

RUTGERS

Institutional Planning
and Operations



GUIDE TO RETURNING TO RUTGERS

Updated: 3/11/22

SUPPORTING TODAY, ENVISIONING TOMORROW.

Guide to Returning to Rutgers
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INTRODUCTION

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We look forward to continued improvement in the public health situation and all the optimism and energy that this brings to Rutgers.

Through it all, a dedicated group of our frontline colleagues – custodians, maintenance personnel, operations staff, public safety workers, health care providers, and researchers – have labored on a daily basis to press ahead and keep the university open. We at Rutgers have continued to house students who had nowhere to go, have made invaluable research contributions like the development of the COVID-19 saliva test, and have continued to treat the ill and infirm. We owe these individuals a huge debt of gratitude. We are also thankful to all those who have been able to effectively serve our students and the university despite the challenges of working remotely.

Rutgers has been leading by example in navigating the pandemic. We have employed all the tools at our disposal to keep our community safe. We have been providing face coverings for every community member, conducting weekly surveillance testing of every individual on campus, mandating vaccine for students, making vaccine readily available at all of our campuses, and making the difficult decision not to repopulate too early. The COVID-19 testing statistics, with an infection rate that is a fraction of the overall state rate, are evidence of the success of our approach. As we continue to monitor the public health situation, we are able to update our approach as we repopulate our campuses and buildings.

We're looking forward
to seeing you in-person
on campus this year!

Our updated strategies, coupled with widespread vaccination and the fundamental understanding of how to co-exist with COVID-19, enable us to repopulate our campuses. While our normal is in fact a “new normal,” different from pre-pandemic, it is nonetheless a vibrant and exciting normal. Since July 6, 2021 our colleagues have begun to return to the workplace, in a staggered and safe fashion. This Guide to Returning to Rutgers provides updated guidance on how we will continue to return in a safe and responsible manner.

Since the onset of the public health emergency, activities at the university have been informed and guided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), requirements of the state (Governor’s Executive Orders, Department of Health Guidelines, Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) standards), and requirements documented in the Guide to Returning to Rutgers.

As the public health situation in our region continues to improve, Rutgers will continue to comply with federal mandates, state requirements, and public health guidelines. State requirements are imposed through Executive Orders from the governor, Administrative

Orders from state agencies, and guidance from OSHE. These requirements change frequently, and as such the information in this guide is subject to continual updating.

The Guiding Principles of Repopulation of Our Campuses:

1

We will recognize that there are many employees who never left campus to work remotely, and we are grateful for their service. We will all return in support of our mission of teaching, research, clinical care, and service.

2

To ensure the commitment to the health and safety of our community remains paramount.

- Public health guidelines will continue to be adhered to.
- State requirements will be followed.
- Science will lead us.

3

To recognize that safe repopulation of our university locations remains a shared responsibility.

- We all have to play a part in keeping our spaces safe.
- There will be equity in how our units manage the return to campus.



Comprehensive resources regarding health and safety during the pandemic are available [here](#). Employees and students should familiarize themselves with the resources available.

MY CAMPUS PASS

We share a collective responsibility to protect one another and ourselves from COVID-19. The shared responsibility for the health and safety of the Rutgers community during the pandemic begins each day with every employee and student planning to be on campus making a quick self-assessment - monitoring for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 before reporting to work or coming to campus. If an employee does not feel well or is sick, then the standard practice of notifying a supervisor and charging the appropriate time-off is mandatory.

The university has developed a screening app, My Campus Pass, available through the myRutgers portal or via the [My Dashboard screen](#). This tool is intended to inform you, the user, and need not be exhibited to gain entry into any Rutgers building. Use of the self-screening tool is not required, but the tool remains available for members of the Rutgers community for self-assessment and vaccination records. More information can be found [here](#).



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BEFORE REPOPULATING OUR CAMPUS

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QUARANTINING AND ISOLATION

Fully vaccinated individuals who are up-to-date with their COVID-19 vaccination (primary series and booster once eligible; see [here](#)) are not required to quarantine after exposure and may continue their regular duties as long as they remain asymptomatic. Those who are not up-to-date must quarantine after exposure, even if asymptomatic. See the CDC link for the most [updated guidance](#) on isolation and quarantine. Note that the CDC defines exposure as 15 minutes or more within 6 feet of a person with COVID-19.

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 outside of the Rutgers testing program (via PCR or antigen test), regardless of whether they have symptoms, should:

- Isolate for 5 days, and may return to campus wearing a mask for 5 additional days if asymptomatic or significantly improving;
- Inform their personal physician of their positive test results;
- Follow up with their physician/urgent care and obtain return to work clearance if they are not significantly improved by day 5; and
- Inform their campus Occupational Health office of positive test results if they are working on campus and they have close contacts at work.

Employees who are able to work remotely and feel well enough to do so, may, with supervisor approval, work from home while in isolation. Employees who are unable to work remotely must charge sick time or paid time off.

VACCINES AND BOOSTERS

Vaccination is the cornerstone of our foundation of a safe repopulation, and the benefits of vaccine boosters are significant. Vaccinations and boosters are available on campus to all members of the Rutgers community at no cost. All employees and students are required to be fully vaccinated and obtain a booster when eligible, and proof of vaccination and booster must be uploaded to the vaccine portal. Click [here](#) for details.

TESTING

Rutgers employees who are granted a medical or religious exemption from vaccination must undergo regular testing. Unvaccinated individuals must undergo weekly testing regardless of work location or schedule; unvaccinated Covered Individuals (as defined in Policy 100.3.1) are required to test twice per week. Testing kits and instructions can be accessed [here](#). Individuals who are up-to-date with vaccinations are not eligible for university testing. Individuals who are up-to-date and access university testing will be responsible for all costs associated with unauthorized testing, and unauthorized testing may result in disciplinary action.

For on-campus testing, Occupational Health will contact the employee in the event of a positive test result and will provide guidance on isolation, follow-up, and return to work. They will also determine if there were any close contacts at Rutgers who need to be notified or tested, in accordance with the guidelines for contact tracing from the CDC and NJ DOH. Contact tracers from Rutgers and/or local health departments may contact employees and their close contacts. Employees should make every effort to assist in these public health measures. The volume of infections may sometimes result in delayed contact. In these cases where contact is delayed, please isolate at home, do not report to work, and contact your campus Occupational Health office.

If an employee was tested at an off-campus test site and tests positive, the employee should isolate at home and not report to work. If the employee who tests positive was present on campus immediately prior to testing, they should notify their campus Occupational Health office, who will then follow the process above to determine if any colleagues or students need to be contacted or tested. Any employee who tests positive should not take a Rutgers saliva test for ninety (90) days.

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WHILE ON CAMPUS

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Best practices with respect to human behavior are critical to co-existing with the virus. Wear a face covering (where required), Watch your distance, and Wash your hands remain effective preventive measures and defenses.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Maintaining space among individuals is one of the best tools to avoid exposure to the COVID-19 virus and to slow its spread, especially in settings where there may be a mix of vaccinated and unvaccinated persons. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay distanced from others, when possible, even if you have no symptoms.

Appropriate distancing is important for everyone, especially to help protect people who are more vulnerable to illness.

WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS

All faculty and staff are expected to fully comply with applicable state requirements as well as Rutgers policies, protocols, and guidance related to COVID-19. Failure to do so presents unnecessary risk to our community and may result in disciplinary action.



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WHILE ON CAMPUS

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HEATING, VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC)

Management of Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems is one component of the overall COVID-19 risk mitigation strategy described throughout this guide. Our experienced HVAC maintenance professionals and engineers manage and monitor all of our infrastructure and continue to manage, monitor, and adjust our equipment as necessary to ensure proper and healthy operation.

All HVAC systems and buildings have undergone:

- Maintenance to ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and provide appropriate indoor air quality for the occupancy level in each space;
- Assessment and, where required, replacement of filters to ensure they functioning appropriately;
- Inspection of filter housings and racks to assure appropriate filter fit and to minimize any air flows around, instead of through, each filter;
- Extended operation of systems to enhance air exchanges throughout our buildings;
- Maintenance to ensure that restroom and other local exhaust ventilation fans are fully functional and operating at maximum capacity;
- Disabling of demand-controlled ventilation (DCV).

Some buildings have operable windows and doors to increase outdoor air flow, when weather conditions permit. In addition, applicable CDC and public health guidance has been taken into consideration and has guided actions taken to address each HVAC recommendation. This information can be found [here](#).

Portable HEPA fan/filtration units are typically not required in rooms, and in fact will not address transmission from close contact between individuals. For specific information regarding these units, visit [here](#).



HYGIENE AND SANITATION

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands with sanitizer and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and wash your hands after touching your face. Sanitizing stations have been placed in building common areas.

While custodial crews will continue to clean office and workspaces based on CDC guidelines, additional care should be taken to wipe down commonly used surfaces. This includes any shared-space location or equipment (e.g. copiers, printers, computers, A/V and other electrical equipment, coffee makers, desks and tables, light switches, doorknobs, etc.).

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WHILE ON CAMPUS

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FACE COVERINGS

The university will provide face coverings upon request. Employees should review face covering requests with their supervisors.

The improving public health statistics allow use of face coverings to become optional in many areas. Effective **Monday April 4**, use of face coverings in offices, conference rooms, research labs, housing, and public spaces in buildings will be optional. However, effective use of appropriate face coverings will still be required in all teaching spaces (classrooms, lecture halls, seminar rooms, etc.), teaching labs, computer labs, buses, libraries, and all clinical facilities. Face coverings are not required outdoors.

If you believe someone or some group is in violation of the established university safety guidelines, please fill out a COVID Observation Report. The form is not monitored in real-time and has been developed to report non-emergency concerns and should be considered the primary reporting mechanism for COVID related violations. The responsibility to enforce COVID requirements falls locally to department heads, supervisors or event coordinators. University Public Safety should only be contacted if an individual is threatening or harassing and their presence is necessary to diffuse an escalating situation. See REPORTING CONCERNS section for more information.

REPORTING CONCERNS

The health and safety of our community is a shared responsibility. While we are hopeful that our community will adhere to the requirements

outlined in this guide, we recognize that some matters may need further review. If you believe someone or some group is in violation of the established university safety guidelines, please fill out a COVID Observation Report. The form is not monitored in real-time and has been developed to report only non-emergency concerns.

NOTIFICATIONS

The CDC defines exposure as a minimum of 15 minutes within 6 feet of a person who has COVID-19, without appropriate protection.

Rutgers employees who test positive for COVID-19 need not notify others at Rutgers who were not exposed, as this creates undue concern on the part of colleagues, many of whom are likely not at risk. They should notify all those they live with, as those residing in the same household are likely to be considered close contacts. They should also notify Occupational Health if they were physically on campus or in Rutgers facilities within two (2) days prior to the positive test.

If an employee were tested on campus and test results were positive, Occupational Health or Student Health will contact the employee to inform of the test result, and provide guidance on isolation, follow-up, and return to work or class. Occupational Health or Student Health will also determine if there were any close contacts at Rutgers who need to be notified, in accordance with the guidelines for contact tracing from the CDC and NJ DOH. A Rutgers Contact Tracer will then notify only those close contacts who may have been exposed, and instruct them on testing and quarantine, if necessary. A Contact Tracer from the local health department, will also be in touch with the employee to follow up on your household and any community contacts who need to be notified.



The Rutgers workplace will be carefully managed to control risks and ensure the safety of members of our community, as well as the communities where Rutgers resides and serves. Employees must return to Rutgers in a planned manner that results in an appropriately reduced density of occupancy. There must be equity among the workforce in this balanced reduced density - that is to say, there cannot be some who are working remotely full time and causing others to be present at all times.

PHASED STAFFING

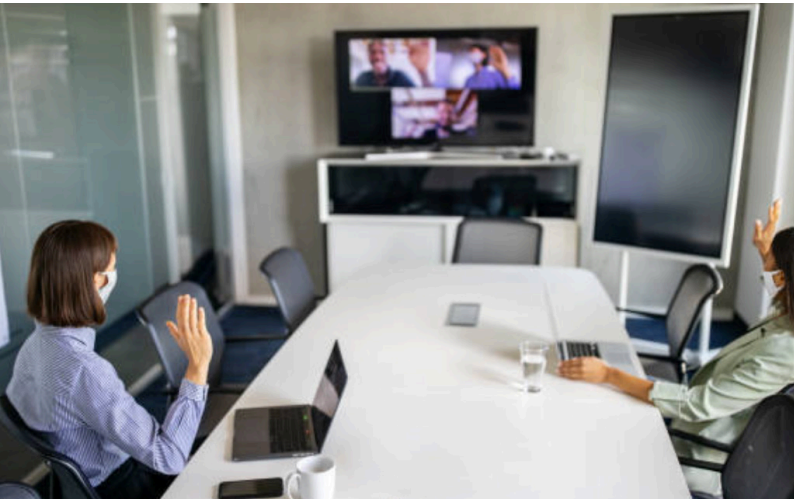
Phased staffing may be necessary in locations where distancing requirements do not allow for a full repopulation at this time. In those situations, there are several options departments should consider to maintain required social distancing measures.

Hybrid - Remote Schedule: Schedules associated with blocks of time, typically in one-week increments, whereby employee cohorts may be in person on the first and third week of a given month and remote the second and fourth week. This would then be alternated with the corresponding cohort. These arrangements, which must be approved by the department head, can be done on other schedules as appropriate.

Alternating Days/Flexible Work Hours: In order to limit the number of individuals and interactions among those on campus, departments should schedule partial staffing on alternating days, or allow flexible work hours. Such schedules will help enable social distancing, especially in areas with large common workspaces.

Staggered Reporting/Departing: The beginning and end of the workday typically bring many people together at common entry/exit points of buildings. Staggered reporting and departure times will reduce traffic in common spaces.

All schedule and hours of work changes which may be implemented will be done so in accordance with the relevant provisions set forth in the collective negotiations agreements.



REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Employees who have a medical condition that places them in a higher risk group, or those who are pregnant who wish to seek a reasonable accommodation related to returning to the workplace, should speak to their supervisor to review telecommuting options. If no telecommuting options are suitable, the employee should contact University Human Resources' Office of Employment Equity.

MEETINGS

In-person meetings, once strongly discouraged, may occur at the discretion of the department head. Conference rooms should not be filled to capacity, appropriate distancing must be maintained, and hybrid meetings (some in-person/some remote) are an effective means to communicate.

OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS

Staffing and occupancy of offices must be planned to accommodate distancing. Rutgers has prepared a [Guide to assist with planning](#).

If you work in an open floor plan environment, be sure to maintain an appropriate distance from co-workers. Departments should assess open work environments and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between individuals.

TRAVEL GUIDELINES

Rutgers will generally continue its broad restriction on both foreign and domestic travel for University purposes, while allowing limited travel that is explicitly approved as an exception via a waiver process. Click [here](#) for more information.

HOURS OF OPERATION

On-site hours of operation may be affected by limits in staffing. Every effort should be made to model hours of operation as close as possible to those in effect pre-pandemic.

Off-site (remote) hours should reflect an employee's typical work day.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This is a difficult time that presents new stressors and burdens on our community members. Please remember that support and guidance services are always available to our students in need through CAPS or UBHC.



MYWELLNESS APP

Rutgers University has launched the My Wellness app, now available within the [Rutgers University mobile app](#) and within the [MyRutgers portal](#). The purpose of the app is to support the physical, emotional, and social well-being of the Rutgers community by providing quick and easy access to wellness content from your mobile device. All members of the Rutgers community are encouraged to participate in activities that promote physical, emotional, and social well-being.

[Rutgers4U](#) is a confidential support line to offer emotional and therapeutic support during and following the COVID-19 pandemic to Rutgers staff, faculty, and their families. The support line will be operational Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., with additional hours to be added. Access the support line by calling 1-855-652-6819.



TELECOMMUTING AND WELLNESS WEBSITE

In addition to the services mentioned above, University Human Resources has wellness webinars and resources already available on UHR's Telecommuting and Wellness site; a selection of digital learning resources has been curated to support your well-being and working in a virtual environment.