



USCL Memo on COVID Classroom Protocols (revised 1/5/2022)

These statements should be used on syllabi for courses being taught in Spring 2022:

COVID-19 Absentee Policy

Students who are experiencing symptoms of COVID 19, have tested positive for COVID 19, or who are engaging in self-quarantine at the direction of their health care professional, should not come to campus for any academic or nonacademic purpose. These students should promptly notify the USCL COVID Nurse Ms. Vicki Hinson: vphinson@mailbox.sc.edu; 803-313-7576.

Students are responsible for notifying instructors of absences as soon as possible and for providing documentation for all excused absences. Instructors will document communications with students who have missed class due to illness. All work missed due to illness must be completed in accordance with the instructor's grading policies.

Face Coverings

Because face coverings have been proven effective in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, everyone on campus is required to wear one in all campus buildings and while riding in any form of university transportation. Face coverings will be available in every campus building for those who need them.

COVID-19 Office Hours Policy

Given pandemic circumstances, office hours formats will be left to instructor discretion. Fully virtual office hours are acceptable.

FAQS

How can I promote safety in the classroom?

Buildings will continue to be outfitted with extra cleaning materials and disposable face coverings in case individuals forget their face covering and would like one. Here are some tips for instructors to encourage safety by students

- Remind students that face coverings are required in all campus buildings and while riding on any form of campus transportation.
- Encourage students to be [vaccinated](#).
- Develop a seating chart or another way to know who is sitting within 6 ft of whom daily.
- If feasible, encourage students to physically spread out using the available seating.
- If students fail to comply with USC public requirements, then please report the misconduct to Todd Lekan, Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs tlekan@mailbox.sc.edu.

Can I require students to be vaccinated?

State law prohibits requiring COVID-19 vaccinations of students, faculty, and staff at USC (unless required by an entity other than USC such as a health care setting or an education abroad provider). The University of South

Carolina and all members of the USC community must follow these regulations. As noted above, we strongly encourage vaccination, and ask all students, faculty, and staff to upload their vaccine record to the secure [MyHealthSpace](#). In addition, we consider the student's medical record to be part of their student record. You therefore may not inquire about vaccination status in the classroom.

Can I require face coverings in the classroom?

Faculty, students, and staff are required to wear an appropriate face covering in all classrooms and in other designated areas on campus. Face coverings should cover your nose and mouth in a community setting. In alignment with the tenets of the Carolinian Creed – including integrity, honesty, and respect for others – and to keep our campus safe, faculty, staff, and students are expected to follow this recommendation. Instructors can encourage but not require face coverings in the classroom.

Can physical distancing be provided in the classroom?

Classes have been scheduled in classrooms at full capacity to be able to accommodate face-to-face classes that approximate pre-pandemic levels and to meet the back-to-work order by the Governor. However, if feasible, you can encourage students to physically spread out using the available seating.

Do I need a seating chart for the classroom?

Instructors are requested to establish a way to help the contact tracers from our campus establish who was sitting within 6 ft of whom in a class on a particular day. Suggestions are to establish a seating chart in the class and take attendance or to have students track who was sitting close to them in class on each class day.

What is the classroom attendance policy?

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 potential 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.

What should I do if a student reports that they are exposed or infected?

Faculty should encourage the student to contact the COVID Nurse immediately and they should report the case to the COVID Nurse.

How will I know if a student is absent because of quarantine or isolation?

COVID-19 related absences will be documented by the COVID Nurse, Ms. Vicki Hinson vphinson@mailbox.sc.edu ; 803-313-7576

Can I share information about COVID-19 infections or vaccination status for students in the classroom?

Faculty should not share medical information about a student or students with others and should not inquire about vaccination status of students. These are health issues, and the information is protected by state and federal law.

Faculty will only be contacted about COVID-19 cases in their classroom if the student grants permission or if they are determined to be at risk by the contact tracers.

Can I change my in-person class to online?

Students have now registered for classes and the modality of teaching should not be changed except under very rare circumstances. These are:

- When 30% or more of the students in a class have documented excused absences, the faculty member may choose to move the class online for a limited amount of time until those documented absences are less than 30%. In such instances, there must be communication to the class both about where they may access lectures or course materials and when the class will go back to the original teaching method, as documented in Self-Service Carolina.
- Since students are registered in classes and have an expectation that the class will be taught in the method that is specified in Self-Service Carolina, permanent changes in teaching method can only occur when there is a documented health issue or disability making online teaching a necessity. These requests should be sent to the Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs, Dr. Todd Lekan: tlekan@mailbox.sc.edu. Temporary changes and changes to hybrid instruction with less than 50% online are preferred over permanent changes to 100% online instruction; changes to synchronous online courses are preferred over changes to asynchronous online courses. In the case of an approved change in teaching modality of a course in the fall, the faculty member should notify the students in the class of the change.

What happens if I become ill or must quarantine?

Faculty should plan how they would manage their teaching obligations should they have to either be quarantined or become ill enough that they are unable to teach in any modality. It is important that instructional obligations to our students be met, and faculty should share their plans to the head of their academic unit. A temporary shift to online instruction is allowable in this case if the instructor is capable of teaching in that format.

What should I expect if a student in my class is isolated because of COVID-19 infection?

Each student who discloses COVID-19 infection to the COVID Nurse will be contacted to determine where they had been during the period 48 hours before their symptoms started and since they've been sick. If this includes coming in-person to any class, the COVID Nurse will work with the student to examine whether there are individuals in the class who were within 6 feet of the infected individual for 15 minutes or more. If we are unable to determine close contacts via the student interview or have questions about classroom activities, the COVID Nurse may reach out to you directly.

How long will students who are isolated or quarantined be out of class?

Isolation: Students who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 are released from isolation when a medical professional has determined, based on the current CDC and DHEC guidelines, that they have recovered. Currently, these guidelines include being fever-free for at least 24 hours (with no fever reducer) and at least 5 days from their first symptom or positive test if they are asymptomatic. This new 5-day isolation period requires symptoms to be resolving. However, if they remain ill, their isolation period may be longer.

Re-testing is not required for individuals at the end of isolation; therefore, do not request students to provide a negative test result as a condition to return to class. Note that isolation standards are the same, regardless of the student's vaccination status

Quarantine: Anyone deemed a close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case will be quarantined for 5 days from their last contact with the infected individual. Individuals who are symptomatic or have other health concerns may be advised to remain under quarantine for a longer period.

Vaccinated students in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case may be required to quarantine depending on the when vaccinations were administered, and the number of doses received.

*Note that guidance is subject to change as the University of South Carolina adapts to the conditions imposed by the pandemic.