

NSU COVID-19 academic notifications and recommendations.
COVID-19 Academic Planning Task Force.
Spring 2021 Update.

ATTENTION: This plan is subject to change and will be updated as more information relative to the COVID-19 pandemic, and guidance from the SD Board of Regents, becomes available.

Note that sections in blue are updates.

DATE: 12-7-2020

Notifications/Updates

1. The South Dakota Board of Regents released a face covering protocol for all of the BOR Universities. NSU is currently at “Level 3.”
<https://www.sdbor.edu/mediapubs/Documents/COVID19FaceCoveringProtocol.pdf>
2. NSU made an exception for the face covering protocol. Faculty may use a face shield instead of a face mask while teaching. This exception is only for the time that faculty are teaching a class. Face shields must extend below the chin. If faculty choose to use a face shield instead of a mask, please keep in mind that faculty should maintain as much social distance as possible from students in the rows closest to the teaching podium in the classroom. The University is not providing face shields, but faculty are allowed to use one instead of a face mask if they choose to do so. The University will be issuing face shields for faculty members who are teaching a class where there is a student with an ADA-documented disability that is assisted by having a full view of the faculty member’s face. The Office of Disability Services will notify faculty of this situation and provide the face shield. This exception at NSU is aligned with face shield exceptions at the other BOR institutions.
3. All faculty and staff will be provided with a face mask, if desired. Faculty and staff within Academic Affairs should see Judy Lapka in Spafford Hall 203 to get your mask. Staff outside of Academic Affairs should obtain their mask from their supervisor. Cloth masks, hand sanitizer, and cleaning supplies will be provided to faculty and staff through a centralized request system to Facilities Services. Orders should be gathered by department and submitted and approved by department head or supervisor at:
<https://northern.formstack.com/forms/cleaningsafety>
4. Guidance on outdoor classes. To be low-risk while outdoors, we need to maintain social distance of 6 feet at all times. See the Mayo Clinic assessment of low-risk outdoor activities: “Wear a mask when you can't maintain at least 6 feet (2 meters) from people you don't live with.”
5. If a student refuses to wear a mask in class, they should be asked to put on a mask, even if they need to leave the room, obtain a mask, and return with a mask. If a student refuses to comply with the mask covering protocol, students should be informed that they will be reported for disciplinary action, and faculty should submit a report to the NSU Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities

(OSRR) on an incident report form (see link). When completing an incident report form, faculty should check the box for “COVID-19 Face Covering Protocol”
<https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?NorthernStateUniv>

6. Students enrolled in online courses will be charged the off-campus tuition rate, while students enrolled in face-to-face (including with HyFlex options) will be charged the on-campus tuition rate.
7. [The Spring 2021 Academic calendar has NOT been modified in response to COVID-19.](#)
See <https://www.northern.edu/academics/academic-calendars-important-dates>.

Recommendations

A. Instructional strategies

1. All students have the option to take available online courses. Students in COVID-19 high risk categories are encouraged to take available online courses.
2. Faculty in COVID-19 high risk categories as defined by the CDC have the option of teaching online. Remote work requests from faculty living with people in high risk categories as defined by the CDC will also be considered on a case by case basis. Notify your department chair and Dean, and fill out the Remote Work Agreement form at:
<https://na3.docusign.net/Member/PowerFormSigning.aspx?PowerFormId=d9be45e8-80eb-451d-9094-fca12dd526a7&env=na3-eu1&acct=0478cf52-e125-4b33-a45a-870f35bb96d1>.
On this form, your Supervisor is your Dean and your Vice President is Dr. Wanous.
The NSU Remote Work Policy can be viewed at:
https://www.northern.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/documents/nsu_remote_work_policy.pdf
The deadline for these requests for Spring 2021 was September 23, 2020 (see previous emails from the Provost).
See this link for the current [CDC Guidelines for Higher Risk Individuals](#).
3. NSU will provide online courses for students who feel more comfortable staying with remote learning—especially general education choices. High-enrollment courses may also be converted to online, based on capacities of available NSU classrooms. Online general education courses will potentially be taught by faculty in high risk categories choosing to teach online.
4. Use of the HyFlex instructional format for all classes is strongly encouraged, providing multiple learning modalities for students, allowing for the reduction of face-to-face time, and to provide flexibility in case students miss class due to illness or quarantine. Multiple faculty development opportunities centered on HyFlex and online instruction have been provided. See “D. Professional development opportunities,” below. Lapel microphones designed to enhance lecture capture are available for all faculty who intend to use the HyFlex model.

Contacts for Instructional Design and Technology:

- Pedagogical or course design assistance, contact CETL@northern.edu
 - Technology assistance (D2L, software issues, third-party implementation, etc.) contact IT@northern.edu
5. All faculty are required to use D2L and to share all course materials both face-to-face and remotely (for students who cannot attend even when classes are face-to-face). At a minimum, D2L must contain the course syllabus, assignments, and grades, and preferably be set up with content modules. Quizzes and tests can be administered through D2L using the Respondus lockdown browser and monitor. Due to the unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty should be ready to pivot to online instruction at short notice. Being prepared from the beginning of the semester is the best approach.
 6. Faculty are encouraged to work with Danette Long and Jason Henslee to adapt the D2L learning environment to utilize universal design for learning (UDL) standards/practices making all courses accessible. Not only would this benefit students with disabilities, but would benefit all students.
 7. Faculty should consider creating seating charts and asking students to sit in the same place each class period.
 8. Faculty will establish lab/studio protocols that limit the number of students in lab at any one time and maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet.
 9. Establish testing practices that do not require proctor or that are paperless, so proctor (including Disability Services) does not have to handle paper and return it to faculty. For example, faculty can email exams to proctor/testing center, coordinator can print exam and administer to students, proctor can scan exam and return to faculty via email.
 10. COVID-19 guidelines for class attendance will be utilized to discourage students who are ill or in quarantine from attending class and to protect students in high risk categories by allowing them to shift to remote learning as much as possible. Faculty Senate developed a COVID-19 syllabus attendance statement for Spring 2021:

[COVID-19 Attendance Statement: If you are absent due to illness, quarantine, or isolation, please follow the What if I Get Sick? Protocol, and inform the Dean of Students, who will officially notify faculty. No additional documentation from a healthcare provider is required for missed classes. Faculty are only obligated to provide alternative arrangements for students who have excused absences through the Dean of Students Office. Students are responsible for contacting faculty about their absence, and for completing all class content and requirements, regardless of absences.](#)
 11. Make extensive use of the Starfish program to monitor lack of student engagement, providing clues for students who may be ill and need to be

Faculty are requested to be flexible on assignments, tests, etc., for students who are ill, as always. [ACHA Guidelines](#).

contacted by Student Affairs, etc. Follow up with students will be particularly important in this semester.

12. The NSU COVID-19 Academic Task Force conducted an analysis of all courses for social distancing. This involved adjusting classroom locations and class schedules to facilitate social distancing of at least 6 feet in classrooms and studios/labs. This step was coordinated by Deans and Associate Deans, in consultation with Department Chairs.

B. Ensure safe educational practices

1. Encourage all students, faculty and staff to use the South Dakota Care19 app for contact tracing <https://covid.sd.gov/care19app.aspx>. The South Dakota Department of Health will conduct contact tracing on COVID-19 positive cases.
2. Enforce social distancing protocols in and out of the classroom to the extent possible.
3. Eliminate face-to-face office hours and office meetings. Utilize Zoom or other digital mechanisms, ensuring that students know when office hours are and how to access them.
4. Encourage business to be done by phone and electronically as much as possible. Faculty, staff and students should pay special attention to email.
5. Use a hybrid professional advising model. Utilize Zoom, phone, email as much as possible. Professional Advising Guidelines for academic year 2020-21:
 - a. Advising sessions will be held by Zoom as the default, to reduce risk relative to COVID-19
 - b. Students may request a face-to-face meeting, if preferred
 - c. Face-to-face meetings will be held in a designated room where appropriate social distancing of at least 6 feet can be maintained, and face masks will be worn by all individuals
 - d. All advising sessions, by Zoom or face-to-face, will be scheduled through Starfish-provide instructions to students on how to access
6. Where there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 on campus, it is critical to maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member, as required by federal law. CDC Higher Education Guidance.
7. Guidance for various scenarios:
 - a. Departments need to be prepared in the case of a faculty member becoming ill and those courses needing to be covered by a different instructor.
 - b. Faculty need to be ready to pivot to online instruction at short notice.

C. Classroom Guidelines

1. Remove all markers and erasers from shared classrooms and issue markers and erasers to faculty for personal use. Faculty have been issued their own dry-erase markers and erasers.
2. Maintain disinfectant cleaning of all instructional spaces between class periods. The University provided supplies of COVID-19 disinfectant spray bottles, paper

towels, and appropriate waste containers. Faculty please allow 5 minutes at the end of class for students and faculty to clean their respective work spaces before dismissing class. Disinfectant spray and cleaning cloths have been placed in each classroom. Used cloths will be replaced with clean cloths daily after 3 pm. Disinfectant wipes have been supplied in classrooms for Spring 2021.

3. Provide wipe stations at all classroom teacher podiums so faculty members can wipe down podium, mouse, keyboard, and remotes, after teaching.

D. Professional development opportunities

The NSU Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) curates the [Faculty Connect Sandbox](#) on D2L to provide teaching resources for faculty, including HyFlex resources. CETL-sponsored training opportunities for HyFlex and online instruction:

1. SnackChat sessions provided:
 - a. *The New Abnormal*, March 25, 2020
 - b. *Active Learning Online*, October 13, 2020
2. Three trainings on online teaching were provided over summer 2020:
 - a. *Part I - QAP Rubrics & Developing an Online Course Syllabus*
April 20, April 27, May 4, May 18, June 1, June 8, August 3, October 22
 - b. *Part II – Building Community in the Online Course*
April 21, April 28, May 5, May 20, June 3, June 10, August 4, October 29
 - c. *Part III – Online Course Shell Development*
April 22, April 29, May 6, May 22, June 5, June 12, August 5, November 5
3. The *No Stress HyFlex Workshop* with Dr. Jenni Hayman on June 22, 2020.
4. Two HyFlex technology follow up sessions on “HyFlex Techs” were conducted by CETL on June 25 and 29, 2020.
5. 2020 Fall In-Service, August 2020:
 - a. *Innovative Teaching* by Dr. Christy Friend
 - b. *Thinking HyFlex* presentation by Dr. Ben Harley and Danette Long
6. *Digital Equity During a Pandemic* presented by Chris Gilliard, dealt with equity issues regarding HyFlex course design, September 16, 2020.
7. The *HyFlex Half Day* featuring international learning specialist Dr. Maha Bali on November 30, 2020.
8. [CETL has scheduled the *Engaging Online Learners Workshop* for January 7, 2021 from 9-11:30 AM. Dr. Marcia Dixon will be sharing proven methods for engaging students in online learning. We will also have discipline-specific breakout groups with NSU and COPLAC faculty colleagues from Truman State University.](#)

References

South Dakota Board of Regents COVID-19 Policy Exceptions
<https://www.sdbor.edu/policy/Pages/COVID-19-Exceptions.aspx>

South Dakota’s Back to Normal Plan
https://covid.sd.gov/docs/COVID_SDPlan_BacktoNormal.pdf

South Dakota Care19 App for COVID-19 contact tracing
<https://covid.sd.gov/care19app.aspx>

CDC COVID-19 Higher Education Guidance
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html>

CDC COVID-19 High Risk Individuals
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fpeople-at-higher-risk.html

Article on understanding the dynamics of COVID-19 spread
<https://www.erinbromage.com/post/the-risks-know-them-avoid-them>

ACHA Guidelines. Considerations for reopening institutions of higher education in the COVID-19 era. American College Health Association. May 7, 2020.
https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_Considerations_for_Reopening_IHEs_in_the_COVID-19_Era_May2020.pdf