

Spring 2022 In-Person Instruction FAQs (rev 2/4)

Health and Safety

1. Why are we returning to in-person instruction?

In Spring 2020, almost two years ago, we were forced to pivot to virtual as COVID surged across the country. As the global pandemic gained traction we had no choice but to shut down most elements of our daily lives. At that time, we committed to finding alternate pathways to deliver our academic programs and services while COVID made it unsafe to meet in person. As we left, we also committed to return to campus when it was safe to do so. With the widespread availability of vaccines, the effectiveness of masking, and the better understanding of how COVID is transmitted, we have been able to reduce significantly the risk of COVID transmission on campus. While we have exposures on campus due to community transmission, transmission of COVID on campus is extraordinarily rare. With all of this in mind, we are confident that our in-person instruction is safe and that we are able to return to campus as the Omicron surge subsides.

2. What is CSUN doing to keep students and employees safe?

Our campus is working hard to ensure that all students and employees are safe and comfortable. Vaccines are required of all students and employees. Exceptions are available only for those with medical or religious exemptions, and those with exemptions are required to test negatively on a weekly basis. 90% of students and 97% of employees have certified/attested to being vaccinated – compared to the Los Angeles County vaccination rate of 69% for both primary doses. In addition, CSUN is now requiring boosters for all students and employees by February 4th or when otherwise eligible. CSUN continues to require daily self-screening to further reduce the presence of symptomatic individuals from attending in-person activities. The campus continues to require masks in all in-door and instructional spaces, and consistent with county guidelines is now requiring medical grade masks of all employees and recommending medical grade masks for students. We encourage social distancing to the extent it is practical, though the social distance 6’ mandate is no longer required. The campus continues to frequently sanitize high touch surfaces, and hand sanitizer and cleaning materials are available throughout the campus. The Klotz Student Health Center (SHC) does active contact tracing on campus cases in order to prevent transmission. And, to further minimize the risk of transmission, the campus has had every HVAC system independently assessed by a third-party mechanical peer reviewer, P2S Engineering, and has installed MERV 13 filters to better capture virus particulates should they be present. Finally, and as our current pivot to virtual illustrates, the campus remains able and willing to move to online instruction when surges make it less safe to be in person in large numbers. The campus follows all Los Angeles County Public Health mandates, and along with the above protocols, has made CSUN one of the safest spaces to be.

3. How will I know if a student is compliant with the campus vaccine mandate?

Students attending any in-person class must submit a self-certification attesting to be compliant with the university vaccine mandate. Student self-certification information is reviewed and monitored at the university level by Student Affairs and Academic Affairs and verified as appropriate. Students not in compliance prior to the end of Fall 21 semester were unable to register for Spring 22 classes until they completed the vaccine certification requirement. Students and employees who have received exemptions and are required to test weekly have their testing results verified by the university. With these protocols in place, all students and employees on campus are able to comply with the campus vaccine mandate.

4. How will I know which students in my class are vaccinated and which are exempted and testing?

Individual vaccine status is confidential and will not be available to faculty or other employees outside of SHC. However, since compliance with the campus vaccine mandate is required, all students in your class are either vaccinated or testing weekly. And, 90% of students have certified that they are vaccinated, and all others are required to test weekly through the campus PCR testing kiosks.

5. May I request a student's vaccine status before allowing them into a class or research lab?

No. Student and employee vaccination status is confidential, and faculty or staff may not request health information. More information on vaccine compliance is available at <https://www.csun.edu/matadors-forward/health-and-safety>.

6. What is my role in enforcing university COVID protocols?

Faculty should remind students in their classes that masks are required indoors at all times, and when congregating as a class outdoors. You may also remind students to take the daily health self-assessment before coming to campus.

7. Fall 21 in-person classes were required to take attendance. Am I required to take attendance in my Spring 2022 in-person classes?

No. During Fall 21 we were tracking which students were coming to campus in order to verify compliance with the vaccine mandate. In Spring 22, we will be assuming *all* students registered in any in-person class are coming to campus and will be verifying compliance with the vaccine mandate.

8. Do permission numbers for enrolling in an in-person class override the COVID-19 vaccination mandate?

No. Permission numbers allow students who are eligible to register to enroll in a restricted class – permission numbers do not override COVID holds or other vaccine mandates.

9. Is social distance in classrooms still required?

LA County Public Health Officials are no longer requiring social distance in classrooms. However, in many sections course enrollments are below the maximum capacity of the room. And, in most cases, the instructor is able to remain socially distant from the seated students.

10. What will we do if there are additional COVID surges?

Our first priority remains keeping our campus community safe. If COVID surges in a manner that threatens student and employee safety we are able to pivot specific courses to virtual through a structured process that is incremental and prioritizes safely retaining in-person instruction for those classes that depend on in person activities – as we are currently doing with our delay of in-person instruction for most classes. We remain prepared to make changes quickly if necessary to accommodate additional safety measures and any emerging guidance from LA County Public Health.

Classroom Management

11. What do I do if a student refuses to wear a mask or comply with other CSUN health and safety mandates?

Our experience in over 2000 in-person sections over the last year demonstrates that students will be committed to maintaining all campus protocols that keep us safe. We have not had any substantive

COVID-related disruption in our in-person classes, and in the few instances where a student arrived unmasked, when reminded to mask-up the student did so. We recommend the following steps should you encounter a student in class who is not wearing a mask:

- Gently remind the student that a mask is necessary; you may provide a new mask to the student if they do not have one (your department and/or college COVID coordinator has spare masks available for distribution).
- If the student explains that they are unable or unwilling to wear a mask, ask the student outside for a private conversation with you. When in a more private space explain that university policy requires that all employees and students must wear a mask in all in-door spaces as a condition of attending any on campus class or activity, regardless of vaccine or testing status. Students seeking a medical accommodation must go through DRES before coming to campus. (There are no medical accommodations for coming to campus maskless, but other course accommodations may be approved by DRES)
- If the student continues to be unwilling to wear a mask, explain that the student is not able to remain in the class without a mask, and that the student will need to leave the class if they remain unwilling to wear a mask. In the unlikely event that the student continues to be unwilling to wear a mask, request that the student leave the class.
- In the extremely unlikely event that the student continues to be unwilling to wear a mask, and refuses to leave the classroom, please end the class for the day, dismiss all students, and leave the room. Tell the student that you will need to consult with the Office of Student Affairs. As soon as practical, please then notify Zeina Otaky-Ramirez, Assistant Dean of Students & Director of Student Conduct (zeina.ramirez@csun.edu). Student Affairs will contact the student to clarify the student's options and pursue any appropriate student discipline.

12. When we return to on-campus instruction in February, may a faculty member convert a scheduled in-person class to an online class and stay virtual?

No. As in pre-COVID, all classes must be held at the time, place, and modality as scheduled in the SOC. With over 6000 sections offered across the university it is especially important to hold classes as scheduled to allow students to experience the course as intended, and to avoid further confusion.

13. Are in-person classes required to accommodate students who wish to remain online?

Students enrolling in an in-person class are expected to be able to attend the class on campus in a regular manner. Faculty are not required to accommodate students who wish to remain online but have no formal accommodation approved by the university. Faculty can, at their discretion, choose to informally accommodate students who may be experiencing some difficulty in attending in person. Of course, as in pre-COVID, faculty must accommodate students who may be unable to attend a class in person due to illness or other approved absence. In such cases, the faculty may use their discretion in how best to accommodate the student. Students requesting formal accommodations for prolonged absences/illness should be referred to DRES.

14. What should I do if a student in my class tells me they tested positive for coronavirus?

If a student or employee reports that they have recently tested positive or been exposed to COVID, please request that they immediately isolate and that they complete the [Student Self-Reporting Form](#) or [Faculty and Staff Self-Reporting Form](#). [Visitors may self-report here](#). You may also report the information to the SHC at shcinfo@csun.edu. Contact tracers from the Klotz Student Health Center will follow-up quickly thereafter.

15. How does CSUN determine if a student with a coronavirus positive test exposed any other students or me in my class?

When a COVID case is reported to the SHC or through one of the self-reporting forms, the SHC will assess the exposure and initiate contact tracing as appropriate. The SHC will contact students and employees who are close contacts directly to instruct them should quarantine be necessary. Employee close contacts will be reported to HR for Cal OSHA. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) will work with Undergraduate Studies (UGS) to inform faculty if there was an exposure in the classroom that may require additional preventive measures. Students will be contacted by the Klotz Student Health Center and employees will be contacted by Human Resources to conduct an intake and advise of relevant isolation and quarantine protocols if required. This will also initiate sanitization protocols. More information is available on the Matadors Forward webpage: <https://www.csun.edu/matadors-forward/health-and-safety>.

16. How do I verify if a student who claims to have a coronavirus infection has actually tested positive?

We are not requiring students who self-report as having tested positive or having been a close contact to verify their status. Our overriding priority is to ensure a safe and healthy campus, and we are intentionally working to incentivize compliance with our campus COVID protocols. We do not want any student or employee who may have been exposed to COVID to attend a class or campus function out of a fear they would be unable to make-up the work through an appropriate accommodation.

17. How will I know when a previously infected student is allowed to return to class safely?

Students recovering from COVID will be informed by SHC as to how long they should quarantine, and whether additional preventive measures are necessary. Once a student has completed these protocols, they are free to return to class. Just as in pre-COVID, students returning from an illness do not require any type of clearance to return to the classroom.

18. What do I do if I am feeling ill or have been exposed to COVID?

Faculty or staff who may be experiencing symptoms of illness, or have tested positive or been exposed to COVID, should stay off campus and notify their chair. In addition, please complete the [Faculty and Staff Self-Reporting Form](#) to allow SHC to begin contact tracing. If you are feeling healthy enough to teach, you may teach remotely without charging sick days during the period of isolation. If you are experiencing symptoms and are unable to meet classes virtually, you may charge sick days as appropriate. [More information on health and safety is available here.](#)

Additional Resources

19. Can a faculty member request a larger room for 'social distancing'?

Since we will be primarily in person beginning in Spring 22, we will once again be experiencing space constraints across the university. Nonetheless, in most classrooms faculty will be able to remain socially distanced from students as they teach. And, with MERF 13 filters and ventilation systems regularly refreshing the air in buildings, masking protocols, and the high campus vaccination rate, university classrooms can once again accommodate full enrollment courses. Still, if a larger room is preferred, please reach out to your chair. In some cases, a larger classroom may be available. Please email requests to academicscheduling@csun.edu.

20. May I hold Office Hours in person?

Yes. You may hold Office Hours in person, online, or both. If you are holding in person office hours, please remember that masks are always required in indoor settings, including private offices when more than one person is present.

21. Will student forms be processed electronically, or will both paper and electronic forms be acceptable?

The campus is currently accepting student forms in both paper and electronic format where both versions exist. Electronic forms may be submitted as directed on the form. The [Student Forms website](#) provides additional information on submission options.

22. What are the health and safety rules/guidelines for taking students on field trips, and as passengers in CSUN vehicles?

Many classes have been holding in person field trips since the beginning of the academic year, and we no longer require COVID safety review or approval as long as basic COVID protocols are in place (compliance with the vaccine mandate, masking, hand sanitizer). Students and employees may carpool or travel in CSUN vehicles with added protocols. EHS has recommended the following protocols for travel by carpool or van related to instructional and co-curricular activities:

- Compliance with the CSUN vaccination policy;
- Daily self-assessment surveys sent to the employee in charge of the trip before leaving;
- Negative PCR test within 3 days of travel ([available free at campus kiosks to all students and employees](#)); Students should not be required to show a negative result to any university employee. Instead, a positive test result [should be reported by the student](#) to SHC and the student should isolate.
- KN95 masks at all times while inside the vehicle (available from college covid coordinator);
- No eating in the vehicle and only remove mask while drinking and replace immediately (take roadside breaks every 90 mins);
- Maximum 2 persons per bench seat/row to maximize distancing if possible;
- Air Conditioning set to outside air and not maximum or recirculating;

23. Will all campus resources be re-opened for in person use by students?

Yes. As we come back to be primarily in person, all campus resources will be open for in person use by students and employees. In fact, most of these are already open for in person use, including several food spaces and the bookstore complex, the food pantry, University Counseling Services, Klotz Student Health Center, the Library, and more.

24. Is professional travel possible now that we are returning to primarily in-person instruction?

Yes. Professional travel in Academic Affairs is once again using pre-pandemic approval criteria. If COVID surges make professional travel unsafe we will adjust approval as necessary.

25. Will advising offices, department offices, and deans' offices be open for use by students and faculty?

Yes. While most of these offices are open for in person services now, Spring repopulation will allow all university business offices to be open for in person service. In many cases, virtual services will also remain available.

26. How can I provide social and emotional support to my students, my colleagues, and myself during our repopulation of campus? Please see Campus Care Recovery Planning Group resources below:

Tips for Providing Socio-emotional Support for Students Returning to Spring 2022 In-Person Classes (prepared by the Campus Care Recovery Planning Group)

It's important to view the current pandemic through the lens of trauma as we work with our students. The first step to addressing trauma is recognizing the existence of trauma. 20% of people in the US have lost a family member or close friend to COVID, and even greater losses are found in diverse communities. 80% of CSUN students report moderate to severe anxiety since the onset of the pandemic. So, we can expect to see varying degrees of trauma in our students returning this spring. Below are tips for faculty to support our students, many of whom have been impacted by the pandemic.

How can faculty support the socio-emotional needs of students returning to in-person classes?

- Begin the semester with introductions in classes to facilitate connection and belongingness among students.
- Assure your concern for student safety by reviewing safety expectations for in-person classes-wear a mask at all times.
- Request student feedback and suggestions for creating a safe and supportive learning environment in your class.
- Promote and model self-care. Check in with students at the beginning of class about how they are doing and ask how they are taking care of themselves. Express understanding that crises like the pandemic can have a negative impact on them both personally and academically. Students are coming back with varying degrees of emotional impact from the pandemic and other social stressors, and will appreciate this expression of compassion and caring.
- Share well-being campus resources with the entire class and in the syllabus:
 - Institute of Health and Wellbeing <https://www.csun.edu/wellbeing>
 - University Counseling Services <https://www.csun.edu/counseling>
 - Self-Care for You at Northridge <https://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/self-care>
 - CSUN with a Heart for food and housing needs <https://www.csun.edu/heart>
 - Campus Care Recovery Plan Central Website and Wellbeing toolkits for faculty available in spring
- Take stretch breaks with in-person classes or on zoom for hybrid classes.
- Besides a regular class break, if scheduled, let students know that they may excuse themselves if they need a break during class. Tell students to notify you if a student needs to be absent for an entire class, but be respectful of their privacy. Let students know that they will be responsible for acquiring and completing missed material from classmates or the instructor.
- Provide flexibility yet also clear expectations regarding how to request extensions and flexibility with course requirements, and talk about this with students at the beginning of the semester. Also put this in your syllabus.
- CSUN Student Disability Resources and Educational Services is available for students who want to request academic accommodations. <https://www.csun.edu/dres>
- Provide a list of CSUN academic resources to all students, and especially to support students who are struggling. <https://www.csun.edu/current-students/resources-services>

How can faculty support a student exhibiting emotional distress during an in-person class?

- Understand the emotional complexity and social nature of learning. When students are faced with an emotional crisis, like the pandemic, their ability to learn and perform is diminished. Anti-Black racism and other forms of racism further adds to student stress.
- Watch for signs of crisis indicators such as verbalizing anxiety or depression, crying and irritability, looking fatigued or acting withdrawn, and sharing personal struggles. Share that these feelings are normal when impacted by a crisis like a pandemic.

- Support and validate students when they are expressing their own experience and difficult emotions; listen and express support even if you may not understand or agree.
- Provide CSUN well-being and socio-emotional support referrals:
 - University Counseling Services <https://www.csun.edu/counseling>
 - Strength United <https://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/strength-united>
 - Mitchell Family Counseling Clinic <https://www.csun.edu/teaching-learning-counseling-consortium/mitchell-family-counseling-clinic>
 - Campus Care Recovery Plan Central Website and Wellbeing toolkits for faculty available in spring
- If a student becomes agitated or escalated in the classroom, deescalate by remaining calm and supportive. Validate feelings, but set limits related to returning to class activities, and making yourself available after class.
- If student escalation continues, invite the agitated student to take a few minutes outside of the classroom to calm themselves.
- If the situation does not de-escalate in class, and it is disruptive to the class environment, calmly end class early in a supportive manner. Contact University Counseling Services for immediate help and guidance <https://www.csun.edu/counseling/urgent-care>
- **University Counseling Services Crisis Line** – 818-677-2366, select option 1, Monday through Friday 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. After hours and on the weekend, 818-677-2366, select option 3.

**Tips for Providing Socio-emotional Support for Faculty and Staff Returning in Person in Spring 2022
(prepared by the Campus Care Recovery Planning Group)**

It's so important that we as faculty and staff (and administrators!) take care of ourselves. Research across the country indicates that many faculty and staff have been impacted socio-emotionally by the pandemic. Below are tips for us to support ourselves, and tips for supervisors to support those in their area.

How can faculty and staff take care of themselves when impacted by the pandemic?

- Understand the emotional complexity and social nature of our ability as faculty and staff to perform, which can be diminished in this pandemic crisis. Anti-Black racism and other forms of racism further adds to stress levels. Be kind and patient with yourself.
- Be aware of indicators that may be adversely affecting you: feelings of anxiety, fatigued, or fear about safety, more physical aches and pains, not sleeping well, feeling withdrawn.
- Develop healthy coping mechanisms. Reengage yourself socially with people by having lunch together, joining an affinity group, enjoying time together at the end of the day, etc. Exercise regularly. Be patient and listen to your body. Process your emotions at your own pace. Remember that you aren't alone and that so many others are experiencing physical and emotional symptoms as a result of all the pandemic trauma.
- Engage in self-care that works for you at home and at work. Take breaks. Consider participation in campus self-care activities:
 - Institute of Health and Wellbeing <https://www.csun.edu/wellbeing>
 - Self-Care for You at Northridge <https://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/self-care>
 - Campus Care Recovery Plan Central Website available in Spring
- Remember that your responses are normal. It's our circumstances that aren't normal.
- If you are struggling emotionally, consider counseling through your personal insurance or through our campus Employee Assistance Program, LifeMatters at <https://www.csun.edu/benefits/lifematters-eap>

- Explore additional resources provided by LifeMatters which include but are not limited to: Health - behavior and physical health self-assessments; web MD resources, smoking cessation program; Worklife - baby welcome program, advanced adoption, child/elder care resource and referrals, college resources and referrals, online searches for varied topics such as summer camps, pet care, etc.; Education - online topical videos, interactive E-learning modules on emotional well-being, family life, and the workplace, and a newsletter on various subjects; Phone Consultations - available with attorneys for most legal concerns and with certified financial planners.

[LifeMatters@CSUN Other Services | California State University, Northridge](#)

How can supervisors support faculty and staff who also are expressing emotional distress?

- Provide positive welcome back notices and events, and reassurance at the beginning of the semester.
- Establish community by fostering supportive connections with faculty and staff through community activities-lunches, holiday gatherings, celebrations.
- Things will not be going back to the way they were pre-pandemic and adjustments are likely to be necessary.
- Understand that people will be affected differently from the pandemic. Some will be excited to be returning to the workplace. Others will be impacted in varying degrees by the stress and anxiety they have experienced.
- Provide structure and routine but also grace and flexibility as returning faculty and staff adjust and discuss their needs with supervisors.
- Have regular check-ins to provide a supportive and collaborative work environment.
- Encourage self-care that can be implemented into office practices by taking breaks, and engaging participation in campus self-care activities:
 - Institute of Health and Wellbeing <https://www.csun.edu/wellbeing>
 - Self-Care for You at Northridge <https://www.csun.edu/eisner-education/self-care>
 - Campus Care Recovery Plan Central Website and Wellbeing toolkits for Supervisors- available in spring
- Provide information through our campus Employee Assistance Program, LifeMatters for those who may need extra support. <https://www.csun.edu/benefits/lifematters-eap>