

Faculty Spring 2022 FAQ
(Updated January 6, 2022)

1. What formats are available for virtual learning during the first two weeks of spring classes?

Faculty instructors may choose the pedagogical format they deem most appropriate for virtual learning in their course. Examples of available virtual learning formats include: live-streaming of the in-person, face-to-face class for students not physically present in the classroom; a recorded version of the in-person, face-to-face classes posted online in Blackboard or Teams that students may access asynchronously; or a digital version of the class materials covered in the in-person, face-to-face class posted online in Blackboard or Teams that students may access asynchronously.

Faculty instructors should keep in mind that students may be unable to attend their face-to-face classes due to self-isolation and/or quarantine because of a positive COVID diagnosis or documented exposure. As per the [undergraduate and graduate excused absence policy](#), the Office of the Provost suggests that faculty instructors consider developing virtual learning materials of their choice for students that require class make-up activities.

2. How may I decrease classroom density in my face-to-face or hybrid courses?

Classroom density modifications may be implemented on alternating class days based on the total number of students enrolled. Student may be assigned to groups alphabetically based on last name or based on student preference if practical for the faculty instructor. Please see examples below for different approaches for assigning groups based on the number of days the class meets per week.

Example 1: Face-to-face or hybrid class scheduled to meet once a week

Student Last Name	Week 1	Week 2
Group 1	Face-to-Face Learning	Virtual Learning
Group 2	Virtual Learning	Face-to-Face Learning

Example 2: Face-to-face or hybrid class scheduled to meet twice a week

Student Last Name	Monday	Wednesday
Group 1	Face-to-Face Learning	Virtual Learning
Group 2	Virtual Learning	Face-to-Face Learning

Example 3: Face-to-face or hybrid class scheduled to meet three times a week.

Student Last Name	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Group 1	Face-to-Face Learning	Virtual Learning	Virtual Learning
Group 2	Virtual Learning	Face-to-Face Learning	Virtual Learning
Group 3	Virtual Learning	Virtual Learning	Face-to-Face Learning

Example 4: Face-to-face or hybrid class scheduled to meet three times a week.

Student Last Name	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Group 1	Face-to-Face Learning	Virtual Learning	Virtual Learning

3. I am teaching a face-to-face class that meets more than once a week. Can I switch my face-to-face class to a hybrid instructional model?

During the first two weeks of class you may choose to switch your face-to-face class that meets multiple times per week to a hybrid instructional model, where all students meet face-to-face one day a week, with virtual learning options being provided for the remaining class meeting days in the week.

4. If I implement measures designed to reduce class density in my face-to-face class, can I assign students attending class in person to specific seats in the classroom?

To maximize physical spacing between students in your face-to-face classes, you may assign students to specific seats in your classroom. To help facilitate this process, seating layouts for all general purpose classrooms (i.e. 110 classrooms) can be found [here](#). This website also provides information on the instructional technology currently available in each 110 classroom, including pictures of the actual classroom space and technology layout. If you are teaching a face-to-face class in a laboratory classroom (i.e. 210 classroom), or a non-traditional classroom space such as a conference room, please contact the Office of the Registrar who will assist you in locating a seating layout chart for such non-110 classroom spaces.

5. If a faculty instructor chooses to implement assigned seating for students in their classroom to facilitate contact tracing, may the instructor assign students choosing to wear a face mask to seats in one region of the classroom, while assigning students who choose not to wear a face mask to seats in a different region of the classroom?

Yes, faculty instructors may implement assigned seating for students in their classroom where the instructor mandates one region in the classroom for students who choose to wear a face mask, and mandates another region in the classroom for students who choose not to wear a face mask. Taking into consideration any appropriate measures the faculty instructor has decided to implement to reduce classroom density, instructors should be extremely careful not to create classroom seating arrangements that prevent either masked or unmasked students from choosing to sit in as close proximity to the instructor or the front of the classroom as they wish. Instructors who wish to assign seating in their classroom may access seating layouts for all general purpose classrooms (i.e. 110 classrooms) [here](#). This website also provides information on the instructional technology currently available in each 110 classroom, including pictures of the actual classroom space and technology layout. If you are teaching a face-to-face class in a laboratory classroom (i.e. 210 classroom), or a non-traditional classroom space such as a conference room, please contact the Office of the Registrar who will assist you in locating a seating layout chart for such non-110 classroom spaces.

6. Is there any mandatory or suggested language that should be included in my course syllabus?

Yes. Faculty instructors should refer to the spring 2022 syllabus language [document](#) posted on the Office of the Provost website.

7. What steps should I follow if a student who has been present in class emails me to report a positive covid test result and/or exposure to someone with a positive COVID test?

Students are required to report a positive test result and or exposure to the UH COVID coordinator. If you receive such a notification from a student, please remind them to visit the [UH COVID website](#) for instructions on how to report a positive test result or potential exposure and to engage the contact tracing process.

8. What are the protocols followed by the University when either a faculty instructor or a student in a classroom tests positive for COVID? What should I or my students do if we have been exposed or potentially exposed to COVID in the classroom?

The Office of the Provost has created an [informational graphic](#) that consolidates many of the questions asked by faculty instructors concerning COVID reporting and exposure protocols, including which individuals UH contact tracers inform of a potential exposure in the classroom, and the actions which both faculty and students should take if they test positive, receive a clinical diagnosis for COVID, or who may have been exposed to COVID. This informational graphic has also been provided to department chairs and associate deans for distribution to all faculty instructors.

9. If a course instructor is exposed to Covid-19 and is required to quarantine/self-isolate, may the instructor move their class online for the period of quarantine/self-isolation?

If an instructor is required to self-isolate or quarantine after reporting a positive test result or potential exposure through the [UH COVID website](#), the instructor may choose to move their class to a fully online format during the period they are required to self-isolate and/or quarantine.

10. A faculty member receives a positive COVID test, receives a clinical diagnosis of COVID, or becomes aware that they have been exposed or potentially exposed to COVID.

A faculty member who receives a positive COVID test or receives a clinical diagnosis of COVID is required to report this via the [UH COVID-19 Diagnosis Form](#) and to immediately begin [isolation](#). If a faculty member (fully vaccinated or not) becomes aware that they have been exposed or potentially exposed to COVID, the faculty member should follow the instructions found in the following [informational graphic](#). Supporting documentation may be requested for compliance purposes.

11. If I am teaching a face-to-face class, may I hold all of my office hours virtually?

Yes, instructors may decide to offer office hours virtually if they so choose.

12. Can I require students to wear a mask in my office?

No, faculty members may not require a student to wear a face mask in their office. However, faculty members may offer a virtual appointment as an alternative to an in-person meeting if they so choose.

13. When will we be informed about what will happen after the first two weeks of spring classes?

The University will continue to monitor public health conditions and adjust instructional operations according to those conditions. Any changes to the current approach to instructional delivery will be communicated to faculty instructors as quickly as possible.

14. What should I do if a student indicates that they or a family member are immunocompromised and/or at high risk from COVID-19 infection, and they feel uncomfortable attending any in-person classes/exams?

Faculty instructors should refer students with these types of concerns to the [Student Accessibility Center - University of Houston \(uh.edu\)](#) to discuss University policy and procedures for requesting an academic accommodation.

15. A faculty member believes that they have a disability and/or condition that qualifies them for a reasonable workplace accommodation allowing them to teach their face-to-face class remotely during the remainder of the spring 2022 semester.

A faculty member seeking a workplace accommodation to teach their assigned face-to-face or hybrid class remotely during the spring 2022 semester should visit the UH Equal Opportunity Services (EOS) website to review the terms of the policy and to submit a [reasonable workplace accommodation](#) request.

16. A faculty member is unable to come to campus to teach their face-to-face or hybrid class because they have to care for a dependent that is in quarantine or self-isolation because of COVID reasons.

A faculty member who needs to partly or fully supervise a dependent at home (including a child who is 12 years old or younger) because the dependent needs to quarantine or self-isolate because of COVID reasons, then the faculty member should contact their supervisor (i.e.

department chair, or if appropriate their dean) to make temporary arrangements to teach their face-to-face or hybrid class remotely during their dependent's quarantine or self-isolation period (up to 10 days in duration). Once any temporary remote teaching arrangements have been approved by their supervisor, faculty members should immediately contact their students to inform them that their class will temporarily be taught remotely for a maximum period of 10 days. If the class cannot be taught remotely because of pedagogical reasons (e.g. laboratory class, experiential learning class), the faculty member should work with their supervisor to identify a flexible working arrangement that allows class instruction to continue even if the individual faculty member is temporarily working remotely. Supporting documentation may be requested for compliance purposes.

17. If I have elected to make no changes in my face-to-face class delivery during the first two weeks of the spring semester, do I have to make online course materials available?

While there is no requirement to make face-to-face class materials available online to students, faculty instructors should keep in mind that students may be unable to attend their face-to-face classes due to self-isolation and/or quarantine because of a positive COVID diagnosis or documented exposure. As per the [undergraduate and graduate excused absence policy](#), the Office of the Provost suggests that faculty instructors consider developing virtual learning materials of their choice for students that require class make-up activities.

18. If a faculty member wishes to seek approval to modify their typical in-person campus faculty-related work schedule for the spring 2022 semester, who should they contact?

In general, faculty members already have a great deal of flexibility in how and where they perform their professional responsibilities. However, if a faculty member seeks to modify their typical, in-person campus faculty-related work schedule, they should first discuss their request with their department chair or immediate supervisor, before submitting their request to modify their typical work schedule for review and approval by their dean.

19. Under what circumstances are faculty members eligible to request approval to work completely remotely?

If a faculty member has a medical condition that prohibits them from coming to campus, they may request a reasonable workplace accommodation by contacting EOS either by phone at 713-743-8835 or by email at eos@uh.edu.

20. Is social distancing required in all classrooms for the spring 2022 semester?

Faculty should encourage students to make their best efforts to avoid close contact with others. If such distancing is not feasible, other measures such as hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced. In addition, getting vaccinated and wearing a face covering in public areas are strongly encouraged.

21. Will faculty instructors and students in face-to-face classes be required to wear face-coverings in the classroom this coming spring semester?

Pursuant to Governor Abbott's Executive Orders of May 18, 2021 and July 29, 2021, the University of Houston may no longer mandate the wearing of face coverings on campus. However, the University strongly encourages the continued use of face coverings in public settings, such as the classroom, to protect themselves and others against COVID-19 infection. As with all the guidance and protocols related to COVID-19, the University will adjust its guidance as necessary to reflect new information and findings. Please check the UH COVID-19 website for the latest [face covering protocols](#).

22. Will sanitizing stations be available in classrooms this coming spring semester?

Sanitizing wipes and/or disinfectant spray are available in classrooms for use on hard surfaces. In addition, all public areas are equipped with hand sanitizer dispensers placed at entrances, elevator lobbies and other key areas throughout buildings. Restroom fixtures have touchless faucets, touchless soap dispensers, and touchless paper towel dispensers and foot pull door openers.

23. How should faculty members encourage students, other faculty members and staff to follow University mandated COVID guidelines if they are not in compliance with these requirements?

The UH COVID-19 website has a [compliance FAQ page](#) which covers ensuring compliance with COVID-related guidelines, and how and with whom concerns about someone not adhering to these requirements should be raised.

24. How will the University respond in terms of instructional delivery if COVID conditions require a change from planned in-person operations during the spring?

Our priority is to keep our campus community safe. Our strategy is to follow the CDC and state guidelines. If we need to respond to changes in current CDC and state guidelines, we will adjust instructional delivery to take advantage of the various online instructional modes we have already successfully deployed over the course of the pandemic.

25. May faculty instructors require that students attending their face-to-face classes be vaccinated?

Based on Governor Abbott's Executive Order, any organization receiving state funds cannot require a COVID-19 vaccination. As such, faculty members (as representatives of the University) cannot require that students attending their face-to-face classes be vaccinated.

26. May students require that faculty instructors teaching their face-to-face classes be vaccinated?

Based on Governor Abbott's Executive Order, any organization receiving state funds cannot require their employees be vaccinated for a COVID-19. As such, students attending face-to-face classes cannot require their faculty instructors to be vaccinated.

27. May faculty members ask their students if they have been vaccinated against COVID, or if they have tested positive for COVID in the past?

Faculty members should not ask whether any student has received the COVID vaccine or contracted COVID-19. However, if a student tests positive for COVID-19, it is their responsibility to report their diagnosis to the University via the online form.

28. Has the University made any special provisions to provide vaccinations specifically for faculty members, and if so how and/or where can I receive a vaccine?

The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to get a COVID-19 vaccination, which is readily available at [multiple sites](#) throughout the region. Vaccinations are provided free of charge to all who request to be vaccinated.

29. Should faculty members encourage their students and colleagues to be vaccinated?

YES! The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to get a COVID-19 vaccination (including booster shots), which are readily available at [multiple sites](#) throughout the region. Vaccinations are provided free of charge to all who request to be vaccinated.

30. What should I include in my spring class syllabus relative to UH COVID-related guidelines, etc.?

Mandatory and recommended language for inclusion by faculty instructors in their spring 2022 class syllabi is currently available on the Office of the Provost website. Please remember that several interim policies implemented during the last year because of COVID-related considerations, such as interim student grading policies, are no longer in effect and should not be included in class syllabi going forward.

31. Under what circumstances may a student request an excused absence from a class (regardless of class instructional mode)?

Please be aware that student excused absence policies are permanent academic policies. Students may request an excused absence from class as detailed in either the [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) or the [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) as appropriate. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).

32. May faculty instructors record their face-to-face classes for use as part of make-up assignments they may provide if a student has been granted an excused absence?

If they so choose, faculty instructors are free to record their face-to-face class lectures and make them available to all students in their class as supplementary class materials or make them available as part of any class make-up activity that an individual student may be required to complete due to an excused class absence.

33. May faculty instructors choose to use a HyFlex mode of instruction even though their class is listed on the course schedule as a face-to-face class?

If they so choose, faculty instructors are free to deliver their face-to-face class in a HyFlex instructional mode to provide their students with additional flexibility. However, faculty members who choose to provide such flexibility to their students may not themselves deliver their class remotely, rather they must still deliver their face-to-face class in person at the required scheduled day/time and classroom location.

34. Do students have the right to access any portions of their face-to-face classes that faculty instructors may choose to record?

Students do not have the automatic right to have unlimited access to any recorded portions of a face-to-face class. However, if a faculty member chooses to record any portion of their face-to-face class, they should inform their students that the class activity is being recorded and for what purpose (e.g. recorded lectures will be made available as supplementary online class materials to all students in the class, recorded lectures will be available to those students as part of a class make-up activity required as part of an excused absence). This information should also be included in the class syllabus. If a faculty member wishes to use recorded lectures as part of a future class, please be aware that such recording may need to be edited to remove any individual student likenesses or interactions.

35. Are students required to physically attend the face-to-face classes they have registered for, even if a faculty instructor decides to record some or all of the face-to-face class lectures?

If a student is registered for a face-to-face class they are required to satisfy the in-person attendance requirements set by the faculty instructor and detailed in the class syllabus.

36. Will faculty members be required to wear face-coverings and practice social distancing in their personal office space this coming spring semester?

Current social distancing and face covering requirements are based on current CDC and state guidelines. A private faculty office is not considered a public area when it allows for reliably maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet from others and includes a physical barrier between other workspaces. In this circumstance, a face covering is not required. Please check the University's COVID-19 website for the most recent [COVID safety requirements](#).

37. Will social distancing and face coverings be required in common departmental areas this coming fall semester?

Current social distancing and face covering requirements for common areas are based on current CDC guidelines. As with all the guidance and protocols related to COVID-19, the University will adjust its guidance as necessary to reflect new information and findings. Please check the University's COVID-19 website for the most recent [COVID safety requirements](#).

38. Will social distancing and face coverings be required during in-person student office hours offered by faculty members in their personal office space?

The University of Houston no longer mandates the wearing of face coverings on campus however, we will continue to follow CDC guidelines in regard to social distancing requirements on campus, including for scheduled in-person faculty-student office hours. In addition, individuals may continue to wear face coverings if they so choose, and the University encourages those who are not fully vaccinated to wear face coverings in settings where the participants cannot maintain appropriate distances from others. As with all the guidance and protocols related to COVID-19, the University will adjust its guidance as necessary to reflect new information and findings. Please check the UH COVID-19 website for the latest [face covering protocols](#).

39. What sanitization and cleaning protocols will be in effect this coming spring semester with regard to campus spaces?

UH maintenance staff, under the guidance of the COVID-19 Coordinator, have been following CDC guidelines for cleaning and sanitizing office buildings and common areas. [Campus Cleaning Protocols](#) can be found on the UH COVID-19 website. The cleaning protocols will be initiated once the positive case has completed the Reporting COVID-19 Diagnoses form located on the [COVID-19 website](#). As with all the guidance and protocols related to COVID-19, the University will adjust its guidance as necessary to reflect new information and findings.

40. When will faculty be able to fully return to carrying out research involving human subjects?

University approved guidelines for human subjects research have been updated to allow approved procedures to be conducted at closer than six feet of distance (for fewer than 15 minutes of cumulative contact per day). Faculty members may review the current guidelines on the [DOR COVID-19 Human Subjects page](#) to determine the detailed requirements for human subject research studies that meet the updated criteria and to download supporting documents, such as the required contact tracing logs and subject informational handouts. The posted guidance is subject to change so please check back on a regular basis.

41. Will there be vaccination requirements for faculty, staff or students who work in research laboratories?

Based on Governor Abbott's Executive Order, any organization receiving state funds cannot require a COVID-19 vaccination. As such, faculty members (as representatives of the University) cannot require that students, post-doctoral fellows or research staff members who work in their research laboratory be vaccinated. We will continue to follow CDC guidelines and state mandates regarding in-person interactions including research operations, which are expected to change over time. Currently, if all participants including faculty members are [fully vaccinated](#) then the following guidelines apply: face coverings are not required for indoor face-to-face gatherings or meetings; you may gather or conduct activities outdoors without wearing a mask except in certain crowded settings and venues.

42. The Child Care Center on campus has had restricted hours of operation during COVID that have impacted faculty members with children relative to their research schedules. Will the Child Care Center hours of operation be different than during the fall 2021 semester?

Up-to-date information on Child Care Center operations can be found [here](#).