

FALL 2021 – Academic Affairs FAQs

This document was compiled by Kate Ziemer, Kevin Healey, and Matt MacManes. It was last updated on September 15, 2021 and will be updated throughout the fall semester as needed.

Academics/Student attendance and participation

Q: Whom should students contact for an accommodated absence? The Student Accessibility Services (SAS) office? The associate dean? The Dean of Students? There is no guidance online.

A: Students seeking a long-term accommodation should contact [SAS](#). If they have a compelling non-academic circumstance that may be emergent or for a short period of time (e.g. broken leg or appendectomy or isolation or quarantine), they should contact the Dean of Students ([Mike Blackman](#)) to obtain a DOS letter with specific dates the student is missing/will miss.

Individual faculty are strongly discouraged from making accommodations for individual students, beyond those required for single class absences.

Q: What do I do if a student asks to take my class remote?

A: Please refer the student to SAS. Accommodations of this nature are only granted after formal evaluation. Faculty are discouraged from evaluating the merits of a health-related concern. Further, evaluation by SAS ensures that accommodations are granted equitably.

Q. Under what circumstances will students be granted accommodations to take a class remotely? If such accommodations are granted, are faculty expected to teach the same class in-person and online? How can this be reconciled with assurances from the administration that faculty are no longer required to teach classes in hybrid modality?

A: Putting aside faculty workload for a moment, a student will be allowed to take a course remotely only if this accommodation is deemed appropriate and feasible by SAS. Just as SAS does with other types of accommodations, they will communicate with faculty to assess feasibility. No accommodation will be granted without consultation with faculty, taking into consideration federal law as it relates to ADA. Faculty will be part of the decision of how the accommodation is finalized.

See this information on the Resource Hub for more details about the process:

UNH SAS Processes – Remote Requests: <https://www.unh.edu/teaching-learning-resource-hub/sites/default/files/media/2021-08/unh-sas-processes-remote-requests.pdf>

UNH Remote Requests – SAS Practice and Policy: <https://www.unh.edu/teaching-learning-resource-hub/sites/default/files/media/2021-08/unh-remote-requests-policy-and-practice.pdf>

Legitimate concerns related to faculty workload should be addressed by the Chair, Dean, or Provost.

Q. Are there any changes to the Academic Calendar this year?

A: No, not at this time. Please see [At-a-Glance Calendar](#) for the academic calendar.

Q. I still feel confused about the general protocols in the classroom. We are not physical distancing in classrooms, correct? So, we are just requiring masks? What expectations are there for students who are exposed to COVID? Will they quarantine, and if so, are faculty expected to offer virtual attendance options (e.g., Zoom) in addition to in-person?

A. As of right now, masks are required. Students who are exposed to COVID will be contacted through Health and Wellness. Health and Wellness will respond according to current CDC recommendations, which are guided by the nature of the contact and the vaccination status of the individuals.

Employee Health and Safety

Q: What are faculty expected to do if they test positive for Covid?

A: If faculty are testing positive through the UNH testing program, they will be contacted by Health and Wellness who will provide recommendations for next steps, including contacting your primary care physician. In terms of teaching, individual faculty are expected to work with their chair and dean to determine how best to deliver course material. This may include the use of teaching assistants, or synchronous/asynchronous remote lectures.

Q: What does a faculty member do if a [CDC-defined close contact](#) tests positive?

A: If vaccinated, the CDC does not recommend any additional quarantine. If unvaccinated state law for close contact definition and quarantine requirements will be followed. ([DHHS - COVID 19 - Self Quarantine](#)) If the close contact is a dependent, and the absence is expected to be extended, the faculty member should consider working with their HR representative on FMLA accommodations.

Q: What do I do if I feel sick with [COVID symptoms](#)?

A: Please stay home. Contact your primary care physician and chair or dean as needed. Please submit a test as soon as possible, even if it is not your normal testing day.

Q. Can a faculty/staff ask about another faculty/staff member's vaccination status?

A: The university strongly recommends that no employees ask fellow employees or students about any personal health information, including vaccination status. Each employee and student has a right to refuse to answer any questions about vaccination status without fear of reprisal. The university encourages everyone to upload evidence of their status to a secure and confidential platform, overseen by the institution's medical records managers. This is to ensure the medical information collected will be properly stored, used, and destroyed when no longer needed.

Classroom Health and Safety

Q: What can we do if a student refuses to wear a mask in class?

A: You may ask (require) the student to leave the classroom immediately. You should follow normal processes in cases of poor student behavior and class disruptions. Students should be reported to the [COVID Complaint form](https://tinyurl.com/UNHCOVID) (tinyurl.com/UNHCOVID) and if necessary, you can follow up with the relevant leader in your department for further action.

Q: What sorts of contact tracing is UNH undertaking? What is the expectation of faculty for identifying close contacts within classrooms? For example, the syllabus guidance still has the recommended practice of having students sit in the same seat or have a seating chart or a photo taken. Is this still necessary?

A: UNH will be conducting its own contact tracing as last Spring. Anything that can be done to help in this process that is practical for your teaching situation (like assigned groups for group work or a picture of your class, assigned seats) may be helpful to those efforts.

Q. Will the classrooms be set up for physical distancing?

A: No, not at this time.

Q. Since classrooms no longer have socially distanced seating will students who sit right next to a student who tests positive be reported as a close contact?

A. Yes. The close contact quarantine requirement is related to the contact's vaccination status.

Q. Can a faculty/staff member ask about a student's vaccination status?

A: The university strongly recommends that faculty do not ask for any personal health information from students, including vaccination status. Each employee and student has a right to refuse to answer any questions about vaccination status without fear of reprisal. Instead, the university encourages all students to upload evidence of their status to a secure and confidential platform, overseen by the institution's medical records managers. This is to ensure the medical information collected will be properly stored, used, and destroyed when no longer needed. Note that by institutional policy everyone must have a valid Wildcat Pass to be on campus. We are encouraging faculty to ask to see a valid Wildcat Pass in classrooms, for office hours, and for campus events.

Q: What steps should we take to ensure ventilation in classrooms and offices?

A: Spaces with dedicated HVAC systems will be operated as designed to ensure efficiency and comfort in spaces across campus. In fall 2020, central air systems were "commissioned" to ensure proper operations. This process will be carried forward as technicians complete routine maintenance efforts and filter changes at required frequencies during the school year. Dispatched HEPA filtration units where mechanical ventilation does not exist will remain in place. Questions or concerns regarding indoor air quality standards can be found at the Environmental Health & Safety website: www.unh.edu/research/indoor-air-quality.

In rooms where windows may be safely opened, faculty are encouraged to do so. Operable windows must be closed upon leaving any classroom spaces.

Q. What improvements to ventilation are in place? What data or evidence is being provided to show that they are sufficient?

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Q: Are any plans being made for teaching outside?

A: While there are no formal plans for teaching outside, informal opportunities can be found. In addition, tents are available at DeMeritt/Great Lawn, Forest Park, Paul College. They can be reserved through the UNH Reservation Portal, same way MUB or Library spaces are reserved.

1st link below is to the reservations portal where tent reservations can be made. 2nd link is the step-by-step guide on how to navigate through the portal to complete a tent request. Tents will be up until the end of October and are available for reservation by employees and student organization leaders.

Link to reservation portal: <https://unh.emscloudservice.com/web/>

Link to Tent Reservation How-to Guide: <https://unh.box.com/s/et51gw7vb0yf6ag1xoi0085ngdkc4o1m>

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A. As of right now, masks are required. Students who are exposed to COVID will be contacted through Health and Wellness. Health and Wellness will respond according to current CDC recommendations, which are guided by the nature of the contact and the vaccination status of the individuals.

Q. Where do I go to request PPE for the classroom or office? Does this include face shields and Plexiglas barriers?

A. For all personnel protective equipment related to covid protocols, including face shields and Plexiglas barriers, contact Ron O’Keefe (Ronald.O'Keefe@unh.edu).

Q. What threshold of case numbers and/or positivity rate will trigger social distance requirements in classrooms? What threshold of case numbers and/or positivity rate will trigger moving classes online?

A. The algorithm used to determine when and how to respond includes positivity rate, but also includes many

other factors such as vaccination rate, origin and whether contacts are localized or widespread, availability of isolation and quarantine facilities and many other data points.

Q. What triggers would lead to a return to online instruction?

A. The algorithm used to determine when and how to respond to changes in our community practices includes many factors such as positivity rate, vaccination rate, origin and whether contacts are localized or widespread, availability of isolation and quarantine facilities, and many other data points.

Masks and Social Distancing Guidelines

Q: Where can I report violations of masking and social distancing guidelines?

A: You should follow normal processes in cases of poor student behavior and class disruptions. Students should be reported through the [COVID Complaint form](https://tinyurl.com/UNHCOVID) (tinyurl.com/UNHCOVID) from syllabus guidance: “At any time, in or out of class, you can use the anonymous online incident reporting tool (to the [COVID Complaint form](https://tinyurl.com/UNHCOVID) (tinyurl.com/UNHCOVID)) to document and report violations of COVID protocols.” Also note, there are no social distancing guidelines at this time.

Q: How will I know if masking and or social distancing guidelines have changed?

A: Changes will be announced via email, the RAVE system, and as a banner on CANVAS.

Q. May instructors wear a face shield without a mask?

A. Yes, an instructor or TA may be wearing a face shield without a mask during instruction **and only while maintaining at least a 6-foot distance from any student**. Please note that per CDC, face shields are not recommended when in close contact with others. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html#print>

Q: Can a faculty/staff member require masks in their office, even if current campus guidelines do not?

A: Yes, you may require masks of individuals entering your private office, so long as you require it of everyone.

Q. The mask policy is unclear. When I did arrival testing, several individuals in that space where not masked. When I inquired, it was expressed masks are only required in the classroom. Is that correct? If not, can clarification be made where masks are required.

A. Masks are required in all indoor public spaces or where people (outside of their living space) are in close contact for more than a few minutes. Per CDC guidance, unvaccinated people are encouraged to wear masks when indoors in public places and outside when in close contact with others. <https://www.unh.edu/president/update-no-34-president-dean-0>

Q. What are the requirements for visitors on campus? For example, what is required for guest speakers, parents, applicants?

A: Currently, the only requirement is that visitors follow any masking or social distancing requirements that UNH has at the time of the visit.

Q. Are student clubs allowed to meet?

A: Yes, given they follow the current recommendations related to masking and social distancing.

Vaccinations

Q. Can a faculty/staff member ask about a student's vaccination status?

A. The university strongly recommends that faculty do not ask for any personal health information from students, including vaccination status. Each employee and student has a right to refuse to answer any questions about vaccination status without fear of reprisal. Instead, the university encourages all students to upload evidence of their status to a secure and confidential platform, overseen by the institution's medical records managers. This is to ensure the medical information collected will be properly stored, used, and destroyed when no longer needed. Note that by institutional policy everyone must have a valid Wildcat Pass to be on campus. We are encouraging faculty to ask to see a valid Wildcat Pass in classrooms, for office hours, and for campus events.

Q. I see that faculty cannot ask students their vaccination status. May faculty announce to their classes something like this? -- "I cannot ask your vaccination status. But if you wish to volunteer it, you may."

A. You may divulge whatever health related information you choose with students, but by institutional policy we are discouraging asking for student vaccination status, even voluntarily. Instead, the university encourages all students to upload evidence of their status to a secure and confidential platform, overseen by the institution's medical records managers. This is to ensure the medical information collected will be properly stored, used, and destroyed when no longer needed.

Q. Can a faculty/staff ask about another faculty/staff member's vaccination status?

A: The university strongly recommends that no employees ask fellow employees or students about any personal health information, including vaccination status. Each employee and student has a right to refuse to answer any questions about vaccination status without fear of reprisal. The university encourages everyone to upload evidence of their status to a secure and confidential platform, overseen by the institution's medical records managers. This is to ensure the medical information collected will be properly stored, used, and destroyed when no longer needed.

Q. Can students ask each other about their vaccination status?

A. Yes. Students, acting as private citizens, may ask, but you have the right to keep your personal medical information private, and may decline to answer. Each employee and student has a right to refuse to answer any

questions about vaccination status without fear of reprisal. In contrast, students, acting in an official capacity as an employee or representative of the University (e.g., tour guide, library worker, club official, etc.) are strongly discouraged from asking for any personal health information, including vaccination status.

Q: If someone asks me my vaccination status, do I have to answer?

A: Each employee and student has a right to refuse to answer any questions about vaccination status without fear of reprisal. And we are encouraging everyone to upload their vaccination status to the secure and confidential database maintained by the medical professionals in Health and Wellness so that we can continue to make good decisions regarding public health and COVID restrictions on our campuses.

Q. Now that the FDA has granted full approval to the Pfizer vaccine, will USNH take legal steps to bypass the new state law and require proof of vaccination of all employees and students? If so: when? If not: why not?

A. COVID vaccine mandates are prohibited by NH state law regardless of level of FDA approval.

Q. What percentage of students, faculty, and staff have been vaccinated?

A. The daily dashboard has resumed and includes vaccination numbers. You can determine the percent vaccinated by dividing the number of people in a certain category (e.g. student) who uploaded a vaccine card and were vetted as having a valid vaccine card and were two (2) weeks beyond the final shot (e.g. 12,401 per 9/15 dashboard) by the number people in that same category who are part of the testing program (e.g. 13,947 students per 9/15 dashboard) and get the percentage (e.g. as of 9/15, 88.9% of the student population is fully vaccinated).

Q. What is the percentage of students who are fully vaccinated? What percentage is considered safe for in-person classes? What percentage is unsafe? Will we be alerted if we are teaching a class with a rate of vaccinations that is significantly lower than the campus average?

The total number of vaccinations is only helpful if you provide the total who have not uploaded their vaccine cards. Only then can we know the percentage.

A. The percentage can now be found on the daily dashboard by dividing the population number of students who have had their self-reported vaccination status verified, by the number of students in the population of students tested. For the 9/13 dashboard, this number is 88.8% students vaccinated.

Our student banner system that holds classroom registrations is separate from our HIPAA databases. We have never had a need to connect those two systems before. We have administratively made the decision that it is not worth the manpower (either hired or taken away from other projects) to build a data link when our overall vaccination rates are so high.

Q. Is it possible for UNH to track and report what percent of positive cases are from vaccinated vs. unvaccinated individuals?

A. Health and Wellness does track, but reporting gets tricky. We are working on a way to formally report this. Please stay tuned.

Q. Would it be possible to let us know the percentage of vaccinated populations? For example, although we know how many students are vaccinated and how many Durham students/employees are vaccinated, we don't know the percentage of either. That is important in terms of making sense of the numbers. Thank you.

A. The daily dashboard has resumed and includes vaccination numbers broken down in the same categories as the test results. You can determine the percent vaccinated by dividing the number of people in a certain category (e.g. student) who uploaded a vaccine card and were vetted as having a valid vaccine card and were two (2) weeks beyond the final shot (e.g. 12,401 per 9/15 dashboard) by the number people in that same category who are part of the testing program (e.g. 13,947 students per 9/15 dashboard) and get the percentage (e.g. as of 9/15, 88.9% of the student population is fully vaccinated).

Q. The FAQ document on the Academics section has a question asking if it is possible for UNH to report the percent of positive cases from vaccinated vs. unvaccinated people. The answer provided "it's tricky because of protecting health information and the volumes involved." However, there is a September 3 video on the media.unh.edu page from Kenneth Holmes in which he says that 50% of the positive cases at that time were people that were vaccinated. That is important information for everyone on campus to understand. These are my questions: 1) Why have faculty/staff not been told about this statistic? 2) Will UNH share information about the percentage of positive cases from vaccinated vs. not vaccinated going forward. Thank you.

A: We are now at a point (unfortunately) where we can do this. This work is currently in progress. We will update this FAQ when we have a date of when it will be completed.

Q. This document (<https://unh.app.box.com/s/i1t1rlf95p7qf8j0k295bcw0tegm7c9>) on the Wildcat pass says that students living in nearby towns will be testing twice weekly. Is that correct and irrespective of vaccination status? I thought twice weekly was only for unvaccinated students.

A. This is NOT correct and has been fixed. Thank you!

Wildcat Pass

Q. Is a valid Wildcat Pass required?

A: Yes, for all employees, contractors and students on campus. See [Syllabus Guidance](#) for ways to use Wildcat Pass in your class.

Q: What happens to students that continue to come to campus with invalid Wildcat Passes?

A: This is a violation of the code of conduct and will be dealt with like any other serious violation.

Wildcat Pledge

Q. Are faculty and staff required to complete the Wildcat Pledge? Will their Wildcat pass be out of compliance if they don't complete it?

A: No. Faculty and Staff are encouraged to support by signing the pledge but are not required to sign for a valid Wildcat Pass.

Help and Support Resources

Q. Will the laptop loaner program be available again this year?

A: Yes. <https://www.unh.edu/dean-of-students/getting-help/housing-food-financial-support>

UNH is committed to helping students who are managing extenuating financial circumstances and need access to the technical resources required to learn and study. If you are approved to participate in this program, you will receive a Lenovo L14 laptop that you can use during the academic year (August 2021 through May 2022). Laptops are available on a first-come, first-served basis. If your request is approved, Enterprise Technology & Services will reach out to you with instructions on scheduling an appointment to pick up your laptop at the ATSC Help Desk in Diamond Library.

Q. How do faculty and staff know about these FAQs? I heard about these FAQs on the town hall call yesterday and I know about this link to add questions because I am with the Senate. But, how will people who did not or will not watch the town hall know about this? Is it possible to add a section to the Covid FAQ page that will link to these FAQs?

A. The link to the covid resources for classes was in the syllabus guidance email that went to all academic faculty and staff. <https://www.unh.edu/provost/guidance-covid-instruction> Please help us spread the word.