



**Connecticut State
Colleges & Universities**

MEMO

TO: College Regional Presidents, Presidents and CEOs
FROM: President Terrence Cheng
RE: Fall Reopening Guidance
DATE: August 19, 2021

I am writing to share COVID 19 related expectations for the Aug. 26 start of classes. Please note, should circumstances change regarding the pandemic or there are updates in state/federal guidelines, we may revise this guidance. It remains our hope that, with increasing rates of vaccination and a decreasing caseload, we will be able to relax or eliminate some restrictions for vaccinated individuals during the semester. In addition, institutions may need to adjust practices to address local conditions during the semester working closely with system office. Finally, system office leadership is working to achieve an agreement with the CSCU bargaining units related to vaccine requirements for all employees. We will issue further guidance specific to employees when negotiations are completed.

Thank you for your hard work and support. Let's continue to work in a spirit of patience and cooperation. As a community we will keep each other safe and provide a teaching and learning environment that is transformative.

Guidelines for the Fall reopening (as of 8/19)

Virus Mitigation

Vaccines

According to the CDC, COVID vaccines are safe and effective at preventing COVID 19 infection and virtually eliminating severe illness and death. Infections happen in only a small proportion of people who are fully vaccinated and when these infections do occur, they tend to be mild. However, if fully vaccinated individuals become infected with the Delta variant, there is some evidence they can spread the virus, though for a shorter duration than can unvaccinated people.

For the fall semester, the BOR has required COVID-19 immunization for all credit and non-credit students with the allowance of exemptions for medical and non-medical reasons. Campuses will continue to coordinate with the state Department of Public Health to advertise and host vaccine clinics to promote access to these important vaccines.

[Student vaccination FAQs \(ct.edu\)](#)

Please note: Only individuals designated by the President/CEO or COVID Coordinator are permitted to ask students their vaccine status and to change the parameters of their school activities based on vaccine status. The names of unvaccinated students will not be shared with faculty and staff. Students should not be asked to disclose their vaccination status in the classroom or outside of the classroom.

Weekly COVID Testing

Weekly testing will take place on campus for students who are unvaccinated or do not provide proof of their vaccine status. A testing vendor will coordinate with the college to provide testing several times per week on campus or available through local providers. The testing vendor will bill student's insurance where possible or the cost will be covered by the state. More information specific to the weekly testing program will be available soon.

Vaccinated students will not be tested as part of the weekly screening program.

Quarantine/Isolation/Contact Tracing

All individuals should watch for [Symptoms of COVID-19 | CDC](#), and if they have symptoms, should be tested and stay away from others. Symptoms can arise 2-14 days after exposure to the virus.

Per CDC guidance,

- You **quarantine** when you might have been exposed to the virus. Quarantine means to stay home and away from other people outside the home.
- You **isolate** when you have been infected with the virus, even if you don't have symptoms. To isolate means the sick person stays away from *everyone*, including people in their home.

Should an employee or student test positive for COVID they are required to notify the COVID Coordinator, isolate for 10 days and not return to work or class until free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, other symptoms are improving and the COVID Coordinator has confirmed they can return safely to school. [COVID-19: When to Quarantine | CDC](#)

The COVID Coordinator will work with the local public health department and support contact tracing so that any individuals considered close contacts can be notified. A contact is defined by the CDC as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. For those considered a close contact who **ARE NOT** vaccinated, they should get a COVID test within 3-5 days of exposure, are not to return to work or class for 14 days from date of exposure and the COVID Coordinator has confirmed they can return safely to school.

People who are fully vaccinated **DO NOT** need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19. However, fully vaccinated people should be tested 3-5 days after their exposure. Should the vaccinated close contact get a positive test result or experience symptoms, they must self-isolate for 10 days or until fever is gone for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, other symptoms are improving and the COVID Coordinator has confirmed they can return safely to school.

Physical Distancing

- **Outside:** If you want to spend time with people who don't live with you, outdoors is the safer choice! You are less likely to be exposed to COVID-19 during outdoor activities, even without the use of masks. Physical distancing will not be required outside of buildings except as deemed necessary by the institution such as large events with mixed of vaccinated and unvaccinated people where both physical distancing and masks may be required.
- **Inside, for vaccinated AND unvaccinated individuals:** DPH has indicated classrooms are low-risk spaces due to the student vaccination requirement and the universal wearing of masks. Fall classroom spaces have been arranged in most cases at a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing. In addition, office areas, particularly those that serve students, have been arranged with a minimum of 3 feet of physical distancing wherever possible.

Masking

- **Outside:** Masking will not be required outside of buildings. However, we strongly encourage those who are not vaccinated to continue to wear masks outside. As noted above, campus leaders may deem masks necessary at certain outdoor larger events with mixture of vaccinated and unvaccinated populations in attendance.
- **Inside:** At this time, because of current virus conditions, wearing face coverings (multi-layer cotton mask recommended) over the nose and mouth is required inside all campus buildings for both vaccinated and unvaccinated students and employees. This includes offices, conference/meeting rooms, event spaces, classrooms, libraries and laboratories, etc.
- All visitors—including contractors, delivery personnel, students in enrichment courses such as boat safety or computer courses, high schools students engaged in dual enrollment or continuing education courses, employees in business-sponsored training programs, parents with children in early childhood centers, and similar groups of intermittent attendees at the campuses must also be masked indoors.
 - College campuses with middle colleges on premise should consider students and staff as visitors requiring masks and physical distancing. Efforts should be made to limit the interactions between the middle college students and the college student body outside of the classroom to mitigate the spread of the virus between groups such as different eating areas or times, and appointments for library and other resources areas.
 - Colleges that host on campus events should consider all attendees as visitors requiring masks and physical distancing. Tracking attendance is strongly encouraged should contact tracing be required due to notification of a positive case.
- **Inside (exceptions):** Exceptions will be made in the following circumstances:
 - Individuals working alone in an enclosed space (an office, research lab, or area with a door or cubicle with walls that extend at least 30 inches above the desktop).
 - Some students and employees, who have received accommodations, may wear face shields instead of masks.

We will continue to evaluate indoor masking guidelines, with the hope that these can be further relaxed or eliminated based on CDC and DPH guidance for vaccinated individuals.

Requesting an Accommodation/Exemption

Faculty or staff who wish to seek a medical exemption or disability-related accommodation are asked to contact HR shared services (HR). Students who wish to seek medical/disability accommodations should contact the Disability Services offices and students who wish to seek non-medical exemptions should contact the Student Affairs office on their respective campuses for assistance.

Telework

Only employees in the SEBAC classified bargaining units are eligible for telework agreements at the colleges. A telework request process has been established through the HR shared services. Those employees without a telework arrangement approved by HR are expected on campus full time.

Campus Activities

Student Services

The full array of campus and student services will be offered on ground this fall. Staff in offices will be required to wear masks and practice physical distancing whenever possible. Alternate meeting spaces have been identified on campuses to support this distancing for meetings should staff and/or students be more comfortable in a larger space. Appointments may be required for some services, but all offices will be open to walk in students.

Teaching and Office Hours

Classrooms will be close to full capacity, with 3 feet social distancing in most cases and with all in attendance wearing masks to start the semester. A classroom seating chart is recommended to assist in contact tracing should it be necessary. Again, we will continue to monitor the public health conditions and guidance and make adjustments if possible.

Should it be necessary to move a class to online format, the Academic Dean or their designee will make that determination. **Faculty are not permitted to unilaterally change the modality of their classroom sessions. However, faculty should be prepared to provide virtual learning opportunities for students who are in quarantine or isolation and should be prepared to pivot to remote teaching if, and only if, called for by the institution.**

Office hours will be provided on ground as well as online at the discretion of the Academic Dean or their designee. **Faculty are not permitted to unilaterally change the modality of their office hours.** Alternative sites have been identified on campus to allow for greater physical distancing than individual offices should faculty and/or students be more comfortable in a larger space.

Food Service

Campuses can offer food service this fall. Opportunities for outside dining and grab and go meals are still encouraged especially for those who are unvaccinated. Masks may be removed while actively eating and drinking in designated areas. Maintaining physical distancing from others while eating and drinking, particularly those you don't live with, is highly encouraged for fully vaccinated individuals and required for unvaccinated individuals.

Travel

Per the CDC guidance, unvaccinated individuals who travel outside of Connecticut should get a test 1-3 days before and 3-5 days after travel and quarantine for 7 days upon return; even if they get a negative test individuals should quarantine for the full 7 days. If they receive a positive test or experience symptoms, isolation is required for 10 days or until fever is gone for 24 hours and other symptoms are improving. Before returning to campus, students and employees must be cleared by the COVID Coordinator. Those who are vaccinated do not need to test or quarantine after traveling.

At this time, the CDC recommends individuals do not travel internationally until they are fully vaccinated. [Read the full CDC international travel guidance for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/travel) The COVID-19 situation, including the spread of new or concerning variants, differs from country to country. All travelers need to pay close attention to the conditions at their destination before traveling.

Unvaccinated employees and students should be prohibited from school-sponsored travel unless granted an exception for special circumstances until such time as local, national and international transmission of the virus is low and/or CDC guidance changes. All school-sponsored and personal international travel must be discussed with the COVID Coordinator to establish a plan for the student's or employee's safe return to campus. All sponsored trips should follow CDC guidance for public transportation. [Requirement for Face Masks on Public Transportation Conveyances and at Transportation Hubs | CDC](#)

Note: the travel rules do not apply to individuals who commute from neighboring states to go to school or work.