
From: Lynn Cooley, Dean of the Graduate School <grad.dean@message.yale.edu>
Sent: Friday, October 15, 2021 10:33 AM
Subject: GSAS Fall 2021 Teaching Fellow policies: Updates and resources

Yale

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

A Message from Dean Cooley

Copied to: DGSs, Chairs, registrars

In this message: Clarification on what you may—and may not—ask of students in your classes

October 15, 2021

Dear Teaching Fellows,

For those of you teaching for the first time this semester, I hope you are enjoying the experience. If you are a returning TF, thank you for your continued efforts to educate others, and become better instructors. I am grateful to all of you for your efforts to keep our campus and community safe as the term unfolds. As cold and flu season approaches, we have been hearing questions in the dean's office about what to do when your students fall ill, or when you are concerned that students in your classroom present a risk of spreading illness.

As a reminder, there is good reason to expect a healthy classroom environment:

- Fully vaccinated undergraduate students and graduate students living in Yale dormitories are required to test weekly for COVID-19.
- Unvaccinated students must test twice weekly and complete a daily health check. Students who miss their mandatory tests may lose access to campus. The contact tracing team will

alert close contacts of any student who tests positive. There is no need for you to track the COVID-19 test results of students.

- All students are required to wear masks during class, regardless of vaccination status.
- Campus vaccination rates are high: 99.4% of undergraduates, 97.8% of graduate and professional students, 95.1% of faculty, and 92.5% of staff are vaccinated.
- Campus COVID-19 positivity rates are extremely low. Updated case numbers are posted [here](#) on a daily basis.

You may:

- Ask students who refuse to wear masks to leave the classroom.
- Report students who refuse to wear masks to [Melanie Boyd](#), Yale College Dean of Student Affairs (undergraduates) or [Matthew Tanico](#), Assistant Dean for Graduate Student Life (graduate students).

You may not:

- Request that students provide evidence of vaccination or documentation of COVID-19 test results in order to attend class, for any reason.
- Restrict access to your class on the basis of a student's apparent medical condition.

Each TF is responsible for determining the class absence policy. We strongly encourage you to develop reasonable policies that are adaptive to the public health situation and to communicate your policies clearly to students. With winter approaching, some students will become ill with colds or flu. Without reasonable absence policies, students may elect to attend class while sick, exposing others to illnesses. To avoid incentivizing sick students to come to class, please be as flexible as you can.

You may, for instance, allow students a designated number of undocumented absences without penalty, or, as outlined in the [message](#) sent to faculty on August 30, you may offer remote instruction to students who are ill. The Poorvu Center has developed [resources](#) that provide guidance on how to approach academic continuity in cases of student absence. Please remember that residential college deans cannot provide excuses for class absences in cases of illness.

Thank you for your understanding, and for all that you do for our community.

With best wishes for your health and success,

Lynn Cooley

Dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Vice Provost of Postdoctoral Affairs

C.N.H. Long Professor of Genetics

Professor of Cell Biology and of Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology

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This email was sent by: Yale University
P.O. BOX 208109, New Haven, CT, 06745 US