

Spring 2022 Instructional Guidelines: Some Practical Recommendations

January 2022

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, which applies to all future semesters

“For spring semester in 2022, 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 at the beginning of the analogous semester that began on or immediately after January 1, 2020.”

Vaccine Requirement:

With multiple vaccines now approved—and booster shots recommended—we are now following the guidance from USHE below.

“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 should 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. The Center for Teaching and Learning Technologies provides helpful tips and templates for preparing a syllabus. 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 and the booster shot recommended for pairing with your vaccine** 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 and booster shot 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>.
 - With high transmission rates in Salt Lake County, the CDC recommends: “Everyone should wear a mask in public indoor settings.”
 - Treat masks like seasonal clothing (i.e., during community surges in COVID transmission, they should be worn indoors and in close groups outside).
 - In cases of classroom exposure, masks should be worn 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, faculty and staff must self-report if they test positive for COVID-19*** via this website: <https://coronavirus.utah.edu/>.

Also consider including:

Class Modalities

In Person

- *This course will be held in person. Except in cases of ADA accommodations or quarantining due to COVID-19 exposure or infection, you will be expected to attend class in person and complete assignments and exams in person. Changes to this policy are up to the discretion of the instructor.*

Hybrid/IVC Hybrid/IVC/Online

- *Parts of this class will be delivered online or digitally. Attendance requirements, assignment submission format and, and exam modalities will be clearly stated in the syllabus and on Canvas. Changes to these requirements are up to the discretion of the instructor.*

Student Mental Health Resources

- *Rates of burnout, anxiety, depression, isolation, and loneliness have noticeably increased during the pandemic. If you need help, campus mental health resources are available, including counseling, trainings and other support.*
- *Consider participating in a Mental Health First Aid or other wellness-themed training provided by Student Affairs' Center for Student Wellness to help contribute to creating a healthier and safer campus community. These are designed to equip you to better recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance abuse challenges..*

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. Share the university's contact tracing protocol with 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 based on the latest CDC guidelines. Please wear a mask whenever you are outside of your home and consider vaccination. Follow the U Health contact tracing team's advice about your return to class.
 - Those who are *fully vaccinated* (2 weeks after a second or final vaccination shot), are free to remain on campus, while following CDC masking, testing and quarantining guidelines.
- 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 ADA accommodation to teach remotely should use the online disability accommodation form and submit it through HR.
- Faculty who are ineligible for an ADA accommodation but have household members at high risk (as defined by CDC) can request to teach remotely by contacting Human Resources and filling 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. If a class is delivered in person, all components of coursework may be required in person, including exams.***
 - ***Use this standard language: “Given the nature of this course, attendance is required, and adjustments cannot be granted to allow non-attendance, except in cases of quarantining due to COVID-19 exposure, or for those who have an ADA accommodation. 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>.

Mental Health Resources

As trusted advisors and mentors who are often closest to our students, your support of their whole health is critical as we begin another semester during the COVID-19 pandemic. With that in mind, please consider including the mental health language provided above with your course

information, such as syllabi and pages on Canvas. Additionally, here is a [printable list of resources](#) that can be downloaded. Note that these services are available to all students – undergraduate, graduate, and professional – in all programs, including students studying in the health sciences.

Please also consider participating in a [Mental Health First Aid](#) or other [wellness-themed](#) training provided by Student Affairs' Center for Student Wellness and sharing these opportunities with your department colleagues. These are designed to equip you to better recognize and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance abuse challenges and help you contribute to creating a healthier and safer campus community.

In addition, this [recent opinion article from *Inside Higher Ed*](#) has useful advice for how faculty can support student mental health.