

UNCOMMON RETURN FACULTY PROTOCOL

July 21, 2020

Concordia University is preparing for a safe, vibrant face-to-face campus experience in the fall of 2020. Guided by our COVID-19 Values Framework, we will ensure the safest facilities possible, while following guidance from the CDC and our state and public health officials.

Using these goals and standards, the Provost's Office has developed a plan for fall 2020 teaching and learning for academic programs that normally meet in-person face-to face (f2f). We strive to provide as many in-person f2f learning opportunities as possible. At the same time, the university must address the realities raised by the COVID challenge. In balancing those two somewhat competing initiatives, our plan is to offer blended courses, providing as much in-person teaching and learning as possible but also providing teaching/learning opportunities for the instructors and students who have valid reasons not to be on-campus for their courses. We strive to offer as many of our learning opportunities synchronously, but recognize that some asynchronous learning will be part of this blended experience.

Concordia's plans will 1) ensure achievement of our teaching and learning mission; 2) reduce onsite density; 3) provide ample space for physical distancing in work areas and 4) consider employees' personal circumstances. These plans may include planning for staggered onsite schedules, mixtures of onsite and remote work, allowance for full remote work when feasible with the essential functions of the role and overall staffing needs for a given department, moving desks and offices to enable physical distancing, as well as other considerations.

Our workplace staffing protocols will be iterative and campus leadership will continue to update and improve the model based on feedback and changing CDC and state and public health guidance. This guidance is applicable to all CUWAA instructors and contains information specifically about faculty work (teaching, office hours and advising). It applies to both graduate and undergraduate courses and programs and is intended to supplement general employee information provided by our Human Resources team.

The following guidance goes into effect August 1, 2020. Please contact Kim Masenthin, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources with any general questions. Faculty should contact Dr. Leah Dvorak, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, for faculty-specific questions.

General Information:

- Instructors who normally teach face-to-face will continue to teach in-person as much as is feasible, following social distancing guidelines in classrooms. We recommend supplementing in-person instruction with asynchronous content delivery. It is also possible to combine in-person and synchronous virtual (zoom) class sessions in certain classrooms equipped for this teaching method ("polysynchronous" delivery). Our IT team is working diligently this summer to prepare more classrooms for polysynchronous teaching and learning. This summer, CELT has provided frequent learning opportunities to assist faculty in preparing for fall.
- Some lab, studio or other hands-on learning experiences will follow a specific format approved by the department and school; please check with your dean for more information if this applies to your course. Clinical courses, internships, student teaching, and other experiential learning experiences may have additional rules or guidelines, so please check with your dean or program director for specific information about those courses.

Communicating with Students:

- **Open your Blackboard course at least one week prior to the first day of the term.** (This is earlier than our normal timeframe.) Please post the syllabus and Zoom link prominently on your course content page. Put these important communication tools upfront where they'll be very visible and accessible to your students.
- Send your students a friendly, welcoming email during the week before your first class session. This is easy to do using Blackboard. In that email, you can direct students to the Blackboard course and its embedded Zoom link. This is a wonderful way to show your care and concern for your students, and to begin to form a sense of community and connection with your class.
- **The first class session for all traditional undergraduate and graduate courses will be a Zoom session** required for all students enrolled in the course. At that first class session, the instructor will review the course plan and syllabus, and will explain how the course will run. **Please record and post this first class session in Blackboard.**
- Course logistics must be clearly described in the syllabus. Let's make it easy for our students to understand our policies and expectations. They should know precisely when they will be in the classroom, when they'll be submitting work or posting in Blackboard, and when they will be learning on Zoom. Due dates for all assignments must be stated.
- Assignments will be submitted through Blackboard; this is now a university requirement. The CELT has numerous resources to assist faculty in developing assignment submission tools ("drop-boxes") in Blackboard. In addition, all class handouts and other course materials will be provided through Blackboard; please do not make copies to pass out. This allows all students to easily access course materials.

Logistical Information:

- Face masks and/or other PPE (i.e. face shields) will be worn by faculty and students in all face-to-face classrooms, labs (including research labs) and other learning environments. We will wear masks whenever we are in classrooms and other teaching spaces with other people, even when they are more than 6 feet away. Faculty should clearly articulate the face mask or other PPE requirement on the syllabus. Students who need an accommodation with respect to masks must request that accommodation from the ARC.
- Attendance will be taken and recorded as usual on the CUWAA portal using our automatic attendance tool. For asynchronous elements of a course, submission of an assignment (e.g. quiz, paper, discussion post, etc.) will count as having attended. Faculty must clearly explain course attendance requirements on the syllabus in light of the temporary COVID-19 attendance policy (see the Faculty Handbook for this policy).
- Faculty must begin and end (especially end) in-person class sessions **on time**, or even a few minutes early. This will help to minimize the number of students gathering close together in hallways before and after classes.

- Each classroom or other teaching space has been provided with cleaning supplies that you can use to quickly wipe down high-touch surfaces. Housekeeping will clean each classroom daily.
- Please ensure that students are spread out in the classroom to maintain 6 feet of social distancing. Faculty can move furniture within the classroom as needed to facilitate this (if the room has moveable furniture) but must replace everything in its original location at the end of class.

Meetings and Office Hours:

- Full-time faculty members may hold office hours and advising sessions virtually through Zoom, or in-person when both the instructor and the student agree to meet face-to-face. Masks or other PPE must be worn for in-person meetings and social distancing should occur. Faculty must clearly explain their office hour policies on the syllabus. (Remember that university policy requires 10 office hours per week during the fall traditional semester.) Adjunct instructors should normally plan to meet with students using Zoom.
- All faculty, department, school and committee meetings will be held virtually with zoom this fall.
- Face masks are not required when alone in your office, studio or laboratory but are required in common spaces (hallways, restrooms, etc.).
- When not teaching or meeting in person with students, faculty members are encouraged to work from home.

Accommodations for Faculty and Students:

- We are likely to have more students than usual who will need ADA accommodations due to COVID. In addition, students may become ill during the semester; those with potential COVID symptoms will not be permitted to attend in-person classes. Such absences will be considered excused, and no documentation will be required. Faculty must plan ahead so that all students can continue to learn and succeed. Please be flexible and ensure that your students can access course material if they are unable to physically attend class or lab. Consider recording and posting your class sessions using Panopto (if it is an option in your classroom), Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate, posting PowerPoint slides in Blackboard, holding online discussions, and developing other creative ways to include all students in the learning experience. We also encourage you to conduct exams, tests and quizzes online whenever that is possible so that all students can access them. The CELT can help you with this.
- If a faculty member has a documented health concern related to COVID-19, please submit a Request for Reasonable Accommodation form to *human.resources@cuw.edu*. Note that the ADA applies only to employees with documented health concerns. The university is committed to doing our best to accommodate the needs of all our employees, while ensuring operational continuity and continuing to serve and support student learning.

FAQs

1. How do we classify the absence of a student who asserts COVID symptoms into the official attendance tracker system, with respect to “excused” or “not excused?” aka do we mark sick students as excused or not excused?

Students who are ill (with diagnosed COVID, suspected COVID, or any other illness) should be marked as “excused” in the online attendance tracker. We want to err on the side of grace and safety with respect to everyone’s health.

2. How do we treat students who say they are sick but have no idea if it’s COVID-related? e.g., a student says she’s “not feeling well and staying home to be safe.” Do we allow for extensions, absences and rescheduling of tests, etc., based on the assumption that the student was acting in good faith?

Students who feel ill, whether or not they have a COVID diagnosis, should not attend in-person classes and should be given an excused absence. We will err on the side of health and safety; that means we would generally allow for extensions or rescheduling and will assume that students are honest and acting in good faith. If there is evidence that a student is “gaming the system”, you can address that student individually. Note that we will not require documentation of illness.

3. How should we handle a student who says he might have COVID but then tests negative for it? Does the COVID attendance policy still apply to him?

Yes, the COVID attendance policy still applies to someone who gets a COVID test that comes back negative. Students who test negative can return to classroom settings as soon as they feel well enough to do so, and are fever-free; they will follow our classroom protocols of masks and social distancing.

4. How are we to treat students who do not tell us in a timely manner about their possible COVID symptoms? e.g., a student tells us after multiple absences

We will extend quite a bit of grace this year because some people with COVID may be too ill to communicate promptly. This would be similar to the way we would treat a student who, for example, was seriously injured in an accident and could not communicate with the instructor immediately.

5. Does this policy apply to students taking an online course? e.g., a student in an online course does not zoom in or submit assignments for more than a week, says he is too sick to do much.

Because fully online courses do not require in-person attendance, we will follow our usual online attendance policy.

6. How we should handle students who don’t have COVID but are pretty sick (e.g., seasonal flu) and request the same extensions, accommodations as students who have/might have COVID? Some students might perceive unfair treatment if we don’t accommodate them.

Students who have a diagnosed case of COVID, or who have any other illness that creates a barrier to accessing course materials or participating in the class, can request accommodation from ARC. Because our courses will be designed to allow students remote access to course materials, it is likely

that many students who are ill (with COVID or another illness) can continue learning without the need for substantial accommodations. We strongly encourage all faculty to design their courses in a flexible and accessible manner. The CELT training this summer has emphasized this.

7. Do we have an obligation to report to someone when a student asserts she is experiencing covid symptoms? And if we came into close contact with that person – say the student sits in the front row of class – should we self-quarantine?

If a student tells you she is experiencing symptoms please have the student leave the classroom and encourage her to communicate with the Student Health Center (if at the CUW campus), communicate with Student Life (if at the CUAA campus) or seek medical treatment from her own provider right away. At CUW, the Student Health Center will be the main contact for student illness and isolation or quarantine information. At CUAA, the Office of Student Life will be the main contact point.

An individual would be asked to isolate when he or she has tested positive for COVID. An individual would be asked to self-quarantine when he or she has been exposed to an infected person (defined as having a positive COVID test) for more than 15 minutes without masks and without having maintained social distance. Because the university is requiring masks and social distancing in our classrooms, the need for self-quarantine should be rather minimal. That is why maintaining social distance and wearing masks is so important. We do not want students or faculty to have to self-quarantine.

The university is continuing development of a reporting and contact tracing process that will be announced in the coming weeks. Government regulations state that we cannot give specific names of individuals who test positive for COVID to others, but only general information, if needed, when a person may have been in close proximity to an infected person without masks and social distancing. Our county health departments are working closely with us on tracing guidelines and will do their own communication on tracing in addition to what the university is providing.

8. What do we do if a student refuses to wear a mask?

You should manage this situation in the same way that you would handle a student who came to class dressed inappropriately; gently remind the student about the university mask policy, encourage the student to go grab a mask, and warmly welcome him or her back to class once the mask is in place. If someone is belligerent about it, you can contact campus safety. A student who cannot wear a mask due to a health concern must contact ARC for an accommodation.

Sample Syllabus Language for COVID-19

Concordia University requires everyone to wear face masks, cloth face coverings or face shields in classrooms, laboratories and other similar spaces where in-person instruction occurs. The Concordia community views the adoption of these practices as a mark of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and other on-campus events if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment of illness. In the event of contagious illness, please do not come to class or to campus. Students who miss class due to illness can access course materials online. All coursework will be turned in via Blackboard, so you can submit assignments without coming to campus. Notify the instructor by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that accommodations can be made. Absence from class due to illness will be counted as an excused absence this semester, and no documentation (e.g. doctor's note) will be required. You are on your honor to monitor your own health and to take appropriate precautions when ill.