



# Maine Community College System

## Webinar FAQ

*This FAQ is drawn from questions submitted during a systemwide webinar held in June on the safe re-opening of Maine's community colleges.*

### **Masks/Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

What is the MCCS mask protocol?

- *Cloth face coverings are required inside all buildings owned or controlled by MCCS, other than private employee residences. Employees are not required to wear a cloth face covering when alone in their office. Disposable and cloth face coverings must have multiple layers of fabric that fit snugly around the face, and fit over the nose, mouth and chin. At this time, MCCS is not permitting the use of face shields as an alternative to cloth face coverings although employees are welcome to wear a shield with their cloth face covering if they would like additional protection.*

Will someone not wearing a mask be asked to leave campus?

- *Individuals who are able but unwilling to wear a mask will be asked to leave campus. We expect that people will follow our rules to protect the health and safety of each member of our college community. We are in this together.*

Will masks and other PPE be provided?

- *Employees and students are expected to provide their own masks. If specific PPE is required for a particular course or program because of the pandemic, it will be provided.*

Will instructors have to wear a mask when lecturing?

- *Under the state regulation, yes. We are looking into whether a barrier or face shield combined with a six-foot distance would be sufficient to replace the mask requirement.*

### **Campus Access:**

Are COVID tests required before returning to campus?

- *We will follow the state regulations. Currently, that means individuals traveling from states other than New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey must either quarantine for 14 days upon arrival in Maine or provide documentation of a recent negative COVID-19 test result.*

How will people access buildings? Will there be multiple entrances? Screening?

- *Each college is making plans for each building, depending on the physical space. Ideally, buildings will have separate entrances and exits, with a screening process that provides information on whether the person entering has any active symptoms. Posted signs will clearly state mask and distancing policies.*

Are there guidelines for employees who make visits to other facilities/schools?

- *Employees should follow our safety policies and state travel guidance.*

Will there be screens between computer stations in labs and plexiglass between staff and visitors?

- *These are decisions being made by each college, based on a variety of site-specific considerations.*

### **Fall Plans: Timing, Preparation, Communication**

When will there be a decision about returning to campus and the mode of instruction?

- *Systemwide policies were announced July 9. Those policies provide a framework for the colleges' individual fall return plans, which will be finalized by the end of July.*

What are the systemwide policies regarding instruction?

- *In-person delivery will be limited to coursework where hands-on instruction and assessment is essential to developing the prescribed skills required of the program. All courses that can be taught remotely will be delivered online, using new online tools and methods that allow for more robust, enriched learning experiences.*

When will staff return to campus? Can I go to campus to get equipment or materials?

- *Under current state regulations, the only employees allowed to work on campus are those individuals who cannot do their job remotely. Employees may visit campus to pick up necessary equipment or materials, or use equipment. Please keep track of when and where you are on campus.*

Will on-site employees have alternate work schedules?

- *Traditional work schedules for staff and instructors may be adjusted for health and safety reasons, while others may not.*

What about residential life?

- *Residence halls will be open at the five colleges that have them, but with fewer students, including a one-person-per-bedroom limit. Masks will be required in common areas, guests will not be allowed and other aspects of residential life, such as group activities, meals and other elements will only be available within COVID-related safety protocols. Students taking in-person classes on campus will have priority for on-campus housing.*

Are students being informed about emerging plans? How?

- *Information is available on the MCCS website FAQ and all colleges are using multiple modes of communication to reach out to students on a range of issues, including fall plans. In addition to college web sites, information is distributed by email, video messages, social media and news statements.*

Have students been polled about their intentions to return to college?

- *No.*

Will there be enough student support staff on campus to serve the students who will be on campus?

- *Each college will determine how to best provide student support services.*

Will reopening plans be different for the System Office?

- *No.*

### **Instruction**

In face-to-face classes, will class sizes be modified?

- *Yes, that is likely and being decided by each college. It will depend on meeting health and safety regulations.*

Will online classes have lower class sizes?

- *It will depend on the class and the assessment of the college president and academic dean.*

If classes scheduled to be on-campus in the fall are delivered remotely, will they be synchronous?

- *It will depend on the course, the instructor and the assessment of the academic dean.*

Are there any legal ramifications to any 2-year program that needs to add another 6 months to a year in order to confirm competency for students before they can graduate to meet accreditation standards?

- *No.*

Can we use large classrooms, gyms, auditoriums and other large spaces to safely teach a larger number of students face-to-face?

- *This is under consideration and will be decided at the college level.*

Some students have indicated they prefer face-to-face instruction and may not return if classes are online. Does that influence the decision of what can be taught face-to-face?

- *Yes, but the primary consideration is the health and safety of students, faculty, and staff.*

Given the impact of COVID, why wasn't Brightspace training and implementation delayed, so faculty and students would have one less issue to be concerned about?

- *Brightspace implementation began in August 2019 and by the time the pandemic occurred, two colleges were live in Brightspace and the other five were in the midst of implementation. Brightspace is also a key tool to continuing instruction if face-to-face instruction is interrupted because of the impact of the pandemic.*

Is it possible to augment class schedules to 8 weeks or 6 weeks and include Saturday or Sunday classes due to the current situation?

- *Each college is exploring a range of delivery options that meet the needs of the students and communities they serve.*

If we are not teaching in our labs, will instructors be allowed to access the facility for instructional materials or for internet access? How about access to equipment that can't be brought home, but is needed for demonstrating use in online training.

- *Yes, instructors can access the campus now. As for specific equipment, each program should be exploring possible options in consultation with department and college leadership.*

If the fall instructional delivery system results in the decision to teach a particular class remotely, can an exception be made to deliver it in person if the students and professors are willing to do that?

- *No, because we are making decisions based on the health and safety of our entire community, not on a class-by-class basis.*

Are we able to require students to buy equipment that they might otherwise have access to in lab? (for example: BP cuff, stethoscope, respirometer for Anatomy and Physiology)

- *Student equipment requirements will remain largely unchanged from the pre-COVID requirements, when students were required to purchase their own equipment for certain programs. If the COVID-related changes require students to acquire additional equipment, the students will not be expected to pay for the equipment needed to comply with the COVID-related protocols.*

### **Human Resources**

Will there be work accommodations for staff and faculty with pre-existing conditions or those who are fearful of face-to-face contact?

- *We are working on plans that place the safety of our employees at the forefront but also consider the educational needs of our students. We will strive to keep employees fully informed of these plans as they are developed.*

What happens if numbers drop and full-time faculty do not have five classes?

- *Of course these are difficult things to predict, but we are very hopeful that fall enrollment numbers will be favorable. The state needs us; the workforce needs us. We need our faculty to meet those needs.*

Will adjuncts be paid to take the Brightspace training/certification course?

- *The System has entered into an MOU with the MSEA adjunct unit to provide additional funding to adjuncts to assist with the transition to remote learning for fall 2020. The System is very grateful to the adjunct unit for their help with this matter and for their help with the transition for the fall.*

### **Student Supports and Student Life**

For the remote instruction in the fall, how will we support students with technology needs?

- *We faced this challenge in the spring and worked to meet student needs on a case-by-case basis. We will continue to do so. There is federal and local aid available to assist with technology needs, and additional information is available on the COVID FAQ at (<https://www.mccs.me.edu/covid-19/>)*

Will we be offering work/study jobs to eligible students as we normally do?

- *Yes.*

Will we have sports this fall?

- *Athletic schedules will be suspended until at least January.*

### **Facilities**

What will happen to communal spaces such as cafeterias, libraries and lounges?

- *All public spaces will meet recommended guidelines for physical distancing, so there may be limited seating, for example. Each college is analyzing its physical space and making necessary adjustments.*

Are there any concerns regarding ventilation systems and the spread of the virus?

- *Ventilation systems are a consideration as each college analyzes their facilities.*

### **Finance/Budgetary Concerns**

What is the financial impact of COVID? Will there be budget cuts? Furloughs?

- *We are committed to the greatest fiscal discipline possible as we work to meet the needs of our students and community. We have used several tools, including federal support and a two-year budgeting process, to mitigate the financial impact on our employees. We await word on the state budget, which will also factor into our financial health.*

Will tuition be adjusted for a traditionally in-person class that is delivered remotely?

- *No, tuition is the same for in-person or online delivery.*

### **College Autonomy**

Who are the people making these decisions?

- *The system COVID response team is comprised of the college presidents and MCCS senior staff and has been meeting at least three times a week for the past several months. At each college, there is a local COVID response team and a safe reopening team, both comprised of administrative staff and instructors.*

Is it possible that each college do something different depending on what is happening in their regions?

- *Yes, but some elements of fall planning are systemwide. Many decisions will be made locally.*

When will the colleges release their fall plans?

- *The colleges' fall return plans will be finalized and released by the end of July.*

Will you have consistent systemwide attendance policies that make it clear that sick or unwell people should stay home?

- *Attendance policies need to take into consideration the modality and availability of instruction and need to balance the students' ability to gain the necessary competency with the health factors associated with being on campus. Both our HR and attendance policies need to be adjusted so that people who are ill can stay home without penalty or guilt.*

Will you provide guidance on how to create a sense of community, since it will be so different with the COVID-related changes and regulations?

- *Yes, and we will do this together, and learn together. There has never been a more important time to create and nurture our sense of community.*

**Note:** This is a living document and we will continue to answer additional questions as plans develop. We will either post those answers to this FAQ page or share them through other MCCS and college communications. The questions we have received to date have helped inform planning and decision making at both the system and college level, and we are grateful for your input. We ask that you continue to communicate any

questions or concerns. One easy way to do that is by using this dedicated email:  
[InItTogether@mccs.me.edu](mailto:InItTogether@mccs.me.edu).

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