

FACULTY EXPECTATIONS FOR COURSE DELIVERY IN FALL SEMESTER 2021 February 25, 2021

Purpose

Given our objective of a full return to campus, it is imperative faculty have confidence that a return to the classroom will be safe for them and their students. We have no evidence that COVID-19 has been transmitted in our in-person classrooms, largely due to the adherence to applicable physical distancing and public health guidelines. A full return is predicated on the continued promotion of health and safety measures within our community through not only behavior—wearing a face covering, washing our hands, and physically distancing—but also through expanding testing and vaccination rollout in the spring and summer.

Expectation of Return to Residential Learning

Emory University is committed to inviting all students back to campus for in-person curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular activities in fall 2021. We seek an in-person, active campus community and will strive to maximize in-person engagement for every student.

Expectations for Faculty

School and university leaders have a shared expectation that all faculty will be available for in-person teaching as determined in each school's or college's curricular plan. Any exemption from in-person teaching made at the individual faculty-member level will require appropriate documentation and approval by the Emory University Office of Human Resources or the Department of Accessibility Services.

Faculty Eligibility for Individual Exemption from In-person Teaching

The following faculty members **may** be eligible for an exemption from in-person teaching:

- A faculty member who is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 as identified by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines (see Appendix) **and** who has been unable to get the vaccine because of limited vaccine supply;
- A faculty member who is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and cannot be vaccinated due to a documented medical condition or religious objection;
- A faculty member who has additional medical issues regardless of vaccination status that create substantial increased risk; or
- A faculty member who lives with an individual who cannot be vaccinated and who is at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 as identified by CDC guidelines.

In all cases in which a faculty member meets the eligibility criteria for a possible exemption from in-person teaching, the university will engage in an interactive process with the faculty member to determine whether remote teaching is the appropriate accommodation or whether there is another accommodation that may satisfy the faculty member's needs and the needs of the university.

Faculty members who believe that they meet the criteria above and wish to request an accommodation should provide appropriate documentation to the Office of Human Resources or the Department of Accessibility Services. They will review the request and work with the faculty member and the appropriate dean or department chair to determine what, if any, accommodation should be approved.

Additional notes:

- Difficulty of in-person or hybrid learning models due to COVID-19 classroom protocols is not a basis for an individual request of an exemption from in-person teaching. However, a school/college may determine that a specific mode of learning—e.g., language instruction, which may be better delivered online without masks than in person with masks—may be best accomplished through online teaching.
- Faculty members assigned to in-person courses are expected to maintain that mode of delivery throughout the semester unless a health and safety event requires a move to remote learning, or we receive a change in guidance from the CDC or Georgia Department of Public Health.

Responsibility for Class-Delivery Format

While it is our goal to maximize in-person learning, we recognize that health and safety guidelines might create practical space constraints that will preclude in-person formats for all courses. It is the responsibility of the schools/colleges and their deans to determine class-delivery formats for courses in their respective units. Determination of class formats will be made by each school/college with the shared objective of maximizing in-person learning and based on:

- federal and state health and safety guidelines;
- university health and safety guidelines;
- space availability of the school;
- curricular needs of the school's students; and/or
- pedagogical benefits of certain delivery modes for specific classes.

A school/college's curricular needs coupled with space constraints and student health and safety needs may make it necessary, in some cases, to offer different sections of the same course in different delivery formats. As such, individual faculty members may be asked to accommodate multiple delivery models.

Appendix

People who **are** at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, as identified by the CDC, include those aged 65 or older and/or those who have any of the following underlying medical conditions: cancer; chronic kidney disease; COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease); Down syndrome; serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies; immunocompromised state from solid organ transplant; obesity and severe obesity, as defined by the CDC guidelines; pregnancy; sickle cell disease; smoking; and type 2 diabetes mellitus.

According to the CDC, individuals with the following underlying medical conditions **might** be at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19: asthma (moderate to severe); cerebrovascular disease; cystic fibrosis; hypertension or high blood pressure; immunocompromised state from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune-weakening medicines; neurological conditions such as dementia; liver disease; overweight, as defined by the CDC guidelines; pulmonary fibrosis; thalassemia; and type 1 diabetes mellitus.¹

¹ Based on CDC [guidelines](#) revised on December 23, 2020.