

Fall 2020 Reopen Plan



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Executive Summary

The *Academic Affairs Reopen Plan* outlines the efforts to reopen academic activities at RIT in the fall semester. This plan rests upon the [Fall 2020 Reopening Plan for RIT](#) and the [RIT Safety Plan](#) and describes how these university-wide plans will be implemented within Academic Affairs. The *Academic Affairs Reopen Plan* is dynamic and will be updated as new information becomes available and as circumstances change. The organization and framework for this plan draws from three guidance documents developed related to higher education reopening:

1. [NYS Interim Guidance for Higher Education During the Covid-19 Public Health Emergency](#) (June 2020)
2. Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU) entitled, [CREATING SAFE AND RESILIENT CAMPUSES: Suggestions for Reopening and Reimagining Colleges and Universities in New York](#) (May 2020)
3. [Open Smart-EDU COVID-19 Planning Guide and Self-Assessment for Higher Education](#) (June 2020)

The *Academic Affairs Reopen Plan* includes areas critical to RIT's delivery of educational and research experiences as well as academic services including: co-op, undergraduate and graduate research, advising, library, and graduate students. RIT is committed to delivering high-quality courses and experiences and supporting faculty, staff, and students as we transition to new work expectations and meet health and safety standards to keep the campus and community safe. See [Table 1: NYS Higher Education Guidelines Crosswalk](#) for alignment with NYS guidance.

The high-level summary below focuses on key operational areas with the full details for each topic discussed in the *Academic Affairs Reopen Plan*.

- ❖ **Calendar:** RIT's fall semester will begin August 19 (five days early) and end coursework at the Thanksgiving break (November 24). Finals will be completed remotely to avoid a return to campus for finals in early December. Unless granted an exemption, students will not return to campus until after winter break.
- ❖ **Course Schedule:** New and returning students schedules will be adjusted as needed to identify modality, instructor, day and time, as well as length.
- ❖ **Course Delivery:** Depending on course modality and availability, students may take classes that are delivered via in-person, blended, or fully online. RIT will offer courses in all three modalities.
- ❖ **Instructional Spaces:** RIT has revised the occupancy capacity of each instructional space in order to comply with physical distancing recommendations. All instructional spaces will comply with occupancy limits. Face coverings are mandatory in all classrooms and other academic spaces.
- ❖ **Programs and Services:** During normal business hours, offices that serve *students and faculty* will be open and staffed including: University and College Academic Advising, University Exploration, Honors, Career Services and Cooperative Education, Student Employment, Innovative Learning Institute, RIT Online, RIT Libraries, Registrar, Graduate Education, Faculty Career Development, college offices, and academic departments.

Academic Affairs Reopen Plan

Academic Calendar & Scheduling

RIT's [fall semester schedule](#) will begin August 19 (five days early) and end coursework at the Thanksgiving break (November 24). Please note that there will be classes held on Labor Day and there will not be a fall break. Finals will be completed remotely to avoid students traveling back to campus after Thanksgiving. Unless granted an exemption, students will not return to campus until after winter break.

RIT's academic calendar supports in-person, blended, and fully online courses (each modality is defined below). This includes students who are on campus taking fully online or partially online courses to minimize in-person teaching exposure. The calendar supports the extended use of evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays as needed to meet physical distancing guidelines in classes.

Once the colleges finalize the fall course schedule, all course modality designations, instructors, day/time, and locations, will appear in the Student Information System (SIS) and be visible to students. The fall course designations include:

- In-Person | SIS Code: (P)
- Blended | SIS Code: (BL)
- Blended A/B | SIS Code: (AB)
- Online (Asynchronous) | SIS Code: (OA)
- Online (Synchronous) | SIS Code: (OS)


For Blended-coded classes (BL or AB) the meeting patterns are also coded:

- Online lecture with an in-person lab: OL-P-LAB
- Online lecture with an in-person studio: OL-P-STU
- Online lecture with an in-person recitation: OL-P-REC

The in-person component (lab, studio, recitation) will have the assigned RIT classroom noted.

Class meeting times have been adjusted to allow 15 minutes passing time between classes. This will also provide more time to change over classrooms and do necessary cleaning and sanitization. For details see the [Standard Time-Block Model for fall 2020](#).

Instruction (In-Person, Blended, & Online)

 Classes will take place utilizing three modalities: in-person, blended, and online. The colleges were provided definitions and guidance in the [Course Delivery Model Guidance](#). For more information about the new modalities, see the [step-by-step guide to understanding student schedules](#).

In-Person: Traditional course delivery mode. Instruction delivered fully in the classroom/lab/studio with interaction between the instructor and student. Students enrolled in in-person classes must be able to access campus facilities and attend scheduled course meetings on campus in order to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes of the course.

Classes that require access to special equipment (e.g., labs and studios) will meet in-person. If room

caps are substantially reduced, faculty are encouraged to reconfigure the course to support instruction outside the lab or studio facility.

Blended: A blended course combines online instruction and in-person meetings. Blended courses have fewer in-person course meetings, but enrolled students must access campus facilities and attend scheduled course meetings on campus. The online course activities for the class will be delivered either synchronously or asynchronously (see definitions below).

[Blended A/B Courses](#) are delivered in-person and online. Students are split into smaller groups for in-person sessions. Attendance at in-person meetings is required unless excused by the instructor.

Blended models of instruction will be used in lecture-based classes where enrollment exceeds the reduced room capacity required by physical distancing, and there is no alternative space for the course to meet. Examples of blended models include placing lectures online with smaller recitation section meetings during scheduled class time or holding class as usual with live streaming to allow some students to be in class while others attend remotely.

Online: The use of a fully online modality (synchronous or asynchronous) will be largely limited to classes where physical distancing requirements make it the only reasonable option.

Synchronous: delivered entirely online. No in-person class meetings are required. In order to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes of a synchronous online course, enrolled students attend class online and engage in course activities at the specified days/times published in the course schedule.

Asynchronous: delivered entirely online. No in-person class meetings are required. No scheduled in-person or online class meetings are required. Course materials and activities are posted online for completion within a designated time frame. Courses may have optional synchronous components.

Online courses accommodate students in different time zones offering asynchronous learning, and one-on-one supplemental support or recitations where necessary.



Flex: A class that has in-person along with synchronous online or asynchronous online components. Students can choose to attend as many of their assigned in-person sessions as they want or could choose to attend no in-person sessions at all, participating entirely online. Definitions and guidance are provided in the [Flex Option Fact Sheet](#).

There are two Flex approaches that are offered, but implementation is at the discretion of the faculty member, and the student must communicate their selection in advance of being absent from an in-person session.

Online Flex: A student selects this option if they are not able to attend *any* assigned in-person sessions of the course and will complete all course requirements *fully online*. The student will communicate this choice to the faculty member and the expectations for course completion will be outlined

Full Flex: A student selects this option if they are not able to attend assigned in-person sessions of the course at any point in the semester, but *may choose to return to their in-person session if their personal situation changes*.

While absent from the in-person sessions, the student will complete all course requirements online.

If a student needs to transition to Online Flex, the student will communicate this to the instructor so that expectations for course completion can be outlined.

Due to physical distancing and the increased number of sections, colleges and the Registrar's Office are identifying additional spaces that allow faculty to teach effectively in various modalities (e.g., so that multiple sections of same course are clustered).

Course Delivery and Schedule

The colleges and departments/programs determine which courses will shift from in-person instruction to either blended or fully online. The colleges were provided a tool to help with the planning - [Prioritization Course Delivery Mode Worksheet](#). Faculty completed a survey to identify their course modality preferences and worked with their program directors or chairs to build the schedule. Colleges provided initial decisions on modality and instructor in June and then finalized those decisions in July.

Of note, faculty teaching lab and studio courses will receive specific support and resources to record videos and may have access to instructional spaces as permissible.

Depending on course modality and availability, students may have classes that are delivered via in-person, blended, and online formats.

Student Course Schedules

New first year students are registered August 3rd by their academic department. RIT developed a process to manage course schedules and the Provost sent a communication on June 12 to returning students making them aware of the potential for course changes and cancellations. The following information was shared with students:

“Creating this environment is requiring some changes to the fall schedule. Because of the impact of social distancing requirements, many class meeting times will shift, which means that your individual course schedule may change. Over the next six weeks, we will be posting modifications to course schedules. We will also be adding information to SIS so that you will be able to tell if any of your classes will take place using an alternative modality, such as a blended format. In rare cases, we may need to cancel a class. Should this occur, the department or college offering the class will reach out to you. Please monitor your email for additional information and check your class schedule regularly. Please contact your advisor if you have any questions. We plan to complete schedule changes by July 15. Please know that we will work with you to ensure you have a complete schedule that allows you to make progress toward your degree.”

Syllabi

Class participation and other related activities will be adjusted to articulate expectations in blended and online modalities. Faculty are asked to ensure the following information is in all syllabi this fall:

- Course modality
- Class meeting schedule
- Course assessments
- Participation expectations as related to modality
- Attendance expectations as related to modality
- Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) expectations: Appropriate face coverings must be worn by students at all times when in classrooms, labs, and lecture halls regardless of whether physical distancing can be maintained. Please note any additional PPE required due to specific lab or classroom activities or spaces.

Assessment and Grading

RIT's regular [grading policies](#) will apply during fall 2020; the pass/fail practice implemented in spring will not continue.

Faculty with questions about preventing academic dishonesty within the context of online and blended modalities are encouraged to consult with the [Innovative Learning Institute \(ILI\)](#) or a member(s) of the College Course Advance Teams (CCATs) for support in developing their preferred approach to testing. The university will not provide live proctoring for examinations.

Data gathering for assessment will continue in fall 2020. Faculty with responsibilities for generating artifacts and data for use in course and program assessment should plan to do so regardless of course modality. Assistance is available from the CCATs and the [Office of Educational Effectiveness Assessment](#).

The collection of course feedback via Student Ratings of Teaching Effectiveness (SRATE) will occur as usual during fall 2020. The joint memorandum on student feedback issued by the Academic Senate and the Office of the Provost will continue to apply during fall 2020.



Instructional Continuity

[Instructional continuity](#) is a critical issue for all faculty to continue to support students' academic progress, even during a significant emergency or an extended campus closure. Advance planning is key to maintaining continuity in the face of disruptions. The [Faculty Course Planning](#) section of the RIT Ready site has resources for preparing flexible courses and the Innovative Learning Institute is available to assist.

Supporting Student Needs

Faculty will provide alternatives to quarantined or ill students so they will be able to access course materials necessary to meet the course learning outcomes and continue academic progress. It is recommended that faculty record classroom lectures in order to support students who are in quarantine or isolation.

Students should request access from their instructors to course materials due to COVID-related circumstances (isolation, quarantine, travel restrictions, etc.) as soon as they are able.




Faculty are asked to work with any student in these situations to ensure they can maintain their course progress to the extent possible. Faculty will continue to follow RIT policies and procedures for students who have received DSO-approved accommodations in their classes, regardless of modality. For more information, see: [Academic Continuity for COVID-related Disruptions in Learning and Disability Services Office \(DSO\) Accommodations](#).

Faculty with questions about student accommodations can visit the [faculty resources section of the Disability Services Office website](#).

Students in need of support for technology can apply for assistance from the COVID-19 emergency fund which will open at: <https://campusgroups.rit.edu/covid19fund/covid-19-emergency-fund/>

Advising


Academic advisors will provide a combination of in-person, remote, and online services. Students who prefer an in-person appointment will be accommodated whenever possible. The college or academic department advising units will develop plans to address "virtual drop-ins" for at-risk populations due to health accommodations. Colleges are being encouraged to be creative and flexible about space so they may offer advising in a safe and flexible way.

 Faculty office hours will take place remotely unless the faculty member indicates otherwise. In-person meetings will be provided upon request, for classes that have an in-person component, if physical distancing can be maintained and meetings are consistent with the [RIT Safety Plan](#). Staff and faculty with documented accommodations involving telework are not required to hold in-person meetings.

RIT utilizes Starfish to enhance the advisors' ability to support students. Students and advisors can set up meetings directly in Starfish, and advisors/instructors/academic leadership can access and follow up on alerts. RIT has online appointment software (Starfish) so that students electronically sign up for appointments to minimize hallway lines during office hours. Students also have access to their degree audit in SIS, and are encouraged to meet with their advisors for a plan to support degree progression and educational goals.


Faculty Support and Resources


Faculty

 The Innovative Learning Institute (ILI) is working in conjunction with the newly developed [College Course Advance Teams \(CCATs\)](#) to provide workshops, consultations, and self-serve learning materials to apply best practices in the development of high-quality materials and preparation for teaching courses in any modality. CCATs are faculty-led support teams that are working within colleges to provide additional guidance and help related to course design and delivery specific to their disciplines. The ILI and CCATs provide training and support to faculty to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to achieve the course learning outcomes, regardless of modality.

RIT provides resources and support structures to help faculty transition to blended and online teaching. The ILI will assist faculty in appropriate technology selection for their courses and provide remote consultations, technology training, and support. Colleges are providing specific hardware and software for faculty. [Faculty may select from one of several packages to support online teaching](#). Packages include: webcams, headphones, microphones, or document cameras.

Classrooms


 [A Faculty Guide to Classroom Safety](#) has been developed which provides detailed information about classroom safety standards and the various ways these may impact pedagogy and classroom management.

 In addition, [A Student Guide to Classroom Safety](#) has been developed to ensure that students have a clear understanding of the classroom safety standards and what is expected of them.

The ILI also developed a classroom technology package that will be installed in university-managed learning spaces. This classroom technology package includes a web camera, microphone, document camera, and USB hub for connections. Please see [Classroom Zoom Equipment Guide](#).

The campus has enough bandwidth/infrastructure to accommodate future usage. RIT Information & Technology Services (ITS) expects the network will be able to handle the increased bandwidth requirements and does not anticipate any bottlenecks with particular buildings even with the increased number of Zoom meetings. Network traffic patterns will be different than our predictable models this fall, so RIT will closely monitor conditions (both the internal network and the external internet providers).

The ILI will be providing in-person and remote assistance for faculty who are using any of the ILI supported technology. For faculty having difficulties with installed classroom technology, support staff will meet faculty in their classrooms to assist in resolving issues.

 Just in time support for any of the supported technology systems such as myCourses, Zoom, the RIT Wiki, and RIT's other academic technologies will be provided by walk-in (may need appointment), phone, text chat, and email. Faculty can schedule virtual consultations with ILI staff for any of the supported systems. ILI will be operating their normal business hours, but support hours may be added during the semester based on demand.

The ILI will also have full time staff backup depending on the volume of calls and questions. Staff have existing knowledge of the technology and can immediately respond. ILI coordinates with ITS if volume increases and ITS staff received faculty technology package items for testing so they are familiar with the technology faculty received.

Accommodations for Faculty and Staff

Faculty and staff with concerns about their return to work due to a medical condition that places them in a [higher risk group as defined by the CDC](#) should use the COVID-19 related [Accommodation Process](#). *Note: Access to the accommodation web page requires an RIT employee login.*

CDC criteria are periodically updated to reflect evolving research on indicators of vulnerability to severe COVID-19. RIT will apply the criteria in effect at the time of application.


For all workplace accommodation requests that are not related to COVID-19 risk factors, faculty and staff should continue to use [RIT's Request Form for Employee Disability-Related Accommodations](#).

Academic Administrative Offices

Work Expectations

RIT expects to be open for in-person instruction in the fall. As a result, faculty and staff with requirements to be on campus will be expected to do so unless an accommodation is approved. However, in accordance with the requirements of [NY Forward](#), RIT will limit the total number of occupants at any given time to no more than 50% for a particular space.

When campus opens for fall instruction, each academic department and support office will establish a work schedule for its employees that ensures no more than 50% of a department's staff and faculty are in the office at any given time. During normal business hours, departments and offices will ensure every office has staff on site who are qualified to assist students and faculty who use their services.

 Managers and supervisors should review the information that Human Resources provided for *Academic Affairs Reopen Plan Updated 08.25.20*

returning to campus - please see [Guidance for Managers/Supervisors](#).


Supervisors should consult with their employees before establishing the office schedule. and can consult with HR for guidance on the most appropriate way to accommodate requests for full-time telework, including requests due to the need to care for children. Faculty and staff with documented accommodations that involve telework will be able to work from home.

Supervisors will need to communicate and coordinate with other departments if they share space to ensure meeting the physical distancing and density requirements.

Tele- or video-conferencing is encouraged for administrative meetings unless the meeting can be held in a space that allows for the maintenance of physical distancing requirements. Physical distancing markers, directional indicators, and designated areas for pick-ups and deliveries, must be observed at all times.

Some offices may find it beneficial to create a customized On-Campus Department Work Plan. A form to assist in the creation of this plan will be available. All individualized safety plans must comply with the requirements of the [RIT Safety Plan](#).

Health and Safety

 All employees returning to work on campus will need to [get a COVID-19 test](#) prior to coming to campus and provide evidence of a negative result in order to return. Any employee coming to campus or any other property that is owned or leased by RIT must be tested. If an employee is on campus *less than once a month*, no test is required.

All employees, regardless of whether they are working on campus, are required to complete the COVID-19 training and the RIT Daily Health Screen dailyhealth.rit.edu every day (7 days a week).

Work is currently underway to install appropriate physical barriers in addition to enhancement of air handling infrastructure, administrative controls (more hand sanitizing stations, changing work schedules, reconfiguring spaces) and ensure access and use of PPE (face coverings, etc.) to support the [RIT Safety Plan](#). Facilities managers or building representatives will identify areas that have student walk-up traffic and customer-facing spaces and there will be plexiglass or polycarbonate barriers installed as needed in campus offices. Academic spaces will also have barriers installed at faculty work stations, between work areas, etc., as appropriate.

 Please see the [Facilities Management Services FAQs](#).




Faculty will be able to request face shields for use in teaching through their college's site safety monitor. The RIT Welcome Center will have face coverings available for anyone who needs one, so everyone will be able to enter a building with a face covering.

Academic Affairs faculty and staff will be provided health and safety training and should review and adhere to the [RIT Safety Plan](#). For the latest information and updates, see the [RIT Ready](#) website.

Instructional Spaces

RIT has assessed the occupancy capacity of each instructional space while complying with physical distancing recommendations and has set occupancy limits for each instructional space. Please see [Physical Distancing Recommendation Instructional Space Capacities for Fall 2020](#). Currently, the

following health and safety measures are being implemented in instructional spaces:

- Based on student population, air purification bipolar ionization systems will be installed in select academic instructional spaces (initial locations include Eastman, Campus Center/Clark, SAU, Wallace, CLA, Booth, Gannett, Gosnell, Gleason, Lowenthal, SLC/SHC, Johnson, GCCIS).
- Occupied spaces maintain HVAC system operation for maximum space occupancy to allow for maximum fresh air supply, regardless of reduced occupancy or use. For units that can be adjusted, outside air will be maximized. In many areas, windows can also be opened.
- Hand sanitizer dispenser stations will be placed in entrances of all major buildings and in academic areas based on student population.
- Barriers are being installed in teaching spaces to limit direct exposure to respiratory droplets between students and faculty.
- 3D coatings and electro-plating will be added to more than 600 door pulls around campus.
- Physical distancing requires members of the RIT Community to ensure that they maintain at least six (6) ft. of distance between themselves, unless safety or core function of the work activity requires a shorter distance.
- Established processes for access and egress from spaces to support physical distancing, teaching, and learning in the classroom to include staggered entry or exit or one-way entry/exit and line management.
- Faculty members can request face shields and wear them while teaching behind the barrier. Face shields protect the user so faculty will still have to wear face coverings if they move around the classroom, studio, or lab. Clear face coverings will be distributed to those who request them.
-  For classrooms, instructional and common space areas, seating will be designated by “do not use” signage and by default the remaining chairs are available for seating.
-  Food is not permitted in classrooms, but faculty can decide if they want to permit drinks (straw only) in their classrooms. Students must replace their face coverings immediately after drinking.
- All faculty and students are required to wear a face covering in all instructional spaces. Faculty can contact public safety to assist as needed.
-  For additional facilities guidance, see: [RIT General Guidelines for Facility Reopening & Operation in the time of COVID-19.](#)

Contact Tracing within Academic Affairs

To support needs for contact tracing, all students will register their presence in class via the Location Check-In Application (Location Check-In), a web-based application for use on campus. All members of the RIT community must use this application. Location Check-In uses unique QR codes to identify

individuals in classrooms, offices with frequent visitors, and RIT shuttles.

Faculty, staff, and students must scan the QR code or enter the information directly on the Location Check-In website every time they enter, that will create a detailed log of the rooms visited by an individual in order to aid contact tracers. RIT community members must maintain a log of their contacts with individuals and any spaces they enter that are not covered by Location Check-In.

Faculty will create a seating chart for each class (or class group) for use by contact tracers as needed. Faculty are not expected to maintain attendance records.

For contact tracing purposes, any individual testing positive for, or showing signs of, COVID-19 will be asked to provide to the Student Health Center (students) or the Director of RIT's Environmental Health and Safety (faculty/staff) all contacts the individual had with others while on the RIT campus during the time period that the individual was infectious.

For contact tracing purposes, faculty who are assigned research space (or staff in charge of research space) that supports research activities must keep a log annotating all individuals that enter via a sign in sheet with date and time.

Classroom Cleaning Protocols

Classrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily and disinfectant will be provided in all learning spaces. Students, faculty, and staff have access to sanitation products (antimicrobial) in the classroom to reduce the possibility of COVID-19 transmissions. Spray bottles of disinfectant will be provided in each learning space to allow students and faculty to disinfect their area before and after class. Training will be developed and provided for students, faculty, and staff. Hand sanitizers will also be provided in all teaching spaces to allow faculty/staff/students to disinfect their hands before leaving.

Specialized Spaces (Labs and Studios)

Each space was assessed to ensure safe reopening based on COVID-19 requirements including physical distancing and occupancy based on a review of the activities/events in that space. A safety checklist has been developed for laboratory, studio, and shop spaces. RIT permits a maximum 50% occupancy rate in some specialized instructional spaces with specific approval based on controls, physical distancing measures, activities and utilization of the room.

Clinical Courses

The clinical programs provided online resources for appropriate use of PPE and resources to students regarding COVID-19 practices. All students, faculty, and lab staff will be equipped with specific PPE to wear during assigned lab time and training will be provided for donning and doffing. There can be no more than two students plus instructor or interpreter within 6 feet, at all times. Student groups of three or more within 6 feet are prohibited.

The clinical affiliates will provide students with appropriate PPE and ensure each student is donning and doffing appropriately. The clinical affiliates will inform students of their protocols and students will complete screening questions prior to being allowed on-site.

Research

RIT has established policies and procedures for the resumption of on-campus laboratory (i.e., lab/studio/shop)-based research activities consistent with New York State's phased reopening

guidelines and subject to adherence to all applicable, local, state, and federal Public Health Authority directives (i.e., physical distancing, use of face coverings, public travel restrictions, etc.)

Requests for resumption of on-campus research activities requires that an application be submitted which includes, amongst other required information, a checklist that must be filled out by the appropriate lab and facilities managers certifying that the areas to be used are deemed safe for the resumption of activities. Please see <https://www.rit.edu/research/srs/node/1893> for lab reopening information.

RIT has developed procedures for a safe ramp-down for laboratories in the event that another full or partial campus shutdown becomes necessary. RIT has created checklists for safe closure of labs to ensure that equipment is shut down, cleaned, samples safely stored, and waste properly disposed and has established a set of critical maintenance procedures necessary to maintain safety or long-term viability (e.g. care of animals, plants, cultures, bacteria, and other living organisms; preservation of materials that require special storage such as radioactive elements; and maintenance of critical equipment that requires regular monitoring such as deep freezers, electron microscopes, or incubators) and has identified the staff needed to maintain these critical operations.

Library Services

Safe Handling of Library Materials

The greater library community is in the midst of conducting studies and establishing standard guidelines for the safe handling of physical materials. The Wallace Center will quarantine tangible materials (e.g., books, DVDs, etc.) for a period of three days. The library has updated and extended due dates for all materials and requested extensions on Interlibrary Loan (ILL) materials since the end of March 2020. Fines will be waived. The due date for items checked out to students will be set for February 2, 2021 unless an item is recalled. Faculty due dates are already set each year for the end of spring semester. In addition:

- All ConnectNY books can be returned to any ConnectNY library (these libraries are located in NYS) but there are no current discussions regarding a nationwide return system. Once a national return process for interlibrary loans is activated in the US, this can be investigated.
- Interlibrary Loan physical items will be quarantined for a period of three days—loan periods will be extended.
- For those students and faculty who just need to check out a particular book, the staff will have items on hold at the Circulation Desk for pick-up.

Library Engagement with the Public

There will be virtual reference consultations and instruction sessions. Patrons will obtain materials (including reserves, ILL, and Wallace Library items) at a circulation desk with partitions. Library staff are working with faculty to utilize electronic resources for course reserves, with the goal of eliminating print reserves materials as much as possible, since print reserves circulate too frequently to be handled safely.

The Cary Collection will support two researchers at a time by appointment only. RIT Archives can support one researcher at a time by appointment only, due to a smaller reading room. Staff will quarantine research materials after their use. Most library courses will be taught virtually, with few exceptions. In rare cases, small in-person classes may be held in the library and will follow the physical distancing protocols established by RIT.

Physical Library

All floors of the library will be open to the public with signage to indicate physical distancing within the collections, and reminders to wash hands frequently.

The physical distance guidelines will be implemented in the following ways: remove seating as to have only one chair per table, mark floors where tables should stay, mark off space and queuing in front of service desks and copiers. Study rooms, if opened, would allow only one person at a time.

The library is developing a process for access to the building, in order to maintain the appropriate occupancy guidelines as well as health and safety measures. The following procedures have been established:

- Access to Special Collections and the RIT Press will be by appointment only.
- The public copiers will be placed further apart to accommodate physical distancing. Most printing/copying by students is done via computer and delivered automatically to the copier for printing. Copiers will be cleaned before and after use.
- A quarantine period (three days) for any donations and materials entering or mailed (print journals, ILL books) to the library will be instituted. People should contact the library before bringing in donated materials.
- Patron-facing service points will be effectively cleaned.
- Partitions will be purchased and installed at circulation desks.

There will be a range of services including book return bins on campus, and quarantine returned materials. There is a curbside pickup several times/week until officially open and may continue into the fall. The [library COVID-19 FAQ](#) outlines library services while the library building is closed.

Digital Collections & Resources

At this time, the library is investing in providing more streaming media for class instruction, and working with vendors and our current consortia partners to provide more access to electronic materials, with unlimited access whenever possible.

RIT Librarians are ensuring that patrons have access to materials made available freely from publishers and vendors during this pandemic. RIT has digital guides to this content and incorporating this material into the Summon discovery system.

Course Reserves

The Circulation Department, Collections Team, Research and Instruction Services Department are creating strategies to reduce the reliance on physical reserves for fall. Staff are working with faculty to find suitable online resources as much as possible, and are continuing to investigate solutions to provide online access to analog materials.

Graduate Students

Student Programs, Services, and Support

The [Office of Graduate Education \(OGE\)](#) works very closely with the graduate student leadership team and the student groups and will continue to connect with students via weekly virtual meetings. In the fall semester, The OGE will hold on-campus programming where physical distancing guidelines can be followed. Programs that cannot be held in-person will be transferred to a

meaningful online/virtual format. Additionally, information on issues relevant to graduate student programming and academic success will be communicated via email, physical media and other RIT community platforms as appropriate.

The OGE is available to meet with students to discuss personal and educational challenges. They will continue to make referrals to campus partners. Every graduate student at RIT has an assigned faculty advisor, research advisor and a graduate program director. Additionally, some graduate students are assigned a professional advisor. If an advisor is not able to work due to illness or hospitalization, the graduate director will step in to guide the student.

Students funded on external grants continue to receive full payments if they complete the work associated with the grant proposal. In cases where the student cannot continue their work, the department/college will make accommodations to provide stipend support for students who are making progress towards degree completion. International Ph.D. students who are not able to travel to the U.S. can receive stipends.

Dissertation Defense

Graduate thesis and dissertation defenses can continue via video-conferencing and allow for a larger audience. In-person defenses can occur with appropriate physical distancing and select invites. Video-conferencing allows the student to invite everyone. If necessary, requests for degree completion extensions will be handled on a case-by-case basis and can be approved by the Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Education.

Labs

Restrictions on lab occupancy applies equally to graduate courses. RIT is reducing classroom sizes to 50% occupancy in graduate research labs to ensure adequate physical distancing between students. Additional course sections will be scheduled to accommodate for the smaller class sizes. Students will be required to complete safety training. They will be provided with PPE and expected to follow RIT guidelines and protocols.

The academic unit head will implement a sign-up process and designate a staff or faculty member to manage the lab space. This process will also manage lab access during non-class times to support students who are working on their thesis or dissertation research to ensure that the space capacity limit is not exceeded. Graduate students entering labs must abide by all elements of the [RIT Safety Plan](#) as well as any additional requirements that apply to the site.

Office Space

Graduate student office space should be treated in the same manner as any other office space. All elements of the [RIT Safety Plan](#) apply. This means graduate students should expect to moderate their on-campus schedules to comply with occupancy requirements. Graduate program directors and department chairs should incorporate graduate student offices in their site safety planning.

Career Services and Cooperative Education

The [Career Services and Cooperative Education Office](#) is offering smaller discipline-specific and virtual Career Fairs. They will provide virtual interview strategies and workshops. The first RIT Virtual Career Fairs are in fall 2020. Students will network, apply for jobs, and participate in workshops focused on finding a co-op or full-time position.

The Career Services and Cooperative Education Office will continue with student outreach and a detailed calendar of events will be available later in July.

Student Employment

RIT's [Student Employment Office](#) (SEO) services will be by appointment. Students should schedule a time to complete their I-9 in-person. This will eliminate the long lines at peak hiring times. The SEO is eliminating the need for returning students to physically update their SEO cards. They will work directly with supervisors to confirm eligibility.

The SEO is implementing a designated email for supervisors to submit hire paperwork. This will eliminate the need for supervisors to physically come to the office to submit paperwork, and continue to give those who remain working from home a way to submit paperwork electronically.

The SEO is currently working directly with departments who have large hiring needs (such as Orientation Leaders) to provide customized services to complete I-9's appropriately to ensure timely employment while maintaining current guidelines.

International

Study Abroad

Study abroad programs and all international travel by students for the 2020-2021 academic year are suspended until further notice. Applications for spring and summer 2021 travel programs will remain open as we monitor the situation.

Students are able to participate in a number of virtual intercultural experiences for credit or not for credit through RIT or our affiliate partners. These might include completely virtual study abroad courses, virtual international internships or regular RIT courses with an international component such as global team projects or international guest lecturers. Currently there are opportunities available in Croatia, Kosovo, Dubai, China, Hungary, Spain and Italy. Study Abroad will also be hosting a number of events, workshops and programs that help students continue to grow as global citizens and explore culture such as virtual international city tours, a diversity speaker series and more. Visit the website studyabroad.rit.edu to learn more.

Global Campuses

Each of our global locations are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and adhering to the health and safety regulations in their respective jurisdictions. The general reopening and continuity plans for each campus are provided below:

Croatia

- Primary Course Delivery Plan (Current): In-class with physical distancing. Online option for at least one section (where multiple sections are offered). Online and blended classes will be higher in Zagreb due to higher enrollment.
- Fall Semester Start Date: September 1, 2020
- Fall Semester End Date: December 17, 2020
- Calendar Changes: No changes expected
- Campus Status: Expected to be open
- Classroom Adjustments: In-class physical distancing (1.5 meters)
- Student/Faculty Health Adjustments: Temperature monitoring (all people entering the building). Currently following measures for secondary schools while waiting on government guidelines for higher education.

Dubai

- Primary Course Delivery Plan (Current): Mostly in-class with physical distancing; 20-30% of classes online; 70% A/B hybrid model.
- Fall Semester Start Date: August 30, 2020
- Fall Semester End Date: December 19, 2020
- Calendar Changes: Possible changes in the calendar; Waiting on government guidance.
- Campus Status: Expected to be open
- Classroom Adjustments: In-class physical distancing (1.5 meters)
- Student/Faculty Health Adjustments: Temperature monitoring (all people entering the building); Additional measures in place to ensure physical distancing.

China

- Primary Course Delivery Plan (Current): Online for the first 8-weeks. A decision on how to deliver the 2nd 8-weeks will be made on August 15.
- Fall Semester Start Date: September 7, 2020
- Fall Semester End Date: December 18, 2020
- Calendar Changes: Main fall scheduled delayed one-week from original plan. Freshman delayed three weeks due to Gao Kao testing delay – freshman classes compressed to 11 weeks instead of 14 weeks (contact hours still met).
- Classroom Adjustments: In-class physical distancing (1.5 meters)
- Student/Faculty Health Adjustments: Measures for physical distancing with special focus on for distancing in student housing). Expect that testing will be required when students are returning from other areas of the country (waiting on confirmation from the government).

Kosovo

- Primary Course Delivery Plan (Current): Government measures currently require fully online.
- Planning to switch to A/B hybrid classes with government approval.
- Fall Semester Start Date: September 8, 2020
- Fall Semester End Date: December 18, 2020
- Calendar Changes: No changes expected
- Campus Status: Not yet approved opening of higher education.
- Classroom Adjustments: In-class physical distancing (1.5 meters)
- Student/Faculty Health Adjustments: Following government guidance to apply spray throughout campus. Measures in place to ensure physical distancing.

Academic Exchange and Visiting Scholars

RIT Global Scholars: Admission of new RIT Global Scholars from global campuses has been suspended for fall semester. Global Scholars who remained in the U.S. from spring semester 2020, will be allowed to return to RIT.

International Exchange: International exchange with partner institutions is suspended for fall semester.

Visiting Scholars: Visiting scholars should be encouraged to either:

1. Conduct their research and collaboration remotely; or
2. Reschedule their intended plans for a future date.

Visiting scholars seeking to come to RIT must be approved by the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. No RIT housing will be provided for any visiting scholars who come to RIT in the fall.

Academic Continuity for International Students

Newly admitted international students who are unable to come to the U.S. have been offered two remote start options for starting their studies at RIT in fall 2020:

1. Global campus remote start for new fall 2020 undergraduate students outside the US

This program will afford students who had been planning to study this fall at the Rochester campus the option to begin their studies in either Weihai at RIT China, or at RIT Dubai. The students will take a mix of courses offered at the global campus, RIT (via online), or other project-based courses. There is not a formal, or one-size fits all, set of offerings, and students will be advised and registered individually based on their interests and available courses. The RIT University Advising Office and RIT Global are working in collaboration with the colleges to provide course guidance for this group of students. In addition, RIT Global and Enrollment Management will develop a calendar of communication, activities, and events to ensure that the students are connected to one another, and feel like they are a part of RIT.

2. International online remote start for new fall 2020 undergraduate students outside the US.

International students who are unable to travel to the Rochester campus this fall have also been offered the option of a remote start by taking online courses. The RIT University Advising Office and RIT Global are working in collaboration with the colleges to provide course guidance for this group of students. In addition, RIT Global and Enrollment Management will develop a calendar of communication, activities, and events to ensure that the students are connected to one another, and feel like they are a part of RIT.

There are also two fall 2020 remote options for returning International undergraduate students:

1. Global Campus study abroad for returning fall 2020 undergraduate students outside the US.

Students who currently reside in the area/region of the RIT Global Campuses may consider enrolling at the relevant "local" location for a semester as a study abroad student. Students will work with the RIT Global – Study Abroad office and their academic advisor to identify appropriate classes. Students can consider a combination of RIT campus and online classes as well as local global campus classes.

2. Online fall semester for returning fall 2020 undergraduate students outside the US.

Academic advisors will work with individual international students unable to return to the Rochester campus in fall 2020 or take advantage of a global campus option to enroll in fully online classes for the fall semester. RIT Global Campus online courses can also be considered by returning international students unable to travel to the Rochester campus – enrollment for these class options will be managed by the RIT Global office. The RIT University Advising Office and RIT Global are working in collaboration with the colleges to review potential course needs for this population.

Programs that already offer an online option will fold remote start students into existing online courses. Students outside the EST time zone can engage in asynchronous learning.

Regulatory Compliance

RIT has obtained Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) approval to deliver online programs and adheres to accreditation standards for online learning.

RIT's licensure programs with clinical hours or placements (physician assistant, educator prep programs, and school psychology) submitted alternative plans to NYSED for spring 2020 semester.

NYSED has extended the distance education flexibility through fall 2020.

Monitoring the COVID-19 Trends

RIT is developing a framework for monitoring COVID-19 trends on campus, in Monroe County and NYS which can be found in the [Fall 2020 Reopening Plan for RIT](#). This framework will assist RIT in assessing the risk associated with the pandemic and to adjust campus practices as a result. This framework identifies indicators that will be used to track any progression of the COVID-19 virus and lists associated actions RIT will take should there be evidence that the virus is spreading within our community.

Associated with each risk level is a set of planned actions that involve course delivery and academic services.

- Risk is determined to be *Low (Green)*: Faculty will teach each class in one of the three following modalities: in-person, blended, and online to reduce density. All student and faculty serving offices will be open and staffed.
- *Risk is determined to be Low-Moderate (Yellow)*: Faculty will teach each class in one of the three following modalities: in-person, blended, and online to reduce density. All student and faculty serving offices will be open and staffed.
- Risk is determined to be *Moderate (Orange)*: Faculty teaching blended courses will shift to teaching fully online. Student serving offices will be open with minimal staffing. Faculty serving offices will shift to fully remote operation.
- Risk is *Moderate and Not Improving (Red)*: Students will move off campus and faculty who are teaching in-person courses will shift to fully online teaching within a seven day time frame. All staff and faculty serving offices will move to fully remote operation.

Table 1: NYS Higher Education Guidelines Crosswalk

Category	RIT	Academic Affairs	Academic Affairs Plan
Reopening: plans for restarting campus operations including student, faculty, and staff return	University coordination of capacity, PPE, testing, residential living, operational activity, restart operations, extracurricular activities, vulnerable populations, and cleaning practices and protocols	Support university plan, practices, and protocols	Classrooms Class Schedule Teaching Modalities Advising Labs and Studios Library Density Physical Distancing
		Operational activity: Determine how classes, shared spaces, and activities may be adapted in various phases of return and operations (e.g., identify which classes will offer alternate approaches such as A/B schedules or remote instruction; appointment-only use of shared spaces, limiting number of individuals participating in in-person activities at any given time)	
Monitoring: policies to track health conditions on campus	University coordination of testing, tracing, and screening practices and protocols	Support university plan, processes, and protocols	
Containment: plans for how to respond to positive or suspected cases as well as preventative policies and practices	University coordination of isolation, quarantine, clearing, and communication practices and protocols	Support university plan, processes, and protocols	
Shutdown: contingency plans for decreasing on-campus activities and operations and/or closing the campus	University coordination for operational activity, move-out, and communication	Support university plan, processes, and protocols Operational activity: Include which operations will be decreased, scaled back, ramped down, or shutdown and which operations will be conducted remotely; include process to conduct orderly shutdown which may include phasing, milestones, and involvement of key personnel	Course Delivery Research