

Dear UConn Community,

I am writing to share current COVID-19 related guidance for the Aug. 15 return to the Storrs and regional campuses. We will issue separate guidance for UConn Health later today.

Please note, should circumstances change regarding the pandemic or state/federal guidelines before Aug. 15, we may revise this guidance. Please also note that although the University can request and track the vaccination status of employees and students, the successful implementation of COVID-19 guidelines rests on each of us continuing (as we have done) to abide by a good-citizenship honor system aimed at protecting ourselves and the rest of the UConn community.

Guidelines for the Aug. 15 Opening

Vaccines

The University encourages all faculty and staff to receive a vaccine for COVID-19. As of today, vaccines are not mandatory for employees; however, we continue to evaluate this stance as we receive further information. Vaccines are mandatory for students.

Social Distancing

- **Outside:** Social distancing will not be required outside of buildings.
- **Inside, for vaccinated individuals:** Social distancing will not be required for students inside buildings including residence spaces, offices, laboratories, or classrooms since student vaccinations are mandatory. The same applies to vaccinated faculty and staff.
- **Inside, for unvaccinated individuals:** For their own protection, unvaccinated individuals -- including unvaccinated faculty and staff -- are requested to maintain 6 feet social distancing space from others when inside offices, classrooms, laboratories, and other buildings.

Masking

- **Outside:** Masking will not be required outside of buildings. However, we encourage those who are not vaccinated to continue to wear masks outside. In addition, individuals who are vaccinated may certainly continue to wear a mask at their discretion.
- **Inside (general policy):** Because vaccinations are not mandatory for faculty and staff and social distancing rules have been relaxed, we will still require masking inside buildings in an abundance of caution. This includes classrooms and laboratories, and applies to both vaccinated and unvaccinated students, faculty, and staff.
- **Inside (exceptions):** Exceptions will be made in the following circumstances:

- Individuals working alone in an enclosed space (an office, research lab, or area with a door or with dividers that are 5 feet tall or higher).
- Student dorm rooms, but not common areas.
- Meetings in enclosed offices where all attendees are fully vaccinated and can sit 6 feet apart.
- Groups working in an enclosed space (such as an office or research laboratory) where all individuals are fully vaccinated and can work 6 feet apart.

Please note even in the above-outlined exception situations, individuals who are vaccinated may certainly continue to wear a mask at their discretion.

We will continue to evaluate indoor masking guidelines after Aug. 15, with the hope that these can be further relaxed or eliminated as soon as possible.

Telecommuting

For employees currently working remotely, the University will continue the existing COVID-19 telecommuting program through Aug. 15.

On Monday, Aug. 16, the current On-Campus Registry will dissolve and telecommuting from Aug. 15 through Dec. 31, 2021, will require approval through the standard non-COVID-19 [telecommuting program](#).

Faculty or staff who wish to seek a medical exemption or accommodation are asked to contact Human Resources for guidance on the ADA process. Faculty or staff seeking non-medical exemptions should discuss with their supervisors.

Classrooms and Teaching

As previously announced, faculty and students will meet in person for nearly all class sessions, with limited instances of pre-established online and hybrid courses. Classrooms will be at full capacity.

With many international students facing visa-related delays, however, every effort will be made by our academic programs to offer virtual access to many classes. Having learned much during the pandemic about the use of technology for teaching, faculty are encouraged to use digital tools to enhance their face-to-face teaching when possible and where appropriate. Again, during initial re-entry, instructors are expected to keep their masks on in the classroom.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your patience, flexibility, and commitment to safety that has enabled the University to successfully weather a very difficult year. We can definitely see light at the end of the tunnel, and I am hopeful that inconveniences such as masking indoors will soon be a thing of the past.

I am sure many of you will still have questions and perhaps suggestions, so we will hold a town hall meeting for faculty and staff on Thursday, July 1 at 10 a.m.

For a link to the town hall meeting and to submit questions or suggestions in advance, [please click here.](#)

Wishing you a wonderful summer.

Warmest regards,

Andy
President