Summary

The Spartan Shield Health Safety Plan was originally created in September 2020 to help safeguard the University community during the COVID-19 pandemic and preserve the University mission. In March 2020, the University pivoted to remote delivery of education experiences, both curricular and co-curricular, as well as services. But in the fall, the University resumed primarily face-to-face learning. The plan served the University well during the past academic year as students, faculty, and staff generally followed the prescriptions it set forth.

The plan was written in the context of a public health care crisis, and the mandates of the plan were designed to follow all federal and state regulations and be in alignment with the best public health guidance.

Today UT strives to return to normalcy and is planning for a full return to face-to-face learning, in working and university activities. While COVID-19 remains a concern, the universal availability of highly effective vaccinations means that UT will continue face-to-face delivery in Fall 2021, with no exceptions for COVID-related reasons.

In summary:

- All instruction will be in a face-to-face format. Faculty may use technology tools to enhance the instruction, but the mode of instruction is fully in-person.
- Neither faculty nor students shall have accommodations to teach or learn remotely.

The University will not require vaccination nor proof of vaccination, as per Florida Senate Bill 2006. Florida law has prohibited educational institutions from requiring documentation certifying COVID-19 vaccinations. As such, UT cannot require community members to be vaccinated against COVID-19 except for a few designated programs. However, certain activities such as students working in clinical placements may warrant vaccines.

- Effective Aug. 16, 2021, all UT community members and their guests are required to wear face masks while indoors on campus, regardless of vaccination status. Exceptions are discussed in the Face Coverings/Masks section of this document.
- Physical distancing limits will now be lifted.
- Face-to-face meetings may be conducted, and the normal business of the University can continue, including events.
- The University travel policy will return to the pre-pandemic policy.
- Campus visitors are now permitted, as long as they abide by this plan and all University policies.
- The residence hall moratorium is lifted. Resident guests will be allowed.
- Daily COVID-19 health self-assessments will continue to be encouraged. Those exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms should seek medical care.
- Quarantining will still be employed in order to control transmission of COVID-19.
- Cleaning and sanitization practices will continue.
This plan update is guided by local and state regulations and the Florida and Hillsborough County Departments of Health. A variety of guidance was reviewed from various sources including, but not limited to, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American College Health Association (ACHA), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate Recreation, among others.

While much of the original plan restrictions have been loosened, we will continue to monitor patterns, and in the event of an outbreak, we will reconsider our practices and may apply new restrictions.

Vaccinations

Getting a vaccination is by far the most important thing each member of the UT community can do to protect individual health and contribute to the health of the community. The University’s position is that all are strongly urged to receive a COVID-19 vaccination(s) if they are able, as recommended by the CDC and WHO. This includes everyone – all full and part time faculty, staff and students. By getting the vaccine, you will help protect yourself, your friends, your coworkers and your community from COVID-19.

While vaccine availability in the Tampa Bay region is robust, the UT Dickey Health and Wellness Center will coordinate and promote convenient vaccination opportunities regularly, particularly at the beginning of fall semester. Opportunities will be publicized throughout campus, most notably on UT’s COVID-19 Safety and Education webpage at ut.edu/coronavirus.

The University maintains that a high vaccination rate amongst the UT community will ensure normalcy in the academic setting:

- Florida law (Florida Senate Bill 2006) has prohibited educational institutions from requiring documentation certifying COVID-19 vaccinations. As such, UT cannot require community members to be vaccinated against COVID-19 except for a few designated programs.
- Community members who have been exposed to COVID-19 and are asymptomatic will be asked to demonstrate proof of vaccination to Rapid-Trace, UT’s contact tracing provider. If vaccinated and asymptomatic, they will not need to quarantine. (see section on Testing/Tracing/Quarantine/Isolation).
- Certain activities – such as students who work in clinical settings – may require vaccines. Participants in those activities will receive communication about that requirement.
- Certain activities such as NCAA athletics may require surveillance testing. Again, those participants will receive communication about that requirement.
- UT will continue contact tracing, quarantine/isolation practices and air quality monitoring and improvement.
- All must wear face coverings/masks when indoors in campus spaces.

At this time, the need for COVID-19 vaccine boosters is not known. When that information becomes available, we will communicate that to you.
Residential students will not be assigned, matched with roommates, or considered for room changes based on vaccination status.

**Face Coverings/Masks**
Infections happen in only a small proportion of people who are fully vaccinated, even with the delta variant. However, preliminary evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who do become infected with the delta variant can spread the virus to others. To reduce their risk of becoming infected with the delta variant and potentially spreading it to others, the CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people wear a mask in public indoor settings if they are in an area of substantial or high transmission. Florida is, at present, an area of substantial or high transmission.

Therefore, effective Aug. 16, 2021, all UT community members and their guests are required to wear face masks while indoors on campus, regardless of vaccination status. Exceptions are permitted when eating, participating in athletic practices and contests, and instruction in selected fine arts. Residential students and their guests are to wear masks in public areas of residence halls but do not need to do so in private rooms. Detailed instructions on how best to navigate these activities will be provided by the respective areas, including Dining Services, Athletics, Fitness and Recreation Center, Residence Life, and the College of Arts and Letters. In addition, instructors and podium presenters who are vaccinated and physically distanced may remove their masks for the duration of their presentation.

Departments may request face masks from Facilities Management through normal provisioning processes. Students should bring a face mask supply when coming to campus.

We are all responsible for the enforcement of this Plan revision. If you see someone who is not wearing a face mask, remind them that it is required. They may have forgotten, and they will appreciate the reminder. If they need a face mask, refer them to the closest office or department so that they may obtain a disposable mask. And, if they refuse, please contact the college office, supervisor, manager, or other person responsible for the area, and they will work with Campus Safety as necessary. Failure to wear a face mask will mean that one cannot enter a building nor attend class. It is considered disruptive behavior and will be treated in the classroom through our disruptive classroom behavior policy and outside the classroom through Student Conduct. Faculty and staff compliance issues will be handled through Human Resources.

**Testing/Tracing/Quarantining/Isolating**

The University will continue its current testing priority levels, self-assessment guidance, and contact tracing practices for the foreseeable future, especially for those unvaccinated, and will continue to work with Rapid-Trace. While we strive to reach herd immunity and strongly encourage all to get vaccinated, there will be community members who choose not to get vaccinated and this will necessitate our ongoing vigilance with contact tracing efforts.
Testing and Self-Assessment

At the Dickey Health and Wellness Center priority testing is given to vaccinated and unvaccinated symptomatic individuals. If you are vaccinated and have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, the CDC is recommending that you should get tested 3-5 days after exposure, even if asymptomatic. Close contacts who are vaccinated do not need to be contact traced. Surveillance testing will continue to be employed for UT’s NCAA athletes and within specific populations as needed.

All members of the University community are encouraged to continue to conduct daily COVID-19 self-assessments, not only for one’s own health and safety, but to mitigate the spread of the virus to protect those members of the UT community who are at higher risk or unvaccinated. The self-assessment will ask:

- Do you have a fever of 100.4°F or higher?
- Have you had any COVID-19 symptoms in the last three days? Symptoms include:
  - 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
- Have you been exposed to anyone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days?

If students answer “yes” to any of the questions they will be advised to seek medical care to determine if they should be tested for COVID-19, recognizing these symptoms are not specific to COVID-19, and not return to campus until medical care has been sought and they are cleared to return.

If a student receives a positive COVID-19 test result at a clinic while out of town or prior to arriving at UT, the student must isolate according to medical instructions. If they are already on campus or live locally, they can be evaluated by health care providers in the Dickey Health and Wellness Center and tested for COVID-19 as appropriate.

All current students who receive a positive COVID-19 test result must contact Rapid-Trace at (813) 699-3551 so that they can receive support during isolation, get an official medical notification sent to their professors and be contact traced. As required by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Dickey Health and Wellness Center must provide data elements (such as race and ethnicity) to the Florida Department of Health and test results for individuals tested for SARS-CoV-2 or diagnosed with COVID-19.

Students who exhibit any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 should contact the Dickey Health and Wellness Center or go to the nearest health clinic for an appointment and self-isolate until a COVID-19 test can be performed, if necessary.
Faculty and staff will be advised to stay home and isolate if they have answered yes to any of the questions and/or exhibit any COVID-19 symptoms and are advised to seek medical attention to determine whether a COVID-19 test is necessary. If a positive COVID-19 test result occurs, faculty and staff should contact Human Resources.

Quarantined faculty and staff can work at home depending on the nature of the position and its duties. If this is not possible in the job role, staff will be advised to use their benefit time and track it through Workday.

To facilitate self-monitoring and assessment, UT will continue to offer the hands-free temperature screening systems in several locations across campus to maximize utilization, complete with signage and videos.

**Types of Tests Utilized**
The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with the Federal Food and Drug Administration authorized emergency use of two different COVID-19 testing options: diagnostic tests and serology (antibody) tests.

Due to the importance of accurate collection, at home COVID-19 antigen self-tests will not be accepted.

**Insurance Coverage for Testing**
All full-time and international students have a health insurance policy through United HealthCare Student Resources (UHCSR). Students should review their United HealthCare Student Resources (UHCSR) policy for benefits coverage at the time of testing. Close contact testing is based on availability, as students with symptoms are a priority. When going elsewhere for testing, students should contact their insurance carrier for eligibility, benefits and coverage.

**Contact Tracing**
The University will continue to partner with Rapid-Trace, a local, independent contact tracing team, which is dedicated to tracing and contacting individuals who have tested positive or unvaccinated individuals who have been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19. The intent of contact tracing is to measure and control the spread of the virus. The use of an external tracing firm with a skilled contact tracing team is intended to speed up the tracking process while achieving quality performance results. The University will also continue to meet with the Florida Department of Health regularly to coordinate cases as needed and receive updates on trends and guidance.

Because physical distancing requirements are being removed, unvaccinated individuals are encouraged to keep their own record of who they are in close proximity with each day. This information will be requested by the contact tracing team. The contact tracing team may also reach out for attendance information in classroom environments and events, if available, to aid in the contract tracing process.

The assistant vice president for wellness serves as the point of contact for the student contact tracing process and the human resources associate director serves as the point of contact for employees and vendors.

**Containment: Quarantine and Isolation**
In December 2020, the CDC and the Florida Department of Health provided options to reduce quarantine time. Quarantine is a critical measure to control transmission. It also ensures that individuals who become symptomatic during quarantine can rapidly receive care and be evaluated. For Fall 2021, the University will employ both the 7 and 10-day CDC quarantine options for the UT community dependent upon testing availability, symptom tracking and compliance. Day 7 and Day 10 quarantine means release on day 8 or 11. Individuals who have a medical necessity that requires a longer quarantine time should contact Rapid-Trace.

**Testing for Non-Vaccinated Close Contacts**

Non-vaccinated close contacts can be tested in the Dickey Health and Wellness Center, based on availability with priority given for testing symptomatic cases, or in the community. Non-vaccinated close contacts who are asymptomatic and test negative on day 6 or later after the last date of exposure may be eligible for release from quarantine after day 7 of quarantine.

Asymptomatic close contacts may also choose the 10-day quarantine option without testing. After stopping quarantine, you should watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure, wear a mask, wash your hands frequently, and avoid crowds. If you develop symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact a healthcare provider. Rapid-Trace will check in with all quarantined individuals until day 14, and it is expected that all newly released community members will continue to cooperate with Rapid-Trace during this time.

Furthermore, non-vaccinated individuals who are close contacts of someone diagnosed with COVID-19 should adhere to the following CDC guidelines for quarantine:

1. As soon as a non-vaccinated student becomes aware that they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, they must report it to Rapid-Trace, (813) 699-3551, if they have not already been notified by Rapid-Trace. These individuals may need to quarantine for 7-10 days from last exposure.
2. Non-vaccinated close contacts of positive cases who have been diagnosed at the Dickey Health and Wellness Center or who have self-reported to Rapid-Trace will be notified and required to quarantine in their residences for 7-10 days since the last exposure.
3. Quarantine requirements extend to any non-vaccinated individual deemed a close contact by Rapid-Trace, which would include any individual who shares bathroom facilities in a residence.
4. Individuals under quarantine should check their temperature twice per day and monitor for COVID-19 symptoms daily.
5. Rapid-Trace will regularly contact quarantined individuals to monitor their health status. Students should respond to all outreach from Rapid-Trace.
6. Any student with symptoms of COVID-19 should contact the Dickey Health and Wellness Center or a healthcare provider for evaluation, even if they are vaccinated.
7. Faculty and staff should work with their primary care physician or go to a testing facility.
8. Students, faculty and staff who provide proof of full vaccination of COVID-19, have had at least 14 days pass since their second dose of Pfizer or Moderna or single-dose of Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine, and are asymptomatic will not be required to quarantine.
9. Proof of vaccination should be shared with Rapid-Trace when contacted during contact tracing to be exempt from quarantining.

Members of the University community who test positive for COVID-19 will be required to isolate for 10 days from when symptoms first appeared and 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving (loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation). Students who reside on campus may be relocated to designated residence hall rooms, including Urso Hall and the Barrymore Hotel when available, reserved for COVID-19 isolation. Students may also be required to isolate in their residence, depending on space availability. Meals will be delivered to residential students who are quarantined or isolated in University residential facilities.

Those who reside off campus should isolate at home, and those who live with others should stay in a specific sick room, or area, away from other people and animals, including pets, using a separate bathroom if available.

**CDC Recommendations for Vaccinated Individuals Who Have Been in Close Contact with Someone with COVID-19**

On July 27, 2021, the CDC updated their guidance for vaccinated individuals. If you are vaccinated and have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, the CDC is recommending that you should get tested 3-5 days after exposure, even if asymptomatic. You should also wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative. You should isolate for 10 days if your test result is positive.

**Student Medical Notifications to Faculty and Staff**

A medical notification for a student does not necessarily mean there is a COVID-19 case, as these notifications go out for all medical issues that would affect a student's participation in the classroom.

The University must follow state medical confidentiality laws and is unable to give out additional information. The following outlines the medical notification process for students:

- Faculty notifications can come from either the Office of Student Affairs or Medical Services at the Dickey Health and Wellness Center.
- Notifications for student employment will not be given. If an employer would like to verify a student's medical absence, they should contact the office of student affairs (studentaffairs@ut.edu).
- If a student notifies a faculty member directly that they have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or feel they are a close contact of someone that has the virus, they should direct the contact and work with Rapid-Trace to get an official notification from the University.
- Timing for medical notifications can differ depending on the circumstances. If a student is not timely in contacting or responding to Rapid-Trace, the notification may be delayed. Notification may also be delayed over the weekend due to operational hours.
- It is up to the student to inform the professor when they are cleared to return after being released from isolation or quarantine.
• As quarantine and isolation times vary from student to student, the University is unable to put in anticipated return to class times due to the volume of notifications.
• A student will be cleared to go back to class by Rapid-Trace. Rapid-Trace will check on each quarantined and isolated student until cleared. Residence Life staff are also available to students adhering to quarantine and isolation guidelines.

The University will continue to closely monitor community trends, work closely with local health care systems and adapt policies and procedures as necessary.

Re-entry after Isolation
Once an individual has completed their full 10 days of isolation after a positive COVID-19 diagnosis and are considered recovered, they no longer pose a risk to the community and can safely return to their prior living situation. Retesting is not recommended as they may continue to test positive over a period of time after recovery.

Students who have recovered from COVID-19 will not have to quarantine again up to 90 days after their test date providing that they can show proof of positive test result. If a student is vaccinated during this period, they can also show proof of full vaccination, per CDC guidance.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing limits are now lifted. This means that learning spaces, lounges, waiting areas, elevators, and other such areas will be re-set to planned, traditional configurations. The residential moratorium that was in place was lifted effective the Summer 1 term.

Face-to-face meetings may be conducted, and the normal business of the University can continue, including events. While face-to-face is the primary method of delivering both curricular and co-curricular experiences as well as services, some services may still use video conferencing technology for non-COVID related reasons.

Food service at events will follow best practices as directed by Sodexo, UT’s food service provider. Seating in the Ultimate Dining Café and other venues will return to 100% capacity. Washable dishware will be used, rather than disposable. Sodexo will continue using contactless payment and Simply to Go options and will implement Grub Hub for retail mobile ordering. The catering area will continue to use served buffets with attendants, and all pick-up orders will be prepackaged.

Campus visitors are now permitted, as long as they abide by the masking recommendations of this plan update and all University regulations as outlined in the University’s Visitors policy. Visitors to residence halls will be permitted according to Residence Life campus living policies for hosting guests. These policies will be provided to all residential students.

It is encouraged that the Plexiglas that was installed in many service areas and offices remain in place. This addition has helped those who have frequent contact with the public feel more confident in their personal safety.
Although physical distancing limits have been lifted on campus, physical distancing is still a mitigation strategy and can increase safety, especially when paired with a mask for non-vaccinated individuals.

**Academic Plan**

UT utilized remote teaching on an emergency basis. Beginning in the Fall 2021, the University will no longer utilize emergency remote teaching. This will represent important changes in instruction compared with the emergency conditions that have been in place since March 2020:

- All courses will be offered in a face-to-face format during the regular semesters. The only exceptions are graduate level courses or programs that been approved for distance delivery independent of the emergency pandemic.
- Courses will meet at the scheduled time in the classroom assigned. The only exceptions to this are courses that do not have a set time, such as internship courses and independent studies.
- Faculty may use technology tools to enhance the instruction, but the mode of instruction is fully in-person.
- Neither faculty nor students shall have accommodations to teach or learn remotely.
  - Isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19 will be treated like any other illness. That illness will be an excused absence from class and governed by the University’s attendance policy. The relevant portion of that policy is below:

  Students …must contact their instructors as soon as possible and provide documentation if required.

  … the instructor will accommodate the excused absences in a fair manner. Instructors will provide an alternative opportunity to replace missed work or assignments; however, arranging to replace missed work is the responsibility of the student.

  If an excused absence coincides with other graded work (e.g., homework collection, in-class activities, quizzes, presentations, activities, etc.), the student shall be given an opportunity to replace such work or shall not have that work averaged into the student’s grade, at the discretion of the instructor, provided it is not identical to the course’s stated accommodation for an unexcused absence. An instructor may determine that missing a certain amount of participation-dependent activities (whether excused or not) precludes successful accomplishment of learning outcomes. In cases like this, the instructor may advise students to withdraw from such courses.

  Making up work for unexcused absences may be allowed or declined entirely at the discretion of the instructor.
• Students should not expect and cannot demand remote delivery of instruction while in isolation or quarantine.
• As noted throughout this plan, the best way to avoid the disruption to learning that isolation or quarantine represent is to get a vaccination.
• In indoor campus learning spaces, such as classrooms and laboratories, all UT community members and their learning space visitors are required to wear face masks, regardless of vaccination status. See the section on Face Coverings/Masks for a discussion of exceptions. A faculty member cannot require a student to remove their mask.
• Classroom capacities will return to our normal, pre-COVID sizes. Furniture is being returned to the classrooms so that all students in a course can be present together at the same time.
• Classrooms will continue to have microphones and amplification to enhance the ability of students to hear the faculty member or other presenters.

The possibility remains that the UT community might experience an outbreak that would require new restrictions. Faculty should prepare for this eventuality with steps that would also be needed if there were a disruption to normal teaching caused by an emergency, such as a hurricane.

All faculty must use Blackboard to post syllabi or other course materials. This also has the advantage of increasing accessibility of the materials for students.

**Seating Charts in Classrooms and Public Events**
To facilitate contact tracing in the event of exposure in a classroom or other group meetings, faculty and meeting organizers are asked to keep a seating chart of students/participants. We recognize this may not be possible in all cases, but where it is possible it will be very helpful in making contact tracing as quick and efficient as it can be.

**Accommodations related to COVID-19**
For the past year, the University has been in an emergency situation and followed CDC guidance for the health safety of all its members. We continue to monitor progress toward combatting COVID-19, and we have returned to a face-to-face environment. This is our primary method of delivering both curricular and co-curricular experiences as well as services. We deliver in-person instruction as a fundamental way of delivery. With the exception of a few graduate programs, UT does not deliver courses remotely.

Remote accommodations for COVID-19 purposes expire on August 14, 2021, for students.

**Cleaning/Sanitization**
UT’s high standards in cleaning and sanitization practices will continue, including

• Podium cleaning supplies will be replenished on a regular basis.
• Hand sanitizing supplies will be available for every area as requested. Departments may continue requesting other cleaning products and personal protective equipment (PPE) from Facilities Management.
• If a person has been diagnosed with COVID-19, the room(s) affected will be sanitized.
• High traffic areas may opt for additional cleaning as necessary, coordinating with Facilities Management.
• Air quality, including ventilation and circulation, will continue to be monitored so that the best air exchange can occur in each space.
• PPE for faculty, staff, and students, in higher risk areas will still be provided. Examples include Dining Services, Dickey Health and Wellness Center, professional staff supporting quarantine/isolation, and student staff working in the residence halls. Departments that have a special need for PPE can contact Facilities Management to make that request.

Travel

The University travel policy returned to the pre-pandemic policy as of July 1, 2021.

Unvaccinated persons travelling communally on university business should get vaccinated prior to travel and wear a mask while traveling in vehicles, planes, etc.

Signage, Communication and Education

Appropriate signage will be developed and placed conspicuously prior to Aug. 23, 2021.

Educational messages regarding the Spartan Shield Health Safety Plan will be coordinated by the Dickey Health and Wellness Center, Public Information, Residence Life and Human Resources. Educational content was added to the online orientation program for new students.

Special attention is paid to:

• The importance of getting vaccinated.
• Practicing good hygiene etiquette per CDC guidance with respect to hand washing and face touching.
• Education relating to having a copy of vaccination card available to exempt them from quarantine if necessary.
• Education on the quarantine/isolation processes.

Spartan Shield Compliance

Last year violations to the Spartan Shield Health Safety Plan were incorporated into the Student Code of Conduct to promote accountability of the Plan when masks and physical distancing were required. As UT transitions back to face-to-face delivery the need for this accountability structure is not warranted. Quarantine/isolation compliance issues can and will be handled through other aspects of the Student Code of Conduct and any employee concerns will be addressed through Human Resources.