



PROTECTING THE PRIDE: Returning to UAFS in Spring 2022

Protecting the Pride

University of Arkansas-Fort Smith officials are dedicated to providing the safest possible environment for living, learning, and working. As a result, we have created this plan to provide guidance and information about how we will work to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19.

This guidance was originally adopted on June 30, 2021. It has been adapted as needed to reflect updated guidance from the CDC, ADH, and UAMS. Changes are listed below.

Medical and Governmental Guidance

UAFS has utilized the best medical information received from credible sources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Arkansas Department of Health, and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. Elements of the plan will adhere to relevant Federal, State of Arkansas, Sebastian County, and City of Fort Smith laws, ordinances, and directives. Other sources of information may be used for decision-making at the discretion of campus leaders and will be noted appropriately in this plan document.

Face-to-Face Education

In March 2021, The Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas voted unanimously to return to face-to-face education on the campuses of the universities and colleges they govern, including UAFS, in fall 2021. Given that directive, campus officials have worked diligently to determine the safest and best ways to deliver on-campus instruction that will provide flexibility and protect those who are most vulnerable to severe outcomes if they contract COVID-19 or are unable to get the COVID-19 vaccines.

Changes to the Plan

Organizational leaders will adapt and alter this plan as needed. Changes will be noted with the date and time of adoption clearly identified below.

Plan Changes

- August 11, 2021 – Adapted to reflect UA System Masking Resolution.
- January 4, 2022 – Adapted to reflect updated quarantine/isolation guidance from CDC.
- January 18, 2022 – Adapted to reflected updated campus face covering requirement
- February 21, 2022 – Adapted to reflect return to pre-Omicron face covering requirement.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR SPRING 2022

Classes will begin as scheduled on Monday, January 10, 2022.

Offices and departments that provide on-site services to the UAFS campus will adhere to the hours of operation posted or those established pre-pandemic.

If you have concerns or questions about the availability of services or hours of operation for a department or office not found on UAFS.edu, please contact that office or department directly.

ILLNESS

If a student or employee tests positive for COVID-19, they should contact their faculty or direct supervisors for further guidance regarding expectations and deadlines.

Students should [complete this secure online self-reporting form through NumaLink](#). Employees should alert their supervisor as well as the Office of Human Resources.

Any individual who tests positive for COVID-19 or other transmittable illnesses such as influenza or norovirus should follow guidance provided by a medical professional regarding medical care and isolation periods.

Students who become ill or who are quarantined may be permitted to take exams online. To complete tests online, students must have a webcam-enabled computer and a secure and stable internet connection. *Please note that Chromebooks and Tablets are not compatible with Examity online testing.*

If you believe you may qualify for additional testing accommodations through the Americans with Disabilities Act, please contact our Student ADA Coordinator, Dana Andreassen, at Dana.Andreassen@uafs.edu or call Ms. Andreassen at 479-788-7577.

FLEXIBLE CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES

After investing a considerable amount of funding to improve classroom and individual use technology, UAFS faculty are able to offer more flexible learning options.

Courses with online elements will be classified as one of three delivery methods:

- Full Online – All instruction online with no expectation of class attendance and asynchronous lectures and materials.
- Synchronous Online – Full online delivery with required times for students to log in and join discussion and lecture live.
- Hybrid – Mostly online with reduced class meeting schedule of at least 1/3 of standard time but no more than 2/3 of standard time.

SAFETY MEASURES

Well-fitting masks that completely cover nose and mouth must be worn indoors when a physical distance of six-feet cannot be maintained. Employees, students, and guests may choose to wear masks despite social distancing.

Most campus offices/departments have disposable face masks and may be able to provide them to students, employees, or guests upon request.

Communal/Public Spaces

Physical distancing in shared and common spaces can be especially challenging and may differ from building to building. Please remember that well-fitting masks should continue to be worn in instances when 6-feet of space is not available except when eating and drinking. Distancing may be accomplished by removing or rearranging furnishings or modifying workspaces, and/or other safety practices. The University will assess spaces and determine the appropriate action to maintain safety.

Classrooms, laboratories, and dining halls have been reset to pre-pandemic occupancy without distancing between seats. Employees in classrooms, laboratories, dining halls, and other gathering spaces may be reconfigured with lower occupancy rates to allow for social distancing during use.

Personal Responsibility

We expect that all community members will:

- Maintain physical distancing of 6-feet or more, when possible.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
- Ensure regular use of hand sanitizer in-between hand washings.
- Cover one's mouth and nose if coughing or sneezing.
- Self-monitor for symptoms of possible contagious illnesses.
- Stay home when they are ill to avoid spreading illness to others.

Daily Self-Screening Requirement

All employees and students should monitor health conditions daily. People with COVID-19 have had a wide variety of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Congestion or runny nose
- Cough
- Diarrhea
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Muscle or body aches
- Nausea or vomiting
- New loss of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sore throat

This list does not include all possible symptoms and testing is encouraged.

Individuals who have these symptoms are encouraged to seek medical advice and to avoid in-person interactions to prevent the spread of illnesses.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

Custodial teams have prepared enhanced daily cleaning and disinfecting protocols based on CDC and Arkansas Department of Health guidelines. Cleanings will be frequent in campus buildings, common areas, high-touch surfaces, offices, and workspaces. In addition, the following can be expected:

The Plant operations team will maintain hand sanitizer stations at major building entrances, elevator entrances, and high-traffic areas.

Faculty, staff, and students will be encouraged to wipe down commonly used surfaces before individual use with readily available products that meet the Environmental Protection Agency's criteria for use against COVID-19 and are appropriate for the surface.

Individuals will be encouraged to sanitize laptops, cellphones, telephone headsets, and any other personal devices daily.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

UAFS has ordered PPE for the campus and has stored many supplies at Plant Operations. Please contact Plant Operations at extension 7175 to request PPE for your office, department, events, or classrooms/labs.

Quarantine & Isolation

According to the latest guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Arkansas Department of Health for Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) Quarantine and Isolation will be as follows:

- People who are fully vaccinated and who came into [close contact](#) with someone with COVID-19 should get tested 5-7 days after the date of last exposure, or immediately if symptoms develop, and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until a negative test result. In general, quarantine is not needed as long vaccinated, exposed persons remain asymptomatic unless required by local rules or regulations.

- People who are not fully vaccinated who came into close contact should [quarantine](#) and get tested immediately after being identified as a close contact. If the test is negative, they should get tested again 5–7 days after last exposure, or immediately if symptoms develop, and continue to quarantine.

Testing & Contact Tracing

COVID-19 Testing is available at the [Powell Student Health Clinic](#), through numerous hospitals, clinics and pharmacies, and through the [Arkansas Department of Health](#).

Due to high volume, the Arkansas Department of Health may not be able to perform contact tracing for all individuals who test positive for COVID-19. Individuals should notify their own close contacts of possible exposure in the event they test positive.

The university is not responsible for contact tracing, and university employees should not disclose the positive COVID-19 status of students or other employees, just as they would not disclose any other medical condition of another individual.

Vaccines

The three vaccines for COVID-19 that have earned FDA approval are [Pfizer-BioNTech](#), [Moderna](#), and [Johnson and Johnson's Janssen](#).

UAFS has hosted several clinics to ensure students, faculty and staff have access to vaccines, and may hold additional clinics if the need arises.

Any individual who wishes to be vaccinated may receive their vaccination at no cost through local pharmacies and hospitals, as well as large distributors such as Walmart. To find vaccination clinics, please click [here](#).

While the university is not formally requiring vaccinations against COVID-19, guidance from the CDC, ADH and state of Arkansas does differ for vaccinated versus unvaccinated individuals.

For example, Governor Asa Hutchinson announced on June 8, 2021, that Arkansas students who are exposed to COVID-19 will not be required to quarantine if they are fully vaccinated, while unvaccinated individuals will still be required to quarantine.

Vulnerable populations

We recognize that some students, faculty, and staff may be more vulnerable, identifying with one of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) categories for increased risk of severe illness.

Vulnerable community members should consult the [CDC's extra precautions](#).

For additional accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, students may contact Dana Andreassen with the UAFS ADA office at Dana.Andreassen@uafs.edu or 479-788-7577. Employees may contact the Office of Human Resources at 479-788-7080.

HOUSING, DINING, AND RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Residence Halls

The Housing team has implemented a variety of modifications to protect student health and well-being, including:

- All triple occupancy rooms have been reduced to double-occupancy rooms.
- Residential staff will be trained on all CDC guidelines, assisting in the creation of a safe residential environment.
- Visitation in residence halls will be limited to ensure that exposure risks are minimized.
- PPE, including hand sanitizer and disposable masks, will be available for residents at the front desks of their facility.

Students can expect continued programs and activities with fellow residents, following all CDC and Arkansas State Department of Health guidelines for reduced density and social distancing.

Dining on Campus

- The Lion's Den Dining Hall will continue full service on the hot food lines. Deli, salad, cereal, dessert, and other stations will be self-service with hand sanitizer and grab papers readily available.
- To-Go options with disposable containers, condiments, and utensils will continue to be available in the Lion's Den Dining Hall for those who desire this option.
- Reusable dishes will be used in the Lion's Den Dining Hall. Dishes will be thoroughly sanitized after each use.

- Seating in the Lion's Den Dining Hall and Campus Center Food Court has been increased. The Dining staff will continue to regularly sanitize tables.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS ON CAMPUS

We are excited to welcome students and employees back to campus for the Spring 2022 semester.

To ensure proper health and safety protocols are met, you can expect the following:

- Gatherings may be limited in size to adhere to state guidelines and may be offered in a hybrid format to allow students who cannot attend in person to engage virtually.
- Indoor events will be configured to accommodate guests at pre-pandemic occupancy rates.
- Virtual meetings and events may replace or accompany face-to-face events as desired by the event host.
- Proper social distancing of three feet or more will be encouraged during events.
- The Recreation and Wellness Center (RAWC) will follow state guidelines for gyms, with additional precautions determined by the RAWC Staff, and the UAFS Health and Safety Task Force. [RAWC COVID-19 Guidelines can be found here.](#)

Student life, including RSOs, recreational activities, student gatherings, career services, support services, and more, are important to creating the university experience and helping all Lions find their place at UAFS. No matter the format, UAFS Student Life Office will continue to support students in building connections and fostering friendships.

*Additional information regarding events is available upon request by contacting Ashley Goodson (Ashley.goodson@uafs.edu or Stephanie London (stephanie.london@uafs.edu).

TRAVEL

Employees and students who are required to travel on behalf of UAFS will be allowed to do so, assuming funding is available, and supervisors or advisors have approved the travel, under the following conditions:

- Domestic travel may be approved to the 50 states and U.S. territories.
- Travelers must follow all rules or directives of airlines, hotels, conference hosts, etc.
- Travelers must take all necessary PPE to ensure personal safety (e.g., wiping down surfaces on planes, wearing face coverings where required, etc.)
- Travelers will *only* be allowed to travel internationally with the prior permission of the UAFS Chancellor (Make requests to extension 7007 or Jennifer.Belt@uafs.edu)
- International travel will not be approved for countries with "Do Not Travel" warnings from the U.S. State Department. There will be no exceptions to this.

Additional questions may be sent to Communications@UAFS.edu for inclusion on the page.

REFERENCES:

[Arkansas Department of Health](https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov//programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus)

<https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov//programs-services/topics/novel-coronavirus>

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)

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DEFINITIONS:

In this section, we will define commonly used terms to add clarity to sections of the plan.

Close Contact: For COVID-19, close contact is defined as someone who was within [6 feet of an infected person](#) (laboratory-confirmed or a [clinical diagnosis](#)) for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

Contact Tracing: Identifying and monitoring people who may have come into contact with an infectious person. In the case of COVID-19, monitoring usually involves self-quarantine as an effort to control the spread of disease.

Disinfecting Wipe/Cleaner: For disinfection, the most common EPA-registered household disinfectants and disinfectant wipes should be effective. A list of products that are EPA approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#).

Face Mask/Face Covering: According to the Arkansas Department of Health, an effective face covering should fully cover your mouth and nose but also allow you to breathe freely.

Hand Sanitizer (also Anti-bacterial Hand Gel): If soap and water are not available, CDC recommends consumers use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

Isolation: Separating ill individuals from healthy individuals.

Mandatory: Actions required by all or of certain, defined parties. Failure to comply with mandatory procedures will result in disciplinary action for employees and students at UAFS and possible fines.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment): Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is specialized clothing and equipment used as a safeguard against health hazards, including exposure to infectious diseases

through physical contact or airborne particles. PPE is designed to protect parts of the body typically exposed in standard attire, including the nose, mouth, eyes, hands, and feet.

Quarantine: Separating well persons who have been exposed to COVID-19 from other healthy persons during the incubation period of the illness.

Self-Screening/Self-Monitoring: Daily self-review of symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Social Distancing/Physical Distancing: Creating a distance between individuals to reduce the community spread of COVID-19.

Testing: A COVID-19 viral test tells you if you have a current infection. Viral tests check samples from your respiratory system, such as a swab from the inside of your nose, to tell you if you currently have an infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Some test results may be available at the testing site in less than an hour. Other tests must be sent to a laboratory to analyze, a process that takes 1–2 days once received by the lab.

Vaccine: A vaccine is a biological preparation of organisms that provides immunity to a particular infectious disease. Three vaccines for COVID-19 that have earned FDA approval: [Pfizer-BioNTech](#), [Moderna](#), and [Johnson and Johnson's Janssen](#).