

RIT | A Faculty Guide to Classroom Safety

Introduction

As we begin preparing for Fall delivery of face-to-face classes, it is clear the health and safety of our community depends on the willingness of our students, faculty, and staff to support each other in abiding by the health and safety guidelines outlined in the RIT Forward plan. Creating a culture of mutual care and respect for the safety of others is fundamental to reducing the risk of contracting the COVID-19 virus. While the classroom experience presents an opportunity to educate and reinforce the values and behaviors that foster this culture of care and respect, it will also present a number of challenges. The purpose of this document is to ensure faculty have a clear understanding of the classroom safety standards and the various ways these may impact pedagogy and classroom management.

The RIT Forward plan outlines hazard controls that will likely impact the classroom environment in the following ways:

1. **Physical distancing** will impact the size of your class and the classroom dynamics.
2. **Student expectations to complete location check-in** at the beginning of the class will impact the time it takes to start class.
3. **Contact tracing protocols** will require faculty to establish and maintain assigned seating charts as a record of student location in each class.
4. **Disinfecting** at the end of class will likely impact class transition times.
5. **Classroom access and egress with proper physical distancing** will likely take longer and will require faculty guidance and support.
6. **Accommodating quarantine, isolation and illness of students** will require faculty to support instructional continuity for impacted students.

The importance of our faculty in creating a safe and healthy environment cannot be overstated. We know these additional controls and procedures will require time and patience. Your efforts on behalf of our students and community are greatly appreciated.

Review of Campus Policies Related to the Classroom and Teaching Environment

Safety & Classroom Management:

- Upon entering an instructional space, students should use designated chairs, desks, or workstations, and maintain 6-foot physical distance throughout the class period. Chairs and desk spaces that are to be left vacant will be labeled with “do not sit” designations to ensure students are physically spaced within the room.
- For purposes of contact tracing, when students enter the room, they shall register via the *Location Check-In* QR code located at the front of the room. The QR codes are large enough to allow students to capture them from their seats. Students without smartphones

may use their computer to check in via the website listed on the *Location Check-In* QR Code poster <https://dailyhealth.rit.edu/checkin>.

- Faculty should develop and maintain an assigned seating chart or other standard record of seat occupancies for each class meeting to support contact tracing should it be needed by RIT or Monroe County Department of Health. This is especially important for those immediately near each other (generally, within 12-14 feet) for the class period. FMS will provide a PDF of a seating chart to assist with this. Faculty members can assign permanent seats at the start of the semester or record seats at each class meeting. Seating information should be stored in myCourses to ensure it is readily available when needed for contact tracing.
- Faculty, staff, and students are required to wear face coverings in all classrooms and instructional labs, studios and shops.
- Faculty, staff and students are required to wear face coverings whenever indoors, except when eating in a designated foodservice area or working alone in a room or individual office.
- Food and drink are not allowed to be open or consumed in classrooms or instructional labs except that faculty members can allow students to sip drinks using a straw if they wish.
- Six-foot physical distance shall be maintained in all classrooms and instructional labs. Some instructional labs, studios and shops have slightly reduced physical distance requirements which have been allowed with specific approved enhanced controls.
- When entering and leaving the instructional space, students shall try to maintain 6-foot physical distance. Brief lapses in distancing while entering and leaving an instructional space is not considered to be high risk. Generally, those exiting take precedence over those entering.
- Faculty will be called upon to help students maintain proper physical distancing as they enter and leave the classroom. Faculty are encouraged to facilitate an orderly access and egress.
- Faculty should communicate the classroom rules for safety on the first meeting. If a student does not comply, they should be reminded of the rules. If they refuse to comply, public safety should be contacted at 475-3333. Faculty should feel comfortable delaying instruction until all room occupants have complied with the health and safety practices and procedures outlined here and in the RIT Ready Plan.

Cleaning & Disinfecting:

- Upon leaving the instructional space, faculty and students should clean their respective workspaces (lecterns, whiteboards, desks, chairs, mouse, mouse pads, etc.) with cleaning materials provided by RIT Facilities Management Services or their home departments.
- Shared equipment shall be cleaned between users. Before leaving a shared space, individuals shall ensure the space has been sprayed with disinfectant for the next group or users.
- The process for cleaning a desk and chair surface:

- At the end of the class period each person should spray the desk and chairs with the antimicrobial spray. **Leave the spray in place – do not wipe it.** The spray is most effective when left for approximately 10 minutes.
- After handling the spray bottle, each person should disinfect their hands with the spray hand sanitizer provided in the classroom.
- Computer keyboards and the computer mouse may be disinfected by applying the antimicrobial to a paper towel and then wiping the equipment. It is NOT recommended to spray the antimicrobial directly on keyboards or other sensitive equipment.
- Everyone should regularly sanitize their hands when using shared equipment.

Handling Assignments:

- Paper collection should involve frequent handwashing, or use of hand sanitizer between and during grading. When returning papers, students should be encouraged to take the same approach to handwashing and letting the paper sit for 24-36 hours before handling or wash hands immediately after handling.
- In general, faculty and students are encouraged to avoid passing paper if at all possible.

Teaching:

- Faculty are to wear their face covering while teaching, and should wear a clear mask if there are any D/HH individuals or anyone requests it. Students should also wear a clear mask to support the inclusion of D/HH or other individuals. RIT is providing both traditional and clear masks for all students, faculty and staff.
- Generally, it is required that faculty wear a face covering while teaching. However, to facilitate communication, faculty may choose to remove their face covering and use only a face shield while teaching if they remain behind the lectern/classroom shield. If faculty move from behind the barrier, they may wear a face shield in addition to their required face covering for added protection, but it is not required. Finally, if faculty need to be within 6 feet of an individual student for more than 10 minutes, they should wear a face shield in addition to their face covering. Face shields provided by RIT will be curved around the face to provide better protection. Straight shields will not be a suitable substitute.

FAQs for Faculty

1. What should be in my classroom when I start classes?

The following items should be in your classroom:

- Disinfectant spray. The number of bottles will depend on the size of your class. There should be one bottle for every 10 students.
- 1 gallon of hand sanitizer.
- A Plexiglas shield in front of the lectern (unless you are in a large lecture hall or one of the smaller spaces or performance spaces where shields were not installed).

- Occupancy signage indicating the capacity of the room under physical distancing guidelines.
- Student seating that is properly labeled and spaced with “do not sit” signage indicating seats that should be left vacant.
- A QR Code placard for Location Check-In.

2. Whom do I contact if my room is not properly supplied or if I want to request a modification?

You should contact your Site Safety Monitor. The Site Safety Monitors for each college and are:

CAD	Michael Dear	med2823@rit.edu
Saunders College	Janette Frank	jfrank@saunders.rit.edu
GCCIS	Susan Quattro	sxqvcs@rit.edu
	Tom Cary	tecics@rit.edu
KGCOE	Tom Grimsley	tjg1485@rit.edu
CET	Ken Garland	kpgiee@rit.edu
	Leslie Gregg	llgmet@rit.edu
	Jeff Lonneville	jglasp@rit.edu
	Jared Biernbrauer	jpbast@rit.edu
	Andy Heinzman	adhppr@rit.edu
CHST	Kim Corbett	kacsbi@rit.edu
CLA	Israel Brown	ixbgla@rit.edu
NTID	Erwin Smith	ejsnfo@rit.edu
COS	Dave Lake	dnlisse@rit.edu
	Larry Buckley	ljbbsbi@rit.edu
GIS	Andy Harland	axhasp@rit.edu
	Tom Mix	tdmgis@rit.edu
SOIS	Kerrie Bondi	kvbhp@rit.edu

3. Must I wear a mask throughout my lecture and class session?

Ideally, yes. However, if you must remove your mask for purposes of communicating, remain behind the lectern shield and wear a face shield. You should wear your face covering any time you move beyond the lectern shield, or in situations where there is no lectern shield.

4. Must I stand behind the lectern and shield throughout my class session?

You may step out from behind the lectern and lectern shield but you must ensure you are wearing a face covering. If you will be moving about the room within the 6-foot distance, a face shield and covering are required to be worn if in close proximity to another individual for more than 10 minutes. For labs and clinical settings where individuals must interact with each other within 6 feet, the group is limited to 2 students plus instructor or interpreter, a total of 3. The general goal is to minimize *close contact*, which is defined as being within 6 feet of another person for more than 10 minutes.

5. May I have students make presentations at the front of the room?

Yes, but presentations should be made from behind the lectern shield in rooms where there are shields. In rooms without shields the distance from presenters to other students should be greater than 10 feet.

6. What should I do if a student refuses to comply with the location check-in, physical distancing, or masking policies?

If a student is not wearing a mask, they should first be asked to put their mask on. If they refuse, they should be asked to leave. If they refuse to leave, then you should call Public Safety at 475-2853. If a student is masked, but refuses to abide by physical distancing guidelines, you should call Public Safety. All students should be encouraged to complete the location check-in, if a student refuses or is unable you should document it by submitting a COVID-19 Violation Report <https://www.rit.edu/ready/adhering-rit-protocols>.

7. What should I do if a student says they cannot wear a mask?

Faculty and students are required to wear a face covering in all instructional spaces. If a student enters a classroom without a face covering, the student should be asked to put on their face covering or leave the classroom if unable to comply. If a student is uncomfortable wearing a face covering, the faculty member should confidentially direct the student to the Student Health Center and the Disability Services Office for support and potential alternate face covering options.

8. I am concerned about the air quality in my classroom, what has RIT done to improve air flow and air quality?

Air purification: RIT is installing bipolar ionization systems in its residence halls, apartments, and academic buildings to help neutralize viruses, bacteria, allergens, mold, and other airborne contaminants. Unlike many air purification systems on a standard air filter, the ions interact with biological contaminants to make them inert. RIT's testing of this technology in our own labs shows that it is effective against many airborne contaminants. Testing of the technology by the manufacturers [shows that it is effective against COVID-19](#). RIT will also reprogram its air handling units to provide the freshest air possible to learning spaces to provide dilution, as recommended by the CDC. Classroom spaces have been supplied with the maximum additional outside air possible. In some spaces, windows can be opened. In larger teaching spaces, ionization disinfection technology has been installed.

9. Will every classroom have Plexiglas shields at the front of the classroom that I must stand behind?

No, not every room will have a Plexiglas shield. In some of the larger classrooms the distance between the instructor and students is sufficient and does not warrant having a shield. In some smaller spaces the room layout does not lend itself to installing a fixed shield. In these situations, faculty should wear the face shields provided by RIT.

10. How will I know if a student is ill due to COVID-19?

As would normally be the case, students are expected to communicate with their professors regarding any absence that may impact their participation in the class. Students are not required to provide documentation of illness or to share the nature of the illness.

11. How will I know if a student has received a DSO accommodation and will not be present in the classroom?

The accommodation for remote participation in courses (whenever possible) is approved by the DSO when students request this support for reasons related to accessibility. Students requesting virtual access for reasons related to quarantine, isolation, travel restriction, or health status of a family member will not work with the DSO to meet this need.

As is the case for any DSO academic/classroom accommodation, students are first approved for the accommodation, then must request it in each of their classes via the MyDSO portal. Once students request the accommodation, DSO staff will email faculty a course-specific accommodation notification letter listing the accommodations the student has requested and is approved to use in their class (including virtual course participation, as applicable.) For remote access accommodations, the faculty member will be consulted to determine if remote access for the entire semester is reasonable based on the course modality, attributes, and content.

If a student requests this accommodation and the faculty member has not received an accommodation notification letter from the DSO, faculty are welcome to reach out to dso@rit.edu to confirm. Faculty may also view all their students' requested accommodations centrally via the [MyDSO Faculty Portal](#). This page on the DSO site details the process by which faculty understand and facilitate accommodations for their students:

<https://www.rit.edu/disabilityservices/faculty-resources#facilitating-accommodations>

12. My class relies on group work and active learning during class time, can I still incorporate group work and active learning in my syllabus?

You certainly can! Students must observe the 6-foot rule and face coverings. Some educational activities like clinical may require less distancing. Be creative - teams do not always have to stand together to operate as a team. Of course, some of the work may best be done remotely. For more ideas on how to approach group work see the CATs Wiki page <https://wiki.rit.edu/x/cgLjDQ>. In addition, the ILI can provide guidance for faculty on active learning with physical distancing. A helpful reference is available from Vanderbilt University <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/2020/06/active-learning-in-hybrid-and-socially-distanced-classrooms/>.

13. Can I ever have students at less than 6 feet?

There are very few circumstances during which any RIT community member should be at a distance of less than 6 feet. From the RIT General Guidelines for Space Reopening:

Special circumstance: In teaching labs, studios or shops where 6-foot physical distancing cannot be achieved, additional PPE and other engineering controls can be implemented with pre-approval. Use the *Controls to be Implemented* Form in *Appendix F* in the General Space Reopening Guidelines to request approval.

Temporary, transient situations: Decreased physical distancing is temporarily permitted when required for essential or instructional purposes, for less than 10 minutes. No more than 2 students plus instructor or interpreter within 6 feet, at all times. Student groups of 3 or more within 6 feet are prohibited. Individuals should be informed of and agree to the increased risk and have the opportunity to wear additional PPE, such as a face shield.

14. What protective equipment will be worn on campus? What PPE is RIT making available to me?

RIT allows you to wear your personal face coverings that cover your nose and mouth. RIT will also issue 2 face coverings and a clear mask to everyone on campus. NTID individuals will receive 2 clear masks. Additional PPE, such as face shields, etc. can be obtained through your Site Safety Monitor. You can also obtain extra replacement face coverings through your Site Safety Monitor. Face shields provided by RIT will be curved around the face to provide better protection. Straight shields will not be considered a suitable substitute.

15. What if I forgot my face covering?

If you forget your face covering, you may stop at the Info Booth/ Welcome Center (south of the flagpoles) to pick up a disposable face covering without leaving your car or entering a building.

16. What if a student wishes to meet with me?

Encourage them to set an appointment, and encourage zoom or remote meetings where it is possible. Generally, faculty offices cannot be used for in-person meetings since 6-foot distancing cannot be maintained. If a face-to-face meeting is required, consider an outdoor setting or in spaces such as the Ritter Arena where 6-foot distancing can be maintained. To support equity and inclusion, for ALL meetings, ask the individual(s) meeting with you, "If you are requesting an in person meeting, please let us/me know if the meeting would be more comfortable and/or accessible for you if I/ we wore a clear face mask."

17. What is the procedure if there is a fire alarm?

Fire alarms will occur during the academic school year and individuals will still be required to evacuate the building. During the evacuation, masks must continue to be worn to protect one another, and individuals should try to maintain six (6) feet of physical distancing as long as it does not hinder the evacuation process. Once outside the building, individuals must move greater than 100 feet away from the building and maintain physical distancing during

the alarm time period. Individuals may take off their mask once outside as long as they maintain physical distancing. Once it is acceptable to re-enter the building, individuals will wear masks and maintain physical distancing throughout the entire re-entry process.