



Spartan Shield Health Safety Plan  
**The University of Tampa's Health Initiative**

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## History

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. In Fall 2020, the University resumed primarily face-to-face learning with masking and physical distancing requirements. For Fall 2021 physical distancing requirements were removed and the mask mandate remained.

At all stages, 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.

UT continues to be nimble, adapting the plan to be responsive to the current health climate of the UT community and the changing public health guidance. While COVID-19 remains a concern, especially as variants are identified, the universal availability of highly effective vaccinations and boosters means UT will continue face-to-face delivery in Spring 2022, with no exceptions for COVID-related reasons.

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.

In summary:

- The best way to mitigate transmission and reduce the possibility of contracting a severe illness is to get vaccinated, including recommended boosters. Though UT will not require vaccination, all members of the community are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated, including boosters.
- Masks are a very important aid in mitigating transmission and reducing risk; health care experts encourage surgical masks or KN95 masks. N95 masks are specifically for health care workers, and must be properly fitted in order for them to work correctly.
- For Spring 2022, all instruction will continue to 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.

Summary Updates Spring 2022:

- The University has reviewed and removed its indoor mask mandate, except in instructional settings (e.g., classrooms, laboratories and studios), where there is a potential for sustained, close contact, and in Medical and Counseling Services. These settings will continue to require face coverings/masks.
- Face-to-face meetings may be conducted, and the normal business of the University can continue, including events.

- The University's pre-pandemic travel policy remains in force.
- Campus visitors are permitted, as long as they abide by this plan and all University policies.
- Resident guests will be allowed.
- Daily COVID-19 health self-assessments will continue to be encouraged. Those exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and seek medical care.
- UT will continue contact tracing, quarantine and isolation practices and air quality monitoring and improvement.
- Cleaning and sanitization practices will continue.
- All UT community members are encouraged to upload vaccination cards in Workday.
- Boosters are strongly encouraged. Record of boosters should also be uploaded into Workday.
- New CDC guidelines reducing quarantine and isolation time are articulated.

We will continue to monitor patterns, and we will reconsider our practices and may apply new restrictions or loosen restrictions as warranted.

### 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 the [recommended vaccine doses](#) for COVID-19, 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.

Vaccine availability in the Tampa Bay region is robust, and the Dickey Health and Wellness Center has partnered with Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market, 1601 W. Kennedy Blvd., to provide COVID-19 vaccines and boosters for the UT community. Additional vaccination opportunities will be publicized throughout campus, **most notably on UT's [COVID-19 Safety and Education webpage](#)**.

While Florida law prohibits educational institutions from requiring COVID-19 vaccinations, the University maintains that a high vaccination rate amongst the UT community will contribute to normalcy in the academic setting. Some information to consider regarding vaccines:

- 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**, and Rapid-Trace will determine if quarantine is necessary (see section on Testing/Tracing/Quarantine/Isolation).
- Residential students will not be assigned, matched with roommates, or considered for room changes based on vaccination status.
- Certain activities — such as students who work in clinical settings — may require vaccines. Participants in those activities will receive communication about that requirement.

## Face Coverings/Masks

As the CDC and other agencies are reassessing how disease affects communities, UT is doing the same. **Reduced COVID-19 caseloads at UT, along with the UT community's high rate of vaccination, has resulted** in the UT community being increasingly healthy and safe. This has been accompanied by reduced severe illness, hospitalizations and deaths in the larger Tampa community, despite high rates of transmission of the COVID-19 omicron variants. While many UT community members may desire to continue to wear a mask, we believe that an indoor mask requirement is currently unnecessary.

The exception is in instructional settings (e.g., classrooms, laboratories and studios), where there is a potential for sustained, close contact, and in Medical and Counseling Services. These settings will continue to require face coverings. Instructors and podium presenters who are vaccinated and physically distanced may remove their masks for the duration of their presentation.

Unvaccinated individuals are encouraged, but not required, to wear a mask in indoor spaces.

Students should bring a face mask supply when coming to campus. Masks may be purchased in the University bookstore. Health experts encourage surgical masks, KN95 masks or N95 masks (for health care workers), which offer additional protection. Departments may request face masks from Facilities Management through normal provisioning processes.

## 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 the University strongly encourages all community members to get vaccinated, we must maintain 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 come into close contact with someone with COVID-19, have no COVID-19 like symptoms, and you have received all [recommended vaccine doses](#) OR you had a laboratory-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection within the past 90 days, have subsequently recovered and no longer have COVID-19 symptoms, you do not need to quarantine. Quarantine requirements will be communicated to individuals by Rapid-Trace and may change due to shifting local and federal guidance. You must wear a well-fitting mask around others for 10 days from the date of your last close contact with a confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case (the date of last close contact is considered day 0) and test on day 5, if possible. If you develop symptoms, you should immediately self-isolate and seek medical care. Close contacts who have received all [recommended vaccine doses](#) 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.** Participants in these populations will receive communication regarding the surveillance testing requirement.

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 asks:

- 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 10 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 kiosks in several locations across campus.

#### 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 and close contacts 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.

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 2021, the CDC 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 Spring 2022, the University will employ the 5-day [CDC quarantine and isolation](#) options for the UT community dependent upon testing availability, symptom tracking and compliance. Individuals who have a medical necessity that requires a longer quarantine time should contact Rapid-Trace.

#### Testing for Unvaccinated Close Contacts

Unvaccinated 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. Unvaccinated close contacts who are asymptomatic may discontinue quarantine 5 days after the last date of exposure (with release on day 6) and must wear a mask around others for 5 additional days. You are encouraged to get tested at least 5 days after you had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

After stopping quarantine, you should watch for symptoms until 10 days after exposure, wear a [well-fitting mask](#), wash your hands frequently, and avoid crowds. If you develop symptoms, immediately self-isolate and seek medical care. It is expected that all newly released community members will continue to cooperate with Rapid-Trace.

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

1. As soon as an unvaccinated 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 5 days from last exposure.
2. Unvaccinated 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 5 days since the last exposure.
3. Quarantine requirements extend to any unvaccinated individual or any individual who completed the primary series of Moderna vaccine over 6 months ago, the primary series of Pfizer over 5 months ago, or the primary series of J&J over 2 months ago and have not received a COVID-19 booster and is 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 and release students from quarantine at the appropriate time. 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 health care 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. If you came into close contact with someone with COVID-19, have no COVID-19 like symptoms, you have received all [recommended vaccine doses](#) OR you had a laboratory-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection within the past 90 days, have subsequently recovered and no longer have COVID-19 symptoms, you do not need to quarantine.
9. Proof of vaccination, including boosters, 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 5 days (with release on day 6) 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). You should continue to wear a [well-fitting mask](#) around others for 5 additional days (day 6 through day 10) after the end of your 5-day isolation period. Students who reside on campus may be relocated to designated residence hall rooms reserved for COVID-19 isolation, including Urso Hall and the Barrymore Hotel when available. Students may also be required to isolate in their residence hall room, 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. **Don't share personal household items, like cups, towels and utensils.**

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

On December 27, 2021, the CDC updated their guidance for vaccinated individuals. If you have received all [recommended vaccine doses](#), have no COVID-19-like symptoms and have had close contact with someone with suspected and confirmed COVID-19, you should wear a [well-fitting mask](#) at all times when around others for 10 days after exposure and test on day 5, if possible. If you test positive, you should isolate for 5 days from the date of your positive test result if you do not have symptoms. If you develop symptoms, self-isolate for at least 5 days from the date your symptoms began (the date the symptoms started is day 0).

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 divulge 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](mailto: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 be directed to 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 5 days of isolation after a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, defined as isolating for 5 days (with release on day 6) 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), they are considered recovered. Per CDC, most SARS-CoV-2 transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally 1-2 days prior to onset of symptoms and the 2-3 days after.

Students who have had a laboratory-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection within the past 90 days who have subsequently recovered and no longer have COVID-19 symptoms do not need to quarantine following an exposure. They must show proof of a positive test result. If a student is vaccinated during this period, they can also show proof of full vaccination, per CDC guidance.

#### Physical Distancing

Although physical distancing limits have been lifted on campus, physical distancing is still a mitigation strategy and can increase safety.

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-19 related reasons.

Campus guests and visitors are permitted, as long as they abide by the recommendations of this plan and all University regulations as outlined in the [University's Visitors policy](#). Guests and 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.

The Plexiglass that was installed in many service areas and offices can remain in place at the discretion of affected area. This addition has helped those who have frequent contact with the public feel more confident in their personal safety.

#### Academic Plan

UT utilized remote teaching on an emergency basis in Spring 2020 through Summer 2021. Beginning in Fall 2021, the University returned to in-person teaching. This continues in Spring 2022. 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 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 number 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 and any recommended booster.
- In indoor instructional spaces, all UT community members and their instructional space visitors are required to wear face coverings/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 are **UT's** normal, pre-COVID sizes.
- 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 possibility 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

Our primary method of delivering both curricular and co-curricular experiences as well as services is in-person. We deliver in-person instruction as a fundamental mode of delivery. With the exception of a few graduate programs, UT does not deliver courses remotely. Accordingly, there are no remote accommodations for COVID-19 for students, faculty or staff.

#### 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

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 and a booster.
- 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 and uploading to Workday to exempt them from quarantine if necessary.
- Education on the quarantine/isolation processes.
- Mask wearing in instructional spaces.

#### Spartan Shield Compliance

Compliance issues, including quarantine and isolation 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.

The University continues to monitor and plan around the global response to COVID-19. While we work to anticipate local and national developments and adapt as appropriate, UT reserves the right to modify this plan for the health, safety and/or wellbeing of our community.