

Onward

GW Operations | COVID-19 Update for Fall 2021

August 28, 2021

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

Introduction

Consistent with GW's commitment to a fully in-person campus experience in fall 2021, campus operations have returned to full speed as of Aug. 16. This document presents the decisions made by university leadership related to COVID-19.

In spring 2021, Dr. Raymond Lucas, GW's COVID Coordinator, assembled a team of medical and public health experts to form the Medical Advisory Group (MAG). The MAG is charged with making evidence and science-based recommendations to GW leadership regarding COVID-19 health-related matters including vaccination, testing, social distancing, and masks. The MAG monitors the trajectory of COVID-19 globally and locally, reviews data and literature, and advises on how to respond to changes in the environment.

Over the past six months, massive public health and medical efforts to distribute vaccines have resulted in significant gains against COVID-19. The MAG has recommended a number of changes to move the university onward from the pandemic to our future.

Before we talk about what comes next, it's important to pause and recognize that our ability to move onward rests squarely on those who have been here throughout the pandemic working to

sustain and return operations to their pre-pandemic level. We are indebted to them and recognize that without their efforts, we would not be where we are today.

While many of us are excited and relieved to return to an in-person experience, it is important to recognize that there are communities and people for whom this crisis is far from over. Vaccine hesitancy, specifically within communities of color, LGBTQIA+ communities and communities with disabilities, remains a major barrier to equal health outcomes and an equitable recovery. We understand and acknowledge that hesitancy is deeply rooted in systemic oppression, historical and current mistreatment of particular marginalized groups by health care systems and the government, and a gap in providing trust, accurate education, and accessible information and opportunity to good health care services to all, including the vaccine itself.

Members of our GW community have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and may continue to need support to recover. Individually, we can show our commitment to GW values by demonstrating continued thoughtfulness and compassion as we rejoin as a campus community and interact with others who have experienced varying levels of difficulty and trauma over the past year. **Together we will Raise High!**

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Planning Assumptions

Planning for the resumption of in-person learning this fall began in early spring. At that time, it was still unknown when vaccines would be widely available and how vaccination rates would impact recommended public health behaviors and restrictions. While the Medical Advisory Group (MAG) focused on public health and medical issues, a university-wide planning team worked on campus operations, beginning with these planning assumptions. They have been updated as MAG guidance has evolved to reflect the current environment.

1. Vaccinations are required to access campus for the full 2021-22 academic year.
2. Masks are required for vaccinated and unvaccinated persons inside all university-owned and –operated facilities.
3. Social distancing is not required.
4. All residence halls are open.
 - a) The six-semester requirement is in place, and only students who receive a residency exemption will be permitted to live off campus.
 - b) Residence hall occupancy is no more than two to a bedroom, and no more than four students sharing a private bathroom. Common bathrooms have enhanced cleaning.
 - c) Guests are permitted in the halls.
 - d) If a student tests positive for COVID-19, they and their roommates are expected to isolate/quarantine based on current CDC guidelines.
 - e) Move-in is staggered over a two-week period.
5. Access to most buildings is limited to anyone with a GWorld Card.
 - a) Spaces designed to be open to the public (e.g., University Student Center, District House food court) will be open.
6. Only regular classrooms will be used to hold classes (no make-shift/temporary spaces will be used for class).
7. Classes usually held in person will be in person.
8. Employees have expanded staffing designations: on-site, in-person, full-time remote and hybrid.
9. Large venue events may continue to operate at a capacity consistent with DC Health guidelines.
10. Surveillance testing continues for all persons who are authorized to access campus and will be reassessed periodically.
11. Students, staff and faculty with approved vaccine exemptions have enhanced screening and testing protocols.
12. Workplace accommodation requests related to COVID-19 will be managed according to existing processes, except vaccine exemptions, which are managed by Colonial Health Center and Occupational Health.
13. Confirmed COVID cases will continue to be managed through the Campus COVID Support Team (CCST), Colonial Health and Occupational Health.
 - a) COVID-impacted persons should have flexible options to continue learning and work during care and quarantine.
14. If an outbreak occurs or COVID increases in our area, GW may recommend temporary restrictions on access and activities.
15. Effective and consistent communication with all stakeholders is critical to a successful fall.

Our New Normal – Public Health

After a year of modified behavior and limited access, the university returned to full, in-person operations on Aug. 16. This table shows what requirements are now in effect based on current CDC and DC Health guidance.

Public Health Behaviors	Students (all in-person)	Faculty (Full-time, adjunct)	Staff (All designations, onsite contractors)	Guests (Alumni, visiting teams, event guests, lecturers, tours, neighbors, etc.)
<u>Vaccine or Approved Exemption Required*</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
<u>Masks Required**</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Testing</u>	Vaccinated: Monthly Exempt: Weekly	Vaccinated: Monthly Exempt: Weekly	Vaccinated: Monthly Exempt: Weekly	N/A
<u>Positive COVID Test</u>	Isolate 10 days minimum	Isolate 10 days minimum	Isolate 10 days minimum	N/A
<u>Quarantine for Close Contacts</u>	Exempt and/or Symptomatic People	Exempt and/or Symptomatic People	Exempt and/or Symptomatic People	N/A
<u>Testing 3-5 Days After COVID Exposure</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	On their own
<u>Daily Symptom Screening</u>	Exempt People	Exempt People	Exempt People	Not Required
<u>Signed Commitment</u>	Once	Once	Once	N/A

* Campus access is linked to compliance with vaccine policy; if a student, faculty member, or staff person requires access to campus for any reason, they must have a confirmed vaccine record or approved exemption. There are no exceptions.

** Masks are required inside university-owned or –operated facilities for all people regardless of vaccination status.

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Our New Normal – Spaces

After a year of modified behavior and limited access, the university returned to full, in-person operations on Aug. 16. This table shows what requirements are now in effect based on current CDC and DC Health guidance.

Space Requirements	Academic Spaces (Classrooms, libraries, study space, etc.)	Living Spaces (Residence halls)	Work Spaces (Offices, research, labs mail and package, etc.)	Public Spaces (University Student Center, District House, open access spaces, parking, etc.)
Access	GWorld	GWorld	GWorld	Public
Masks Required	Yes	Yes *	Yes	Yes
Social Distancing	No	No	No	No
Space Modifications (e.g., shields, furniture moved)	None	None	None	None
Cleaning	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard

* Masks are not required in your own room.

Our New Normal – Events and Activities

After a year of modified behavior and limited access, the university returned to full, in-person operations on Aug. 16. This table shows what requirements are now in effect based on current CDC and DC Health guidance.

<u>Event Requirements</u>	On-Campus: Public Buildings and Outdoors	On-Campus: Secure Buildings	Athletics	Off-Campus
Capacity	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	Unrestricted	Unrestricted
Access	Public	Coordinated Access*	Public	N/A
Guests	Permitted	N/A	Permitted	N/A
Masks Required	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Social Distancing	No	No	No	No
Space Modifications (e.g., furniture moved)	None	None	None	None
Food and Beverages	No Restrictions	No Restrictions	No Restrictions	No Restrictions
Maintain Event Roster for Contact Tracing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Depending on event location, access may require coordination with the events team to allow guest access to normally secured buildings and space.

Our New Normal – Other Questions

After a year of modified behavior and limited access, the university returned to full, in-person operations on Aug. 16. This table shows what requirements are now in effect based on current CDC and DC Health guidance.

Guests

Guests are permitted without restrictions but require an escort in areas controlled/secured by GWorld. A guest is someone without a GWorld card who is temporarily accessing campus for a short period of time. They are not required to check-in beyond school, department or business unit normal operating procedure. They must wear a mask indoors but are not required to do symptom monitoring, testing or present proof of vaccination. There are no additional special procedures for guests at the university level.

Travel

Beginning August 1, 2021, until further notice, and subject to continuing review of domestic and international health conditions, GW will resume university-related travel this academic year. The university will allow limited international travel in accordance with the latest version of the [Interim Policy for International Travel during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). Students, faculty, and staff traveling domestically will be expected to follow the established domestic travel policies for their school/department and the current local/[CDC travel guidelines](#).

Shuttle

The shuttle between Foggy Bottom and the Mount Vernon Campus is limited to those with GWorld access only. The VSTC shuttle is operating under a modified schedule. For more information, visit transportation.gwu.edu.

Masks

Masks are required for vaccinated and unvaccinated persons inside university-owned and -operated facilities regardless of vaccination status.

Testing for Vaccinated People

The current requirement is monthly for vaccinated persons, and the MAG is continually evaluating the testing policy to see if testing frequency needs adjustment.

Expectations for Symptomatic People

Community members who are experiencing suspected COVID-19 symptoms have a responsibility to stay home, get tested and notify their supervisor or professors, according to existing sick policies. Students, faculty and staff are required to cooperate with the CCST and, if necessary, follow the instructions of Colonial Health and/or Occupational Health regarding quarantine and isolation.

What's Ahead



The Medical Advisory Group continues to monitor COVID-19 cases globally, locally and within the GW population. Key determinants remain unknown such as how long immunity lasts from vaccines or natural infection and the impact of variant strains. If the analysis of current data suggests it is appropriate or if local, state or federal guidance changes, the MAG may recommend changes to our public health behaviors, surveillance testing frequency and campus access policies to maintain a safe environment for students, faculty, staff and guests. Updates on guidance and access will be announced by email and posted to onward.gwu.edu.

Operating Continuum

The MAG continues to monitor COVID-19 data and the university is prepared to adjust operations as needed to facilitate learning in a safe environment. This graphic illustrates the full-scale of potential operating statuses from fully open to fully closed.



OPEN

Normal Operations

The university is open and in-person.

- Masks optional for fully vaccinated people
- Guests permitted
- No social distancing
- Travel permitted

OPEN WITH PRECAUTIONS

Modified Operations Based on Situation

Some or all of the following adjustments may be made based on COVID-19 data:

- Masks required
- Testing and symptom screening frequency increased
- Guests limited
- Three-foot social distancing
- Exposure and quarantine protocol tightened
- Travel limited
- Telework maximized

CLOSED

Essential Personnel

The university is closed and remote.

- Masks required
- Weekly testing frequency
- Daily symptom monitoring
- No guests
- Six-foot social distancing
- No travel
- On-site and authorized personnel only
- No events or activities

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