

APPENDIX IX REVISION (9-1-21): FACULTY PROCEDURES FOR A SAFE RETURN TO CAMPUS UNDER PANDEMIC CONDITIONS IN FALL 2021

These procedures go into effect at the discretion of the Chancellor and Faculty Chair in periods when global and local health agencies indicate widespread need for social distancing, mask use, remote work, and other measures to mitigate the spread of airborne pathogens. Because they result from urgent public health measures, these procedures temporarily supersede corollary instructions in the body of the *Faculty Manual*. Faculty are expected to adhere to policies and procedures issued from the Office of the Chancellor or published on the [COVID-19 Resources](#) page of the university website. The following materials provide implementation guidance for classroom faculty and suggested language for syllabi.

TEACHING

Classroom Safety

“Mask UP when close UP” is a guiding principle for a safe return to campus this fall. Students and faculty are required to wear face coverings in the classroom and all indoor campus facilities. Face-to-face classroom policies apply to all students and faculty regardless of vaccination status. Faculty should set an expectation for the use of face coverings in their classrooms, both verbally and in their syllabi.

Faculty will establish a seating chart and take attendance to help Student Health Services identify students who need to be contacted if a classmate tests positive for COVID-19. Anyone [within 6 feet for >15 minutes](#) is considered to have been exposed. Attendance tools are available in Blackboard and Starfish. If feasible, encourage students to physically spread out using the available seating. Faculty may also request a larger classroom through their chair; requests will be handled on a case by case basis.

If a student attempts to enter a classroom without a face covering, the following steps may be followed depending on the situation. In alignment with the university’s core values of wellness, equity and civility, the instructor should engage with the student in a respectful manner, and arrive at a solution by discussing options one-on-one:

- Instructors should ask the student if he/she has a face covering on their person (in a pocket or backpack), and if so, ask them to put it on. If not, instructors may ask the student if he/she has a mask in their possession (in a car, in their apartment, etc.), and if so, ask him/her to retrieve it and return to class.
- If the student has no face covering or cannot retrieve one in a timely manner, the instructor may offer the student a disposable mask should one be immediately available.
- If the student cannot retrieve a face covering, the instructor may ask the student to leave and return to the next class wearing a face covering, or ask the student to sit apart from the rest of the class in an area where physical distancing is possible (if there is space in the classroom).
- If the student refuses to wear a face covering, the instructor may tell the student to leave the classroom and that a referral to the Dean of Students Office will be made. [Dean of Students | USC Upstate](#).
- If the student causes disruption (e.g., yelling, using profanity, interrupting an instructor’s ability to teach or conduct the class) USC Upstate police may be called to address the situation (864-503-7777). Campus police are trained in de-escalation techniques, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. They also receive biennial training in responding to people in states of mental crisis.

Students with conditions that prohibit them from wearing a face covering must register with Disability Services; appropriate accommodations will be approved by that office [Disability Services | USC Upstate](#).

Since face coverings are required in their class, instructors of record are expected to either wear a face covering, teach behind a barrier (e.g., Plexiglas guard), or be physically distanced from the students (at least 6 feet). In many cases, these options will address the needs of any instructor of record who has a condition that prohibits them from wearing a face covering. If not, the instructor should work with their supervisor/academic unit for accommodations. Note that the academic unit may request documentation for accommodations beyond those described herein; such documentation would be submitted to Human Resources.

Faculty are encouraged to clean keyboards and other shared equipment before and after use. Wipes, paper towels, and spray cleaners will be available for faculty and students to use between classes. Most surfaces and items in classrooms will be cleaned once a day by custodial staff members.

Office Hours

As USC Upstate returns to face-to-face instruction, all faculty members must devise and disseminate procedures for in-person and/or remote office hours that provide students with predictable and regular ways to receive mentorship or seek other assistance. Faculty have the right to consider their personal health and safety in devising these policies.

All faculty, regardless of teaching modality, are expected to hold a minimum of 90 minutes of in-person or virtual office hours per week. Faculty who choose to hold all regular office hours in person should still provide a virtual option for students so that the burden of requesting remote access is not necessary. For example, faculty might open a session in Blackboard Collaborate Ultra that runs concurrently with in-person office hours. Faculty should remain responsive to requests for availability outside of office hours and should clearly describe what students can expect, including a typical timeframe for returning emails. To reiterate:

- Faculty are permitted to opt for virtual office hours (with none held in person), provided that the other requirements in the first paragraph are met.
- Students should always be given the option of online appointments.

Faculty and students are required to wear face coverings and practice social distancing during office hours when more than one individual is in the room, regardless of vaccination status. Faculty should make disposable masks available from supplies provided by the university and can request that anyone entering their office wear a mask. Should the individual decline to do so, the faculty member can move to a space which provides more safety or reschedule the appointment in a virtual format.

In all cases, methods of holding office hours should prioritize the safety of students, faculty, and staff by adhering to campus regulations regarding mask use, social distancing, and other safety practices, while remaining flexible enough to accommodate student needs and maintaining appropriate levels of responsiveness to students.

Attendance and Make-up Work

As USC Upstate returns to face-to-face instruction, it is important to recognize the importance of staying home when sick, quarantine of close contacts, and isolation of positive cases. For these reasons, it will be necessary for faculty to provide make-up work. The specific make-up work is at the discretion of the faculty member and could include: virtual attendance options; providing recorded lectures, either from the current class or a previous semester; reading lists; alternative assignments for missed in-class work. Note, faculty are not required to offer a live, virtual option. In many ways, recorded lectures may be preferable to live, virtual attendance, in that students may be too unwell to attend a synchronous session.

Specifically, we will adopt the attendance [policy set by USC Columbia](#) that states, “In brief, faculty must provide make-up course work including content and assignments when students have excused absences which include (but are not limited to) being in quarantine or isolation, religious holidays, medical conditions related to pregnancy, and military duty. Excused absences may be at the discretion of the faculty member but it is strongly recommended that documentation be requested for most excused absences. Make-up work can be in a variety of forms and is determined by the faculty member; the make-up work does not have to be in the form of recorded lectures. To limit the need for make-up work, assessments may be structured such that all students may miss a certain number or drop a certain number of low scores.

If a student is ill, they should not attend class and they should contact Health Services to arrange testing for COVID-19 and medical documentation for an excused absence. If a student is ill but tests negative for COVID-19, faculty are encouraged to still view this absence as an excused absence.” Faculty are also encouraged to view vaccination appointments and any vaccine side effects as excused absences.

Academic Integrity and Testing/Assessment

The USC Upstate Faculty Manual empowers faculty to develop grading criteria characterized by “fairness and good judgment.” Airborne pathogens and other disruptions to physical presence on campus do not eliminate the need to assess student learning, nor do they eliminate student obligations under the USC Upstate Code of Academic Integrity. However, grading and academic integrity policy can benefit from data-driven adaptation, which may vary depending on the mode of course delivery.

Attention to access and equity issues are essential to ensuring fair and ethical assessments of student learning. In this context, faculty should consider the following practices and are invited to use or adapt related syllabus statements provided in the following pages:

1. In online asynchronous courses, faculty are encouraged to develop testing procedures that provide students with a reasonably broad window of time in which to take an examination. Student work schedules, as well as family care schedules, will benefit from a higher degree of flexibility during times of increased uncertainty. Shifting to more flexible, take-home models of assessments; breaking large exams into smaller, more frequent assessments; or releasing multi-part exams in separate parts can be effective strategies for managing logistics of assessments in all course modalities.
2. Faculty teaching in all course modalities are encouraged to obtain training or assistance in using testing features within the Blackboard LMS. These include enabling equity and access features, such as allowing backtracking or displaying all questions at once, keeping the force complete option turned off in case of connectivity issues, and using exceptions and accommodations for time-and-a-half or double-time for testing. These features also include tools for supporting academic integrity, such as timed testing, randomized question order, calculated formula questions, and randomized test questions drawn from larger question pools. Faculty are also encouraged to add customized automatic feedback with narrative explanations and comments on correct and incorrect responses in order to streamline grading while expanding constructive feedback on test-based assessments.
3. Faculty are required to provide make-up work for students in isolation or quarantine (see the above section on [“Attendance and Make-up Work”](#)). When possible, faculty should adopt assessment make-up policies that recognize that airborne pathogens may create exigent circumstances, such as caregiving demands or disruptions in access to basic needs, that are not typical and may be less amenable to documentation. Extended deadlines on assignments and other similar modes of flexibility will be necessary to support students who are sick, under quarantine, experiencing vaccine side effects, or providing essential caregiving services to close family members. Likewise, faculty who penalize unexcused or excessive absences

should clearly define those terms in the syllabus. Examples of unexcused absences might include work, oversleeping, vacations, and family events. To be clear, these are merely examples, not a proposed definition of the term unexcused absence. It is also possible to allot a certain number of total absences to be used at the students' discretion, beyond which a penalty may apply. In the early days of the semester, faculty may also want to strategize with students about backup plans to technological problems including awareness of loaner computers on campus and community sources of free wifi access.

4. Faculty may use services such as the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor as necessary to maintain academic integrity during the completion of an assessment. In all cases, faculty should obtain training in the use of these tools if they intend to use them and should make clear syllabus statements concerning the use of these technologies and addressing students' privacy concerns. It is best practice to enable the iPad/tablet option and to offer students an ungraded pre-test to identify potential issues with using the online proctoring system.
5. Both Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor have limitations, including the need for a webcam in the case of Respondus Monitor. Using Lockdown browser via Spartan Greensky is not ideal and requires students to install software prior to every exam. In this context, faculty using either of these tools will need to assist students by preparing alternate testing arrangements for students logging in through Spartan Greensky or using one of the virtual interfaces on campus.
 - a. Faculty are encouraged to be cognizant of potential privacy concerns and security breaches with regard to the use of Respondus Monitor and to encourage students to take advantage of free anti-malware software provided by the helpdesk at <http://uscupstate.edu/its>.
 - b. Faculty are also encouraged to be cognizant of equity and access issues. Faculty should plan to accommodate students who do not have required technology, e.g. compatible device, webcam, and microphone, or to make students aware if this technology is available for checkout from the Office of Information Technology.
6. Faculty should recognize that high-stakes assessments may be more prone to academic integrity violations, including various forms of electronic cheating. Alternatives to high-stakes testing include frequent lower-stakes assessments, professional presentations, peer-to-peer teaching and test preparation (and accompanied faculty evaluation), periodic integrative reflective assignments, and multiple forms of the same substantive instrument. Including academic integrity statements at the beginning and end of assessments that students must affirm is also an effective strategy for preventing integrity violations. For an example statement and additional cheating prevention strategies see "[7 Ways to Assess Students Online and Minimize Cheating.](#)"
7. Academic integrity is one of the pillars of higher education, yet it is common practice to address academic integrity as a set of penalties for violations. Research shows the benefits of proactively teaching the values of academic integrity, including ownership of intellectual property and respect for the originality of individual contributions to knowledge. Such lessons can help combat aggressive marketing tactics from contract cheating companies that target students. Likewise, giving constructive feedback on assessments to stress the positive value of students using their own words and ideas, making mistakes, and improving as essential tools for learning and growth can reward students who behave with integrity. Faculty should consider using online resources related to academic integrity to instill a shared code of ethics in the course. The USC Upstate Library's Plagiarism Prevention Module and the [International Center for Academic Integrity Educational Resources](#) (especially academic integrity video examples) are some examples. Faculty may wish to specifically prohibit the sharing of recorded live streams, test questions or answers, or other course material with anyone not currently enrolled in the course or with classmates during an exam period.
8. Faculty teaching synchronous online sessions should recognize that there are many valid reasons for students to keep their cameras off during class and [research has linked camera](#)

[use to increased trauma and psychological distress](#). Camera-use should be encouraged by discussing and establishing positive, yet flexible classroom norms, rather than penalizing students who do not use the camera. Offering opportunities for students to engage using the chat feature, polls, or emoji checks can support learning and encourage active participation among students who cannot turn on their cameras.

9. Faculty teaching in person should integrate current campus risk mitigation efforts into their syllabi as a matter of student and faculty integrity.

Syllabus Templates for Appendix IX

All syllabi must include the following statement:

Students who show symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath) or who test positive for COVID-19 must inform USC Upstate Health Services (864-503-5191). Students with academic concerns due to quarantine or isolation should contact Susannah Waldrop, Executive Director of the Student Success Center (swaldrop@uscupstate.edu, 864-503-5414).

To support the work of faculty teaching during an airborne pathogen pandemic, the following syllabus templates are provided for optional use or adaptation in individual syllabi. Additional resources and templates are available from the [Center for Academic Innovation and Faculty Support](#) (CAIFS).

1. Exam Statement for Asynchronous Courses (Time Window): To ensure that you have the flexibility that is necessary during the pandemic, all exams in this course will have a time window of _(hours/days) for you to complete an exam. Once you log in to take the exam during the time window, you will have ___(minutes/hours) to complete the exam online. Once you begin taking an exam you must complete the exam.
2. Exam Statement for Face to Face Courses with Online Examination: To provide all students with an equal opportunity for success, all students, whether they attend in person or online, will be completing their exams online at the same time. Students who are enrolled in an in-person section may choose to bring a laptop to class to take their exam or may complete their exam at a remote location with access to a computer. Students who are enrolled in a virtual section should remain at their virtual location to complete the exam. Students can also check out devices from the Office of University Information Technology.
3. Exam Makeup Policy (Can Be Adapted as an Assignment Deadline Extension Policy): I recognize that airborne pathogens create conditions that may cause absences, including extended absences, for a variety of reasons. Students who are required to quarantine or seek medical treatment due to a diagnosis of COVID-19 or other incapacitating illness should contact the instructor as soon as possible so a suitable equivalent makeup arrangement can be provided. Students should also provide documentation to the Dean of Students Office when possible. The Dean's Office will notify me of the general circumstances of your absence without compromising your privacy with respect to the specific issue. Students directly exposed to someone who has tested positive for an airborne pathogen may also need to quarantine themselves. Anyone [within 6 feet for >15 minutes](#) is considered exposed. In this event, students should contact me as soon as possible to discuss makeup arrangements. Absences due to care obligations arising from airborne pathogens should also be discussed with me as soon as possible to determine the appropriate course of action. Prompt communication with me is critical and expected in each of these situations.
4. Monitoring Language (For courses that use some combination of Safe Assign, the Respondus Lockdown Browser, or the Respondus Monitor software): This course uses of variety of tools to maintain academic integrity in course evaluation. All uploaded writing assignments will be scanned using Safe Assign software though Blackboard. Safe Assign helps the instructor

detect plagiarism, which is prohibited under the Code of Academic Integrity in the Student Handbook. Other means to detect plagiarism in student work may also be used. During testing, all students will use the Respondus Lockdown Browser to prevent unauthorized use of the web while taking an exam. This software can be downloaded for free and is required when taking an online exam. Finally, all students taking an exam online from a remote location will be required to use the Respondus Monitor System for online proctoring. Before you take an exam, you will need to download the Respondus Lockdown Browser and activate your webcam. After opening your exam in Respondus Lockdown, you will perform a webcam test and show your identification to the camera. While you take the exam with the webcam on, the software will record you. This recording is subject to review.

5. Online Academic Integrity Language: The USC Upstate Code of Academic Integrity prohibits bribery, cheating, lying, and plagiarism. All elements of the USC Upstate Code of Academic Integrity apply to students regardless of course modality (online, hybrid, or in-person). Students should complete the Plagiarism Prevention Module provided by the USC Upstate Library at <https://uscupstate.libwizard.com/f/PlagiarismPreventionModule>. Note that the Code of Academic Integrity prohibits the unauthorized use of any electronic or mechanical device. In this course the unauthorized use of an electronic device includes accessing the web for any resource used to complete and an assessment unless that resource is specifically authorized by the instructor.
6. Please ask early and often if you have any questions about what is permitted and what is not. Communication is one of the keys to maintaining academic integrity. I want you to succeed and for your grade to be a result of your own hard work. I believe these measures are necessary to ensure fairness for all students and to protect the value of the degree that you are working to earn.
7. Camera Use/Virtual Meeting Expectations: Please log in on time for class meetings and you're your mic when not speaking to avoid an echo. Using headphones can also help reduce echoes. Consider keeping your camera on if you can. Class meetings are much more interactive when we have our cameras on and gives us an opportunity to build community.
8. Safe Return Language (primarily for Face to Face Courses): This course is designed with health and safety in mind. All faculty and students are required to wear a mask in the classroom. To protect the health of our classroom community, I will be wearing a mask. Students are likewise required to wear face coverings, and I will set up a seating arrangement to facilitate social distancing and assist Health Services in contact tracing in case students in our class are exposed. Please rest assured that I will do my part in upholding these safety measures, and I invite students to communicate with me if the conditions of the classroom feel unsafe.

Students who have a health condition that prevents them from wearing a mask should contact Disability Services at 864-503-5199 to discuss accommodations, including alternative face coverings or a transition to online learning to protect their health from potential virus transmission in the classroom. If pandemic conditions worsen, it may be necessary to move the course online. If this occurs, you will receive further communication from me on the format for all remaining elements of the course including lecture, discussion, lab work, discussion, and assessment (insert or subtract whichever elements apply to your course). To the extent possible, you should prepare for this possibility by thinking about your computer and internet access, as well as anything else that may help you succeed in the event that this course is delivered entirely online. If you anticipate difficulty, talk to me about it so we can come up with a plan for you to successfully complete and pass the course.

SERVICE

In order for faculty governance to sustain its important role during the pandemic, faculty members will continue to participate in regularly scheduled meetings to conduct business. As a result of the pandemic, many faculty members continue to face difficult challenges in the area of work-life balance which can be mitigated by flexibility. Faculty caregivers who wish to reduce their service loads should be accommodated when it is possible to replace them. Likewise, faculty caregivers who wish to continue their usual service commitments, but whose schedules are limited by caregiving responsibilities, should be accommodated (in meeting scheduling requests, for example) where possible.

Committees are therefore permitted to communicate non-personnel information by email, deliberate and vote in virtual settings on committee matters (including promotion and tenure cases), and provide digital signatures. Whenever possible, virtual meetings are preferred. If the committee opts for in-person meetings, appropriate health pre-cautions should be taken, including masking and distancing. Committees should also make it possible for members to participate virtually.

Units are encouraged to identify and postpone non-essential service (non-urgent curriculum revision, for example) in order to decrease overall service pressures within the institution where possible.

Additionally, units are permitted to continue meeting virtually, and all units should provide virtual access for meetings that are not conducted fully online.

RESEARCH

Human subjects research protocols should be adapted to online data collection and remote interactions as much as possible. See current IRB guidance on resuming in-person human subjects research.

For administrative and peer reviews, faculty are encouraged to document the impact of the pandemic on their research agendas, rate of productivity, and research outcomes. Faculty and administrators who conduct faculty reviews should take this global incident into account in the interest of maintaining fair and reasonable review processes on campus. Moreover, the impact of a pandemic on faculty research will reverberate across a span of years.

Units are therefore encouraged to review unit guidelines and develop clear adjustments for these challenging circumstances, both in the interest of fairness and in an effort to reduce or eliminate disproportionate impacts on research by faculty caregivers. These adjustments should also be considered by rating administrators when conducting annual reviews for the current academic year and subsequent years impacted by the current pandemic.