

**UC Santa Barbara Natural Reserve System University-Level Class Use COVID Plan**  
**Last Updated: 3/7/21**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In fulfillment of the [UC NRS mission](#), the 7 UC Santa Barbara Natural Reserves support instructional activities of the University of California and all institutions of higher education by facilitating the use of Reserves by University-level courses. Of this use, approximately 50% is by UCSB courses, and the remainder 50% of class use originates from other institutions of higher education, including other University of California campuses.

In March 2020, the Executive Director of the systemwide UC NRS determined that Reserve visitation will remain the authority of the respective campus NRS and Reserve staff. As such, the UCSB Natural Reserve system has worked closely with its UCSB Control Point, the Office of Research, to operate safely under all State, County and UC Santa Barbara requirements to implement a COVID-19 safe staged ramp-up of research activities. Since Spring 2020, the UCSB NRS has successfully and safely permitted critical research and maintenance activities at all 7 sites.

At UC Santa Barbara, in-person field experience classes not involving the NRS are permitted and currently taking place under current SB County Public Health guidance. Such classes are part of the department normal curriculum plan created in conjunction with the relevant divisional deans and assistant deans. As part of their field experience classes, other UC NRS campuses, including UC Santa Cruz, UC Irvine, UC Davis, UC Berkeley, and UC Merced have allowed for class use of Reserves, under campus-specific operating guidelines.

The information in this plan concerns the use of the 7 UCSB NRS sites to support in-person field experiences for University-level classes and collection of material for virtual teaching needs. This plan is based on the guiding principles and policy guidelines of the UCSB-approved UCSB NRS [COVID-19 Research Ramp Up Plan](#). All protocols and procedures detailed in the [COVID-19 Research Ramp Up Plan](#) will apply to University-level class users. Here we highlight the changes and additions to the [COVID-19 Research Ramp Up Plan](#) specific to Day and Overnight Use by University-level classes.

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

The process to request use of UCSB NRS Reserve sites by University classes must follow the protocols outlined in the [COVID-19 Research Ramp Up Plan](#). This includes the following 6 steps to be undertaken by a course instructor:

**Step 1.** Prior to Reserve use, seek and receive approval from their home institution/department to conduct the in-person outdoor coursework.

**Step 2.** Submit an application in the UC NRS [Reserve Application Management System \(RAMS\)](#).

- All users included in a RAMS reservation must have filled out a UC NRS liability waiver (accessible in RAMS).

**Step 3.** Submit a [COVID-19 Safety Plan \(via Google Form\)](#).

**Step 4.** Have class participants enroll in a self-reporting application to track and report daily symptoms. UCSB faculty, students and staff may use the [Daily Symptom Tracker](#). All non-UCSB users should use an alternate self-reporting health application detailed in section III.H. of the UCSB NRS [COVID-19 Research Ramp Up Plan](#).

**Step 5.** Acknowledge (as a checkbox within RAMS and the Safety Plan Google Form) that all class users have read the Reserve-specific COVID-19-related documents that include required COVID-19 UCSB NRS policies and procedures prior to use.

**Step 6.** Distribute the UCSB [Student Researcher Return to Campus Agreement](#) to all course participants. All course users must agree to the terms of this agreement, regardless of home institution.

After the above steps have been carried out, and due to the uniqueness of each application, as well as the Reserve-specific facilities, and localized weather conditions at each Reserve site, requests for University class use will all be evaluated by our UCSB NRS COVID review committee. The committee meets once per week and all requests for research and class use must be approved through this committee. The following includes the UCSB NRS requirements for Day Use and Overnight Use at Reserves.

### **Day Use by University Classes**

Procedures for day use of UCSB NRS Reserve sites must follow all protocols for day use as outlined in the approved [COVID-19 Research Ramp Up Plan](#). University class students and instructors at all UCSB NRS Reserve sites must:

- Wear appropriate face coverings at all times.
- Maintain a minimum of 6 foot physical distancing between individuals.
- Not enter any buildings with the exception of restrooms
- Travel to a Reserve is subject to home campus requirements for offsite group travel. The course instructor must determine appropriate travel protocols, which must be described in the submitted COVID 19 Safety Plan (Steps 1 and 3 above).

### **Overnight Use by University Classes**

Procedures for overnight use of UCSB NRS Reserve sites must follow all protocols for overnight use as outlined in the approved [COVID-19 Research Ramp Up Plan](#). The following provides specific guidelines for small classes (5-10 users or less) and large classes (greater than 10 users):

- ***Small Classes (5-10 users or less)***

Overnight users will be assigned their own bedroom, except in cases where users cohabit at their personal residences. The maximum capacity for overnight accommodations at each Reserve is dependent on layout, capacity, communal facilities, and safe use of vehicles. All small class participants must follow all COVID safety protocols as indicated in the UCSB NRS [COVID-19 Research Ramp up Plan](#), including social distancing, wearing of face coverings, and other CDC recommended human health safety guidelines. Any group activities must be conducted outdoors and participants will remain socially distanced and masked. COVID testing is required; Instructors must communicate via email to the Reserve Director prior to arrival, confirming that all participants have received a COVID test, and that all participants have tested negative no more than 3 days prior to arrival. Regardless of COVID test results, all class participants must still maintain all UCSB NRS COVID safety protocols as outlined in the [COVID-19 Research Ramp Up Plan](#).

- ***Large Classes (greater than 10 users)***

Large classes that exceed the available Reserve housing capacity limits of one person per bedroom may be allowed only if the classes have a COVID-mitigation plan involving a pre-course period of isolation and testing, and are able to form a 'self-contained' unit allowing them to safely share indoor spaces. COVID-mitigation plans are likely to vary widely depending on the class, Reserve location, state and local conditions. An example of a large class COVID-mitigation plan that has been approved and is in use at several UC NRS Reserve sites is the

plan for the UC Natural Reserve System [California Ecology and Conservation Course](#). COVID-mitigation plans for large class use of UCSB NRS Reserves will each be evaluated by the UCSB NRS COVID review committee.

Required elements of a Large class COVID-mitigation plan include:

- Pre-course isolation and testing. Instructors should provide information concerning period and method of isolation, when tests are taken and results. All isolation and testing protocols should follow [CDC guidelines](#).
- Restricted contact with anyone external to the self-contained class
- Contingency plans in the event that any member of the class tests positive for COVID. Contingency plans should address reporting, communication and isolation plans, as well as a plan to evacuate and receive health care if necessary.
- Travel to a Reserve is subject to home campus requirements for offsite group travel. The course instructor must determine appropriate travel protocols, which must be described in the submitted COVID 19 Safety Plan (Steps 1 and 3 above).

#### **UCSB NRS Response to Increased COVID risk**

The UCSB NRS will comply with all UC, UCSB campus, and state and county public health safety requirements. In the event that localized COVID infection rates increase, or variants of the virus are determined to introduce additional risk to the UC Reserve community, then the UCSB NRS is prepared to cease hosting class use of Reserves.