

College of Environmental Science and Forestry
Division of Student Affairs
Guidance for Implementing COVID-19 Expectations within Courses that Involve
In-person Contact

The health and safety of the College of Environmental Science and Forestry students, faculty, and staff is of utmost importance. It is incumbent upon each of us to understand the importance of our personal and collective actions, and to hold ourselves and each other accountable to behave in ways that will slow the spread of COVID-19. To achieve this, the [College Commitment](#) was developed. Each member of the ESF community, including students, faculty, staff, and other constituents, has been invited to affirm their commitment to uphold it.

The College has actively communicated with students and the ESF community through a variety of media (social media, emails, the Fall 2020 Restart website, posters/signage across campus, etc.) to inform them of the important community expectations that everyone at the College is required to follow to maintain a safe and healthy educational environment. These expectations are outlined on the Fall 2020 Restart [website](#).

**Wearing a Mask/Maintaining Social Distancing in a Classroom/Lab Setting:
Responding to Student Non-Compliance**

Making sure the same language is being used with employees, students, and visitors about the College's expectations ensures a firm, polite, and compassionate message. On the rare occasions that you identify a student in your classroom who is not following these expectations, below are guidelines that may be helpful in addressing the student's behavior.

Speak to the student in a firm, polite, and compassionate manner. Politely ask any student you see who may not be following one or more of the COVID expectations to do so for the sake of their health and the health of others. Most students will likely apologize and comply with your request. Some examples of this initial interaction include:

- “Hello Jordan, I see that you do not have a mask on today. To ensure the health and safety of everyone in the class, please put your mask on. I really appreciate your cooperation. Thanks!”
- “Hi, Taylor. I see that you're sitting in a seat that is marked off to ensure distancing. Please move to any other seat that is not marked. Thanks so much for helping me keep the classroom safe.”

If the student forgets their mask, or other necessary item required for compliance, offer guidance to assist the student in resolving the issue. If you learn that the student has forgotten their face mask, explain to the student that to ensure everyone's safety, they need a mask to remain in the classroom. Disposable masks will be available in central locations

across campus during the first few weeks of the semester. If they obtain a mask, they can return to class.

“Hey Sam, thanks for letting me know you forgot your mask. Unfortunately, you’re not allowed to be in class without a mask. Once you obtain a mask, you’re welcome to return to class.”

1. **If the student discloses they have a disability-related reason they cannot wear a mask or other necessary item required for compliance.** As the instructor, you can opt to identify a reasonable accommodation that does not change the learning objectives of the course or you can direct the student that they must register with the [Center for Disability Resources](#), where documentation of this reason will be reviewed. A reasonable accommodation cannot be a violation of COVID expectations or the [New York State Executive Order](#).
 - “Sam, thank you for making me aware of this need. We need to make a plan for today’s class and you need to make the appropriate arrangements with the Center for Disability Resources...I need you to email me before our next class regarding what those arrangements are.”

Planning for this class may include asking the student to leave for the day and working independently at home, but they may not be able to stay for this particular session for the health and safety of others.

2. **If a student repeatedly fails to comply with classroom expectations, discuss your reporting obligations and ask the student to leave the class.** If a student is repeatedly noncompliant and/or argumentative with you, you reserve the right to instruct the student to leave the classroom, mark it as an absence, and file a report with the Division of Student Affairs, noting the student’s noncompliant behavior.
 - “Jordan, I really want you to be part of this class but for that to happen, I need you to comply with the College’s expectation regarding wearing a mask in the classroom. Unfortunately, if you continue to not wear a mask I am obligated to file a report with the Division of Student Affairs in the interest of the health and safety of everyone in the class.”

Reporting Violations

Students who comply after an initial or secondary request should not be reported. On the rare occasion that a student repeatedly does not follow your instructions to comply with the COVID-19 expectations, or if the student is disruptive to your class, we have established a mechanism where you may file a report. It is listed below and will be available on the Fall 2020 Restart [website](#). A filed report will be sent to the Office of the Dean for Student Affairs.

Student Affairs staff will review the report, contact the instructor for additional information or clarification (if necessary), and then follow-up with the student.

If you feel that the situation is escalating to a point where the student is becoming aggressive or refuses to leave the class after being instructed to do so, you may contact the ESF University Police by dialing x6667 from any campus phone or dialing (315) 470-6667 from your cell phone.

Important Resources:

Office of the Dean for Student Affairs, (315) 470-6660

[File a report](#) of non-compliance.

ESF University Police Department (UPD)

- From a campus phone: x6667
- From a cell phone: (315) 470-6667

[Syracuse University Center for Disability Resources](#): (315) 443-4498

Adapted with permission from UAlbany.

University at Albany. (2020). How to respond to student noncompliance. Retrieved from <https://www.albany.edu/covid-19/planning-fall-2020/teaching-learning/resources-instructors/how-respond-student>