

TUFTS UNIVERSITY
MEDFORD/SOMERVILLE
COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS
PLAN – FALL 2021

Executive Summary

Recognizing its role and responsibility to its students, faculty, and staff and to the broader community, Tufts University has developed a comprehensive coronavirus (COVID-19) preparedness plan for our Medford/Somerville Campus. Our plan complies and, in many cases, exceeds all federal, state, and local guidelines.

Tufts University is committed to the health, safety and security of our neighbors, students, faculty and staff and we greatly value our partnership with our host communities and our plans have been driven by data and are built to be flexible given the uncertainties that we have experienced so far in this pandemic.

Major elements of the plan include mandatory weekly COVID-19 testing of students, faculty and staff, daily health screening, quarantine and isolation policies and procedures, the monitoring of early warning indicators associated with COVID-19 prevention, carefully thought-out move-in plans, and vaccine mandates. All students, faculty, staff, and visitors are required to wear masks when inside campus facilities, regardless of vaccination status, except when actively eating or drinking. All students, faculty, and staff are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 unless they qualify for a religious or medical exemption under Massachusetts law.

The goal is to minimize to the extent possible the risk of COVID transmission by introducing multiple layers of protection and asking each member of our community to remember their obligation to protect the health of all members of our community. The plan also includes protocols for contact tracing, quarantining and isolating. Test results will continue to be updated daily on the university's public COVID dashboard.

As we start to bring students back to campus, our attention is laser focused on the health, safety and wellbeing of students, faculty, staff, and that of the communities which surround us.

COVID-19 protocols at Tufts

COVID prevention measures include:

- **Vaccination requirements for students, faculty, staff, vendors, affiliates, and visitors**
- **Protocols for mask wearing, gatherings, dining**
- **Mandatory weekly surveillance testing, quarantine, isolation & daily health screening**
- **International travel restrictions**

Vaccination requirements for students, faculty, staff, vendors, affiliates, and visitors

All vaccines approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) are accepted as meeting Tufts' requirement for vaccination. However, all individuals who have received a non-FDA-approved or non-FDA EUA approved vaccine will be offered an FDA approved or EUA vaccine after consultation with a clinician.

Students

- **Students** (including undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-traditional students) must be vaccinated prior to participating in on-campus classes or activities. For students in the School of Arts and Sciences (including the SMFA at Tufts), School of Engineering, School of Medicine, Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences, School of Dental Medicine, Fletcher School, Friedman School, and Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, the deadline for vaccination was **July 1**. We will assist students who have limited access to a vaccine in meeting this requirement shortly after their arrival on campus. Like other vaccine requirements in place for students, medical and religious **accommodation** will be considered. More details about this policy, including information on how to submit proof of vaccination status, is posted at tufts.edu/covidvaccine. Vaccination is a requirement for in-person attendance; only medical or religious accommodations are permitted. Any student refusing to be vaccinated will not matriculate or will be unenrolled from in-person classes.

Faculty & Staff

- **All faculty and staff**, vendors and affiliates were required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 by August 31, all faculty, staff, affiliates, and vendors must provide evidence that they have been vaccinated, have begun the vaccination sequence, or are in the process of seeking a medical or religious accommodation. A declination of vaccination will no longer be approved by the university. By September 30, all faculty, staff, affiliates, and vendors must have completed the vaccination sequence or obtained a medical or religious accommodation. Read the Employee COVID-19 Vaccination Policy.

More details about this policy, including information on how to submit proof of vaccination status, is posted at tufts.edu/covidvaccine. Faculty and staff who refuse to be vaccinated face disciplinary action, including termination. Vendors who fail to certify that all staff are vaccinated or have been accommodated on religious grounds under Massachusetts law will have their contracts terminated. All affiliates must be vaccinated.

Protocols for mask wearing, gatherings, physical distancing & dining

Mask Wearing

- **Fully vaccinated individuals** (defined as 14+ days after the second dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or 14+ days after a single dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine) **are not required to wear masks or physically distance outside**. However, individuals who feel more comfortable wearing a mask outdoors for whatever reason, are encouraged to do so.
- **Non-vaccinated individuals** are advised to continue wearing face masks and physically distance outdoors until they are fully vaccinated.
- Tufts requires that **all individuals**, whether vaccinated or not, **continue to wear masks indoors, except when alone in an office or when eating**.
- **Per the state's guidance**, face coverings are required for all individuals on public and private transportation (including rideshares, livery, taxis, ferries, MBTA, Commuter Rail and transportation stations), in healthcare facilities, congregate care settings, and health and rehabilitative day services.

Gatherings & Room Occupancy

- **There are no limits on the size of indoor or outdoor gatherings**. Standard pre-COVID room occupancy limits will apply, including in conference rooms, offices, classrooms, laboratories, gyms, studios, and libraries.

Physical Distancing

- People are **no longer required to remain six or more feet apart** outdoors or indoors, including in conference rooms, offices, classrooms, laboratories, gyms, studios, and libraries.

Dining

- Outdoor dining throughout the summer and early fall is encouraged; physical distancing to the extent possible is encouraged.
- All in-person events and office parties should be held outside with prepackaged food.

- Indoor dining returns to pre-pandemic capacity and we encourage everyone, to use good judgement when it comes to their proximity to others while eating in any setting.
- Faculty and staff are discouraged from taking breaks or eating in large groups indoors. Breakroom guidance stressing physical distancing, no talking and one at a time eating have been developed.
- For events, food will be prepackaged; self-service buffets and potluck are not permitted.

Testing, quarantine, isolation & Daily Health screening

Testing

- COVID-19 surveillance testing will be once a week for all students, faculty, staff, affiliates, and vendors who are on campus regularly and in contact with others. For other circumstances, see guidance on [Testing at Tufts](#).

Quarantine

- **Vaccinated** close contacts of a COVID-19 case will not be required to quarantine; however, **they must participate fully in the contact tracing process and monitor themselves for symptoms of infection**. Those identified as close contacts by Tufts contact tracers will be instructed on who to contact if symptoms develop.
- **Unvaccinated** close contacts of a COVID-19 case must quarantine.
- ALL close contacts regardless of vaccination status are tested for COVID at baseline (as close to exposure as possible), on day 4 and day 7 after exposure; then fall back **into** the normal testing **cadence**. Anyone developing symptoms of COVID must immediately alert health services for covid testing.

Isolation

- Vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will isolate at home or in the mods (Somerville/Medford/SMFA students only) for 10 days. Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 either through Tufts University surveillance or externally is **expected to participate fully in the contact tracing process and identification of close contacts**. Per state guidance, individuals with a positive COVID-19 test must be cleared by a medical professional prior to return to classes or to work.

Daily Health Screening

- All faculty, staff, vendors, affiliates, and students and visitors who are coming to or living on campus are required to complete the [daily health status survey](#).
- **Students, faculty, and staff, vendors, affiliates, MUST stay home when feeling sick!** Individuals with flu-like symptoms should seek medical care and receive a negative COVID-19 test before returning to work or classes.

For more details on testing, quarantine, isolation, and daily health screening, visit [Testing at Tufts](#).

**Visitors (What about adding vaccine requirement for visitors? Maybe just link to webpage since there are a bunch of rules depending on your visitor category?
<https://coronavirus.tufts.edu/visitors>)**

The information in this section applies to visitors who are **not** already part of the regular surveillance testing on campus.

- Visitors who are indoors and **wearing a mask *at all times*** do **not** need to be tested.
- Visitors who **interact with patients** in a healthcare setting (e.g., dental exam proctors) **are required to be tested**.
- Visitors who provide students with **hands-on instruction are required to be tested**.
- **Outdoor visitors** do **not** need to be tested, but unvaccinated visitors are not permitted.
- For more details on testing for campus visitors, please see [Testing at Tufts](#).

Travel

<https://global.tufts.edu/global-travel/covid-19-travel-information>

- All **domestic and personal international travel** is allowed without restrictions.
- All **Tufts-related international travel** must follow the [current review process](#), including approval by the dean or division VP's office and review by the ITRC for students and by the Integrative Safety Committee (ISC) **for research-related travel**.
- All **travelers** (personal and Tufts-related) must follow arrival quarantine protocols according to their vaccination status.
- All travelers should be familiar with and follow local guidance at their destination.
- Even if fully vaccinated, travelers should follow [safe travel guidelines](#) to protect themselves and others.

For details on **arrival testing** for both domestic and international travelers, including **unvaccinated international students** arriving for fall courses, see [Testing at Tufts](#).

In collaboration with local and state boards of health, we will continue to monitor and respond to local, national, and international data and trends. Thus, our guidance may change. However, our primary objective is to create and maintain a very positive experience for students, faculty, and staff throughout the fall and into the winter.