



TO: University of Vermont Faculty

FROM: Patricia A. Prelock, Provost and Senior Vice President

DATE: July 13, 2020

SUBJECT: FAQs: Process for Remote Teaching Assignment Requests Related to CDC-Identified COVID-19 Risk Factors

As part of our continuing efforts to support the health and safety of our faculty members and our safe return to campus, I am writing to share the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding requests for remote teaching assignments related to CDC-identified COVID-19 risk factors. These FAQs will provide useful information to both faculty members and department chairs. They were developed by the UVMStrong Faculty and Academic Affairs Working Group and the university's ADA Coordinator, and were reviewed by Human Resource Services.

Faculty:

- What is the process and who will make the decision on whether I can teach remotely?

Faculty should download and complete the [COVID-19: At-Risk Faculty Request for Remote Instruction Form](#). The form should be submitted to your Department Chair who will sign and forward it to your Dean's Office. By signing the form faculty acknowledge that they have a CDC-identified risk factor including pregnancy, live with or have primary care-taking responsibilities for someone who is at risk for serious illness from COVID-19 and request to be assigned remote instruction for the fall.

- Can I teach remotely if I teach an experiential course?

Experiential courses such as labs, studios, practicum, service learning and internships may not be conducive to remote instruction. If you are teaching one of these courses, please discuss with your Chair what provisions can be made to allow you teach the course remotely. If it is not possible to teach the course remotely, as part of these discussions, the Chair may need to assign a different course or other work.

- Should I include details of my situation with the request?

Please do not include details of your situation on the form. In addition, it is not necessary or encouraged for you to share details of your situation with your Chair or Dean.

- I have questions about my eligibility under CDC guidelines. Who should I contact?

You should contact ADA Coordinator Amber Fulcher at 656-0945 or accessibility@uvm.edu.

- What resources are available to me if my request is denied?

The Dean has final authority over your request. Requests to teach remotely because you or a household member or recipient of care are at risk under CDC guidelines will generally be granted, and should only be denied in circumstances where your courses cannot be taught remotely, as is the case for some experiential courses. Your Chair and Dean should work with you to find suitable accommodations for your course or alternative teaching assignments that are amenable to remote instruction. Additionally, faculty who have a medical condition and would like to request formal accommodations other than remote teaching should contact ADA Coordinator Amber Fulcher at 656-0945 or accessibility@uvm.edu.

Chairs and Deans:

- Who should review the form and decisions made about the request? How is the decision communicated to the faculty member?

The faculty member will submit the form directly to their Chair. After consideration, the Chair should inform the HR Representative in their department and Dean's Office of the request. The form requires the Dean's Office to sign off on the decision. The decision should then be communicated in writing by the Chair to the faculty member.

- How is the decision made?

Chairs should determine whether the courses to be taught by the faculty member can be taught remotely. Our experience this past spring semester has shown that many classroom-based courses can be taught effectively remotely. Experiential courses such as labs, studios, practicum, service learning, and internships may not always be conducive to remote instruction. If a faculty member is teaching one of these non-classroom-based courses, you should first determine whether it is possible to provide some provisions that would allow for remote instruction. If not, you may reassign the faculty to a course that can be taught remotely or assign other work (for represented faculty, please refer to Article 16 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement).

Before a request to teach remotely is denied, please coordinate with your HR Representative and consult directly with your services Labor and Employee Relations Representative to assure all options have been explored for supporting the faculty member.

- Am I required to approve the request?

The Provost supports providing the opportunity for remote instruction for all faculty with COVID risk factors. Not approving the request means that the course assigned to the faculty is not conducive to remote instruction. If that is the case, you should determine whether it is possible to provide some provisions that would allow for remote instruction. If remote instruction is not possible, examples of next steps include reassigning the faculty to a course that can be taught remotely, or assign other work (for represented faculty, please refer to Article 16 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement).

- What if a course the faculty member is teaching cannot be taught remotely?

If possible, you should provide some provisions that would allow for remote instruction. If remote instruction is not possible, you may reassign the faculty to a course that can be taught remotely or assign other work (for represented faculty, please refer to Article 16 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement).

Before a request to teach remotely is denied, please coordinate with your HR Representative and consult directly with your Labor and Employee Relations Representative to assure all options for supporting the faculty member have been explored.

- Can I ask the faculty to provide details on the nature of their eligibility under CDC guidelines?

No, you should not ask the faculty for details on the nature of their eligibility. If a faculty member shares details of their medical condition or situation, please remind them they are not expected to share this information with you and discourage further disclosures. Any medical information that is disclosed by a faculty member must be kept private. Please contact ADA Coordinator Amber Fulcher at 656-0945 or accessibility@uvm.edu for questions pertaining to disclosures.

- I have questions about the process or concerns about agreeing to allowing the faculty to teach remotely. Who should I contact?

You should contact your Labor and Employee Relations (LER) representative or email uvmler@uvm.edu.