



## Fall 2022 Return to Campus Guidance for Faculty/Staff (8/8/22)

### Background

With the goal of maintaining safe and healthy campus learning environments for all students, faculty and staff, this document describes the intended operating strategy for the Fall 2022 semester. This fall we are better informed and more prepared than either of the past two fall semesters: Outpatient treatment is accessible; and vaccines, boosters and free home testing kits are widely available. These allow for rapid identification of cases and a variety of effective treatment options that will continue to evolve over time. **Even so, COVID-19 remains a threat to our faculty, staff and students and our campus operations.** Deaths from COVID are hovering at almost 500 per day in the U.S. In N.C., although 87% of adults have received at least one dose, only 63% are fully vaxed, and only 18% have had a booster ([NYT](#), updated Aug 4, 2022). Given that current community rates of COVID-19 in Orange County are high, we must be vigilant in our efforts to mitigate against community spread wherever possible. Outbreaks are likely, no matter what strategies we pursue. Many people in the UNC-Chapel Hill community will get COVID-19. Although we hope these will not result in severe illnesses or hospitalizations, we remain vigilant and are ready in case we must implement changes to operating conditions. As the UNC-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health, we aim to be an exemplar for implementing science-based best practices. We are committed to providing a safe residential learning experience and work environment for our students, faculty and staff.

### Operating Status

For Fall 2022, all courses are expected to be taught on the day, time, location and in the mode of instruction listed in ConnectCarolina. Students have been able to view days, times, and modes of instruction of courses since early March, and then register for courses at the end of March. Presumably, all faculty members have discussed with their department chairs any instances that vary from the standard 'in-person' mode of instruction, and pedagogy has informed the mode of instruction decision.

The five modes of instruction (2 in-person & 3-remote) listed in ConnectCarolina are shared with outside entities, such as the UNC System Office. More importantly, they represent the method of teaching that enrolled students expect. At this point, if a faculty member requests **any permanent mode of instruction change**, it must first be approved by their department chair, and then by Laura Linnan, ScD, senior associate dean for academic and student affairs. If a faculty member requests a **temporary mode of instruction change for two weeks or less**, this should be approved and documented by their department chair in the event reporting is required by the Provost Office. **This is the same process as last spring and fall.** Here is a link to a more detailed description of the [Instructional Modes](#).

### COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies

**Masks: Masking is one of the most effective ways to reduce community spread of COVID-19.** We continue to follow Orange County Health Department guidelines encouraging masking in public spaces. Given the current high community rate of COVID-19 in Orange County, masking is encouraged indoors but (consistent with university policy) masks are not required in classrooms, offices, and most public spaces. Masks are required in health care settings, including UNC Health, Campus Health, the Employee Occupational Health Clinic, the Student Stores Pharmacy and any other patient clinics or clinical simulation areas on campus. Masks are also required on university transit services like P2P and Safe Ride, and on Chapel Hill Transit. **To reinforce the use of masks, we are making them available at several**

**locations in the Gillings School.** At the same time, students, faculty and staff should not be penalized if they do not wear a mask in their classroom or office setting where it is now optional based on university guidance.

**If a student, staff or faculty member is not feeling well?** Anyone with symptoms should *not* come to campus and *should* get a COVID test!

- **Optional Re-entry Testing:** Consistent with university policy, we do not require testing for coming back to campus; nor will incoming students be required to attest to their vaccination status. However, we encourage people to get tested if they are not feeling well, have been exposed, or fear they may have been exposed. **Remember: Anyone who has symptoms should *not* come to campus and *should* get a test.** Students who test positive before the start of the semester and are unable to come to campus as a result should contact Campus Health to let them know of their positive test, complete all isolation protocols, and return to campus when able. Students should report positive tests [here](#); and faculty and staff should report [here](#).
- **Testing: No mandatory** or voluntary testing for *asymptomatic* individuals is available on campus for employees or students. **Symptomatic testing** for students is available through Campus Health. Here is a great [website](#) describing how to get free at-home tests. The same [website](#) also has a section on how to get free tests through your insurance or through local sites.
- **For those who are at high risk** of severe illness from COVID-19, [effective treatments](#) are [available by prescription](#), including through Campus Health (students) and healthcare providers (faculty and staff), and through [test-to-treat locations in N.C.](#) Because treatments work best soon after onset of symptoms, even mild symptoms, it's important to get tested and arrange to get treated promptly.
- **Vaccines:** We strongly encourage vaccination with approved vaccines as a safe, effective method to prevent severe disease and death. Student Stores Pharmacy and Campus Health Pharmacy have vaccines available for students, faculty, and staff and community members age 12 and older ([find out more](#)). No appointment is necessary, and it is open Monday through Friday from 9am -5pm. As a reminder to faculty, staff and students with young children, vaccinations for children aged 6 months - 12 years are now available at many locations, including your pediatrician's office, Orange County Public Health Department and other community settings.
- **Faculty/staff Leave Approved for Boosters.** Attesting to getting a vaccine or booster is *not* required. It is, however, encouraged using the COVID-19 Vaccination Form found [here](#). And, state employees are eligible for eight hours of leave if they attest to receiving a booster shot using this form.
- **Isolation/Quarantine Protocols:** All students should report positive results from off-campus testing or at-home tests to [Campus Health](#). Residential students who test positive can isolate at home (strongly preferred) or in their residence hall room (only leaving for food pick-up and medical care while wearing a mask). Detailed isolation information for students can be found on the [Campus Health website](#).
- **COVID-19 Cases:** We will continue to monitor COVID-19 cases and make changes as dictated by local and national trends and recommendations. As stated at this time, the [Orange County level](#) is high.
- **Travel Abroad:** The federal government dropped requirements to test negative for COVID before boarding flights to the U.S. However, the university is still under travel restrictions that require prior approval for university-related international travel (access the form [here](#)). Travelers should also check restrictions in [destination countries](#).

## Looking Ahead

The best experience for our residential students is on campus, with in-person classes. We will do everything we can to make that possible. As with much of our planning throughout the pandemic, we have made this plan in consultation of our own public health, infectious disease, and local health experts and consistent with university policies. We are ready to respond to conditions as they may evolve. As in prior semesters, should conditions degrade or a dangerous variant appear, we will shift in operations to address the circumstances.

## Class Attendance

The policy for absences is maintained by the Education Policy Committee of the UNC-CH Faculty Council following resolution 2018-1, passed on February 9, 2018. It is available [here](#), and states:

*Regular class attendance is a student obligation. Students are responsible for all of their work, including assessments, tests, and written work, and for all class meetings. If a course instructor chooses to take attendance and sees that a student misses three or more consecutive class meetings or misses more classes than the course instructor thinks advisable, the instructor may report the facts to the student's advisor and/or academic dean. No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:*

- *Authorized University activities*
- *Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by Accessibility Resources and Service and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC)*
- *Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by Dean of Students, Gender Violence Service Coordinators, and/or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office (EOC).*

## Excused Absences

In any given semester, faculty routinely accommodate excused absences due to non-COVID-related conditions that are beyond the students' control, including: illness; death; accidents; major emergencies; religion; and University Approved Absences. **Faculty are strongly encouraged to resolve requests for an excused absence with the student directly without involvement of the University Approved Absence Office.** The [Class Attendance Policy](#) remains in effect for undergraduates. Graduate students should pay attention to the course syllabus where faculty describe the policy on absences. They should work with the faculty member to make up missed work and meet the credit hour requirements for that course. In all cases, **faculty are NOT required to record classes or teach in a mode of instruction that is not stated in ConnectCarolina for that class.** As clarified in the memo all students received, **faculty have the discretion to establish policies regarding absences and what students must do to make up absences or missed information in their class.** As a result, faculty should carefully review the syllabus, absence expectations, and make sure all students understand the policies for a given class. Students should clarify policies with their faculty instructor on the first day of classes.

## COVID-19 Related Absences

**Students should communicate with their instructor and not show up for class if they have potential COVID symptoms.** Only students who have tested positive or who have received orders to isolate or quarantine will be issued University Approved Absences (forms found [here](#)). **Accommodations and/or adjustments for symptoms or other circumstances should be arranged between the instructor and the student.**

## Faculty Responsibilities Regarding COVID-19 Absences

As with discussions about all absences, please demonstrate compassion and do your best to work with the student who has a COVID-related absence. If they have concerns *not* related to class attendance, guide them to their Academic Coordinator and/or their faculty mentor. Questions or concerns regarding accommodation requests due to disability should be directed to the Accessibility Resources and Service office: <https://ars.unc.edu/accommodations>.

**In most cases faculty members can work with students to make accommodations for excused absences.** There are several different options faculty may consider that can help reduce the need for making numerous individual accommodations for COVID-19 or other absences, including:

- Record classes and make them available for review later (**note: recording classes is NOT required but may be helpful depending on class or room size, and other pedagogical considerations**).
- Post PowerPoint slide decks and lecture notes to Sakai or Canvas – direct students to them.
- Provide flexibility with assignment due dates.
- Use online exams that allow flexibility with start and stop times.
- Hold Zoom office hours and review sessions in addition to in-person office hours.

- Encourage students to get notes from classmates on information they may have missed.

## Excessive Student Absences

Sometimes, due to a variety of issues, students miss too many classes and these absences make it impossible or unreasonable to make up all missed work. In these cases, faculty should inform a student that they will not receive credit for a course. Examples of cases in which faculty may not be able to accommodate a student's absence requests due to significant number of absences include:

- Students cannot adequately engage in the required number of instructional minutes based on the federal definition of a credit hour;
- Students cannot achieve the course's stated student learning outcomes; or
- Course instructional activities involve a pedagogical component that cannot be replicated or accommodated without class attendance (e.g., semester-long project, substantial collaborative work, work requiring in-person involvement).

In those cases, instructors should encourage the student to contact their Academic Coordinator and/or faculty mentor about withdrawing from the course and/or repeating it at another time.

## Communicating Attendance Expectations to Students

Part of your communications to students should be that class attendance is not only expected but required. **This should be done through the syllabus and on the first day of classes.**

As part of accreditation requirements, courses must follow the listed hours of class time and additional hours of out-of-class engagement in the course. The [credit hour policy](#) applies to all courses at all levels (graduate, professional, and undergraduate) that award academic credit (i.e., any course that appears on an official transcript issued by the University), regardless of the mode of delivery, including, but not limited to, self-paced, online, hybrid, lecture, seminar, and laboratory. Number of hours of contact time inside the classroom, and student effort outside the classroom, is the same in all course formats.

## Recording Lectures

**There is no requirement to record lectures**, but it may help you avoid having to make numerous individual accommodations for students who may miss classes. Some best practices about recording classes, as detailed in [UNC's Policy and Procedures catalogue](#), include:

- Indicate on syllabi, or Sakai/Canvas, which classes (or parts of classes) *may* be recorded.
- Notify students and any guest speakers when a class is to be recorded.
- Ensure recordings are only available to enrolled students in the class. A recorded lecture should not be used for any purpose except to meet the educational objectives of that particular class (the department should contact University Counsel for any other purpose).
- Prohibit students from making individual recordings of the class in any format without prior consent from the instructor.
- Prohibit students from sharing or distributing recordings without permission of the instructor.

## Possible Changes in Mode of Instruction

As we continue in-person instruction this semester, there will be instances in which instructors need to temporarily move classes to remote learning for short periods of time to continue or enhance instruction. Requests for **temporary changes in mode of instruction of two weeks or less** can be submitted to department chairs for approval, documentation and the change must be communicated to students but will not result in any change in ConnectCarolina. Any **permanent changes** in mode of instruction must be approved by the department chair and the senior associate dean for academic and student affairs, and once approved, will be communicated with students and

entered into ConnectCarolina. **These are the same procedures we have used for mode of instruction changes in the past two semesters.**

## Grading and Withdrawal from Classes

We have returned to traditional grading at the Gillings School with H, P, L and F options; unless otherwise noted as pass/fail classes. Students have until Friday, October 7, to drop courses with a Withdrawal notation. After that time students can submit a request through academic advising.

## Supporting Mental Health and Well-Being

As we have done throughout the pandemic, we continue to emphasize an approach of **flexibility, adaptability and kindness** as we interact with each other, and with our students. We have adjusted to the pandemic in many ways, but many still face daunting challenges. Below are important resources you can remind students and colleagues of, if needed.

- **Well-being Days** (no classes held) – Sept 6, Sept 26. Instructors may not hold class, administer tests or other assessments, collect papers or assign new work on Well-being Days.
- **For everyone at UNC-Chapel Hill**, [Heels Care Network](#), the one-stop gateway for mental health and wellness resources for everyone at UNC-Chapel Hill.
- **For students:** [UNC Student Wellness](#) and Counseling and Psychological Services ([CAPS](#))
- **For employees:** [Work/Life & Wellness Programs](#), including Employee Assistance Program ([EAP](#))
- **For all people:** National [988](#) mental health crisis/suicide prevention lifeline (call/text/chat), launched July 16, 2022 (with strong support in [North Carolina](#)).

This guidance is effective as of 8/8/22 and it will be updated with new information from university leadership or CDC/Orange County Health Department as needed throughout the semester.