



UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO

FACULTY HANDBOOK

Fall 2020 Return to Campus



The purpose of this document is to highlight long standing university policies related to instruction that are relevant to the return to campus for faculty in Fall 2020, and the extent to which the practice of these policies has or has not changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

University policies and resources for faculty can be found in the following places.

- Board Policy Manual Expectations for Instruction are found on pages 102 and 104-106: <https://www.unco.edu/trustees/pdf/board-policy-manual.pdf>
- University Regulations starting on page 12: https://www.unco.edu/trustees/pdf/university_regulations.pdf
- Undergraduate Catalog (student policies and procedures): <https://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/Current/Undergraduate-Catalog/Undergraduate-Information-and-Policies/Student-Policies-and-Procedures>
- COVID-19 specific policies (FAQ, Return to work, etc.): <https://www.unco.edu/coronavirus/frequently-asked-questions.aspx>; <https://www.unco.edu/return-to-campus/resources-policies/>
- CETL Fall 2020 teaching guides: <https://www.unco.edu/center-enhancement-teaching-learning/fall-2020-teaching.aspx>
- CETL and IDD support: [CETL Teaching Resources](#); [Instructional Design and Development](#).



COURSE POLICIES AND SUGGESTED PRACTICES

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The UNC attendance policy is in the [University Catalog](#) with further detail on faculty expectations in [Board Policy](#) 2-3-401(1)(b)(l) and [University Regulations](#) 3-2-109(2). In particular, the longstanding policy of the university around student attendance includes,

“Regular class attendance is assumed. Faculty should state their specific policies on absences in the syllabus. Each instructor determines the relationship between class attendance, the objectives of the class, and the grade. The instructor is responsible for attendance policies and their effect on grades. Students are responsible for knowing the attendance policy of each course. Only the instructor can approve a student’s absence. Students are responsible for requesting such approval.”

In light of the pandemic, and for its duration, the university has adopted the practice that faculty may not require a medical provider’s note to document illness resulting in short-term class absence. See the relevant questions in the [coronavirus FAQs](#) in both student and faculty sections. Further, the Dean of Students office is not in a position to routinely collect documentation of excused absences on behalf of faculty. They will reserve this role for serious and longer-term absences. CETL’s [Promising Practices Toolkit](#) includes advice for faculty on how to motivate attendance without mandating medical provider notes.

For classes that meet face-to-face, faculty are encouraged to take attendance (regardless of how or whether attendance is included explicitly in the course's grading scheme) in the event this information becomes useful to assist with contact tracing. Canvas has an [attendance tool](#) (including a seating chart) that can assist with this.

MASK WEARING

[UNC's mask policy](#) requires students, employees, and visitors to wear cloth face coverings over their nose and mouths at all times while in public or shared spaces on campus, including in classrooms. For courses in which there is a pedagogical need for the instructor or students to temporarily remove their face coverings, or for the instructor to wear a clear face shield instead of a cloth face covering, the instructor should contact Glen Adams (Glenn.Adams@unco.edu) for guidance.

Faculty should include a statement in their syllabi reminding students that they must wear a mask in class. A small supply of emergency/disposable masks will be available in Deans' offices and [other locations around campus](#). Students who arrive without a mask should be directed to the nearest location where masks may be available for pickup and allowed to return to class if they are successful in securing a mask. Student failure to comply with [UNC's mask requirement](#) is subject to disciplinary action under the Code of Student Conduct. There is no individual medical exemption for wearing a mask in an in-person course; students who cannot wear a mask because of medical or psychological conditions can contact the Disability Resource Center to explore alternative course modalities.



OFFICE HOURS

As stated in [Board Policy 2-3-402\(1\)\(a\)\(V\)](#), instructors are expected to schedule a reasonable number of office hours for student conferences, with the additional option of prearranged appointments for students when there is a schedule conflict.

Instructors may employ virtual office hours (using Zoom or Teams) for both regularly scheduled and prearranged appointments. CETL has [suggestions for implementing virtual office hours](#). Instructors who chose to hold in-person office hours during the pandemic must adhere to social distancing and mask requirements, including ensuring that students waiting for an appointment are able to stay 6 feet apart (pre-scheduled appointments are recommended to minimize crowding).

Instructors whose offices are too small to host in-person meetings under social distancing requirements may schedule small classrooms or other spaces for this purpose by working with their college schedulers. Group office hours must not exceed 10 people, or the maximum Covid capacity of a given space, whichever is smaller.



CLASS MEETINGS AND CONTACT HOURS

Classes must fulfill required instructional contact hours following [CDHE](#) guidelines. For most 3-credit courses the ratio is 1:1, but an instructional “hour” is 50 minutes, hence the instructor must be actively involved in teaching for 150 minutes each week. For a synchronous course (whether online or in-person), this is equivalent to three 50-minute class periods or two 75-minute class periods. For an asynchronous or blended online course, the distinction between “active teaching” and other activities like grading/providing informal feedback is blurred, but instructors are expected to actively engage students via informal/ungraded interactions in keeping with the spirit of the contact hour expectations. Instructors should contact their department chair/school director for clarification about how the contact hour ratio applies to their classes.

Courses designated as face-to-face require the instructor to meet with students in the same physical space for at least 75% of the total instructional time as calculated above. Instructors of Mixed Face-to-Face courses must meet with their students in the same physical space according to a schedule clearly posted on their syllabus and/or course Canvas site. Regardless of course modality, instructors should provide ample opportunities for students to interact with the course content, other students, and the instructor. CETL hosts several workshops and other resources, and provides individual consultations, for instructors wishing to enhance their strategies; see also their [Fall 2020 Teaching Guides](#), which include targeted advice for fully Online, Mixed Face-to-Face, and fully In-Person courses.

Instructors may choose to hold class outside but must adhere to social distancing and masking requirements. Instructors should also be mindful that this is distracting and uncomfortable for many students (information about outdoor meetings should be clearly indicated on the syllabus and highlighted during the add/drop period).



SOCIAL DISTANCING IN THE CLASSROOM

In addition to wearing masks, everyone present (students and faculty) must maintain social distance during class and not exceed the COVID room capacity posted outside each classroom. Faculty and students should not move classroom furniture as the seats have been arranged to provide the appropriate distance between individuals for social distancing.

In the transition time between classes, all students should exit the classroom before other students enter. To accommodate this, it is important for instructors to end class on time; questions from students to faculty after class should be conducted outside of the classroom, virtually or in office hours.

CLEANING EXPECTATIONS

As stated on [UNC's COVID-19 Prevention page](#), "Every member of the UNC community has a responsibility for sanitizing your own work and/or living area and shared resources. Disinfecting wipes (or disinfecting spray and paper towels) will be provided so you can do your part to prevent surface transmission of coronavirus." Cleaning supplies will be available in every room. [Facilities management](#) can be contacted if supplies need to be replenished before the end of the day at 970-351-2446.

ACADEMIC SCHEDULE AND FINAL EXAMS

The university will maintain its regular academic schedule, including continued on-campus instruction after Thanksgiving and during Final Exam week.

The university's [final exam policy](#) remains in effect. Instructors who do not administer an end of term assessment must inform their department chair/school director and provide students with additional contact hours equivalent to the final exam period (typically 2.5 hours for a 3-credit hour course).

Instructors who choose to utilize an alternate assessment should set the submission deadline to coincide with the end of the registrar-scheduled final exam period for the class. All timed final exams (including exams administered online) must be delivered during the registrar-scheduled time period.

- Instructors of traditional, Face-to-Face courses who wish to administer timed final exams may use their regularly scheduled classroom during the registrar scheduled time period.
- Instructors of Mixed Face-to-Face courses are encouraged to determine, early in the semester, the preferred mechanism (online, in-person, etc.) for administering a final, and to work with the college scheduler to find a room if an in-person exam is going to be administered as the final exam.
- For asynchronous courses, a best practice is to allow a 48-hour window that overlaps with the registrar-scheduled time period.

GRADING POLICIES

Usual grading policies apply. The temporary S/U grading policy applied only to courses in Spring 2020. As stated in Board Policy 2-3-501, the grading scheme for individual classes must be included in the syllabus.

CONTACT TRACING AND FERPA

In the event a student in an instructor's course tests positive for COVID-19, university officials might contact the instructor to perform contact tracing. Providing attendance information following such a request is not a violation of FERPA. Faculty are not responsible for reporting -- and should not announce to their class -- that a student in the class has tested positive.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

50% WORKSPACE CAPACITY

Faculty who can work remotely to fulfill some or all of their work responsibilities should continue to do so (see [UNC Returning to the Workplace Guide](#)). Overall, UNC is required to reduce the people density with 50% as a guideline. Working remotely reduces the number of people on campus and minimizes the spread of the virus. In particular, only 50% capacity in each office suite is permitted. Faculty sharing a suite of offices should work together to ensure their compliance with this practice.

Faculty meetings and similar activities should be conducted entirely online (i.e., via Zoom or Teams), and must include a virtual/call in option for those who prefer to attend remotely, unless the essential work to be conducted during the activity cannot be accomplished online. Per State rules, in-person meetings may not exceed 10 people.

REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Faculty who have tested positive for COVID-19 should report this to their department chair or school director, and also to the university using the link available on [UNC's Health Alerts](#) page. If a student informs a faculty member that they might be sick, the student should be encouraged to [get tested](#) and self-report their results using the link on the Health Alerts page. If a student reports to an instructor that they have tested positive, the instructor should submit a report through the Health Alerts page as well.

INSTRUCTOR ABSENCE

In keeping with [Board Policy](#) 2-3-402, instructors who become unable to meet with their scheduled classes regularly (which includes providing appropriate synchronous or asynchronous contact time in an online course) due to illness, quarantine or other emergency must notify their department chair/school director, who must take appropriate action to ensure that instruction continues for students.

Department chairs/school directors are encouraged to work with faculty in their units to identify an appropriate “back-up” colleague who could step in if needed for each course being offered in their unit.

If an instructor of a Face-to-Face or Mixed Face-to-Face class is required to remain off campus but is healthy enough to teach using synchronous or asynchronous delivery for a short period of time, doing so might be appropriate. Even if the instructor can continue teaching the course in this way, they must notify their department chair/school director of the temporary change in the instructional modality. The instructor should consider the impact on students who might not have adequate technology or internet access or might be unable to arrange for a quiet place to connect to the class during synchronous meetings.

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Virtual oral comprehensive exams, proposal hearings, and dissertation/doctoral scholarly project defenses are expected for the 2020-2021 academic year. Graduate program faculty are also encouraged to find alternatives to face-to-face written comprehensive examinations. Please consult the [Dean or Associate Dean of the Graduate School](#) for guidance.

Graduate School forms for appointment of doctoral committees, scheduling oral comprehensive exams, and scheduling dissertation/doctoral scholarly project defenses are available on the [Forms](#) page of the Graduate School website (<https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/student-resources/current-students/graduate-school-forms.aspx>). These forms allow for digital signatures and should be submitted electronically to relevant Graduate School staff.

Results forms for oral comprehensive exams and dissertation/doctoral scholarly project defenses are sent to research advisors once an exam or defense is scheduled by the Graduate School. The forms require committee members to sign digitally and send the form electronically to the Graduate School.

The Graduate School will accept digitally signed dissertation/doctoral scholarly project signature pages.



Applications for [Graduate Lecturer, Graduate Faculty status and Graduate Faculty with Doctoral Research Endorsement](#) status are available online and accept digital signatures (<https://www.unco.edu/graduate-school/faculty-resources/graduate-faculty-status.aspx>). Completed applications, which must include signatures of chair/director and college dean, should be emailed to Carol.Steward@unco.edu. The [Doctoral Research Endorsement workshop](#) presentation is available online. Face-to-face workshops will not take place this year, but there will be occasional virtual sessions to address faculty questions about Graduate School policies as they relate to doctoral students.

Appointments with Graduate School staff may be scheduled by [emailing individual staff members](#) or using the scheduler function in Outlook. Staff members are happy to meet virtually with faculty or students via TEAMS or Zoom.

Faculty working with graduate assistants and graduate teaching assistants should ensure that these students are familiar with COVID-19 safety protocols. If a GA or TA is exposed to or becomes ill with COVID-19, that student must quarantine. The student is permitted to take two weeks paid leave during the period of quarantine or illness. If the student needs a longer leave, it is important to contact Human Resources for the appropriate process and application for medical accommodation.

COURSES THAT DO NOT MEET ON THE GREELEY CAMPUS

Field-based courses are subject to the health standards described in this document and on the COVID-19 return to campus website (<https://unco.edu/return-to-campus/prevention>).

Students engaged in Internship, field-placement, cooperative education, clinical placement, or any educational activity that occurs at partner locations (e.g., not at a UNC campus location) must also follow the health and safety guidance of the partner organization.

Courses offered at the Lowry or Centerra campuses are subject to the same health and safety guidance as the Greeley Campus.

FACULTY TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT/NEEDS

Faculty are strongly encouraged to visit their classrooms and test out the technology as soon as possible. Faculty who need additional technology support or training should submit a ticket from the [IM&T Home Page](#).