FAQs and Process for Remote Instruction Requests Related to CDC-Identified COVID-19 Risk Factors

November 18, 2020

As part of our continuing efforts to support the health and safety of our faculty members, we are sharing the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) regarding faculty requests for remote instruction assignments related to CDC-identified COVID-19 risk factors. These FAQs will provide useful information to Academic Faculty, Department Heads and Deans.

Requests for remote instruction for COVID-19 related health and safety concerns will be assessed by Human Resources and granted as appropriate while ensuring adequate in-person instruction during Spring 2021. Faculty members who have been instructed to teach in-person and have concerns about doing so due to a medical condition that places them in a higher risk group, have a household member or recipient of care in a higher risk group, those who are pregnant, or those who wish to seek Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Reasonable Accommodations related to Returning to the Workplace should contact Kerry Wilson, HR Business Partner, at klwilson@mines.edu.

FAQs for Academic Faculty:

- What is the process and who will make the decision on whether I can teach remotely?

Faculty members who have been instructed to teach in-person and have COVID-19 related health and safety concerns about doing so should contact Kerry Wilson, HR Business Partner, at klwilson@mines.edu to request Remote Instruction for Spring 2021 if:

- Faculty meets CDC guidelines for having an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19,
- Faculty lives with an individual identified as At-Risk for severe illness from COVID-19, and/or
- Faculty has concerns related to COVID-19 and pregnancy.

After initial review, Human Resources will inform the faculty member’s Department Head and Dean of the request and partner with them through the process to ensure consistency as much as possible. The Department Head and Dean will confer and obtain approval from the Provost on the decision. Once the decision is approved by the Provost, the decision will then be communicated in writing by Human Resources to the faculty member.

- Can I teach remotely if I teach an experiential course?

Experiential courses such as labs, studios, practicum, service learning and internships may not be conducive to remote instruction. If you are teaching one of these courses, please discuss with your Department Head what provisions can be made to allow you teach the course remotely. If it is not possible to teach the course remotely, as part of these discussions, the Department Head may need to assign a different course or other work.
• What information and paperwork does Human Resources require regarding my request?

There is a difference between an ADA accommodation vs. an accommodation under the CO Executive Order. If you do disclose that you have a potential serious medical condition, additional information will be required from you and your treating physician as required under the ADA. The ADA requires documentation to indicate a serious medical condition of the employee and Mines’ requirement to engage in the interactive dialogue process to determine what reasonable accommodation, if any, needs to be made to ensure the employee can meet the essential functions of their job. The final decision to accommodate, regardless of ADA, is a collaborative effort between Human Resources, Department Heads and Deans to ensure consistency as much as possible across these requests.

Please read “Colorado School of Mines Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Request Procedures for Employees and Job Applicants” for additional information or contact Kerry Wilson, HR Business Partner, at klwilson@mines.edu.

• Will the details of my situation with the request be kept confidential?

Any medical information pertaining to your request that is disclosed to Human Resources will be kept confidential. Please contact klwilson@mines.edu for questions pertaining to disclosures. It is not necessary or encouraged for you to share details of your situation with your Department Head, Dean, or the Provost.

• I have questions about my eligibility under CDC guidelines. Who should I contact?

You should contact Kerry Wilson, HR Business Partner, at klwilson@mines.edu.

• What resources are available to me if my request is denied?

The Provost has final authority over your request. Requests to teach remotely because you or a household member or recipient of care are at risk under CDC guidelines will be granted if possible. If granted, your Department Head and Dean will work with you to find suitable accommodations for your course or alternative teaching assignments that are amenable to remote instruction. Additionally, faculty who have a medical condition and would like to request formal accommodations other than remote instruction should contact Kerry Wilson, HR Business Partner, at klwilson@mines.edu.

FAQs for Department Heads and Deans:

• Who should review and makes decisions about the request? How is the decision communicated to the faculty member?

The faculty member will submit their request directly to Kerry Wilson, HR Business Partner, at klwilson@mines.edu. After initial review, Human Resources will inform the faculty member’s Department Head and Dean of the request and partner with them through the process to ensure consistency as much as possible. The Department Head and Dean will need to confer and obtain
approval from the Provost on the decision. Once the decision is approved by the Provost, the
decision will then be communicated in writing by Human Resources to the faculty member.

- How is the decision made?

Department Heads, with approval by their Dean and the Provost, should determine whether the
courses to be taught by the faculty member can be taught remotely. Experiential courses such as
labs, studios, practicum, service learning, and internships are not always conducive to remote
instruction. If a faculty member is teaching one of these non-classroom-based courses, you
should first determine whether it is possible to provide some provisions that would allow for
remote instruction. If not, you may reassign the faculty to a course that can be taught remotely.

Before a request to teach remotely is denied, the Provost will consult with Kerry Wilson, HR
Business Partner, to ensure all options have been explored for supporting the faculty member.

- Am I required to approve the request?

Mines supports providing the opportunity for remote instruction for all faculty with COVID risk
factors. Not approving the request means that the course assigned to the faculty is not conducive
to remote instruction. If that is the case, you should determine whether it is possible to provide
some provisions that would allow for remote instruction. If remote instruction is not possible,
consider reassigning the faculty to a course that can be taught remotely.

- What if a course the faculty member is teaching cannot be taught remotely?

If possible, you should provide some provisions that would allow for remote instruction. If
remote instruction is not possible, consider reassigning the faculty member to a course that can
be taught remotely.

Before a request to teach remotely is denied, consult with Kerry Wilson, HR Business Partner, to
ensure all options have been explored for supporting the faculty member.

- Can I ask the faculty to provide details on the nature of their eligibility under CDC
guidelines?

No, you should not ask the faculty for details on the nature of their eligibility. If a faculty
member shares details of their medical condition or situation, please remind them they are not
expected to share this information with you and discourage further disclosures. Any medical
information that is disclosed by a faculty member must be kept private. Please contact Kerry
Wilson, HR Business Partner, at klwilson@mines.edu for questions pertaining to disclosures.

- I have questions about the process or concerns about agreeing to allowing the faculty to
teach remotely. Who should I contact?

You should contact Kerry Wilson, HR Business Partner, at klwilson@mines.edu.