

**NSU COVID-19 academic notifications and recommendations for Fall 2020.  
COVID-19 Academic Planning Task Force.**

**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.**

**DATE: 8-24-2020**

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. The BOR has suspended the Small Section Rule for the 2020-21 academic year. This provides flexibility for BOR institutions to adjust class sizes to adapt to COVID-19 safety measures such as social distancing in classrooms. All decisions on class enrollments will be coordinated by the Deans and the Provost.
7. 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.
8. The Fall 2020 Academic calendar has been modified in response to COVID-19. Fall In-Service is scheduled for August 17-18. Classes start August 19, with instruction being completed by the end of the day, Tuesday, November 24. An online final exam schedule will follow the Thanksgiving holiday. See <https://www.northern.edu/news/fall-semester-schedule-adjusted-northern-other-sd-public-universities>.

## 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](https://www.northern.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/documents/nsu_remote_work_policy.pdf)  
The deadline for these requests was July 1, 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. The use of the HyFlex instructional format for all classes is strongly encouraged, allowing for the reduction of face-to-face time, and in case students miss class due to illness or quarantine. NSU hosted the HyFlex workshop on June 22, 2020 and follow up sessions on “HyFlex Techs” were conducted by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) on June 25 and 29, 2020. The Zoom video recording for the No Stress HyFlex workshop is posted in the Faculty Connect sandbox in D2L. Faculty can find it under Content>HyFlex Teaching Model>No Stress HyFlex Workshop Recording. NSU CETL has created links to all of the activities that Dr. Hayman used in the workshop in that same content

module. Dr. Hayman has also posted a few resources that faculty will find useful as they further explore the HyFlex modality and how they can personally implement aspects of it into their teaching. Lapel microphones designed to enhance lecture capture have been ordered for all faculty who intend to use the HyFlex model and wish to record their lectures. Faculty should contact Jeanie Hoffman [Jeanie.Hoffman@northern.edu](mailto:Jeanie.Hoffman@northern.edu) to receive their microphones. For any questions regarding implementation of instructional technologies, please contact our instructional technologist Jason Henslee, [Jason.Henslee@northern.edu](mailto:Jason.Henslee@northern.edu) or our instructional designer Danette Long, [Danette.Long@northern.edu](mailto:Danette.Long@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 from attending class and to protect students in high risk categories by allowing them to shift to remote learning as much as possible. Syllabus attendance statement: "Class attendance is flexible due to COVID-19. 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 notify faculty. No documentation from a healthcare provider is required for missed classes. Students are responsible for all class content and requirements, regardless of absences." Faculty are requested to be flexible on assignments, tests, etc., for students who are ill, as always. [ACHA Guidelines](#).
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 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
  - d. All advising sessions, by Zoom or face-to-face, will be scheduled through Starfish-provide instructions to students on how to access
6. Establish locations with large social distancing for necessary face-to-face meetings. E.g., Jewett conference room. Encourage use of masks.
7. 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.
8. 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 will be placed in each

classroom. Used cloths will be replaced with clean cloths daily after 3 pm. Disinfectant wipes are on order and will replace disinfect spray and cleaning cloths upon their arrival.

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**

1. The NSU Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning provided faculty training opportunities in May and June. Danette Long offered 3 different sections of the 3 courses in the series. For assistance with online instruction, contact [instructionaldesign@northern.edu](mailto:instructionaldesign@northern.edu).
2. NSU hosted the HyFlex workshop on June 22, 2020 and follow up sessions were scheduled by the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.
3. Resources for remote teaching are available at: <https://www.northern.edu/coronavirus/continuity>.

#### References

South Dakota's Back to Normal Plan

[https://covid.sd.gov/docs/COVID\\_SDPlan\\_BacktoNormal.pdf](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](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](https://www.acha.org/documents/resources/guidelines/ACHA_Considerations_for_Reopening_IHEs_in_the_COVID-19_Era_May2020.pdf)