

Frequently Asked Questions concerning the Duke Compact and Related COVID-19 Policy Documents for Graduate and Professional Students

The Nature and Implications of the Duke Compact and Related Student Policy Documents

Q. What does the phrase "personally responsible" in the Duke Compact mean?

That phrase refers only to the commitment of each member of the Duke community to take responsibility for her/his/their behavior in adhering to public health protocols – to take the crucial reasonable steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Q. I will be teaching this semester in-person (whether as an instructor of record or a TA). Evens with all of my safety precautions, if my students transmit coronavirus between each other, am I personally responsible for that?

No.

Q. Is the Duke Compact a legally binding document?

The Compact outlines expectations for all of us as members of the Duke community and affirms our commitment to each other, expressed through adherence to the public health guidelines that seek to prevent spread of COVID-19. It is binding to the extent that members of the Duke community (students, faculty and staff) must attest that they will adhere to the Compact as a condition for continued access to Duke facilities.

Q. Why might my decision to study remotely have implications for the nature of my health insurance coverage or other aspects of my status as a student?

If you will be living in North Carolina, there will be no impact on your health coverage. If you are living in the United States outside of North Carolina, you will pay less for the student health fee, but may face higher co-payments. If you will be living outside the United States, you will not have to pay a health fee, but if you pay for Duke health insurance, coverage will be limited to emergency care.

General Health Concerns

Q. I have a concern about the vaccine requirement for students. Is the University asking me to commit to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, even though we don't know which vaccine candidates will be selected, and are not in position to assess the safety and efficacy of any of these candidates?

No. The current vaccine requirement described in the Duke Compact and accompanying document pertains to the flu shot. Since there is no COVID-19 vaccine at this time, there is no requirement to receive it. There will be extensive discussion with faculty, students and staff if public health experts

recommend a COVID-19 vaccine. Signing the Compact does not commit you to receiving a COVID vaccine.

Q. Are results from COVID-19 tests going to be reported to the Duke community?

Duke will provide regular updates based on tests that are administered by the university.

Q. Are my data protected under HIPAA?

Yes.

Q. I am teaching online this fall (whether as an instructor of record or as a TA) and do not plan to come to campus. Do I still need to report symptoms or possible exposure COVID 19?

Even if you are not coming to campus, you should report actual symptoms and evidence of possible exposure in order to facilitate appropriate responses to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Parameters for Teaching In-Person This Year

Q. Is my class considered a large gathering?

No. The term "Gatherings" in the Compact and Related COVID-19 Policy documents refers to assemblies of individuals for extra-curricular and social purposes.

Q. Are faculty who are teaching in-person receiving COVID-19 tests?

Those faculty members have the opportunity to sign up for a baseline COVID-19 test prior to the start the term. We expect all students on campus, and all faculty and staff who will be regularly interacting with students, to participate in pooled surveillance testing.

Q. I am TAing (or serving as an instructor of record) in-person this semester. What pandemic-related issues should I be aware of?

As always, faculty members should meet regularly with TAs to discuss course issues and should make sure that you know whom to contact in case of emergency, especially if the faculty member is not available in a given instance. In addition, if you are a TA, you should:

- *familiarize yourself with key public health protocols described in the Compact and related policy document;*
- *expect the instructor of record for your course to make compliance with public health protocols a regular discussion topic;*

- *not hesitate to reach out to the instructor of record or your DGS/chair/dean if they have any concerns*
- *review the recommendations for in-person teaching at the end of these FAQs*

If you are an instructors of record, you should:

- *familiarize yourself with key public health protocols described in the Compact and related policy document;*
- *not hesitate to reach out to your DGS/chair/dean if you have any concerns;*
- *review the recommendations for in-person teaching at the end of these FAQs*

Q. Will graduate students teaching in-person receive a notification if a student in their course receives a positive COVID-19 test?

*Student Health will provide instructors of record with information to the extent necessary to adequately inform them of potential exposures **in or around the classroom**, while maintaining confidentiality under applicable laws and university policies. Instructors of record may communicate to other individuals in the class that there has been a potential COVID-19 exposure, without sharing additional identifying information.*

Q. As a TA, if I test positive for COVID-19 or learn that I have been exposed to someone who has tested positive, what obligations do I have to notify the instructor of record?

You have the usual obligation to inform the instructor of record if you will need to miss one or more classes, as you would for any reason. You do not need to disclose that inability to attend is COVID-19 related.

Q. Will we have plastic shields around the lectern (in addition to masks and plastic face helmets that I will bring)?

No. The latest research indicates that Plexiglas partitions do not provide protection against the spread of COVID-19. Public health experts also do not recommend reliance on face shields.

Q. If I don't feel comfortable, can I switch my in-person course to on-line?

Yes. You can choose to move a course or section online if conditions lead you to change how you feel about the circumstances of teaching in-person. It will be important to communicate any change clearly to the instructor of record (in the case of TAs), students, and your chair or dean.

Classroom Situations

Q. I have a student who refuses to wear a face covering. What can I do?

The first step would be to ask them to leave the room to protect the safety of others in the class. If the individual refuses to leave, stop the class, and tell the class that you will schedule a remote-virtual class to cover the material for that day. If you are a TA, report the incident to the instructor of record; if you are an instructor record, report the incident to you DUS and chair/dean.

Q. What should I do (as an instructor of record or a TA) if a student in an in-person class claims a medical exemption from mask wearing, or needs to be able to read lips?

Students will need to receive an exemption from Student Health, who will then contact instructors of record. TAs should learn about any such instances from the faculty member responsible for the class. Given public health concerns about unmasked individuals, students who receive medical exemptions, or who depend on their ability to see others speaking, may need to take particular courses online or make other arrangements. Any individualized plan will need to be consistent with Duke's responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Q. What can you do when they know that someone who has been infected or who has been exposed has not been complying with public health requirements (self-isolation or quarantine, for example)?

Anyone who is concerned about non-compliance or behaviors of another member of the community (including students, staff, and other faculty) that jeopardize health and safety, and who do not feel comfortable addressing the situation directly, should contact their Chair or the office of their Dean. They can also contact Duke's anonymous Speak Up Program at (800) 826-8109 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week), complete the online form (<https://values.duke.edu/speak-up-reporting>), or contact the [Duke Office of Audit, Risk, and Compliance](#).

Parameters for Overnight Travel

Q. Where can I get up-to-date guidelines on overnight travel, particularly travel during the Winter break?

Bookmark and regularly consult this [webpage](#) for information and guidance on travel domestically and internationally:

Q. Is travel to an academic conference in another state forbidden during the semester?

At the moment, Duke has prohibited non-essential Duke travel, including travel solely for the purpose of attending a conference. There is a process to apply for permission to use Duke funds for travel that is critical for scholarly research or other official purposes. You can find more information [here](#).

Q. I'm not sure about the rules pertaining to weekend overnight travel within driving distance. And what about emergencies, such as the need to travel for a funeral or to take care of a relative? Are such trips now prohibited, or are they just discouraged?

Such personal trips are not prohibited. Duke asks that you carefully assess the need for and circumstances surrounding personal overnight travel. If you do undertake such a trip, and if you are obligated to complete daily symptom monitoring, you must report such travel after you return. Depending on the circumstances, personal travel may have implications for your ability to come to campus. Please see the [Statement on Personal Travel](#).

Also keep in mind that COVID-19 may lead to state and local governmental restrictions, which can change quickly based on pandemic conditions, and which may delay, complicate, or prevent your entry to other countries, your reentry to the United States, and/or your travel between states.