

MEMORANDUM

To: All Gillings School Residential Students

From: Barbara K. Rimer, DrPH 
Dean and Alumni Distinguished Professor

Cc: Laura A. Linnan, ScD
Sr. Associate Dean, Academic and Student Affairs

Date: January 25, 2022

Subject: Gillings Return to In-Person Instruction – January 31, 2022

Thank you for your continued dedication to a safe and successful spring semester!

The purpose of this message is to let you know how our academic plan will continue beyond the pivot to remote instruction we had put in place for the first three weeks of classes at Gillings. We have continued to monitor existing local community and university data, spoken with our infectious disease specialists, and have come to a consensus as the school leadership team. **Aligned with the UNC system and larger UNC-CH campus community expectations, and as we indicated in our correspondence regarding remote plans at start of spring semester, Gillings will return to in-person instruction as the default mode of instruction (MOI) beginning Monday, January 31, 2022.**

There are two categories of exceptions to in-person MOI. The first exception to in-person MOI is for seven courses that were already approved for a **PERMANENT MOI change** (to remote). Those courses will remain in remote status. Permanent MOI changes are designated as such in ConnectCarolina. If you are uncertain about the status of your class, you can check ConnectCarolina or reach out to your faculty instructor.

A second exception to immediate return to in-person is that some Gillings classes may be approved for a **new TEMPORARY MOI change**. Course instructors with approved, temporary changes in MOI have been directed to reach out to their students and let them know plans for classes beginning next week. If you do not hear from your instructors, or are uncertain, please reach out to your instructors directly by COB on Friday, January 28, 2022. All temporary MOI changes will require approval of the Department Chair/Unit Lead and the Sr. Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs.

As in the past, and in pre-pandemic times, faculty have the discretion to make **temporary ADJUSTMENTS to their courses** lasting a week or less for reason such as accommodating guest speakers, conference attendance, faculty illness, or student illnesses. These temporary adjustments will not require prior approval, but it is essential that faculty and students stay in close communication about any adjustments that are made. In all cases, we are asking faculty to record class sessions so that if students must miss class, they can get the recording and/or zoom in to class if that technology is available.

Remember, if you have been exposed, are symptomatic or have a COVID diagnosis, **you should NOT go to class!** Please let your instructor know as soon as possible so that adjustments can be made for you to view class recordings or Zoom in to class, if that option is possible.

When you are back to in-person instruction, we must continue to demonstrate best public health practices and operate as safely as possible by using the tools we *know* make a profound impact on preventing spread of COVID: vaccines, boosters, high-quality, well-fitting masks, good ventilation, and distancing, when possible. We will continue to refrain from eating/drinking in classrooms, as well. Please step out of the classroom when eating or drinking, and faculty instructors have been asked to show understanding around these circumstances.

As always, students may be living with or experiencing a hardship that should be addressed by [Accommodations Resources Services \(ARS\)](#). Please review the eligibility requirements of ARS and follow the petition process outlined on their website. If ARS accommodations are approved, faculty instructors will be informed about the nature of the accommodation from the ARS office.

We will continue to consult with our public health experts and closely monitor data and developments of the pandemic in case additional pivots are required, though we do not anticipate them now. You can find updated FAQs posted on our Gillings [Coronavirus Information Portal](#) for more information. Fortunately, the evidence shows that most vaccinated and “boosted” people who test positive for COVID will either be asymptomatic or have very mild symptoms. While that is comforting, we know that people still have significant, legitimate concerns about contracting COVID, especially if they are immunocompromised or living with such individuals or have unvaccinated children or other family members at home.

We ask that everyone continue to operate with our touchstones of “adaptability, flexibility and kindness” as together, we navigate what we hope will be the tail end of the current pandemic surge. We recognize that adapting to life in a pandemic is taking a lot out of everyone. If you need help coping, please do not hesitate to check out the Gillings Virtual Engagement Hub <https://sph.unc.edu/students/gillings-virtual-hub/> or the UNC Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <https://caps.unc.edu/>. Best wishes for a safe, healthy, and enjoyable Gillings Spring 2022 semester!