Spring 2021 Comprehensive Health and Safety Plan
Message from Chancellor Finis St. John

Our System is grateful for our three campus communities and the employees of the UAB Health System, who worked together to navigate through a successful fall semester in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic. In our Comprehensive Health & Safety Plan, we continue to draw on the world renowned expertise of the physicians, scientists, and researchers at The University of Alabama, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, The University of Alabama in Huntsville, and throughout our UAB Health System. With their guidance, I am confident we will have a robust on-campus experience as our students, faculty and staff return for the spring semester.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and our System leadership, thank you for your commitment to our guiding principles and our work on behalf of the citizens of Alabama. While we are individually distinct, we are altogether stronger.

Finis St. John IV, Chancellor
The University of Alabama System
Contents

Introduction
Task Force Membership
Updated Health & Safety Requirements

1. Training (Required for Entry)
2. GuideSafe™
3. Testing
   - Student Entry Testing (Required for Entry for On-Campus Students)
   - Student-Athletes, Athletic Coaches and Staff / Clinical Students and Instructors (Required)
   - Sentinel Testing (Voluntary for general campus population/Required for Specific Groups)*
   - Common Location Exposure Testing (Voluntary for general campus population/Required for specific groups)*
   - Campus Exposure Notification (Required)
   - Exposure Notification App (Voluntary)
   - Isolation and Quarantine (Required)*
   - Campus Command Centers
4. Safety Protocols
5. Student Affairs
   - Student and Academic Event Limitations (Required)
     - Student Events On- and Off-campus
     - Attendance Limitations
     - Event Registration
   - Recreation Facilities
   - Visitor Policies
     - Visitors in On-campus Housing (Required)
     - Off-campus Visitors to Campus
6. Compliance and Enforcement (Required)
7. Finance and Administration
8. Research
9. Communications
10. Continuation of Activities of the Task Force
Mandatory Health & Safety Requirements

Mandatory requirements for UA System employees and students are identified and must be satisfied before entering campus, and to maintain the privilege of continued campus access.

GuideSafe™ Healthcheck (Required)

Faculty, staff and students are required to participate in the Healthcheck portion of the GuideSafe™ platform. Healthcheck is a COVID-19 assessment tool that allows users to report COVID-19 related symptoms and exposure. The frequency of required reporting will be determined by public health and medical guidance relevant to each campus community. Campus health experts will continually reevaluate the recommended reporting frequency and may alter the requirements as the number of positive COVID-19 tests fluctuate.

GuideSafe™ Exposure Notification Application

A reliable and secure mechanism for exposure notification is a top priority for the UA System. GuideSafe™ Exposure Notification is a partnership of Apple, Google, the Alabama Department of Public Health, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB). Participation in technology-facilitated exposure notification is voluntary. The opt-in resource alerts participants if they have been in close contact with a person who has reported a positive COVID-19 test within the past 14 days.
GuideSafe™ Event Passport

When using the Event Passport function, event attendees will be approved to enter a facility or event only after having completed the Healthcheck assessment tool. The Passport can also be used to ensure compliance with reporting requirements by denying facility or event access to individuals who have not completed the required assessment. The Event Passport function shall be used to facilitate access to registered social events and to on-campus instruction. The Event Passport function should be considered, but is not required, for other events on-campus, such as athletic events.
Testing

**Student Entry Testing (Required for Certain Students)**

Students living in on-campus residential housing, including Greek housing, *must* participate in entry testing within 7 days of returning to campus for the Spring 2021 semester. UA System campuses must communicate clearly and repeatedly with their on-campus students regarding testing requirements and the registration process.

- **Students Using a Private Provider or Who Have Previously Tested Positive for COVID-19:** Students who elect to test with their private provider or who have previously tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 12 weeks are required to upload verifiable proof of a prior positive test or proof of their negative test through their campus immunization portal. All documentation must be uploaded within seven days of arriving on campus.

**Student-Athletes, Coaches, and Athletic Staff (Required)**

UA System campuses will develop separate protocols to regularly test all students and employees participating in intercollegiate athletics. Testing protocols for these groups will be outside of sentinel testing and must comply with all NCAA and host site requirements, as well as any conference requirements. At a minimum, all staff and students actively engaging in intercollegiate workouts or competitions, whether formally or informally, must be tested at least one time per week.

**Sentinel Testing (Voluntary for General Campus Populations/Required for Specific Groups)**

Weekly sentinel testing, which targets a randomized sample of the general campus population (with a target of collecting no less than 2.5% of the sample), is used to signal trends, identify outbreaks, and monitor the prevalence of COVID-19 on UA System campuses. To monitor and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 upon re-entry, UA System campuses must test at least 2.5% of the campus population for the first three weeks of the Spring 2021 semester. System campuses shall take whatever steps necessary to collect the full sample immediately post-entry, including extending testing hours or increasing the randomly-selected sample size.

UAH and UAB will participate in the GuideSafe sentinel testing program. While participation in sentinel testing is voluntary for most of the campus community, UAH and UAB student registration with the Verily system is mandatory for all students who participate in any activities, including instruction, on-campus.

Sentinel testing is REQUIRED for students:

- Living in on-campus residential housing (including Greek housing)
- Participating in clinical activities, provided the student also has or will have a presence on-campus throughout the semester
- Other individuals participating in University-sponsored programs, subject to the discretion of the University (student government, club sports, marching band, etc.)

**“For-Cause” Testing (Required for Specific Groups)**

UA System campuses will immediately respond to any suspected increase in COVID-19 exposures in a specific campus location or an identified group of individuals (“for-cause” testing). Campus healthcare professionals have discretion to perform for-cause testing when there have been three or more positive tests for COVID-19 in a common geographic area or group of people. For-cause testing is required for students who are required to participate in sentinel testing, as well as members of student organizations that are the focus of for-cause testing. Those who refuse to participate in required for-cause testing will be referred to Student Conduct officials.
**Campus Exposure Notification (Required)**

Prompt notification of COVID-positive cases enables a proactive response to mitigate spread of the virus. Individuals must report COVID-positive test results and suspected exposures. Each campus will then provide direct notification to members of the campus community of their potential exposure. The campus exposure notification does not replace contact tracing measures employed by the state and local health departments.

**Exposure Notification App (Voluntary)**

The UA System strongly encourages voluntary and anonymous participation in the [GuideSafe™ Exposure Notification](https://guidesafe.com) application, which notifies participants having close contact with a person reporting a positive COVID-19 test in the prior fourteen (14) days.

**Isolation and Quarantine (Required)**

UA System campuses will maintain housing designated for isolation and quarantine on-campus, including protocols for providing support (academics, food, other necessary items), and active monitoring. Students required to temporarily relocate to isolation and quarantine housing on campus shall be provided information related to healthcare, dining and other resources available. Asymptomatic individuals who have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 may remain in their on-campus residence, so long as there are no shared common areas (including bathrooms).

The Health subcommittee will provide campus health officers with regular updates on quarantine and isolation guidelines based on the latest CDC and ADPH guidance. UA System campuses have protocols in place to contact campus community members who have reported a COVID-positive test or multiple COVID-19 related symptoms through Healthcheck.

COVID-19 positive tests, suspected close contacts, or an increase in COVID-19 related symptoms must be reported in Healthcheck. Compliance with quarantine and isolation requirements issued by ADPH, local health departments, or campus officials, includes any requirement for on-campus residents to relocate from their residence to dedicated isolation and quarantine space on campus. On-campus residents who are required to relocate for isolation and quarantine will be given the option to return home for their quarantine and isolation period. Students missing classes due to COVID-19 may be required to submit documentation for excused absences.

**Campus Command Centers (Required)**

Campus command centers will function as a centralized information resource that monitors ongoing compliance, health clearance, utilization of isolation space, community trends, and the capacity of local healthcare providers. Campus command centers must provide daily monitoring updates to campus leadership, and updates to System leadership every weekday.
Safety Protocols

On-campus Instruction

RESUMPTION OF IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

Campuses shall resume in-person classes consistent with this Plan in January 2021. Campuses shall alert the System Office of any barriers to the resumption or continuation of in-person instruction, such as inability to adequately comply with these recommended protocols, including consideration of the availability of adequate testing as outlined herein. Any delay in the resumption of in-person instruction should be clearly communicated to faculty, staff, and enrolled students.

Hybrid / Continuous Remote Learning Options

Campuses should utilize a combination of in-person and remote delivery of instruction to maintain recommended social distancing. Campuses should also utilize remote delivery to ensure continuity of instruction for students needing accommodations, and to enable the return to fully remote delivery if in-person instruction is halted due to increased transmission. Campuses should develop contingency plans for continued instruction in the event a faculty member is unable to teach.

If distancing can be maintained within a classroom or lecture hall, in-person instruction shall be the preferred method of instruction on all UA System campuses. In the absence of COVID-19 or ADA accommodation, faculty should aspire to provide instruction on an in-person basis.

Physical Distancing/Social Distancing

Physical distancing or social distancing is defined as at least six-feet circumferential distance regardless of space size. Physical/social distancing measures must be implemented in all university facilities whenever possible. Practicing physical/social distancing should be strongly emphasized and encouraged among the campus community. The use of plexiglass barriers between individuals may shorten the distancing required in a classroom setting as long as facial covering requirements, routine facility sanitization, medical oversight, and heightened testing protocols remain in place.

When practical, campuses may utilize assigned seating and seating charts in classes, and strategically space seating in public areas to respect physical distancing requirements.

A list of attendees participating in an on-campus event should be captured and maintained by the organization hosting the event (i.e., student group meetings, social events, speakers). Campus administrators should also consider measures such as alternating workdays and class schedules, or staggering arrival and departure times to promote social distancing.
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

FACE COVERINGS

When physical distancing cannot be achieved, all faculty, staff, and students are required to wear face coverings. Face coverings are not a substitution for social distancing. All faculty, staff, and students must wear face coverings in all campus facilities or in any campus setting where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Reasonable accommodations will be made for those who are unable to meet this requirement.

Face coverings are not required in one’s own dorm room or suite, alone in an enclosed office or study room, in one’s personal vehicle, or in public outdoor settings where physical distancing requirements are met. Although not required in these instances, use of a face covering in all settings is strongly encouraged.

ADDITIONAL PPE REQUIREMENTS

Faculty, staff, and students in a clinical setting must follow the official PPE guidelines of the local clinical facility.

LOCAL JURISDICTION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to campus requirements, all faculty, staff, and students must comply with local ordinances for face coverings.

PPE PROCUREMENT

Campuses should coordinate the purchase and distribution of PPE (face coverings, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, etc.) through a central procurement mechanism on each campus. Faculty and staff will be provided two non-disposable face coverings. If available, students may be able to purchase face coverings from the campus with no mark-up on the per-mask cost. If available, disposable face coverings should be made available to visitors who arrive without a face covering. Faculty, staff, and students are responsible for maintaining their personal PPE.

Cleaning/Sanitization

UA System campuses should adopt and implement clear and actionable procedures for cleaning and sanitizing. Cleaning and sanitization procedures should focus on prevention and controlling the spread of COVID-19 in UA System facilities. To accomplish this, campuses should adopt protocols consistent with the following measures:

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PROTOCOLS

UA System campuses should develop a plan for cleaning and disinfecting to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and other viruses. Campus plans should identify surfaces and objects that require routine cleaning and those that require heightened disinfecting (such as high-touch areas including doorknobs, common areas and break rooms, light switches, handrails, etc.). Campuses should remove items in common areas, such as break rooms and lobbies, that can be touched by multiple people. Plans will be monitored and revised based on updated guidance and current circumstances.

ENHANCED CLEANING FOLLOWING CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASE

Campuses must develop a plan for enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of areas or buildings where a confirmed or suspected positive case of COVID-19 is identified.
INDIVIDUAL SPACES

Students, faculty, and staff are responsible for cleaning/sanitizing personal workspace. Sanitizing wipes or disinfectant should be made available to promote the cleaning of individual spaces. This requirement applies in settings where others may come into contact with items touched by another individual. This includes offices, classrooms, dining facilities, libraries, and housing facilities.

TRAINING

Custodial staff must be adequately trained on the implementation of the campus’s cleaning and disinfecting plan. Additional training must be provided for cleaning and disinfecting protocols related to a positive or suspected positive COVID-19 case.

Click here to see CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces.

Signage/Education

To effectively minimize the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19, proper training and education are necessary to ensure an understanding of applicable protocols, and to encourage individuals to be advocates for prevention. Education and training are required prior to participation in university-sponsored activities.

Signage should be installed in prominent and visible locations, and should provide instructions on the proper use of PPE, adherence to campus social distancing guidelines, CDC guidance, and inform individuals of the cleaning and sanitizing steps taken to protect them.

Floor markings should be used to indicate proper distancing and flow of foot traffic in dining facilities, residence halls, classrooms, and other points of ingress and egress.

Campuses must develop education and training videos and maintain a website for COVID-19. Campuses should also consider using other methods to communicate requirements specific to COVID-19.

CDC tools for social media, print resources, and videos are available here.
Student Affairs

In addition to the adoption of all requirements outlined in the Health & Safety protocols, the following applies to all UA System campuses related to Student Affairs. Updated detailed policies must be submitted to the UA System Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs by January 11, 2021.

Student and Academic Event Limitations (Required)

Student Events On- and Off-campus

To mitigate spread of the virus upon return to campus, there will be a two-week moratorium on student organization-sponsored social events to begin the spring semester. Both on-campus and off-campus student events must be approved by the Vice President of Student Life and are subject to the parameters listed below. Students or student organizations determined to have hosted gatherings in violation of state or local health orders will receive heightened sanctions, including, but not limited to, suspension. All gatherings are subject to the attendance limitations set out below.

Attendance Limitations for Academic and Student Events

Unless otherwise dictated by state or local health ordinances, all academic and student events are subject to the following limitations:

- On-campus event attendance is limited to the number of people that can be accommodated, taking into account square foot and physical distancing requirements. Event attendance may not exceed fifty (50) people indoors and one hundred (100) people outdoors.
- Attendance at athletic events will be determined by sport-specific plans coordinated between the Athletic Director at each university, their respective athletic conference, and the UA System Health & Safety Task Force.
- Approved off-campus event attendance will be determined by the applicable health ordinance(s) of the jurisdiction in which the events are held, will be subject to a 150-attendee maximum regardless of venue capacity, and will be subject to any additional restrictions imposed by the Vice President of Student Life. No out-of-town social events will be permitted.

- Any actions, contracts, or expenses incurred are at the risk of the student organization and will not be factored into approval or cancellation decisions.

Event Registration

All events must be registered in accordance with campus registration guidelines and must include the proposed number of attendees and a plan for maintaining social distancing. Except for seated meals, any food or beverages provided during an event must be provided as individual grab-and-go options. Event organizers must provide attendees with a link to the GuideSafe™ Healthcheck, or a comparable symptom tracking questionnaire, twenty-four (24) hours before the event, and must use the Event Passport to facilitate access into the event. A list of all event attendees must be maintained by the department or student organization hosting the event for no less than fourteen (14) days. Any exception to these event limitations must be approved in writing by the Vice President of Student Life or the Provost.

Recreational Facilities

Limited Close Personal Contact

Campus recreational facilities will consider CDC guidance and must remain consistent with state and local public health orders and ordinances.

Recreational facilities should control points of entry, utilize floor markings to indicate proper spacing, and leave doorways open where possible to facilitate ventilation. All equipment should be properly spaced to comply with social distancing guidelines. Use of drinking fountains is prohibited.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

Campus recreational facilities must maintain enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols, which may include
the removal of hard-to-clean exercise equipment. Facilities will provide sanitizers and disinfecting supplies to promote the cleaning of equipment following use by facility patrons.

**FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THESE GUIDELINES WILL RESULT IN SANCTIONS AGAINST STUDENTS AND STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS**
Visitor Policies

Visitors in On-Campus Housing (Required)

Access to campus housing will be limited to residents or members of a respective student organization only. This restriction excludes employees, security personnel, and other individuals with an essential reason to access the facility.

Off-campus Visitors to Campus

To minimize the risk of COVID-19 being brought to campus, visitor access must be limited. Visitors should only enter campus facilities by invitation or for specific events. The UA System Health & Safety Task Force recommends that visitors be pre-approved, complete the GuideSafe™ Healthcheck or other comparable symptom tracking questionnaire, and Passport, or provide evidence of a recent negative test or other medical clearance. UA System campuses must clearly communicate these expectations regarding off-campus visitors to all employees, students, and parents.

Compliance and Enforcement (Required)

Compliance with and enforcement of all System and campus health and safety requirements is mandatory. The campuses and System Office will emphasize to employees, contractors, advisors, and volunteers that it is their responsibility and obligation to comply with all health and safety requirements. The campuses and System Office will empower their employees to enforce these requirements using established policies and training to promote consistent enforcement.

The campuses and the System Office will implement interim policies codifying the requirements of the UA System’s Comprehensive Health and Safety Plan and their approved plans. Interim policies will be effective immediately but are subject to revision under Board Rule 108 if they conflict with federal, state, or local ordinances, or the UA System’s Comprehensive Health and Safety Plan.

Human Resources and Student Affairs will reinforce these expectations through frequent communications to employees and students, and each student organization’s officers, advisors, faculty representatives, and members. Student organizations will be held responsible and sanctioned appropriately for failing to enforce campus policies and directives related to COVID-19.
Finance and Administration

In addition to the adoption of all requirements outlined in the Health & Safety protocols, the following applies to all UA System campuses related to Financial Affairs.

Centralize and Manage Purchasing of COVID-19 Related Equipment and Supplies

Financial Affairs offices on each campus should create and implement a centralized process to request and distribute PPE to ensure the delivery of PPE to all faculty and staff on campus. Each campus should consider providing students an opportunity to purchase face coverings at purchase cost, if sufficient reserves are available. Reserves of additional PPE are encouraged to ensure departments have access to disposable face coverings for students and visitors arriving to events without proper PPE. Bulk, centralized orders of PPE should be made as soon as possible through identified supply chains based on projections of need through the spring semester. PPE should include protective barriers for residential and dining staff.

Financial Affairs departments will also procure disinfectants such as hand sanitizers, wipes, and sprays to fulfill the enhanced cleaning and sanitization policies established by the campus in accordance with the UA System Health & Safety Plan.

Limitations on Travel

Unless modified by the Board of Trustees, campuses shall prohibit all university-related non-essential travel for all students, faculty, and staff. The campuses shall implement or use existing waiver processes to grant limited exceptions. Regardless of the phase, all university-related travel shall adhere to existing policies requiring notice or approval.

Track All Expenses Related to COVID-19 for Potential Reimbursement

For the purpose of potential reimbursement under FEMA, the CARES Act, or any other existing or future stimulus program, Financial Affairs departments shall track all expenses related to COVID-19 and maintain a projection of future expenses. For assistance in determining whether an expense should be considered “related to COVID-19,” Financial Affairs departments should contact the UA System Office of Finance and Administration, which must coordinate with UA System Governmental Affairs. In accordance with Board Rule 409, all requests for reimbursement of COVID-19-related expenses from state or federal resources should be coordinated through the UA System Office.

Management of Ongoing Construction Projects

Financial Affairs departments on all campuses must promote healthy and safe practices on construction sites by placing signage on site entrances reminding employees of CDC guidelines related to COVID-19, such as not entering the workplace if a worker is symptomatic. Financial Affairs departments must work with general contractors and others to ensure compliance with federal guidelines related to construction projects during the pandemic. Financial Affairs should make information about the GuideSafe™ symptom assessment tool available to campus contractors. Contractors choosing to use the symptom assessment tool shall be solely responsible for the implementation and management thereof.

Human Resources Considerations

Communication

There should be consistent UA System and campus messaging to employees for COVID-19 related matters. Campus Human Resource offices should work with their Communications department in accordance with the communication guidelines in this plan.

Changes to Delivery of Services

Human resource services will be performed online or by mail to the greatest extent practicable. This includes meetings with employees, completion of employment-related documents, and the distribution of paychecks.
**Reasonable Accommodations for Employees**

UA System campuses should follow their current accommodation process and, as appropriate, consider temporary reassignment, modified duties, modified workspace, telework options. All training and associated guidelines should be developed in consultation with the respective campus’s Office of Counsel.

UA System campuses shall provide reasonable special COVID-19 accommodations for employees with certain medical conditions placing them at increased risk of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19, as determined by the CDC, or who have individuals within their same household with these conditions.

Employees who have, or who live with someone who has a medical condition that “might be at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19,” as determined by the CDC, shall apply for accommodation under the university’s current accommodation process.

**Health and Emotional Well-Being**

Campus Human Resource offices will provide adequate support and counseling to promote mental health and wellness among all faculty and staff. This may include increased educational/training opportunities, and increased service availability provided through telehealth.
Research

In addition to the adoption of all requirements outlined in the Task Force Health & Safety protocols, campus research plans should incorporate the principles provided herein.

Phased Approach

Campus research plans should be developed using an approach consistent with this plan. Research departments should identify essential and non-essential projects, and develop an approval process for the resumption of specific projects.

Exposure Management

To reduce the exposure to campus and community members, trials involving human subjects should be suspended while campuses are operating under limited business operations. Human studies deemed “essential” by the campus Vice President for Research may continue provided they adhere to all state, local, university, and Task Force Health & Safety protocols. Researchers should promote the use of the GuideSafe™ Healthcheck assessment tool to determine when subjects should be allowed on campus. Human studies involving medical procedures should adhere to all local pre-procedure testing guidelines.

Access and Density Control

Badge access protocols should be developed to manage facility access and lab density. The plans should include specific methods to control density in collaborative spaces during all phases of return. Access should be limited to students, faculty, and staff who must be in the lab. Student participation may occur, provided formal permission has been granted by a supervising faculty member and the campus Vice President for Research.

Consideration should be given to creating or rotating shifts for shared lab space, and should limit or eliminate the use of shared equipment. In-person collaborative research with off-campus partners should be limited as appropriate for a campus’s given phase. During the more restrictive phasing, research personnel should continue to use virtual meetings and work remotely as much as possible. Attendance at gatherings, such as meetings and conferences, should be avoided or restricted until each campus enters its final phases of return to modified normal operations.

Compliance with Laws and Regulations

All campus return-to-research plans should continue to adhere to all federal guidelines governing research projects and labs, including, but not limited to, continued compliance with all NIH guidelines regarding animal welfare, and all campus existing health and safety protocols.
Communications

In addition to the adoption of all requirements outlined in the Health & Safety protocols, the following applies to all UA System campuses.

Consistent Messaging

Each campus should develop a communication plan to disseminate information surrounding the return to normal operations. Communication plans should address messaging for diverse campus constituents, including, leadership, students, faculty, staff, alumni, local community, media, and appropriate governmental entities. Campus plans should utilize a variety of communication methods to effectively target groups with information on campus COVID-19 mitigation efforts and changes in operational guidelines, academic calendars, and policies.

Education

Campuses should develop communication plans to educate students and employees on the UA System Comprehensive Health & Safety Plan, and their respective campus plans.

Campus communication plans should include detailed plans to notify students of updated COVID-19 guidelines, available campus and community resources for assistance, and to promote the general health and well-being of the campus population.

Continuation of Activities of the Taskforce

The Task Force understands that circumstances may necessitate modification of this plan or the implementation of additional policies and procedures to continually ensure the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff across our three campuses. Therefore, the Task Force will remain empaneled, will periodically receive updates from campus incident command centers, and will continue to execute, analyze, and amend these procedures on a regular, as-needed basis. This plan is not meant to limit the discretion the campus or System representatives have to respond in any given situation, except as otherwise specifically stated.