

## REOPENING GUIDANCE

# Colleges and Universities

The following is intended as a plain language summary of rules for colleges and universities in the Green Phase and does not replace the need to follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations. It summarizes the full PDPH COVID-19 Reopening Guidance for Universities and Colleges and is meant to highlight the most important safety precautions in that document, not to supersede it.

### See also:

[Order of the Secretary of Health providing for building safety measures](#)

[Order of the Secretary of Health providing for business safety measures \(to keep employees and customers safe\)](#)

[Guidance for outdoor recreational activities and sports, Philadelphia Department of Public Health](#)

## Protections Needed

### Masks

- Colleges and universities should provide masks to all faculty and staff for utilization while on campus.
- Students, faculty, and staff must mask whenever they are in public unless they are far away from others. The following should be communicated to all:
  - If you think it might be 6 feet, that's too close. Keep your mask on.
  - Find lightweight, comfortable masks. Keep enough around that you always have one handy.
  - Wash your mask in the regular laundry each day that you use it.

### Barriers

- If campus offices, dining halls or other common spaces remain open, install plastic barriers between staff and the students, faculty, or staff who are accessing services.
- Install partitions on tables/study desks in libraries and computer labs to promote distancing and prevent spread of respiratory droplets in situations in which distancing is difficult to maintain.

### Isolate

- Colleges and universities should have all students, faculty, and staff screen themselves for symptoms before entering the campus or going out into public on campus. Anyone with a cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, sore throat, muscle pain, or new loss of taste or smell should get [tested](#) for COVID-19 and be immediately isolated away from others.
- If a student, faculty, or staff member has been exposed to someone with COVID-19, they should be quarantined for 14 days and not go to work/class. Colleges and universities should have a plan for isolating and quarantining students on campus. Isolation and quarantine rooms should be physically separated from other residential student rooms and have private bathrooms. Students who opt to isolate or quarantine at home may do so if they can travel in a private car AND social distancing and [infection prevention recommendations](#) can be maintained in the home. Students under isolation should avoid going to a private home in which persons with high-risk conditions reside.
- If a staff member or student develops COVID-19 infection or has a positive test, colleges and universities must take additional precautions to stop the virus from spreading further, as described in [Guidance for Essential Businesses and Organizations During COVID-19](#). Required precautions include calling PDPH at 215-685-5488 to report positive cases.

### Distance

- Restructure work and classroom environments to ensure that people remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Large lecture classes should be offered online. For instruction that is held on campus, please note that classroom capacity should meet the following criteria:
  - At least 6 feet of distance between students/instructors AND one of the following:
    - » 5 people (students and staff) per 1,000 square feet
    - » < 25% of maximum capacity of classrooms
    - » A maximum of 25 students per class
- Consider staggering class times or continuing virtual lectures, especially for large classes for which distancing would be difficult to implement or for faculty who are at high risk for severe infection.



## Reduce crowds

- Gatherings of more than 25 persons indoors or 50 attendees outdoors are prohibited, even with masks and distancing.
- Gatherings of even fewer than 25 persons who do not live together in the same apartment or dormitory suite creates unnecessary risk of spread. Strongly discourage and make efforts to prevent gatherings (other than academic classes) of any size, whether on-campus or off-campus, and communicate clearly to students that they should avoid such gatherings. In classes and other situations where gathering of persons cannot be avoided, enforce strict mask-wearing and distancing.
- In dormitories and residences, where possible, assign a single student to a bedroom. If two people must share a room, beds need to be placed at least 6 feet apart.
- Close gathering spaces such as game rooms and student lounges.
- Dining Halls should restrict occupancy to <25% so that diners are at least 6 feet apart and should offer “to go” meal options.



## Handwashing

- Reinforce handwashing with soap and water (or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol) for 20 seconds.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers should be mounted in all dormitory and classroom building hallways and campus common areas.



## Clean

- Frequently clean bathrooms and other commonly used areas with disinfectants. See [CDC guidance](#) for details.
- Ensure that high-touch surfaces are regularly cleaned (e.g., doorknobs, handrails, elevator buttons, desks, tables, chairs, and counters/surfaces in cafeterias, meeting rooms, and offices).
- Limit use of shared objects (e.g., lab and computer equipment) or clean between uses.



## Ventilation

- If possible, increase ventilation in the building by either:
  - Opening windows and/or doors on opposite sides of the building and using fans to blow outside air through the building OR
  - Optimizing ventilation provided by the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system by:
    - Having the HVAC system checked to assure that it is working properly. If it can be adjusted, the system should be set to provide at least 6 air exchanges per hour.
    - Maximizing the amount of outside air circulated by the system.
    - Installing filters with minimum efficiency reporting values (MERV) of 13, or the highest compatible with the filter rack. It is not necessary to use high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters or ultraviolet light irradiation systems.
    - Checking that the external air inlet duct is not blocked and that it is at least 15 feet from people.



## Communicate

- Educate students, faculty, and staff about symptoms and prevention of COVID-19
- Post prominent signs at entrances to campus buildings, common rooms, and dining halls:
  - Mandating physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
  - Mandating that all students, faculty, and staff wear masks.
  - Asking people who are sick or who have had contact with someone with COVID-19 within the past 14 days not to enter.
- Identify a college/university representative who can serve as a liaison with a designated contact person at the local health department.

## Other

- For [athletics](#) and [fitness centers](#), colleges and universities must follow PDPH guidance.