

Fall 2021 Instructional Guidelines: Some Practical Recommendations
September 2021

We continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing that conditions can evolve rapidly. The University of Utah will continue to follow guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state and local health departments. We are working within the legal parameters set by SB 107, HB 308 and HB 1007 during the 2021 Legislature, as well as Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) policy, including:

In-person Instruction Prioritization:

“For fall semester in 2021, an institution of higher education shall offer a number of in-person courses that is at least 75% of the number of in-person courses that the institution of higher education offered for the analogous semester that began immediately on or after August 1, 2019

COVID-19 Vaccine Amendments:

“A governmental entity may not require, directly or indirectly, that an individual receive an emergency COVID-19 vaccine.”

USHE Student Vaccination Letter:

“In Utah, public colleges and universities may require students to receive vaccinations as a condition of enrollment if students are provided the option to opt-out of this requirement for medical, religious, or personal reasons.”

And, Face Mask Requirements:

“An institution of higher education...may not require an individual to wear a face covering to attend or participate in in-person instruction, institution-sponsored athletics, institution-sponsored extracurricular activities, in dormitories, or in any other place on a campus of an institution within the system of higher education at any time after the end of the spring semester in 2021.”

However, following University of Utah public health and CDC guidelines, if students or faculty are exposed, they are expected to wear a mask in class (details below).

Finally, some clarification from the Office of General Counsel of additional COVID-related 2021 legislation regarding faculty and university liability:

SB 3007 and 5003 were enacted to clarify that various entities, including governmental entities such as the university, do not have legal liability related to COVID-19. The bills reference “willful,” “reckless” and “intentional” infliction of harm, but none of these would apply here where the university and its employees are merely complying with state law and local health department regulations. If such a complaint were brought by one of our students against the university or one of its employees, we anticipate that the case would easily be resolved on summary judgment.

Recommendations for Instructors: Standard Language

With those constraints in place, the Academic Affairs office has prepared a model PowerPoint to share with your classes. Also, please consider using the following standard language in your course syllabi and Canvas pages:

*University leadership has urged all faculty, students, and staff to **model the vaccination, testing, and masking behaviors** we want to see in our campus community.*

These include:

- *Vaccination*
- *Masking indoors*
- *If unvaccinated, getting weekly asymptomatic coronavirus testing*
- *Quarantining after exposure*

Vaccination

- **Get a COVID-19 vaccination** if you have not already done so. Vaccination is proving highly effective in preventing severe COVID-19 symptoms, hospitalization and death from coronavirus. Vaccination is the single best way to stop this COVID resurgence in its tracks.
 - University of Utah students are required (as of August 27, 2021) to complete a cycle of COVID-19 vaccination with an approved vaccine, or complete an exemption form. The university provides three convenient vaccination options:
 - Attend one of the regularly-scheduled vaccine events at the Student Union on campus.
 - Schedule an appointment with Student Health here.
 - Visit <http://mychart.med.utah.edu/>, <https://alert.utah.edu/covid/vaccine/>, or <http://vaccines.gov/> to schedule your vaccination.

Masking

- While masks are not required outside of Health Sciences facilities, on UTA buses or campus shuttles, **CDC guidelines now call for everyone to wear face masks indoors.**
 - Check the CDC website periodically for masking updates—
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>
 - Treat masks like seasonal clothing (i.e. during community surges in COVID transmission, masks are strongly encouraged indoors and in close groups outside).
 - In cases of classroom exposure, masks will be required for the quarantine period (see details below).

Testing

- ***If you are not yet vaccinated, get weekly asymptomatic coronavirus tests.*** This is a helpful way to protect yourself and those around you because asymptomatic individuals can unknowingly spread the coronavirus to others.
 - *Asymptomatic testing centers are open and convenient:*
 - *Online scheduling*
 - *Saliva test (no nasal swabs)*
 - *Free to all students returning to campus (required for students in University housing)*
 - *Results often within 24 hours*
 - *Visit alert.utah.edu/covid/testing*
- ***Remember: Students must self-report if they test positive for COVID-19*** via this website: <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/>.

Also consider including:

Student Mental Health Resources

- *Rates of burnout, anxiety, depression, isolation, and loneliness have noticeably increased during the pandemic. If you need help, reach out for [campus mental health resources](#), including counseling, trainings and other support.*
- *Consider participating in a [Mental Health First Aid](#) or other [wellness-themed training](#) provided by our Center for Student Wellness and sharing these opportunities with your peers, teaching assistants and department colleagues.*

Required Protocol for Instructors: Exposure

Follow the [Exposure Management Guidelines](#) for responding to and managing student reports of COVID-19 infection—including contact tracing and reporting exposure to college and department leaders.

If you have been exposed, or are experiencing symptoms, [self-report](#) and follow university [guidelines for exposure](#).

Promptly report classroom exposures and cases through the [COVID-19 Central](#) website. The Campus Contact Tracing Classroom Exposure Unit will help you mitigate and manage the situation. Here are some practical tips:

- Take **attendance/roll** with each class meeting.
- Use a **seating chart** to aid contact tracers
- Remind students of the [CDC guidance](#) to wear a mask in public indoor settings.
- Remind students who have not been vaccinated to participate in [weekly on-campus testing](#).
- If your class is exposed, the U of U Health contact tracing team will contact you, your department chair, your dean, and your students. The following masking policy will be implemented for all members of the class:

- For those who are unvaccinated, the Utah Department of Health and the University of Utah ask that you please comply with self-quarantine measures by staying home from class and work and avoiding close physical contact with other people. You will need to get tested 3-5 days after exposure and quarantine for 10 days starting with the exposure date. Please wear a mask whenever you are outside of your home and consider vaccination when you have completed 10 days of quarantine. At completion of the 10-day quarantine period, unvaccinated students may return to class.
- Those who are *fully vaccinated* (2 weeks after a second or final vaccination shot), are free to remain on campus, but are expected to wear a mask in the classroom, around campus and anytime they are outside their home for 14 days. Please get tested within 3-5 days after the exposure. Anyone who chooses not to wear a mask during class will be asked to participate in the class remotely for the 14-day monitoring period.
- If you or your students have to isolate or quarantine, Teaching and Learning Technologies (TLT) can record your lectures, simply fill out a request form in advance. Or, you can check out portable AV/recording equipment for rooms where recording is not possible.

ADA Accommodations

The University of Utah will continue to accommodate students, faculty, and staff through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- Faculty seeking an accommodation to teach remotely should contact Human Resources and fill out a Temporary Work Adjustment (TWA) form.
- For courses classified in the schedule as “in-person,” faculty must host live classes at the scheduled time in the assigned classroom. They have discretion to determine whether to offer additional modalities: (e.g., live-streaming a class meeting or creating a recording for students to access at home). However, this is not required.
- ***Include the following guidance in your syllabus:***
 - ***If in-class attendance is a necessary component of the course for pedagogical reasons (e.g., laboratories, studios, or artistic training), state it explicitly.***
 - ***Use this standard language: “Given the nature of this course, attendance is required, and adjustments cannot be granted to allow non-attendance. However, if you need to seek an ADA accommodation to request an exception to this attendance policy due to a disability, please contact the Center for Disability and Access (CDA). CDA will work with us to determine what, if any, ADA accommodations are reasonable and appropriate.”***
- Faculty must accommodate the instructional needs of students who are quarantined or self-isolated due to COVID-19, or who have ADA accommodations.

- a. The Center for Disability and Access (CDA) has prepared guidelines for working with for students requesting accommodation. Review the full guidelines here: <https://tinyurl.com/4c5xftk2>
- b. In many if not most cases, a faculty member's regular, pre-COVID-19 approach to accommodating students who miss class or assignments because of an illness will be sufficient.
- c. If a student is self-isolated for a longer period of time due to a COVID-19 infection, faculty are encouraged to draw on their most successful strategies from 2020-2021 to accommodate the student. If necessary, faculty may want to consult with the Center for Disability Access (CDA)
- d. Each course and each student's circumstance will be different. Please be as open-minded and flexible as is possible and reasonable when students need COVID-19 related accommodations and as you plan your courses and assignments.

Teaching Resources

1. CTLE and TLT have developed a website to answer most of your questions and direct you to services available to help with your teaching needs this fall. You can find it, along with the Canvas common syllabus template, suggested PowerPoint deck and other resources at <http://facultycenter.utah.edu>.
2. The Office for Faculty has a collection of teaching-related articles. You can access them here: <https://uofu.box.com/s/xfuk06p9mdg7tx8b1pcr5rc8gzy55u9r>.