Guidance if a Student Requests Remote Participation or Online Course Delivery

As the university moves forward to return to more normal operating procedures, COVID will continue to impact our lives. Many students will have concerns about their ability to safely/effectively integrate into the in-person learning environment. The university is no longer engaging in a special consideration process; however, we have the responsibility to share what flexibility and options exist for students to continue their progress toward degree. The following guidance is designed to help you navigate requests from students. Please contact Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) [1] if you have questions.

Concerns about taking in person courses

Students with concerns about taking in person courses should be referred to first work closely with their academic/program advisor to identify options already available, such as:

- alternative courses that meet degree/program requirements that are already offered online
- an alternative schedule of courses that may be out of synchronization
- taking courses approved by the appropriate authorizing official that are offered online at a different institution
- reducing hours for a semester through an underload or a decelerated program

Flexibility Within the Current Course Design

Faculty are not expected to redesign an in-person course or create a separate course to afford online participation; however, faculty are invited to consider solutions that are
possible within the current course design even if these may not fully emulate the in-person student experience.

Students should work with the instructor to determine what flexibility exists for any student that has or had special circumstances (e.g., reviewing recorded course lectures when sick with flu/COVID/isolating/quarantining or students missing class for official university business or to meet religious commitments, etc.).

One possible option may be to utilize a recurring or standing Zoom meeting in class with the remote student as participant and use the screen sharing feature in Zoom to share any visual materials with both in-person students and the remote student. Zoom can be set to hide non-video participants so as not to clutter the screen. Auto-captions can help the remote student and the Chat window can be used to make contributions. If small group/paired work is a planned feature of the class, an in-person student can be invited to join the meeting (note, this will necessitate the instructor muting both the sound and microphone on the class computer to avoid audio feedback issues).

For assistance in determining what might be possible with the technology available in a classroom, instructors may find the UNC Hotline :: Classroom Training Materials helpful. In addition, instructors can schedule an in-person demonstration of the technology available in any general purpose classroom. Instructors scheduled in non-GPC classrooms can reach out to departmental/school IT staff for similar assistance.

If the flexibility offered by an instructor does not resolve the student’s concerns, the student should work through the academic chain (department head and ultimately college or school) as they normally would if there are extenuating circumstances (e.g., senior graduating at the end of the current semester).

Students may be referred to ARS when there is uncertainty regarding the underlying reason for the request. “If you need to request accommodations based on a disability or medical related need, please contact Accessibility Resources and Service.”

**Disability Related or Medical Condition Related Concern**

For courses that do not have an online option readily available, a student with a disability or chronic medical concern may initiate a request through Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) by completing and submitting the Self-Identification Form. Pregnant students or students with parenting concerns should reach out to Equal Opportunities and Compliance (EOC).

If it is substantiated that a student is eligible for this consideration, ARS will contact the student’s instructors to initiate discussions about options available. ARS will work with
each instructor to specify the feasibility and details of remote participation and inform the student of options available.

Should a student be eligible, it is understood that:

- not all courses have options for remote participation (e.g.: heavy discussion/participation based, group work required, labs, practicums, etc.)
- approval for Fall 2021 would not imply approval for future semesters
- provision of remote participation for an in-person class may look different than it did in Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 semesters
- remote participation is unlikely to provide the same experience as students receive in the in-person/seated course
- modifications may take the form of streamed synchronous access with varying levels of interaction or recorded lectures provided asynchronously

If remote participation is not feasible, ARS will explore possible alternatives with the department in a good-faith effort towards inclusion. For example, allowing the student to enroll/transfer an online course from another university that is approved by the college, school or program, and/or any supporting policy modifications.

Source URL: https://ars.unc.edu/accommodations/guidance-if-student-requests-remote-participation-or-online-course-delivery

Links
[1] mailto:ars@unc.edu
[3] https://hotline.unc.edu/public/?schedule
[5] https://ars.unc.edu/students/request-forms/connect-ars
[6] mailto:eoc@unc.edu