

TOPIC: TRANSITION PLAN AND WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY

Question: Do the recently released guidelines for transitioning back and full reopening of the campus apply equally to all faculty and staff?

Answer: The [Transition and Full Reopening Guidelines](#) recently released by the President apply equally to all UH employees, both faculty and staff members.

Question: What are the expectations for faculty members to fully return to campus in the fall?

Answer: In general, faculty members already have a great deal of flexibility in how and where they perform their professional responsibilities. However, certain tasks and responsibilities, such as delivering face-to-face instruction in the classroom or laboratory, conducting office hours for students, and participating in service-related tasks are by their nature faculty activities which normally require on-campus, in-person interactions. As such, faculty members are expected to transition back to their typical, pre-pandemic in-person campus work schedule by the beginning of the fall semester.

Question: If a faculty member wishes to seek approval to modify their typical, pre-pandemic in-person campus faculty-related work schedule, who should they contact?

Answer: In general, faculty members already have a great deal of flexibility in how and where they perform their professional responsibilities. However, if a faculty member seeks to modify their typical, pre-pandemic in-person campus faculty-related work schedule, they should first discuss their request with their department chair or immediate supervisor, before submitting their request to modify their typical pre-pandemic work schedule for review and approval by their dean.

Question: Under what circumstances are faculty members eligible to request approval to work completely remotely?

Answer: Faculty members are expected to transition back to their typical, pre-pandemic in-person campus work schedule by the beginning of the fall semester. However, if a faculty member has a medical condition that prohibits them from coming to campus, they may request a reasonable workplace accommodation by contacting EOS either by phone at 713-743-8835 or by email at eos@uh.edu.

TOPIC: CLASSROOM HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

Question: Will social distancing be required in all classrooms this coming fall semester?

Answer: Social distancing requirements for classrooms in the fall will be based on the most up-to-date CDC and state guidelines available at the time. While current classroom enrollment caps for fall classes are set at pre-COVID levels, the University will adjust its guidance on final classroom enrollment caps closer to the beginning of the fall semester as necessary.

Question: Will faculty instructors and students in face-to-face classes be required to wear face-coverings in the classroom this coming fall semester?

Answer: We are following CDC guidelines in regard to wearing face coverings indoors and outside. There are circumstances in which face coverings are not required. As with all the guidance and protocols related to COVID-19, the University will adjust its guidance as necessary to reflect new information and findings. Please check the UH COVID-19 website for the latest [face covering protocols](#).

Question: Will sanitizing stations be available in classrooms this coming fall semester?

Answer: Sanitizing wipes and/or disinfectant spray will be available in classrooms for use on hard surfaces. In addition, all public areas are equipped with hand sanitizer dispensers placed at entrances, elevator lobbies and other key areas throughout buildings. Restroom fixtures have touchless faucets, touchless soap dispensers, and touchless paper towel dispensers and foot pull door openers.

Question: What should a faculty instructor do if a student in their face-to-face class refuses to wear a face covering when required to do so?

Answer: If a student attends the in-person component of a class without a face covering, then the instructor of record should ask the student to put on a face covering with positive coaching or to leave the classroom if the student does not wish to wear a face covering. If the student refuses to comply, the instructor of record can end the class meeting to avoid putting the instructor of record and other students at risk. The instructor of record should report non-compliant students to the Dean of Students by submitting an [Incident Reporting Form](#).

Question: How should faculty members encourage students, other faculty members and staff to follow University mandated COVID guidelines if they are not in compliance with these requirements?

Answer: The UH COVID-19 website has a [compliance FAQ page](#) which covers ensuring compliance with COVID-related guidelines, and how and with whom concerns about someone not adhering to these requirements should be raised.

Question: How will the University respond in terms of instructional delivery if COVID conditions require a change from planned in-person operations during the fall?

Answer: While our assumption is that the pandemic is under control, the situation may change over the summer or during the fall. Our priority is to keep our campus community safe. Our strategy is to follow the CDC and state guidelines. If we need to respond to changes in current CDC and state guidelines, we will adjust instructional delivery to take advantage of the various online instructional modes we have already successfully deployed over the course of the pandemic.

TOPIC: VACCINATION STATUS

Question: May faculty instructors require that students attending their face-to-face classes be vaccinated?

Answer: Based on Governor Abbott's Executive Order, any organization receiving state funds cannot require a COVID-19 vaccination. As such, faculty members (as representatives of the University) cannot require that students attending their face-to-face classes be vaccinated.

Question: May students require that faculty instructors teaching their face-to-face classes be vaccinated?

Answer: Based on Governor Abbott's Executive Order, any organization receiving state funds cannot require their employees be vaccinated for a COVID-19. As such, students attending face-to-face classes cannot require their faculty instructors to be vaccinated.

Question: May faculty members ask their students if they have been vaccinated against COVID, or if they have tested positive for COVID in the past?

Answer: Faculty members should not ask whether any student has received the COVID vaccine or contracted COVID-19. However, if a student tests positive for COVID-19, it is their responsibility to report their diagnosis to the University via the [online form](#).

Question: If a faculty member is fully vaccinated, are they required to follow all university guidelines concerning face coverings and social distancing requirements?

Answer: We will continue to follow CDC guidelines and state mandates regarding in-person interactions, which are expected to change over time. Currently, if all participants including faculty members are [fully vaccinated](#) then the following guidelines apply: face coverings are not required for indoor face-to-face gatherings or meetings; you may gather or conduct activities outdoors without wearing a mask except in certain crowded settings and venues.

Question: Has the University made any special provisions to provide vaccinations specifically for faculty members, and if so how and/or where can I receive a vaccine?

Answer: The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to get a COVID-19 vaccination, which is readily available at [multiple sites](#) throughout the region. Vaccinations are provided free of charge to all who request to be vaccinated.

Question: Should faculty members encourage their students and colleagues to be vaccinated?

Answer: YES! The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to get a COVID-19 vaccination, which is readily available at [multiple sites](#) throughout the region. Vaccinations are provided free of charge to all who request to be vaccinated.

TOPIC: CLASSROOM TEACHING AND INSTRUCTION

Question: What should I include in my fall class syllabus relative to UH COVID-related guidelines grading policies, etc.?

Answer: Mandatory and recommended language for inclusion by faculty instructors in their fall 2021 class syllabi is currently being updated by Office of the Provost and will be distributed to departments as soon as possible. Please remember that several interim policies implemented during the last year because of COVID-related considerations, such as interim student grading policies, are no longer in effect and should not be included in class syllabi going forward.

Question: Under what circumstances may a student request an excused absence from a class (regardless of class instructional mode)?

Answer: Please be aware that student excused absence policies are permanent academic policies. Students may request an excused absence from class as detailed in either the [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) or the [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) as appropriate. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

Question: What options does a faculty instructor have in terms of face-coverings if a hearing-impaired student who relies on lip-reading requires an accommodation in their face-to-face class?

Answer: For students who are hearing impaired, opaque face coverings can be a hindrance to communication either due to lack of ability to read lips or difficulties using a sign language interpreter. Faculty are encouraged to work with the [Center for Students with DisABILITIES](#) to determine appropriate

accommodations (e.g., wearing a face shield or a transparent face covering to accommodate students relying on lip reading). For classes using sign language interpreters, interpreters will either wear a face shield or provide remote interpreting. Alternatively, if the instructor is able to maintain a 6 foot or greater distance from their class and partitions are in place between the instructor and the class, the instructor may remove their face covering while teaching so long as they maintain the required distance and stay behind the partition and the students continue to wear face coverings.

Question: May faculty instructors record their face-to-face classes for use as part of make-up assignments they may provide if a student has been granted an excused absence?

Answer: If they so choose, faculty instructors are free to record their face-to-face class lectures and make them available to all students in their class as supplementary class materials, or make them available as part of any class make-up activity that an individual student may be required to complete due to an excused class absence.

Question: May faculty instructors choose to use a HyFlex mode of instruction even though their class is listed on the course schedule as a face-to-face class?

Answer: If they so choose, faculty instructors are free to deliver their face-to-face class in a HyFlex instructional mode to provide their students with additional flexibility. However, faculty members who choose to provide such flexibility to their students may not themselves deliver their class remotely, rather they must still deliver their face-to-face class in person at the required scheduled day/time and classroom location.

Question: Do students have the right to access any portions of their face-to-face classes that faculty instructors may choose to record?

Answer: Students do not have the automatic right to have unlimited access to any recorded portions of a face-to-face class. However, if a faculty member chooses to record any portion of their face-to-face class, they should inform their students that the class activity is being recorded and for what purpose (e.g. recorded lectures will be made available as supplementary online class materials to all students in the class, recorded lectures will be available to those students as part of a class make-up activity required as part of an excused absence). This information should also be included in the class syllabus. If a faculty member wishes to use recorded lectures as part of a future class, please be aware that such recording may need to be edited to remove any individual student likenesses or interactions.

Question: Are students required to physically attend the face-to-face classes they have registered for, even if a faculty instructor decides to record some or all of the face-to-face class lectures?

Answer: If a student is registered for a face-to-face class they are required to satisfy the in-person attendance requirements set by the faculty instructor and detailed in the class syllabus.

TOPIC: FACULTY AND DEPARTMENTAL OFFICE SPACE

Question: Will faculty members be required to wear face-coverings and practice social distancing in their personal office space this coming fall semester?

Answer: Current social distancing and face covering requirements are based on current CDC guidelines. A private faculty office is not considered a public area when it allows for reliably maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet from others and includes a physical barrier between other workspaces. In this circumstance, a face covering is not required. Please check the University's COVID-19 website for the most recent [COVID safety requirements](#).

Question: Will social distancing and face coverings be required in common departmental areas this coming fall semester?

Answer: Current social distancing and face covering requirements for common areas are based on current CDC guidelines. As with all the guidance and protocols related to COVID-19, the University will adjust its guidance as necessary to reflect new information and findings. Please check the University's COVID-19 website for the most recent [COVID safety requirements](#).

Question: Will social distancing and face coverings be required during in-person student office hours offered by faculty members in their personal office space?

Answer: We will continue to follow CDC guidelines in regard to wearing face coverings and social distancing requirements on campus, including for scheduled in-person faculty-student office hours. If both the faculty member and the student are [fully vaccinated](#), with mutual agreement both may choose not to wear a face covering or socially distance. As with all the guidance and protocols related to COVID-19, the University will adjust its guidance as necessary to reflect new information and findings. Please check the UH COVID-19 website for the latest [face covering protocols](#).

Question: What sanitization and cleaning protocols will be in effect this coming fall semester with regard to individual faculty offices, and shared departmental and college office spaces?

Answer: UH maintenance staff, under the guidance of the COVID-19 Coordinator, have been following CDC guidelines for cleaning and sanitizing office buildings and common areas. As with all the guidance and protocols related to COVID-19, the University will adjust its guidance as necessary to reflect new information and findings.

TOPIC: RESEARCH OPERATIONS

Question: When will faculty be able to fully return to carrying out research involving human subjects?

Answer: University approved guidelines for human subjects research have been updated to allow approved procedures to be conducted at closer than six feet of distance (for fewer than 15 minutes of cumulative contact per day). Faculty members may review the current guidelines on the [DOR COVID-19 Human Subjects page](#) to determine the detailed requirements for human subject research studies that meet the updated criteria and to download supporting documents, such as the required contact tracing logs and subject informational handouts. The posted guidance is subject to change so please check back on a regular basis.

Question: Will there be vaccination requirements for faculty, staff or students who work in research laboratories?

Answer: Based on Governor Abbott's Executive Order, any organization receiving state funds cannot require a COVID-19 vaccination. As such, faculty members (as representatives of the University) cannot require that students, post-doctoral fellows or research staff members who work in their research laboratory be vaccinated. We will continue to follow CDC guidelines and state mandates regarding in-person interactions including research operations, which are expected to change over time. Currently, if all participants including faculty members are [fully vaccinated](#) then the following guidelines apply: face coverings are not required for indoor face-to-face gatherings or meetings; you may gather or conduct activities outdoors without wearing a mask except in certain crowded settings and venues.

Question: Will the UH Libraries be fully operational and offer their full complement of typical in-person academic and research services this fall?

Answer: As indicated in the Transition and Full Reopening Guidelines recently released by the President, all campus units including the UH Libraries are expected to transition and fully return to campus by August 2. As such, the UH Libraries is expected to return to full in-person operations and services by August 2 but may reopen at full capacity earlier than August 2. Up-to-date information on all UH Libraries services including operating hours can be found [here](#).

Question: The Child Care Center on campus has had restricted hours of operation during COVID that have impacted faculty members with children relative to their research schedules. Will the Child Care Center hours of operation be expanded when faculty return to campus?

Answer: As indicated in the [Transition and Full Reopening Guidelines](#) recently released by the President, all campus units including the Child Care Center are expected to transition and fully return to campus by August 2. As such, the Child Care Center is expected to return to full operations by August 2 but may reopen at full capacity earlier than August 2. Up-to-date information on Child Care Center operations can be found [here](#).