

University Policy

Title

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Policy on Classroom Recordings

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish clear rules for the recording of classroom proceedings at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (“UNC-Chapel Hill” or “University”).

Scope

This Policy applies to all UNC-Chapel Hill students, staff, faculty (including visiting faculty), teaching assistants, postdoctoral scholars, contractors, and vendors.

Media filming in classrooms is separately addressed by the University’s [Media on Campus Policy](#) and [Filming on Campus Procedure](#).

Policy

Policy Statement

UNC-Chapel Hill is committed to enhancing the educational experience through technology, including the recording of classroom proceedings.

Who Can Record or Access Classroom Recordings and the Permissions They Need

Students

Students may not record classes, including online classes, without express advance permission from the instructor teaching the class they wish to record. If a student needs to record a class in order to address a disability or other health condition, the University’s [Accessibility Resources & Service](#) must first approve the student’s use of recording as an accommodation.

Faculty (or Instructors)

Instructors may record their own classes for instructional purposes, including, for example, to enhance the learning experience, to allow for online/hybrid classes, to provide access to students who may have missed or need to review a lesson, for self-evaluation and course planning, and/or to

supplement asynchronous learning. Instructors should describe any intentions to record their classes in their syllabus.

Sample Syllabus Statement on Classroom Recordings:

Classroom Recordings and Privacy Notice

This course may involve the use of audio and/or video recordings for instructional purposes. Recordings may be used to support student learning, provide approved disability accommodations, or facilitate review of course content. By participating in this course, you consent to being recorded as part of the class environment.

- Recordings will be made available only to students enrolled in the course through secure University platforms (e.g., Canvas, Panopto).
- These recordings are intended solely for educational use and may not be shared, downloaded, or redistributed without permission.
- If you have concerns about being recorded or require disability accommodations, please contact me and/or Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) as early as possible.

Disclaimer: In rare cases, the University may record or access classroom recordings without prior notice for purposes such as investigations or legal compliance. These instances are governed by University policy.

The University may record a class or access existing classroom recordings for any instructional purpose with permission from the Instructor being recorded except as provided below.

Academic units may develop their own rules for recording classes offered within the unit, provided those rules comply with this Policy.

As part of regularly scheduled evaluations in the University's tenure and promotion process, and consistent with the policies of the relevant academic unit, the University may also record a class or access existing classroom recordings for the purpose of evaluating the performance of the instructor teaching the class to ensure the quality of education provided by the University. When the University records a class or accesses an existing classroom recording for this purpose, the University will:

- Provide at least seven calendar days' prior notice to the instructor; and
- Collaborate with the instructor to identify a class (or classes) that is representative of the overall course.

The University may record a class or access existing classroom recordings without the permission or knowledge of the instructor being recorded for the following purposes:

- To gather evidence in connection with an investigation into alleged violations of University policy, when authorized in writing by the Provost and the Chief Human Resources Officer; and
- For any other lawful purpose, when authorized in writing by the Provost and the Office of University Counsel.

- **Notification of Recording**

To promote transparency and respect for all participants, the University requires that individuals be notified when a class or meeting is being recorded except as provided above. Notification procedures include the following:

- Faculty and staff must provide clear notice to students and other participants at the beginning of any class session or meeting that is being recorded. This may be done verbally, in writing (e.g., in the syllabus or meeting agenda), or through automated system notifications when using University-supported recording platforms.
- When recordings are made using University-supported platforms (e.g., Zoom, Panopto, or Canvas), system-generated notifications and visual indicators (such as a red recording icon) must remain visible throughout the recording.
- In rare cases where recordings are made without prior notice—such as those authorized under investigative or legal exceptions outlined in this policy—participants will not be notified in advance.
- When appropriate and permissible, individuals whose participation was recorded without prior notice may be informed after the fact, particularly if the recording is used in a way that affects them directly (e.g., in a disciplinary proceeding).

Questions about notification requirements should be directed to the Office of University Counsel or the Office of the Provost.

Keeping the Recordings

Copyright and Intellectual Property

The University affirms that instructors retain copyright ownership of their original instructional materials, including classroom recordings they create, in accordance with University policy and applicable law.

Instructors who create recordings of their own instructional content (e.g., lectures, presentations, or course materials) retain the copyright to those recordings unless otherwise agreed upon in writing. These recordings may not be used, distributed, or modified by the University or others without the instructor's explicit permission, except as permitted under this policy for limited, authorized purposes (e.g., investigations or accessibility accommodations).

When the University records a class or accesses existing recordings without the instructor's knowledge or consent, such recordings are used solely for the specific, authorized purpose outlined in this policy and do not transfer ownership or diminish the instructor's intellectual property rights, if any.

In cases where teaching assistants, postdoctoral scholars, guest speakers, or others contribute to recorded instruction, the University encourages clear communication and mutual understanding regarding ownership and use of those contributions. Questions about ownership or rights should be directed to the Office of University Counsel.

This provision is intended to protect academic freedom and uphold the intellectual property rights of instructors while balancing the University's responsibilities related to compliance, accessibility, and institutional integrity.

Authorized sharing of the recordings

Students may not share recordings unless authorized by the recorded instructor.

Instructors may share recordings for academic and professional purposes, subject to all applicable law, including the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act ("FERPA"). In particular, before sharing a recording outside of the University, instructors must edit out any portions of recordings that contain personally identifiable information about students, including images, questions, or commentary and discussion by students.

Classroom recordings may be used or distributed beyond their original instructional purpose only under specific, authorized circumstances. Examples of such uses include, but are not limited to:

Internal University Processes

Recordings may be shared with University entities such as the Honor Court, the University Compliance Office, or other investigative or adjudicative bodies when relevant to a formal inquiry or proceeding. Such sharing must be authorized by the Office of University Counsel and, where applicable, the Office of Student Conduct.

Faculty Use for Professional Development

Instructors may use recordings of their own classes for purposes such as self-evaluation, peer review, or professional development. These uses do not require additional approval but must comply with University privacy guidelines and may be supported by the Office of the Provost.

Research and Scholarly Activities

Faculty may review classroom recordings to inform the development of research questions or scholarly inquiry. Any use of recordings for research involving human subjects must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and must comply with all applicable consent and data protection requirements.

Instructional Support and Accessibility

Recordings may be shared with students enrolled in the course to support learning and accessibility, including accommodations for students with disabilities. Such use must comply with guidance from the Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) office and the Office of the University Registrar.

All uses and distributions of recordings must comply with applicable University policies, including those governing privacy, data protection, academic freedom, and intellectual property. Questions about appropriate use should be directed to the Office of University Counsel.

Unauthorized sharing of recordings

All other University employees, contractors, or vendors must not share recordings unless required or authorized by law or policy, or if the new recipient of the recordings is approved for access to existing recordings as addressed above.

Public Records and Legal Compliance

Classroom recordings created or maintained by the University may be subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law (N.C.G.S. § 132-1), which defines public records broadly to include materials made or received in connection with the transaction of public business by public agencies. However, the release or disclosure of such recordings is subject to some limitations, including but not limited to student privacy protections and intellectual property considerations. Requests for access to classroom recordings under public records law will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Public Records Office to ensure compliance with all legal obligations and protections.

Penalties for unauthorized access or misuse

University employees and students who make, access, or share recordings outside the scope of this policy may face disciplinary consequences, up to and including termination or dismissal, under applicable student, faculty, and staff policies.

Use of Excerpts and Required Disclaimers

When excerpts from classroom recordings are used or distributed—whether for instructional, administrative, or research purposes—any disclaimers, notices, or contextual statements included in the original recording must be preserved and clearly presented alongside the excerpt. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Statements regarding the intended audience or purpose of the recording;
- Disclaimers about the confidentiality or sensitivity of the content;
- Notices related to copyright, privacy, or consent.

The omission or alteration of such disclaimers is not permitted, as doing so may misrepresent the context or violate University policy. Individuals preparing or sharing excerpts are responsible for ensuring that all relevant disclaimers are retained and visible.

Questions about appropriate excerpting or required disclaimers should be directed to the Office of University Counsel or the Office of the Provost.

How recordings are stored

Recordings must be stored securely and in compliance with all applicable law and policy, including, but not limited to, the University's [Information Security Policy](#) and [University Data Governance Policy](#).

How long recordings are retained

The University will retain recordings in compliance with the University's [Records Management Policy](#).

Reporting on Recordings

The University shall compile and publish an annual report documenting:

- The number of requests made to record or access classroom recordings without notice;
- The number of requests approved; and

- The number of recordings actually made or accessed under this provision. This report shall be made available to the Faculty Council and other relevant governance bodies to support institutional accountability and oversight.

Exceptions

None.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, a **class** refers to any organized instructional session, whether credit-bearing or non-credit-bearing, that is led by a faculty member, instructor, or teaching assistant. This includes lectures, seminars, labs, discussion sections, and other instructional formats, regardless of delivery mode (in-person, hybrid, or online).

A **classroom** refers to any physical or virtual space where a class is conducted. This includes traditional lecture halls, seminar rooms, laboratories, and digital platforms such as learning management systems (e.g., Canvas), video conferencing tools (e.g., Zoom), or other University-supported instructional technologies.

Instructor refers to any individual responsible for delivering, facilitating, or supporting instruction in a class or classroom setting. This includes, but is not limited to, faculty members (tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track), teaching assistants (TAs), postdoctoral scholars, adjunct instructors, visiting lecturers, and guest speakers. The term applies regardless of employment status, academic rank, or whether the instructional role is primary or supplementary.

A **recording** refers to any audio, video, or screen capture—whether live or asynchronous—that documents classroom activity, including lectures, discussions, presentations, or student interactions. This includes recordings made by faculty, students, or the University using University-supported or personal devices.

Participants refers to any individuals present in a class or classroom setting, whether physically or virtually. This includes faculty, instructors, teaching assistants, enrolled students, guest speakers, and any other individuals whose voices, images, or contributions may be captured in a recording.

Distribution refers to the sharing, posting, transmitting, or otherwise making accessible any portion of a classroom recording to individuals or entities beyond the original instructional context. This includes sharing within the University (e.g., with administrative offices, committees, or other academic units) and external sharing (e.g., with the public, media, or third parties), whether through University platforms, email, cloud storage, or other means.

Related Requirements

External Regulations

- Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)
- [North Carolina General Records Schedule](#)

University Policies, Standards, and Procedures

- [FERPA Policies and Procedures](#)
- [Information Security Policy](#)
- [University Data Governance Policy](#)

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