Background and Rationale:
The University is committed to ensuring the health and safety of members of the University community, as well as the surrounding Rochester community, for the upcoming (2020-2021) academic year given the COVID-19 pandemic. Practical operating guidelines are being developed to ensure a safe learning environment for all. In recognition of the important role that community engagement plays in the educational mission of the University, and the mutual benefits of community-engaged learning to our students and community partners, it is the university's expectation that community-engaged curricular activities will continue to be an essential part of coursework, and both in-person and online activities are permitted. The following guidelines are offered to encourage safe community engagement activities.

Guidelines for Conducting Community-Engaged Activities in Courses:
As both in-person and online curricular offerings are to occur in University coursework this fall, courses with community-engagement components will also be permitted to offer both in-person and online community-engaged learning. For in-person engagement, equivalent online activities must be offered in order to make the course accessible to students who are not able to be in Rochester or are uncomfortable with in-person activities. In addition, because collaboration between students, faculty and community members is a critical aspect of community-engaged coursework, in-person activities as part of community-engaged courses may take place off-campus, and community members who are collaborating with instructors in conducting community-engaged courses may participate in on-campus face-to-face activities as part of these courses. Campus guests must follow the guidelines for campus visitors described in the University’s restart plan (“Restrictions on Visitors Coming to Campus”) and also here: https://www.rochester.edu/coronavirus-update/guidance-on-fall-semester-events-guests-and-visitors/

Students may use University-sponsored platforms such as Zoom or Box to facilitate such interactions, and community partners may also be granted guest access to achieve outcomes pertinent to community-engaged courses. (Contact University IT to pursue access for guests).

For all in-person activities, whether on- or off-campus, faculty, students and community collaborators must adhere to regulations and recommendations established by New York State and the Monroe County Health Department, as outlined in the University’s Restart Plan. For off-campus activities, faculty and students must adhere to requirements of the off-campus site where the engagement activities occur. Spacing guidelines established by the off-campus location (density or distance) as well as other rules or guidelines established by the community partner organization should be provided to instructors and students prior to arrival and must be adhered to. At a minimum, students and instructors must maintain physical distancing (at least six feet between people), wear masks and wash hands before and after all activities. Students and instructors should complete health screenings at UR and at the community site (where required). Community partners engaging with students must complete a COVID-19 screening (such as ROC-COVID-19) on the day(s) of any in-person engagement, and be prepared to show documentation of their completion to University faculty or staff.
upon request. When planning in-person engagement, instructors must strive to conduct these activities outdoors whenever possible.

Any community-engaged research activities should adhere to the URMC Coronavirus: Guidance for Researchers. COVID-19 guidance for Human Subjects Research states precautions to protect members of the community from risk of exposure to COVID-19 during the research process.

All activities should be in compliance with the travel guidance provided by the University’s Restart Plan for fall 2020. If transportation is required for students to attend community events, activities, and meetings, whenever possible students must use socially-distanced, chartered transportation if arranged, or individual, personal transportation to and from sites as the best option to maintain social distancing. RTS is a viable transportation option. Visit the RTS COVID19 updates website for latest guidance and rules for riding the bus.

The University will maintain an accurate list of all faculty engaged in teaching community-engaged courses or conducting community-engaged research in order to facilitate rapid identification of the faculty, students, and community partners involved if pandemic conditions require. This will be overseen by the Vice Provost for Academic Administration and the Committee on Academic Planning, in concert with the Academic Community Engagement Collaborative, a sub-group of the University's steering committee for community engagement.