

Young Harris College's Return-to-Class Plan (Fall 2020)

Revised July 27, 2020 based on revised CDC guidance

Young Harris College will implement the following modifications to its fall 2020 instructional plans. This plan is informed by and complies with current best practice recommendations, Gov. Kemp's executive orders and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It may be changed as a result of new information, orders and guidance. Any changes will be communicated to the campus community immediately.

Academic Calendar

Classes will begin as scheduled on campus Monday, Aug. 17. Fall Break will occur as scheduled on Oct. 8-9. In-person instruction will end on Friday, Nov. 20. Following a full-week break for Thanksgiving, the final week of classes, from Monday, Nov. 30 through Friday, Dec. 4, will be held via distance learning. Final exams will be administered electronically between Monday, Dec. 7 and Friday, Dec. 11.

Phased Return to Classroom Instruction

To minimize risk and enhance the safety and wellbeing of students and employees, the College will return to instruction in three phases. The College expects to proceed through these phases in order, but decisions about phases will be made based on constantly changing information and conditions.

Phase 1 is scheduled to last at least two weeks, from Monday, Aug. 17 through Friday, Aug. 28 or later. This phase may be extended as warranted by changing conditions. During Phase 1, the following restrictions will be in place:

- Students and instructors will be required to maintain at least 6 feet between themselves and others in instructional spaces.
- Course sections will be limited to half normal capacity of their assigned instructional spaces to maintain appropriate distances. For most instructional spaces, this will mean a limit of no more than 15 students meeting with the instructor at a time.
 - The Office of the Registrar will work with deans and chairs to make temporary classroom reassignments and use larger instructional spaces, such as Wilson Lecture Hall, and other available spaces, such as Hatcher Dining Room and the Organizational Loft, to the greatest extent possible.
 - Course sections that cannot be moved, yet exceed the lowered capacities of their assigned instructional spaces, will be temporarily reorganized into subsections. Instructors will communicate with students via YHC email/Moodle to divide the roll into groups that meet the lowered capacity restriction. Class meetings will alternate between subsections, with in-person instruction supplemented by Moodle. (Instructors of once-a-week classes, such as science labs, may break their lab meetings into subsections.) The expected time of student engagement will not be reduced.
 - Limited additional restrictions on or adjustments to course section meetings may be proposed by deans, chairs or instructors and must be approved by the Provost.
- Large music ensembles will meet as sectionals only.
- Disposable disinfectant wipes will be available in all instructional spaces. Instructors will be required to use these to disinfect high-touch surfaces, including doorknobs and instructor stations, at the start of every class period. Students will be encouraged to wipe down surfaces they need to use in class.

- Hand sanitizing stations will be installed in high-traffic areas across campus, including in instructional buildings. Students and employees will be encouraged to use them frequently.
- Cloth face coverings will be required for all students and instructors in all class meetings. Instructors will be authorized to dismiss students from class and mark them absent if they do not wear cloth face coverings as required.
- Cloth face coverings will be required of all students and employees in all instructional support spaces, including the Zell & Shirley Miller Library, the Success Center and the Office of Academic Affairs. Employees will be permitted to remove cloth face coverings only when alone in their offices with the door closed. Visitors will not be permitted in any spaces without prior approval and screening.
- Individuals who evince any symptoms associated with COVID-19 will be required to report them immediately. These include fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle/body aches, headache, loss of taste/smell, sore throat, congestion/runny nose, nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea.
 - Students with symptoms must report to the Office of Student Development.
 - Instructors with symptoms must report to their division dean and the Office of Academic Affairs.
 - Individuals with symptoms will not be permitted to return to class until such time as symptoms have abated and may be required to meet other return-to-class or return-to-work criteria based on guidance in place at that time.
 - Students who are not permitted to return to class will be provided with adapted instruction, assignments and assessment to accommodate them as appropriate to their courses and their specific situation.
 - Instructors who are not permitted to return to class will continue to teach via distance learning if possible as appropriate to their courses and their specific situation. Deans and chairs will develop alternate instruction plans should instructors' symptoms prevent them from teaching via distance learning.
- Faculty members may use videoconferencing or other alternatives for office hours at their discretion. If a faculty member meets with a student in his/her office, both the faculty member and the student must wear a cloth face covering.

During Phase 1, the College will conduct regular evaluations of progress, including collecting and reviewing data on the impact of restrictions, soliciting feedback from students and faculty, and reviewing all new guidance. When the President determines that it is appropriate, the College will transition to Phase 2.

Phase 2 will last at least two weeks, beginning as soon as Phase 1 concludes (i.e., Monday, Aug. 31 or later). This phase may be extended as warranted by changing conditions. During Phase 2, the following restrictions will be in place:

- Students and instructors will be encouraged to maintain at least 6 feet between themselves and others when and where possible.
- Course section capacity limitations will be lifted. Classes that were temporarily reassigned to larger spaces will return to their originally assigned spaces. Class subsections will be recombined.
- Large music ensembles may continue to meet as sectionals only, as determined by the appropriate dean, chair and directors.
- Disposable disinfectant wipes will continue to be available and will be used as in Phase 1.
- Hand sanitizing stations will continue to be available and will be used as in Phase 1.
- Requirements related to cloth face coverings and visitors will continue as in Phase 1.

- Individuals who evince any symptoms associated with COVID-19 will continue to be required to report them as in Phase 1.
- Faculty members may continue to use videoconferencing or other alternatives for office hours at their discretion, as in Phase 1.

During Phase 2, the College will continue to conduct regular evaluations of progress, as in Phase 1. When the President determines that it is appropriate, the College will transition to Phase 3.

Phase 3 will begin as soon as Phase 2 concludes (i.e., Monday, Sept. 14 or later). This phase represents the closest the College community expects to get to “normalcy” this fall and assumes that cases of COVID-19 on campus and in the surrounding community are either non-existent or so thoroughly isolated as to present no continuing threat to students and employees. During Phase 3, the following restrictions will be in place:

- Social distancing guidelines will be relaxed.
- Large music ensembles will meet regularly.
- Disposable disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizing stations will continue to be available for those who wish to use them.
- Expectations and requirements related to cloth face coverings will be lifted. Individuals may continue to wear cloth face coverings if they so choose.
- Individuals who evince any symptoms associated with COVID-19 will continue to be required to report them as in Phase 1 and Phase 2.
- Faculty members will hold office hours in their offices.

It is possible that, as a result of ongoing community transmission, the College will not be able to reach Phase 3 by the end of the fall semester. It may also be necessary to reinstitute certain restrictions or return to an earlier phase if conditions warrant this. Any such changes will be communicated to the entire College community as soon as such decisions are made by the President.

Instructors Teaching via Distance Learning

While most instructors of courses designed for classroom instruction will return to campus subject to the conditions above, some instructors may be provided an exemption and allowed to teach via distance learning. Exemption requests, accompanied by appropriate documentation when needed, must be submitted in writing to the Provost and communicated to the instructor’s division dean and department chair.

- During Phase 1, any requested exemption will be approved.
- During Phase 2, a requested exemption will be continued or approved if the instructor can provide appropriate documentation of meeting any of the following conditions:
 - The instructor has one or more qualifying reasons to work away from campus, as defined by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). These include being subject to a federal, state or local quarantine or isolation order; being advised by a health care professional to self-quarantine; experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (see above) and seeking a medical diagnosis; caring for an individual subject to a legal quarantine or isolation order or advised by a health care professional to self-quarantine; or caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed as a result of COVID-19.
 - The instructor is age 65 or older.
 - The instructor has one or more of following underlying medical conditions that put one or might put one at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, per CDC guidance: asthma (moderate to severe), cancer, cerebrovascular disease, chronic kidney disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cystic

fibrosis, diabetes, hypertension/high blood pressure, immunocompromised state, liver disease, neurologic condition (e.g., dementia), obesity (BMI 30+), pregnancy, pulmonary fibrosis, serious heart condition (e.g., heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies), sickle cell disease or thalassemia.

- The instructor has a compelling reason not covered by the conditions above.
- During Phase 3, a requested exemption will be continued or approved only if the instructor has one or more FFCRA-qualifying reasons.

Young Harris Early College

Dual enrollment students and instructors involved with classes offered off campus through Young Harris Early College will be subject to the rules of the partner school system. Any questions should be directed to the Office of Academic Affairs.

Additional Plans

The President and members of the Pandemic Recovery Task Force continue to review all available information and work with partner organizations, including the Georgia Department of Public Health and Union General Hospital System, to develop additional protocols. The Task Force will continue to release topic-specific plans as protocols are reviewed and finalized.