (group B)& 12:00pm (group A)

Schedules can be adjusted to meet your needs. Please contact the Center when you confirm your dates.

Q: What is the chaperone to student ratio?

A: School groups must have a 1:9 chaperone/student ratio. For special needs students a ratio of 1:1 or 1:3 is recommended depending on your student's needs. Teachers and chaperones are expected to be with students at all times, including lunch and restroom breaks.

Q: Is there a place to store lunches for in-person programs? Should our students have brown bag lunches, would that be better for you?

A: Most schools bring a cooler with brown bag lunches or boxed lunches. We have an area where we can store the cooler. We also have a lunch room for use in inclement weather. There are "green" spaces on the Framingham State University campus as well.

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## Missions

Q: We used to bring 36 students per mission. Is that still the same?

A: Due to remaining COVID 19 restrictions, the follow limits apply:

Mission and Planetarium Program-10-24 student limit

Planetarium Program only- 48 participant limit

We will continue to follow State, Local and Framingham State University Guidelines regarding in-person gatherings

Q: What time do your programs start?

A: STANDARD SCHEDULE (For more than one program)

Challenger start times: 9:00am (group A) & 11:30am (group B)

Planetarium start times: 9:00am (group B)& 12:00pm (group A)

Schedules can be adjusted to meet your needs. Please contact the Center when you confirm your dates.

Q: Is there any prep work required before the missions?

A: The Center does offer pre-mission content for our in-person programs. A copy of the materials is included in a groups registration packet.

It is not required that you go through all the classroom prep lessons, but they are a good way to expose your students to mission related content. The activities that the students perform in the mission relate back to the classroom. We do recommend that students work through some of our pre-mission lessons, but it is not a requirement. We have had many groups this year that have not extensively prepped their students and they have done fine.

At a minimum a crew manifest is required for all missions.

Q: How do we fill out the Crew Manifest?

A: Stations that are required for the mission are indicated by an asterisk (\*). These stations should have a student in both Mission Control and Spacecraft. There should be an even number of students in both Mission Control and Spacecraft.

Q: There are nine positions, so does each side have the same positions and if so which positions should have more than one child assigned to them?

A: Both the Spacecraft and mission control should have at least one student on each team. Stations that have asterisks (\*) can have more than one student assigned to them at a time.

Q: Which stations are most accessible to a wheelchair?

A: Any station can be accessible with enough notice

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# Planetarium

Q: How many people does the Planetarium seat?

A: The planetarium's capacity is 48 guests total (teachers/chaperones included). For groups that would like to book both a Challenger Learning Center mission *and* planetarium, their group size will be limited to 24 because that is the maximum number of participants for a Challenger Learning Center Mission. Additionally, although the capacity of the planetarium is 48, we strongly recommend smaller group sizes for very young children.

Q: How long is a planetarium program?

A: The standard planetarium program is about 1 hour and includes a 30-minute fulldome film plus a 30-minute live, interactive planetarium presentation. Groups who are also doing a Challenger Learning Center mission may spend between 1 and 1.5 hours in the planetarium in order to accommodate the day's schedule.

Q: Does the Planetarium offer programming for Pre-K, Kindergarten and Grade 1 students?

A: Yes! We offer special live interactive planetarium programs designed for the youngest learners. These programs are slightly different from our standard planetarium program: they are 100% live, do not include a fulldome film, and are slightly shorter. If you are interested in these programs, please indicate it in "comments" on your Program Request Form.

Q: Can I rent the planetarium for a private event?

A: Generally, the planetarium is not available as a venue for external events like birthday parties, weddings, etc. Private groups may book a planetarium program, but special fees may apply. Submit a special program request form, your request will be addressed.

Q: I'm an FSU Professor. How can I use the planetarium?

A: FSU Faculty from ALL disciplines are encouraged to take advantage of the FSU Planetarium as a resource for their courses. Faculty can work with our educators to create dynamic, immersive experiences that connect to a wide range of subject areas. Faculty have also used the planetarium as a unique space for presentations or to screen movies. Fill in a program request form to get started!

Q: I'm an FSU student. How can I use the planetarium?

A: FSU students often experience the planetarium as a part of a course, but student groups can also book the planetarium for private events. Fill in a program request form to get started! We also encourage students to attend our public events. Contact Mary MacDonald [mmacdonald7@framingham.edu](mailto:mmacdonald7@framingham.edu) if you'd like to learn more about how you can get involved.

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## Virtual Programs

Q: What software is needed for virtual missions offered at the McAuliffe Center?

A: The McAuliffe Center uses Zoom and an internet browser (Google Chrome is preferred) for virtual missions.

Q: Our school does not use Zoom for remote learning. Can we still do the Mission?

A: Yes! While Zoom is preferred by the McAuliffe Center, Google Meet, Skype, Teams, or other video conferencing platforms are acceptable. If not using Zoom, the lead teacher/organizer may be required to set up the meeting.

Q: Implementing the Mission: in-person vs hybrid vs fully remote

A: From a program accomplishment standpoint, all situations work. The McAuliffe Center can be flexible in meeting your group's situation. The groups that are fully remote take a little bit more time at the beginning of the mission to get going and into their stations. In all situations, McAuliffe Center staff utilize the chat feature to provide assistance to participants during the mission.

Q: What is the length of the Europa Encounter mission?

A: The Europa Encounter mission is an hour in length. The mission is 45-50 minutes of student activity content.

Q: Registration and Program Agreement Form questions

A: The following information is required on the form: Teacher Contact Information - This is the main contact person, Business Office - This is the contact information for where we can send

the invoice. All Registration and Program Agreement forms must be signed by the organization's Authorized Signatory - This would be the principal, dean, or an individual in a similar position.

Q: Privacy policy. Would we need to ask the participants and their parents to sign a form relating to it?

A: For the privacy policy, as the organizing group, you would need to agree to it. We wouldn't need individual forms from each of the students.

Q: How many students can I assign per team on my Europa Encounter crew manifest?

A: For the Europa Encounter Manifest, It recommended assigning one student to a team (except Com, as that station is filled by McAuliffe Center Staff). For larger groups, all stations except Probe can have multiple stations students assigned.

Q: I would like to do the Solar Systems Explorers but my students are not in grades 1-3. Can this program be adapted?

A: Yes, this program can be adapted for any age group, but it is best if there is not a wide range of ages in the group.

Q: Can my group do just one of the Life Cycle of Stars programs or is this program only available as a multi-part series?

A: The program is best experienced as a multi-part series in sequential order, but each session can be presented on its own. Please pay attention to the Science Concept Pre-requisites for each session. If your group has had some exposure to these concepts already, then they should be able to understand the program session.

Q: What are the Science Concept Pre-requisites listed for the Life Cycle of Stars programs?

A: The Science Concept Pre-requisites are foundational science concepts that participants should be familiar with before the session in order to understand the new content presented in the session. Some of these concepts are presented in earlier sessions in the series. For example, the Electromagnetic Spectrum is a Science Concept Pre-requisite for the entire series, but participants can gain exposure to this concept through the first session in the series.

Q: What happens during a virtual mission?

A: McAuliffe Center Program Facilitators (Flight Directors) will guide participants through the mission. Flight Directors will provide participants with links to Task Cards at the beginning of the mission. Participants will need to view a shared screen and internet browser window at the same time. The McAuliffe Center recommends reviewing THIS DEVICE SETUP tutorial before participating in the mission.

Q: Can you clarify how to best fill out the Mission Crew Manifest? Do we fill each spot with at least one student? Or should we not assign some roles and have pairs for as many roles as possible?

A: For the Manifest, I recommend assigning one student to a team. Students can be doubled up on any stations as needed. If you have over 30 students a second mission is required.

Q: How long does each program last? Do they ever run over?

A: Each mission is about an hour. The missions are designed with 45 minutes of content. We schedule them for an hour so there is no need to rush or have a hard stop. Most students complete their tasks in 45 - 48 minutes.

Q: How do you make these experiences accessible to students with different learning needs, including our students who are English language learners?

A: As the student task cards (their instructions) are webpages, English language learners are able to translate the task cards into the language of choice. Students are also able to utilize screen readers to help them with their task cards.

Q: Can students participate in virtual programs if they are in-person, at school?

A: Yes. Students can participate in all our virtual missions whether the group is fully remote, hybrid, or fully in-person. However, most of our programs still require a 1:1 device ratio (or maximum of 2 students working together on one device). Some of our programs, such as Solar System Explorers, can be facilitated without students on individual devices.

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## Payment/Learning Stream



Q: How do I pay for the programs?

A: Payment must be made online through our Learning Stream online payment system. If you are not able to pay through our online payment system, you must alert Joanne Klova ([jklova@framingham.edu](mailto:jklova@framingham.edu)) and make payment arrangements before your program date.

Q: How do I get a refund?

A: Please email [jklova@framingham.edu](mailto:jklova@framingham.edu) if you need a refund.

Q: Did you raise your program fees? Why?

A: After many years, we have finally chosen to increase our program fees to reflect increasing costs and loss of revenue due to COVID-19. We continue to take pride in the fact that we offer quality programming at a more affordable rate than other Challenger Learning Centers and similar science learning institutions. Although we have raised base program fees, we now offer a 10% discount on bookings of 4 or more programs! Finally, in recognition that some schools and community organizations may be unable to immediately return to the traditional field-trip experience, we will continue to offer [Virtual Programming](#), at rates much lower than those of in-person programs.

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## Policies

Q: I also had a question regarding your privacy policy. Would we need to ask the participants and their parents to sign a form relating to it?

A: For the privacy policy, as the organizing group, you would need to agree to it. We would not need individual forms from each of the students.

Q: What is your cancellation policy?

A: Should your groups need to re-schedule a program(s) due to a public health directive, we will work with your group to re-scheduled your date(s) to another mutually convenient time. However, should you need to cancel, below is our cancellation policy:

Cancellations

Payment for McAuliffe Center programs is required no later than 15 days prior to the first day of your scheduled visits. Any exceptions to this policy must be arranged in advance by calling Joanne Klova, at (508) 626-4050.

1. An online payment for the total cost of your scheduled visits must be provided to the McAuliffe Center at least 15 days prior to your visit. **The Center will not reserve dates for which prepayment in full is not provided.**
2. Notification of cancellations must be received by the Center at least 6 weeks prior to your first scheduled program.
3. Notification of cancellations must be submitted IN WRITING.
4. Cancellations falling within the 6 week period prior to your first scheduled visit will result in a charge equal to 50% of scheduled program fees. No-shows and cancellations falling within the 2 week period prior to your first scheduled visit will result in a charge equal to 100% of scheduled program fees.

Note: Snow days or other official school closures are not considered a cancellation. In such cases the McAuliffe Center will work with you to reschedule your program(s). In the event of such a closure please email Evan Pagliuca at epagliuca@framingham.edu AND Joanne Klova jklova@framingham.edu as soon as possible. Failure to inform the McAuliffe Center of your school's official closure is considered a no-show and will be subject to a charge of 100% of scheduled program fees applicable to that date.

#### No-Shows and Cancellation Charges

6 Weeks Prior to a Scheduled Visit	50% of Program Fees
2 Weeks Prior to a Scheduled Visit	100% of Program Fees

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## Miscellaneous

Q: Does the McAuliffe Center do birthday parties?

A: No.

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