

Alternative Educational Arrangements for Students who are at Higher Risk for Severe Illness

It is important to note that institutions of higher education have a legal obligation to consider and to process student accommodation requests pursuant to the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and Section 504 has not changed as a result of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the nature of the interactive process and the determination of reasonable accommodations may be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. USG has instructed its institutions to continue to follow their normal procedures for any ADA and Section 504 accommodation requests received from students.

Students who fall into one of the categories listed below, which the CDC has deemed place people as being at higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19, may request an alternative educational arrangement. CSU has undertaken efforts to provide reasonable accommodations and alternative arrangements for the requesting students through the ADA mandated interactive process. Students who believe that they fall into one of the risk categories must submit a request for an alternative educational arrangement through the Center for Accommodation and Access (CAA).

Students must self-identify with the CAA and submit the COVID-19 Intake form (<https://caa.columbusstate.edu/surveys/covid-intake-form.php>). Students should provide documentation demonstrating that they have one of the underlying medical conditions as part of their request. The nature of a reasonable accommodation or alternative educational arrangement may be affected by the unique circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Decisions about what reasonable accommodations and alternative educational arrangements are appropriate will be made by the CAA staff in consultation with other authorities, as needed, on an individual basis depending on the particular circumstances involved. After the reasonable accommodation or alternative educational arrangements are determined, the student will need to request letters of accommodation be submitted to their faculty members. It is imperative that students, CAA staff, faculty, and staff work together to implement the accommodations and arrangements.

Qualifying CDC categories for higher risk for severe illness with COVID-19 :

Students who are 65 or older (Students who are younger than 65 can provide documentation from a health care provider that their age is a determining factor for

risk that should prevent them from attending and participating in regular on-campus instruction.)

Students with the following underlying medical conditions :

- Chronic kidney disease
- COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from solid organ transplant
- Obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 30 or higher)
- Serious heart conditions, such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, or cardiomyopathies
- Sickle cell disease
- Type 2 diabetes mellitus
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Cerebrovascular disease (affects blood vessels and blood supply to the brain)
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Immunocompromised state (weakened immune system) from blood or bone marrow transplant, immune deficiencies, HIV, use of corticosteroids, or use of other immune weakening medicines
- Neurologic conditions, such as dementia
- Liver disease
- Pregnancy
- Pulmonary fibrosis (having damaged or scarred lung tissues)
- Smoking

- Thalassemia (a type of blood disorder)
- Type 1 diabetes mellitus

Examples of Alternative Educational Arrangements Below is a list of potential accommodations and alternative educational arrangements that could be considered by institutions as part of the interactive process. These are meant only as examples. This list is meant purely as an aid, and is not intended to indicate that the listed accommodations and arrangements must be granted, nor that other accommodations and arrangements are not available.

- Course substitutions (with permission of the appropriate academic department)
- Adaptation of modality (lecture capture, synchronous/asynchronous, online, etc.)
- Smaller groups for labs, etc...
- Alternatives to traditional masks (such as scarves, special masks for glasses wearers, clear masks, or clear face shields*)
- Modified performances
- Assistance in demonstration of physical activities
- Modified arrival/departure times for classes
- Instructions provided in written format
- Ability to use computer in class
- Ability to record class
- Rental of hearing amplification devices
- Rental of recorders
- Peer notetaker
- Preferential seating

- Priority registration
- Waiver of live-on requirement
- Housing Modifications, if available
- Modified Attendance Agreement
- Additional PPE

*Note that the CDC warns against substituting a face shield for a face covering.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>