

**Guidance for Instructors of Record:  
Introductory Messaging, First-Day Discussion Points, and Ongoing Conduct of Classes  
in the Context of COVID-19**

1. **Before classes begin.** At least one week before the start of classes, send an introductory e-mail to your students highlighting some key points of information about what to expect on the first day. Introduce yourself, be positive about the upcoming semester and the content and objectives of your course, inform them of required textbooks or other course materials they need to acquire, and that you would like to outline a few expectations for everyone to have as they come to the first class period. Some expectations to note:
  - a. **Face coverings are required.** Students are expected to enter the building wearing a face covering and keep it on throughout the class period and when walking through the building afterward. [Note: Departments may purchase through the warehouse catalog in Techbuy a limited supply of masks for instructors to have in class. There will also be sanitization stations or kiosks located in academic buildings where students may obtain temporary face masks.]
  - b. **Signage.** Alert students to be attentive to signage posted at external and some classroom doorways that indicates entry and exit ways, gathering and queuing spaces, and availability of masks and hand sanitizer (see attachment C).
  - c. **Seating assignments.** Students are expected to sit at a minimum of six feet apart. [State whether seats in your classroom will be marked as available and unavailable.] A required seating chart will be created once everyone is positioned with appropriate social distancing. There will also be an orderly procedure, designed to ensure social distancing, for exiting the classroom. [Note: Operations Division Planning and Administration can assist departments with classroom layouts and seating plans. Also, some classes may be suited to meeting in outdoor spaces on campus; departments should contact Grounds Use to discuss arrangements.]
  - d. **Syllabus.** Attach a copy or a link to your class syllabus if it is ready at the time you send this e-mail message. Point to elements you want students to be familiar with on the first day.
  
2. **First Day.** Plan to spend a good portion of your opening class period discussing protocols and answering questions about mitigating viral spread.
  - a. It is expected that one or more videos featuring “campus influencers” (e.g., Chancellor Mitchell, President Schovanec, Student Government Officers) will be available for showing in your initial class period. Use the video as a way to segue from University expectations to those for your class.
  - b. Review the key points you highlighted in the introductory e-mail sent the week before.
    - i. **Face covering requirement.** Texas Tech University requires that students wear face coverings while in classes, while otherwise in campus buildings, and when social distancing cannot be maintained outdoors on campus. This requirement is consistent with the current (as of July 2, 2020) State mandate to wear face coverings in public. Describe how you plan to address students coming without or refusing to wear a face covering in class (e.g., “Face coverings are required in the classroom. Please check at the station in the foyer to see if they have one available.”).

- ii. **Seating assignments.** The purpose of assigned seating is to assist in contact tracing, if necessary, and to augment social distancing. In a hybrid course with alternating attendance days, a seating chart will be needed for each group of students meeting face-to-face. For studios, performance venues, and labs in which students might not have specified seats, a location chart will be needed. Plan to adjust the seating/location chart as enrollment changes.
  - iii. **Queuing to exit the class.** State your plan for how class will be dismissed and in what order (e.g., row-by-row starting from the back), stressing the need to keep face coverings on and maintain social distancing. If available, instruct students to wipe down their desks/table spaces with sanitizing wipes.
  - iv. **Signage and markers.** Remind students to pay attention to signage and encourage them to use hand sanitizer or to wash their hands in a restroom as they walk through the building. Information to look for:
    - 1. Reminders to wear face coverings.
    - 2. Entry and exit pathways.
    - 3. How to congregate and queue before entering a classroom.
    - 4. Social distancing guidance for using tables and chairs in gathering spaces.
    - 5. Instructions specific to elevators and stairwells.
    - 6. Locations of sanitation stations and hand sanitizer dispensers.
  - v. **In the event a class member has a positive case.** [Based on TTU System and University-wide guidance anticipated to be available soon.] Be prepared to review protocol and point students to sources of information so they will know what to expect should a member of the class have a positive case of COVID-19.
3. **Syllabus.** In addition to the usual elements your syllabus contains, it should also include the following statements, to be discussed in class on the first day. It may also include any of the above not repeated below.
- a. For placement at or near the top of each course syllabus:  
*If Texas Tech University campus operations are required to change because of health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that this course will move to a fully online delivery format. Should that be necessary, students will be advised of technical and/or equipment requirements, including remote proctoring software.*
  - b. Policy on absences resulting from illness (see Attachment A.). Anticipate that some students may have extended absences. To avoid students feeling compelled to attend in-person class periods when having symptoms or feeling unwell, a standard policy is provided that holds students harmless for illness-related absences.
  - c. Policy statement on positive test (see 2.b.v above).
  - d. Requesting accommodations as a result of personal health concerns (see Attachment B.). It is important to enable students who have immunocompromising health conditions or concerns for family or other live-in individuals' health risks reasonable accommodations for fulfilling class attendance and assignment expectations.

## A. Illness-Based Absence Policy

If at any time during this semester you feel ill, in the interest of your own health and safety as well as the health and safety of your instructors and classmates, you are encouraged *not* to attend face-to-face class meetings or events. Please review the steps outlined below that you should follow to ensure your absence for illness will be excused. These steps also apply to not participating in synchronous online class meetings if you feel too ill to do so and missing specified assignment due dates in asynchronous online classes because of illness.

1. If you are ill and think the symptoms might be COVID-19-related:
  - a. Call Student Health Services at 806.743.2848 or your health care provider. After hours and on weekends contact TTU COVID-19 Helpline at [TBA].
  - b. Self-report as soon as possible using the [Dean of Students COVID-19 webpage](#). This website has specific directions about how to upload documentation from a medical provider and what will happen if your illness renders you unable to participate in classes for more than one week.
  - c. If your illness is determined to be COVID-19-related, all remaining documentation and communication will be handled through the Office of the Dean of Students, including notification of your instructors of the period of time you may be absent from and may return to classes.
  - d. If your illness is determined not to be COVID-19-related, please follow steps 2.a-d below.
  
2. If you are ill and can attribute your symptoms to something other than COVID-19:
  - a. If your illness renders you unable to attend face-to-face classes, participate in synchronous online classes, or miss specified assignment due dates in asynchronous online classes, you are encouraged to visit with either Student Health Services at 806.743.2848 or your health care provider. Note that Student Health Services and your own and other health care providers may arrange virtual visits.
  - b. During the health provider visit, request a “return to school” note;
  - c. E-mail the instructor a picture of that note;
  - d. Return to class by the next class period after the date indicated on your note.

Following the steps outlined above helps to keep your instructors informed about your absences and ensures your absence or missing an assignment due date because of illness will be marked excused. You will still be responsible to complete within a week of returning to class any assignments, quizzes, or exams you miss because of illness.

## B. Addressing Accommodation Requests from High-Risk Students Returning to Campus

Texas Tech University is taking considerable measures to provide effective social distancing and sanitation protocols as we prepare to return to campus in the Fall. We need to be mindful that, because of underlying health conditions, some students will be at higher risk for COVID-19. Other students, although healthy themselves, might live with someone who has compromising health conditions. Students in one or both of these two categories might request accommodations or alternatives to fulfill course requirements to avoid potential exposure to the virus.

The Office of the Provost authorizes instructors of record (IoRs), in coordination with their department chairs, academic advisors, and academic associate deans, with the flexibility necessary to make instructional accommodations for students to avoid exposure to COVID-19. Accommodations might include, as examples, alternatives to face-to-face group assignments, remote learning such as online instruction or off-site activities, changing to an online section of the same course or to an independent study with the same learning objectives as the original course, or approval of a substitute course that is offered online and can fulfill the same degree requirements of the original course.

Keep in mind the following criteria when considering making an accommodation for a student: (1) whether the requested accommodation would make a substantive alteration of the course material or objectives; (2) whether the accommodation provides an equally effective alternative to the original objectives or activities of the class; and (3) whether the accommodation can be uniformly applied should more than one student request it. If the IoR can satisfactorily address these three requirements for accommodation, and is comfortable providing it, then it is appropriate to do so. If the IoR feels unable to provide accommodation that satisfies these three criteria or is unsure how the requested accommodation can be provided, the IoR is encouraged to contact their academic associate dean's office for guidance. Students should also be advised to follow the steps for reporting illness-related absences outlined on the [Dean of Students COVID-19 webpage](#).

If a high-risk student asks for a substantial alteration to the essential elements of the class, then the IoR, advisor, or associate dean should suggest that the student work with SDS to provide a Letter of Accommodation (LOA).

## B. STUDENT CONGREGATION AREAS AND USE OF OUTDOOR SPACES

1. Guidance for use of outdoor spaces:
  - a. All requests to use outdoor spaces for formal class instruction, organizational meetings, and/or any other event should follow the requirements and procedures specified in [OP 61.02](#);
  - b. Before submitting a request to schedule use of an outdoor space, individuals should review the Grounds Use [webpage](#), which includes a calendar of scheduled events.
2. Guidance for students waiting for their classes to begin:
  - a. A system group is planning signage that will be used in academic buildings;
  - b. Operations and Student Disability Services are in the process of touring academic buildings and will work with each department to roll out the signage plan for masks, hand washing, and wellness kiosk stations;
  - c. Students can be encouraged not to queue for classes until at least 10 minutes before start time. Once in line, social distancing, and use of face coverings should be observed.
3. Guidance for exterior doors and building traffic flow:
  - a. Exterior doors must remain unlock. Academic units may work with Operations concerning routing traffic flow through specific doors, but no exterior doors can be locked (without specific permission from Operations, SDS, and the Fire Marshall);
  - b. Academic units can reach out to **Larry Phillippe in SDS and to the Fire Marshall to set up internal review of expected traffic flow patterns; -- to shawn shelder**
  - c. Exterior doors may not be propped open because doing so: 1) is against fire code, and; 2) disrupts air flow patterns and exchange rates that are being used by Operations.
4. Guidance for congregating in academic buildings and auxiliary spaces:
  - a. Operations is providing some uniform signage and guidance during tours of buildings;
  - b. Units can work with Lance Rampy to coordinate walk-throughs if they want guidance from Operations on *additional* signage needed for unique common spaces (i.e., no more than two people allowed in copy room at a time);
  - c. Units' building coordinators may contact Operations for help moving furniture as a means of decreasing available seating in common spaces. Units are encouraged to work with Operations so that relocated furniture does not block electrical access points or violate fire code. If furniture cannot be moved, units should indicate that furniture is not available for use.
5. Guidance for students who want to stay on campus and use TTU's internet services:
  - a. The Library and [campus computer labs](#) will have usage guidelines available on their websites and in their physical spaces;
  - b. IT is working (in conjunction with Traffic and Parking) to increase wi-fi signal within parking lots:
    1. R21 – North of Law School, spaces closest to Law School building;
    2. Z4 – Directly east of Law School, spaces closest to Law School building;
    3. R31 – West of Administrative Support Center.
6. Guidance for outdoor space congregation:
  - a. Grounds Use is developing guidelines for approved outdoor events – these will be provided to any group whose request for outdoor space reservation is approved;
  - b. Operations will develop signage for known common congregation areas and will address new needs as they arise.