



FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

COVID-19 Campus Guide



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Introduction

The guide provides guidelines for a safe and healthy campus and information related to our COVID-19 processes. The university has a COVID-19 Operations Team that reviews the state and federal guidelines related to COVID-19, and assists with testing, contact tracing, statistical data and establishing procedures for the campus community. The guide will be updated as applicable pending new guidance and processes.

The university administration will continue to monitor and follow MA DPH and CDC guidelines when it comes to health and safety protocols. Health and safety requirements include masks, vaccination, sanitation, contact tracing and testing.

Please review the guidelines and recommendations. If you have any questions please contact Human Resources at extension 3172 or hrcovid@fitchburgstate.edu or the Office of Environmental Health and Safety at environmentalsafety@fitchburgstate.edu.

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Vaccination Requirements

For the fall 2021 semester, undergraduate and graduate students who are attending in-person classes, conducting research on campus, living in residence halls, or participating in campus life activities are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Students who have not complied with the vaccination requirement must provide proof of full vaccination and or request an exemption by Friday, Oct. 15. If this information is not provided, students will be disenrolled from Fitchburg State University and barred from the campus effective Monday, Oct. 18. Failure to comply with the COVID-19 vaccine mandate is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Employees are required to be vaccinated to work on campus. Employees not working on campus during the fall semester are required to document their vaccination status when coming to campus. The MSCA, APA and AFSCME have agreed to masks and vaccination requirements and have signed MOA's. Employees are asked to complete vaccination attestation forms and attach a copy of their CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card. Employees who may require an exemption for either medical or religious beliefs are asked to complete the same attestation form and complete the appropriate section for an exemption. A medical note from a medical professional is required for a medical exemption, or if requesting a religious exemption, a statement regarding a sincerely held religious belief attesting that the vaccination conflicts with such belief.

Employees who are not vaccinated and have an approved exemption are required to test weekly. Employees who are required to test weekly but fail to do so, will not be able to continue to work on campus as defined in their respective union MOA's. Non-unionized employees will be released from their position for non-compliance. Students who have an approved exemption must test weekly if they fail to do so they will receive progressive disciplinary action.

The Office of Human Resource is responsible for tracking all vaccination and exemption status for employees and monitoring the weekly testing requirements for exempted employees. Employees will meet with Human Resources if they are not in compliance as defined in the appropriate MOA language.

Student Affairs continues to contact students who have not yet met the requirement. Human Resources will continue to gather appropriate documentation for new staff to maintain compliance. The number of vaccinated students and staff continues to increase. We encourage staff and students to review the dashboard weekly at [COVID-19 19 Testing and Vaccination Data](#).

Reasonable Accommodations

Employees may request reasonable accommodation under the American Disability Act. The accommodation process is an interactive approach to determine what if any accommodation can be made to allow the employee to perform the essential functions of their position.

“A "reasonable accommodation" is a change in the work environment that allows an individual with a disability to have an equal opportunity to perform a job's essential functions, or enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.” If a particular accommodation would result in an undue hardship, an employer is not required to provide it but still must consider other accommodations that do not pose an undue hardship.”

If an employee discloses that they have a specific medical condition or disability that puts them at increased risk of influenza or coronavirus complications, the university will ask them to describe the type of assistance they think will be needed. Employees should not assume that all disabilities increase the risk of influenza or coronavirus complications. A medical statement will be requested to approve an accommodation request in most cases.

Mask Requirements

Employees and students are required to wear masks while indoors. Masks may be removed when eating and drinking. Employees who are preparing food or drink in break or kitchen areas, should keep their masks on until they are eating and drinking. Once the employee is done eating and/or drinking they should place their masks back on their face, covering their nose and mouth. Employees who have a private office may remove their mask when alone, with the door open or closed. Staff working in areas alone may remove their mask, but must place their masks back on their face, covering their nose and mouth when another member of the campus enters the space they are working. Office areas who have multiple staff working together, must wear their masks throughout the day. Managers may provide intermittent mask breaks during the day for staff.

Employees must wear face coverings when using university transportation. If an employee requires an accommodation to the mask requirement please contact Human Resources to discuss the request and complete the [Request for Reasonable Accommodation](#) form.

The university will evaluate the need for mask wearing over the academic year and adapt the protocols according to the data and recommendations by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MA DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

If an employee or student may need a mask, each department on campus has received disposable masks. Please provide a mask to anyone requesting or needing a mask. Human Resources will provide five Fitchburg State University masks to new employees during onboarding.

Contact Tracing, Testing, Quarantine, and Isolation

Staff and faculty who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms must refrain from all in-person activities on campus to include in person classes, meetings, and gatherings, until they have tested for COVID-19 and received a negative result. Employees who are exhibiting symptoms should test off campus.

Employees should notify the Office of Human Resources if experiencing symptoms. They should also contact their primary care physician or may contact the Community Health Connections located at 375 Nichols Road, Fitchburg 01420 or 175 Connors Street, Gardner 01440 for testing.

VACCINATED

A person is considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 when 14 days have passed after receiving the second dose of either the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines or 14 days have passed since receiving a single dose of the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine.

UNVACCINATED/PARTIAL VACCINATION

A person is considered unvaccinated for COVID-19 if 14 days has not passed since receiving the second dose of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine, or one dose of Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) vaccine, or if a person has not been vaccinated at all.

COVID-19 Symptoms

CDC recommends that anyone with any [symptoms of COVID-19](#) get tested, regardless of vaccination status or prior infection. If a person is tested because they have symptoms or were

potentially exposed to the virus they should stay away from others pending test results and follow the advice of their health care provider or a public health professional.

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

DEFINITION OF COVID-19 POSITIVE – The person who currently has or recently contracted the COVID-19 virus. This person is considered actively contagious and can potentially transmit the virus to other individuals.

CONTACT TRACING – Contact Tracers will contact students, staff and faculty who have tested positive for COVID-19. Employees or students will be asked to provide the names/information of close contacts which is defined as being within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period while they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or within the 48 hours prior to symptom onset.

TESTING – The CDC recommends who should be tested for COVID-19; the university has added some precautionary measures in addition to the CDC guidance:

VACCINATED

- Employees who have COVID-19 symptoms should not come to work and should contact their primary care provider to be tested off campus. Faculty should not attend class if they are exhibiting symptoms.

- Employees who receive a positive test result from an off campus testing provider must contact Human Resources.
- People who have had [close contact](#) (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) with someone with confirmed COVID-19.
 - A Human Resources representative or a university contact tracer will contact faculty and/or staff who have been identified as a close contact to anyone on campus and will provide additional guidance and information.
 - If an employee or student learns they are a close contact off campus; employees should contact Human Resources and students should contact Student Affairs.
 - Faculty and staff who are vaccinated and considered a close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) will be requested to test between 3-5 days from exposure to a confirmed positive case as a precautionary step. They may continue with normal activities if they remain symptom free.
 - Employees may test on campus if they have no symptoms.
 - Employees should continue to monitor symptoms for 14 days.
 - If they experience any symptoms after the exposure, they should contact their primary care provider and be tested off campus, not come to campus and contact Human Resources. Students should not attend classes and should notify Student Affairs and their faculty.

Faculty and staff who are not considered close contacts would take no action to test. A close contact is defined within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period if the person is not fully vaccinated.

UNVACCINATED

If a faculty or staff member is unvaccinated and considered a close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) they must quarantine for 7 days and test for COVID-19 between day 5 and 7 after exposure.

- A member of the HR team will contact them to discuss quarantine.
- Faculty or staff members may be released from quarantine on day 8 if they have had no COVID-19 symptoms, they are tested between day 5 - 7 after exposure during the quarantine period using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to detect the presence of the virus and test negative.
- Faculty or staff members must continue to monitor for symptoms for 14 days from the start of their quarantine period.
- Unvaccinated employees are required to test weekly for COVID-19.

Positive for COVID-19 – Isolation

A person who tests positive for the COVID-19 virus must isolate to prevent the transmission of the virus to other individuals. The person's isolation period is 10 days from either date of positive test or onset of symptoms. They may resume normal activities on day 11 if fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and symptoms have improved. Symptoms may linger such as cough or loss of taste and smell as an example.

COVID-19 Positive Within the Last (90) Days

Employees who have been positive with COVID-19 and develop symptoms again, must refrain from all in-person activities on campus to include classes, sports and/or in person meetings and gatherings or work until they are symptom free. Students should notify the Office of Student Affairs and employees should notify Human Resources that they are experiencing symptoms. They should also contact their primary care physician or may contact the Community Health Connections located at 375 Nichols Road, Fitchburg 01420 or 175 Connors Street, Gardner 01440

Employees who have had COVID-19 should test for COVID-19 in this case only if they are experiencing symptoms. They should notify the testing site that they have had COVID-19 in the last 90 days.

If they are positive, they must be isolated for 10 days from either the onset of symptoms or from the date of the positive test, whichever came first. They may resume normal activities on day 11 if fever free for 24 hours without the use of medication and symptoms have improved. Symptoms may linger such as cough or loss of taste and smell as an example.

Negative Test Results

The university does not contact students, faculty or staff who have tested negative for COVID-19. Employees may retrieve their results by logging into the [Broad testing portal](#). Employees should provide their Fitchburg State University email address if testing on site. They will receive instructions on how to login into the portal to access the results of their test.

Campus Testing

Employees may schedule an appointment: [Covid-19 Test](#) or walk in during testing hours.

Employees regardless of vaccination status may test at any time on campus if they are not currently experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. The university does not provide testing for individuals who are currently experiencing symptoms.

Days/Times: Mondays through Thursdays, 10:00am-noon; 1:00pm-6:00pm
Fridays, 10:00am-noon; 1:00pm-3:00pm

Location: Hammond Hall Campus Center, Room G01

Employees should contact their primary health care professional if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and or have been exposed and follow the guidance for testing. Employees may also contact the Action Community Health Center, our campus health services partner, located in Fitchburg. The center is open to employees to be tested if they have been exposed or have COVID-19 symptoms, employees may also contact the center regarding vaccinations.

ACTION COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Locations at 375 Nichols Road, Fitchburg 01420 or 175 Connors Street, Gardner 01440.

Faculty/Staff Positive Cases – Remote Work

FACULTY AND LIBRARIANS - If a faculty or librarian tests positive they should not come to work whether they exhibit symptoms or not. The MSCA's, *Health and Safety MOA*, "requires any faculty member or librarian who tests positive for COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, to isolate according to CDC guidelines. Such unit members shall be allowed to work remotely during such isolation periods." Once the isolation period is over, faculty will return to their original course modality.

The MSCA's Vaccination MOA provides additional guidance, "unit members who are unable to work shall be required to use accrued sick, personal or vacation (librarians) leave, or take an unpaid leave of absence until they are permitted to work on campus. Unit members will be permitted to use COVID-19 temporary emergency paid sick leave, should such leave be available."

STAFF - If a staff member (APA, Non-Unit, AFSCME) tests positive they should not come to work whether they exhibit symptoms or not. The AFSCME and APA MOA's provide the following guidance, "unit members who test positive for COVID-19 shall isolate and may work remotely if they are medically able." In such cases where employees are not able to work, they will be required to use their sick, personal, compensatory (AFSCME) or vacation leave or other union benefits as defined by their unions MOA or an unpaid leave of absence until they are permitted to work on campus. Unit members will be permitted to use COVID-19 temporary emergency paid sick leave, should such leave be available. Employees whose jobs must be performed on campus will utilize leave during their isolation period. Employees who are contracted employees (part time) receive sick benefits under the [Massachusetts Earned Sick Time](#).

Non unit professionals will be afforded the same remote options as the unionized staff and use accrued benefits defined above.

If faculty or staff have family members in their immediate household who contract COVID-19 or are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 they should contact Human Resources. An HR representative will provide appropriate guidance on next steps. If the employee needs to remain home to care for the family member, their contractual benefits will be utilized. The union benefits include sick accruals to be used for family members. ([Collective-Bargaining](#)) If other paid time benefits are available, employees may use those accruals per the collective bargaining agreements. If a faculty member must remain home due to COVID-19 they may teach remotely during that time if they are medically able.

Students – COVID-19 Communication Process

Students who test off campus and are positive for COVID-19 are **required** to contact Student Affairs. Student Affairs will notify the contact tracing team of an off campus positive. If a student tests on campus and is positive the contact tracing team receives the positive results and contacts the student. Student Affairs is notified of positive student cases.

Students who are positive receive notification from a university contact tracer not to come to campus if they are commuters; residential students are moved to isolation spaces or may go home for their isolation period.

Whether the positive is from off-campus or on campus testing, the contact tracing team will contact the student to determine who they have been in close contact with and gather other

pertinent information. Students testing positive must be isolated for ten days regardless of being vaccinated or unvaccinated.

A university contact tracer and/or Human Resources representative will notify faculty if a student who has tested positive for COVID-19 has attended their class, and or attended class within 48 hours of testing positive or the onset of symptoms. The MSCA Health and Safety MOA does require that faculty are notified of a positive case if a student has attended their in-person class, in accordance with contact tracing protocols established by local health officials. If a student has not attended a class within this period of time, the faculty will not be contacted.

The student is asked what classes they have attended and if there were any close contacts. The faculty will be asked about the class setup, class activities, if they were a close contact to the student and other related information to assist the contact tracing process.

Faculty should not share the name of the student who has tested positive with other students. Faculty may share that a student has tested positive in the class and remind students that regardless of vaccination status they may be tested on campus as a precaution preferably 3-5 days after exposure. They may also share that if a student was named as a close contact, they should receive a call from a university contact tracer.

STUDENTS POSITIVE FOR COVID-19

Student Affairs sends an email to the student's faculty members if a student will be out of class due to COVID-19. Students are encouraged to work directly with their faculty regarding missed assignments/coursework. Faculty are encouraged to provide assistance as they would normally do if there was a student absence. If the course is hybrid the student may, if medically able, join the class remotely. This option is only if the faculty can accommodate a remote option to join the class. **Students are not required to provide faculty with negative test results prior to returning to classes.** The COVID-19 Operations team is monitoring the days a student must isolate and/or quarantine and are released on the appropriate day.

If students in the class are considered close contacts, the contact tracing team will notify the students and provide guidance on next steps. If the close contact is vaccinated, they will be required to test on day 3 -5 after exposure and may continue normal activities if they have no symptoms. They are asked to continue to monitor for any symptoms for 14 days. The COVID-19 Operations team is tracking close contact testing for compliance.

If the close contact is unvaccinated, they are required to quarantine for 7 days and test between days 5 - 7. If they test negative, they may be released from quarantine on day 8. Faculty are notified that the student will not be in class.

If the student has symptoms and chooses not to test they will be required to remain in quarantine for ten days from the date of symptoms onset.

NEGATIVE COVID-19 TEST RESULTS

Students may continue with all normal activities once they receive a negative test result for COVID-19.

In Person Learning

The university will continue with in person learning as long as the positive rates for COVID-19 remain low. There is no specific percentage that has been determined by the university at this time to change from in person learning to remote. The administrative team will continue to monitor our positive rates, publish them weekly and assess our percentage of positive cases with the local Board of Health and other state entities. The staff and faculty will be provided with notification in a timely manner of any changes to in person learning pending any urgent needs to transition more quickly.

COVID-19 Safety

If faculty and staff members have concerns regarding overall health and safety, please contact the Environmental Health and Safety office at extension 3756 or 4801 or at environmentalsafety@fitchburgstate.edu. For policy and procedures related to COVID-19, please contact Human Resources at extension 3172 or email hrcovid@fitchburgstate.edu.

University Indoor Community Events

The university will host several community events on campus that draw external community members. Visitors will be asked to wear masks in accordance with the face mask requirement when on campus. Members of the Fitchburg State University community who plan to host an indoor event on campus that will include external guests must adhere to the following COVID-19 guidelines/checklist:

- Event space (conference rooms, classrooms, etc.) reservations need to be confirmed through EMS.
- All visitors attending an indoor, on-campus event must complete the university's [COVID-19 attestation form](#). The link to the form can be sent to attendees in advance and the completed forms can be printed and brought to the event. Forms must also be made available onsite for guests to complete upon entrance.
- Any visitor who presents a valid Fitchburg State OneCard does not need to complete a form.
- If a guest does not present a valid Fitchburg State identification card, they need to complete an [COVID-19 attestation form](#).
- Guests not able or willing to comply with the attestation requirements will not be permitted to attend the event.

Campus Visitors

While vaccination of all visitors is highly recommended in order to help us continue to provide a healthy and safe environment, proof of vaccination will not be required in order for a visitor to be on campus. Visitors will be asked to wear masks in accordance with the face mask requirement when on campus.

Travel Guidance

- If you [travel in the United States](#), you do not need to get tested before or after travel or self-quarantine after travel.
- You will still be [required to wear a mask](#) on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States, and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations. Employees using the shuttle service on campus will be required to wear a face covering while riding on the shuttle.
- You need to pay close attention to [the situation at your international destination](#) before traveling outside the United States.
 - You do NOT need to get tested before leaving the United States unless your destination requires it.
 - You still need to [show a negative test result](#) or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before boarding an international flight to the United States.
 - You should still get tested 3-5 days after international travel.

- You do NOT need to self-quarantine after arriving in the United States.

University Guidelines

HYGIENE/HAND WASHING AND SANITIZER

Employees are encouraged to continue with good hygiene practice. Employees should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds throughout the day. Hand washing should be performed after being in a public place, after riding on any public transportation, after touching frequently used items or surfaces, or after blowing your nose, coughing and sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.

DISINFECTING AND SANITIZING

The CDC's research shows that the risk of infection through contact with contaminated surfaces is low. The university will clean high touch areas routinely. If an area has a known positive case of COVID-19, it will be cleaned and disinfected. Employees may continue the practice of disinfecting/sanitizing commonly touched equipment such as the multi-function devices, phones, and other departmental equipment for their own comfort. Employees may continue the practice of wiping down items used on their desk, shared counter spaces, etc. CPM will continue to provide cleaning spray and paper towels to each department. Departments must request the cleaning spray and paper towels to be refilled by calling extension x3115.

PERSONAL SPACE

There are no social distancing requirements, with that said the CDC maintains within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period for close contact guidelines. Employees should remain mindful of providing personal space when meeting and speaking with others. When talking and meeting with other employees, ensure that your colleagues are comfortable with the amount of space between you and them.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Social interaction establishes feelings of well-being and enhances work interactions where trust, collaboration, and positivity are present. When employees feel valued and respected during social interactions, it improves perceived well-being. We encourage employees to begin to interact with their peers one on one to reinforce positive experiences within the work environment.

TECHNOLOGY

Due to the pandemic, many departments had to review their current in person processes and establish new automated processes and procedures using technology to meet business needs. Employees and managers should review these processes and determine where efficiencies have been achieved. We encourage the continued adaptation of electronic processes, to provide a strong customer experience to our campus constituents with a blend of in person services and automation. With the return of all students to campus, it will provide an opportunity for all offices to review the advances they have made and how this may impact our business process with students on campus.

OFFICES, CLASSROOM SPACE AND MEETING SPACES

Staff and faculty may resume use of meeting and office spaces on campus effective May 29, 2021, at the occupancy prior to COVID-19.

Culture of Care

The university promotes a culture of collective accountability for the health and safety of ourselves and each other. We encourage all members of the campus community to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Employees should listen, validate and respond empathically and supportively to all members of the community as we return to onsite work. There are many things you can do to support yourself:

Take care of your body.

- Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.
- Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, and get plenty of sleep.
- Make time to unwind and do some activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about how you are feeling.
- Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities.
- Contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#)