

**AY 2021–22 ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION:  
GUIDANCE FOR COLLEGES, SCHOOLS, DEPARTMENTS, AND PROGRAMS  
FROM THE ACADEMIC INSTRUCTION IMPLEMENTATION TEAM**

**Volume 2, Edition 5: March 3, 2022**

**Topics: Transition to Mask-Optional Campus on Mar. 7, 2022; Policy Updates;  
Reminders on Student Class Performance and on Final Exams**

**Due Dates for Chairs/Directors and Department Schedulers: None in this edition**

***Deans, chairs and directors: please email this entire edition of guidance to your faculty, including lecturers and adjunct/temporary faculty; your graduate students with teaching appointments; and your academic support staff.***

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### **What's in this edition of guidance**

This edition of guidance focuses on the transition to a mask-optional campus on March 7, 2022, and on other academic updates and reminders for the rest of the spring semester.

## Mask-optional campus starting March 7: FAQs for instruction, office hours, events

The campus shifts to a “mask-optional” environment at 6:00 a.m. on Monday, March 7, 2022.

Individuals, including visitors to campus, will make their own determination to wear a mask based on their comfort level. Read more about the reasons for this change in the [Provost’s and COO’s Feb. 28 memo to campus](#).

Frequently asked questions about what this shift will mean for teaching, office hours, and events include:

- **Can those who teach classes in person, including faculty, GPTIs, and TAs, still require masks in their classroom or lab?**
  - They can request that masks be worn but not require them.
- **Can those who hold office hours in person, including faculty, GPTIs, TAs, and advisors, still decide to require masks?**
  - They can request that masks be worn but not require them.
- **Can those who teach classes or hold office hours in person require unvaccinated students to wear masks?**
  - Students should not be asked to report their vaccination status.
  - Unvaccinated students are the same as everyone else on campus: they may be requested, but not required, to wear masks.
- **Should those who teach classes or hold office hours in person report a student to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution if the student is requested to wear a mask but refuses to do so?**
  - No. Students may be requested to wear masks, but not required to do so.
- **What are an instructor’s options if they are not comfortable teaching classes or lab sessions in person with no face covering policy? What if they are immuno-compromised, or live with somebody who is? Can they shift their class to remote status?**
  - As detailed in the [Jan. 13, 2022 Academic Instruction Guidance](#), instructors may not independently change the instruction mode of their classes. If a short-term instruction mode change is needed, instructors should work with their department chair to ensure continuity of instruction. Changes in class instruction mode that would be for the remainder of the semester must always be approved at the department/program/college level; during the pandemic, including spring 2022, changes must also be approved by the provost’s office.
  - An instructor may choose to continue to wear a mask. Even if others are not wearing a mask, a well-fitted KN95 or N95 still provides protection.
  - For those who are both fully vaccinated/boosted and choose to wear a properly fitted N95 or KN95 mask, the chances of becoming infected with COVID-19 are extremely low.
- **What are a student’s options if they are not comfortable attending classes or lab sessions in person with no face covering policy? What if they are immuno-compromised, or live with someone who is? Can they ask to take the class remotely?**
  - Students cannot request that an in-person course be taught to them remotely for reasons other than a documented disability that would require such an accommodation. Contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) for more information.
  - A student may choose to continue to wear a mask. Even if others are not wearing a mask, a well-fitted KN95 or N95 still provides protection.

- For those who are both fully vaccinated/boosted and choose to wear a properly fitted N95 or KN95 mask, the chances of becoming infected with COVID-19 are extremely low.
- **Can I create “masked” and “non-masked” areas for students in my classroom, if it makes students who prefer to wear masks more comfortable? I have used this practice before to create “laptop” and “non-laptop” areas in my classroom.**
  - Yes, but please do not use this practice to disadvantage one group of students (for example, by having them sit in the back of the room).
- **Can a faculty member, GPTI or TA hold office hours remotely?**
  - As detailed in the [Jan. 13, 2022 Academic Instruction Guidance](#), office hours may be held in person or remotely, at the discretion of the instructor. TAs, consult with the instructor of record for the class about mode and location for your office hours.
- **Are masks required at events?**
  - No.
- **Can a group scheduling an event decide to require masks?**
  - In a mask-optional environment, campus groups can recommend that participants wear a mask but cannot require it. Off-campus groups renting space on campus may choose to implement their own requirements. If an off-campus group requires masks, they would be responsible for enforcing that requirement.
- **Can graduate examinations (comprehensive, final, or defense) and honors thesis defenses continue to be held remotely? If held in person, can masks be required?**
  - Remote or hybrid examinations/defenses continue to be allowed. It is recommended that each examination be thoughtfully considered on a case-by-case basis. It may be requested that masks be worn by in-person participants, but not required.
- **What would trigger CU Boulder to re-institute required masking? Would a new variant cause masks to be required again?**
  - The university will continue to track the evolution of this disease and work with campus, local, and state health officials to ensure we are making the decisions that best protect our community. In particular, we would consider the transmission pattern of new variants, hospitalization rates and capacity of local hospitals in helping to make such a decision.

## **Reminder: Make sure your students know how they’re doing in your class**

### **Give your students graded feedback before pass/fail and late drop deadline**

The deadline for students to declare a class pass/fail (or to change a pass/fail designation to a grade) is the end of the tenth week of classes (prorated for shorter-term classes). This is the same deadline for dropping a class. For spring 2022, that deadline is **Friday, Mar. 18**, for regular-term courses. ***For undergraduate students especially, it’s important that students know how they’re doing in your class before this deadline, so they can make informed decisions about pass/fail or dropping a class. Please make sure you’ve assigned and graded significant assignments by this point.***

### **Use the Course Alert System**

As of fall 2021, the campus expanded the [Course Alert System](#) to cover all undergraduate classes. Course alerts are an important component in ensuring undergraduate student success. A course alert may be submitted for undergraduate students who are not completing assignments, are missing class, are performing poorly on tests and assignments, or are otherwise struggling and may need help.

Please use the Course Alert System for your undergraduate classes if you have not already done so. The feedback form is available semester weeks 2–13 (prorated for shorter classes), and may be submitted multiple times during the term (though only once per student). Submission dates for spring 2022 and instructions for using Course Alert are posted on the [OIT Course Alert page](#).

### **Update: Revised Grade Replacement Policy**

To support student success, and in accordance with the Academic Affairs process for policy revision, including the endorsement of the Boulder Faculty Assembly and the Council of Deans, the campus has revised its grade replacement policy, effective this semester. Key revisions include:

- Grade replacement is now applied automatically at the end of each term for eligible courses and students. Students do not have to apply for grade replacement. Students who do not want an eligible grade to be replaced can apply to opt out.
- The previous cap on credits that may be replaced has been removed. Individual schools, colleges, and degrees may continue to limit the number of times certain courses may be repeated.

Other provisions of the grade replacement policy remain the same, including the threshold grades required for grade replacement. *Grades earned in a course where a student was found guilty of academic dishonesty are not eligible for grade replacement, as was the case under the prior policy.*

### **Update: Campus closure for weather and other emergencies**

#### **Revised Campus Closure Policy**

CU Boulder has revised its [Campus Closure Policy](#) to provide more clarity about what happens when the campus must be closed due to weather or other emergencies, or when a delayed start or early closure is scheduled.

#### *Delayed start*

1. A decision for a delayed start will normally be made by 5:30 AM of the emergency day.
2. All campus events, facilities, and venues are open and on schedule after the delay period has ended
3. All in-person and remote (synchronous) classes with a start time that is during the closure period will be canceled.
4. All online (asynchronous) classes will be held as normal, and no classes or exams will be delayed or canceled due to a delayed start.
5. In the event of a delay during the final examination period, the Provost will provide a directive regarding exams according to the [final examination policy](#).

#### *Early closure*

1. All campus events, facilities, and venues are open until the early closure time.

2. All in-person and remote (synchronous) classes with a start time after the early closure time will be canceled.
3. All online (asynchronous) classes will be held as normal, and no classes or exams will be delayed or canceled due to an early closure.
4. In the event of an early closure during the final examination period, the Provost will provide a directive regarding exams according to the [final examination policy](#).

*Classes canceled and administrative closure for the entire day*

1. A decision for a class cancellation will normally be made by 5:30 AM of the emergency day.
2. All in-person and remote (synchronous) classes will be canceled.
3. All online (asynchronous) classes will be held as normal, and no classes or exams for online (asynchronous) classes will be delayed or canceled due to a decision for class cancellation.
4. In the event of a closure during the final examination period, the Provost will provide a directive regarding exams according to the [final examination policy](#).
5. Communications will contain information on how the campus may be impacted. Contact your supervisor, or event venue if there are specific concerns. Campus events, facilities, and venues may be closed or canceled; employees, students and others should contact them directly for questions regarding operating status.

**FAQ: Why are remote classes canceled on a snow day?**

Many students and faculty depend on campus facilities and internet access to teach or take remote classes. Holding a remote class when some students cannot participate is unfair to those students, and faculty or students should not feel that they must travel to campus to teach or take a class when it is not safe to do so.

**FAQ: What should I do to hold makeup sessions when my class is canceled for a snow day?**

You may schedule an in-person or makeup session, but you may not require that students attend that session if it is not during your regular class time. You may also record a lecture for students to access on their own schedule. If your makeup session covers material that will be on an exam, you should record the lecture and make it very clear to your students (put it in writing) that they are responsible for that material.

**Reminders: Final examination schedule and final exam modes for spring 2022**

The spring semester final exam schedule is on the Office of the Registrar [site](#). As a reminder, guidance for scheduling and delivery modes of final exams from the [Nov. 19, 2021 edition of Academic Instruction Guidance](#) is repeated here:

*All classes*

- All classes must follow the campus [Final Exam Policy](#) exam scheduling provisions:
  - For courses in sessions of ten weeks or longer, no examinations may be given during the week of classes preceding the start of the campus's final examination period; however, assignments listed in the syllabus such as papers, lab practicums, presentations, portfolios, and projects may be due during that week.

- Class sessions or graded assignments of any kind, including papers, lab practicums, presentations, portfolios and projects, may not take place or be due on a day designated in the academic calendar as a Reading Day. For spring 2022, Friday, Apr. 29, is designated as a Reading Day.
- When students have three or more final examinations on the same day, they are entitled to arrange an alternative examination time for the last exam or exams scheduled on that day. When students have two final examinations scheduled to meet at the same time, they are entitled to arrange an alternative examination time for the course that meets later in the week during the term or, if the two courses meet on the same day during the term, the course that meets later in the day.

#### *In-person classes*

- Final exams for all in-person classes should be administered during the [designated time for that class](#) during the [final exam period \(April 30-May 4\)](#).
- Final exams for in-person classes are normally held in person, but may be administered remotely at the discretion of the instructor of record.
- The class syllabus must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

#### *Remote (synchronous) classes*

- Final exams for all remote (synchronous) classes must be given remotely. They should be administered one of two ways:
  1. During the [designated time for that class](#) during the [final exam period \(April 30-May 4\)](#). Be prepared to accommodate students who have computer or connectivity problems during that time slot.
  2. Within a time window of at least 24 hours, as long as that time window (a) includes the entirety of the [designated final exam time for that class](#) and (2) begins and ends within the [final exam period \(April 30-May 4\)](#).
- The class syllabus must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

#### *Online (asynchronous) classes*

- Final exams for completely online (asynchronous) classes should be offered during a time window, inclusive of start and completion times, of at least 48 hours. The window allows students to fit the exam for an asynchronous class into the rest of their exam schedule.
- Final exams for online (asynchronous) classes must be administered during the [final exam period \(April 30-May 4\)](#). They may be offered at any time during that period, as long as the administration time window of at least 48 hours begins and ends within that final exam period.
- An exception to the above two bullet points: some online classes are included on the [common final exam schedule](#) for exams to be given at a specific time during the final exam period. These online classes may require the final exam to be taken remotely at that specific time. For those teaching one of these courses, please communicate your expectations clearly to your students about whether their exam will be given during the established common exam time.
- The class syllabus must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

### *Hybrid classes*

- Final exams for hybrid classes may use the guidelines for either of their instruction modes, as specified above. For example, a hybrid in-person/remote class may follow the guidelines for either in-person classes or remote classes.
- The class syllabus must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

### *Exam delivery mode for common exams*

- Departments that offer common final exams may choose to offer an exam in person or remotely. If the course includes remote or online sections, a remote exam *must* be administered to students in those sections. The department may also choose to administer the common final exam remotely for students in *all* sections. (See “In-person classes,” above.) Those teaching a class with a common final exam should check with the department about the exam delivery mode.
- The class syllabus for each section must specify the final exam timing and mode of delivery.

## **Updates from the Center for Teaching & Learning**

The Center for Teaching & Learning has online resources on a range of pedagogical topics, such as [assessment](#), [classroom management](#), and [inclusivity](#). We further provide confidential consultations on any aspect of teaching: [ctl@colorado.edu](mailto:ctl@colorado.edu).

## **Updates on Technology: Self-help IT resources**

While most faculty, staff and students have successfully changed their IdentiKey password, many other campus affiliates, alumni in particular, are still going through the process which is creating long queues and delays for IT support. Until the demand for support returns to normal levels, you may experience support delays. The following resources will allow you to help yourself or escalate your support issues.

[OIT Request Portal](#): This page has links to OIT’s service request forms for things including CUClickers, software downloads, syllabus archive requests, new Microsoft Teams, Classroom Capture requests, reporting network issues, and much more.

[Dedicated Desktop Support Portal](#): Customers of OIT’s Dedicated Desktop Support service can request support or report issues through this portal.

[Classroom Technology Problem Reporting Form](#): Instructors and students in [OIT-supported classrooms](#) can use this form to quickly report problems with classroom technology. Issues submitted via this form are directly submitted to the Learning Spaces Technology team in order to receive priority queuing.

## **Updates from the University Libraries**

**Opening hours.** [Library Hours](#) for all five locations including Norlin are published on the website and updated regularly. Spring Break hours for all locations and extended Finals hours for Norlin Library have been posted. Additionally, Norlin Library will be open on Saturdays beginning April 2, and Sunday hours will be extended beginning April 3.

**Gemmill Library.** On Jan. 7, 2022, [Gemmill Library](#) experienced severe water damage due to a broken water pipe. The library reopened on Feb. 28, enabling access to the main floor ([more information](#)), where printing is available. The first floor computer lab was damaged and will be replaced, and the lower floor remains closed for continued work and repairs. Materials may be requested via [Prospector](#) and [interlibrary loan](#). Additional information on how to access the collections remotely will be shared when available.

**Norlin construction completed: reading room reopened, additional study rooms added.** Norlin West construction has been completed. The West (Norlin Quad) entrance has re-opened, enabling access to our new reading room as well as additional group study rooms (available by reservation or for first-come, first-served access when not reserved). All library group study rooms may be reserved online via [the Libraries' website](#).

**Suggest a library purchase.** All library users including students can [suggest items for purchase](#) if they are not already held in the collections. Users who require items for summer research or teaching are asked to submit these requests as early as possible to avoid delays around the closing of the fiscal year.

### **Further academic instructional guidance for spring 2022 and fall 2022**

Consult the [Nov. 19, 2021, Jan. 4, 2022, and Jan. 13, 2022 editions of Academic Instruction Guidance](#) for guidance on other topics not covered here, including:

- COVID-19 mitigation in the classroom and in instructor/advisor offices
- Accommodating students who are ill or quarantined
- What to do if a student reports they have COVID-19
- Planning the fall 2022 class schedule: instruction modes and class assignments
- Assistance for faculty, staff, and students affected by the Dec. 30 fires
- Teaching and learning technology assistance, training, and support for students and faculty

### **Other questions: Contact Buff Info**

To provide the CU Boulder community a centralized point of connection and information, the campus has established Buff Info, a team of dedicated professionals to answer questions and provide connections with campus resources. The Buff Info team is available to answer questions on a wide variety of topics related to CU Boulder and help faculty, staff, students, and parents connect with the appropriate campus office for additional information or assistance as needed.

Buff Info liaisons can be reached at 303-492-INFO (4636) or via email at [buffinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:buffinfo@colorado.edu), 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. The university will extend these hours when needed. Buff Info also offers a live chat that can also be accessed by students at [colorado.edu/students](https://colorado.edu/students).

### **Past guidance editions, forthcoming editions, questions, and requests**

Past and current editions of Academic Instruction Guidance and their supporting materials are available [on the Academic Affairs website](#). New editions will be published as needed to guide faculty, staff, and students in any necessary changes to current instruction and in planning for future academic terms.

Please continue to send questions, requests for clarification, and requests for further guidance. Your communications are welcome and help shape decisions about instruction and instructional support and recommendations to campus leadership. Individual faculty and other instructional personnel should



direct questions to their chairs and directors. Deans, chairs, directors, and school/college administrators should send all queries and requests to [Katherine Eggert](#), senior vice provost for academic planning and assessment.