

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## FALL 2020 PLANNING



4/24/2020

**Q: Why are you announcing this now, versus waiting until the fall semester gets closer?**

**A:** We're announcing now that we plan to welcome students back to our four campuses this fall in order to provide as much clarity as possible to members of our community, and to give us time to plan appropriately. Campus teams are planning now for how we can safely resume in-person learning, providing excellent education to our students while also abiding by appropriate public health guidelines. We will always be guided by the science and will change course if necessary.

**Q: What steps might you take to ensure a safe learning environment?**

**A:** Chancellors will share more details as they develop, but broadly, steps may include:

- Only partially filling our residence halls to allow for proper distancing between students.
- Increasing our use of online learning to reduce density in our classrooms, or spreading our classes across more days, times and venues.
- Permitting or requiring remote work for some employees.
- Making additional arrangements for those members of our University community who may be at risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- Providing regular testing for COVID-19 so that we can quickly identify and isolate anyone who may develop symptoms.

**Q: How do you know it will be safe to have students and faculty back on campus?**

**A:** We are consulting daily with our experts from UNMC and other health officials. We will use sound science to inform our decisions. While we are planning for a safe return to the four campuses this fall, we will also plan for other scenarios, including a continuation of remote teaching and learning if conditions require it.

**Q: Should I assume I'll be working remotely until the fall semester begins, or is it possible I will be able to return to on-site work before that?**

**A:** If our health experts tell us it is safe to do so, we anticipate we will begin transitioning some employees back to on-site work before the semester begins. We will provide further details as they are available. For now, you should continue to work remotely until further notice. We expect supervisors to continue to provide as much flexibility to their teams as possible to ensure continuity of University operations.



**Q: I don't think I'll feel safe coming back to campus this fall. Will you force me to return?**

**A:** We will not force any student or employee to return to campus this fall if they don't feel safe. We especially recognize that certain members of our community may need to continue to work or learn remotely in order to stay safe. Your supervisor/department chair/dean will work with you to make arrangements that keep you safe, while continuing the important work of the University.

**Q: I'm a student. For safety reasons, I prefer to stay home and take my classes online this fall. Can you guarantee all my courses will be available online?**

**A:** We can't guarantee that every course will be available online, but as a University system, we are committed to helping you stay on the path to graduation. We recommend you work with your academic adviser to make a plan for the upcoming semester.

**Q: Depending on whether any Nebraska communities are COVID-19 "hot spots" when fall comes, could an individual NU campus elect to continue remote education, even if other campuses welcome students back to campus?**

**A:** Yes. Some decisions are best made locally. An individual campus may need to act independently of other campuses if it is in the best interests of its students, faculty, staff and broader community. While our planning is focused on having students back on campus this fall, we are ready to adapt based on science and the advice of our health experts.

**Q: Will all campus facilities be open this fall?**

**A:** Chancellors are engaged in planning work now and will share further details as they are available. Generally, our planning is focused on having students back on campus and facilities open by the time the fall semester begins.

**Q: You mentioned regular testing for COVID-19. Are you confident sufficient testing will be available?**

**A:** Our state government partners have expressed confidence that Nebraska will have increased testing capacity by the fall. Keeping our community safe and healthy is our highest priority; if we need to change course, we will.

**Q: Does this mean you expect collegiate sports, musical performances and other large events to resume this fall?**

**A:** Not necessarily. Nebraska may still have restrictions on large gatherings. We will rely on advice from our health experts to determine which events may be safe and which may not be. Some decisions, like collegiate sports, will be made by those governing bodies.

