



Number: E-6-040
Title: Return to Regular University Operations In COVID-19 Environment
Responsible Office: Facilities Management; Academic Affairs

Date of Origin: 8-14-20

Date Last Amended:

Date Last Reviewed:

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- I. **Purpose:** The University has implemented multiple physical, procedural, technological and organizational strategies to support and encourage health and safety standards on-campus for all members of the USF community returning to a USF campus in the fall of 2020. However, it is well known that the COVID-19 virus can be spread person-to-person, which means that any strategy intended to help protect the campus community must include expectations about person-to-person interactions on-campus. USF is committed to communicating the conduct expectations that will be in place to promote the health and safety when students, faculty, staff and visitors returning to a USF campus beginning in the fall semester 2020.

This policy also addresses how the University will balance its mission with the challenges that employees may have in returning to regular on-campus duties based on their circumstances.

1. **Phased Approach to Normal Operations:** USF developed and is implementing a 4-phased approach to encourage and support health and safety standards as the University reconstitutes normal operations so that faculty, staff, and students may gradually return to regular operations. These 4 phases provide flexibility and adaptability based on current and projected developments in COVID-19 trends. Each phase limits the number of individuals on-campus, while collecting data to determine next actions.

Throughout all phases of reopening USF's mission remains unchanged; however, the University may modify methods of delivery of services along with the physical learning and work environments to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

USF's full plan for phased reopening was approved by the USF Board of Trustees on June 9, 2020 and by the Board of Governors on June 23, 2020. The plan is available here:

<https://www.usf.edu/board-of-trustees/documents/meetings/general/20200609-bot-agenda.pdf>

2. **Shared Responsibility:** USF's phased approach to resuming regular operations relies on the acceptance of shared responsibility by all members of the USF community to take individual actions that support the health and safety of all.
3. **Acknowledgment of Risk:** All members of the USF community who wish to obtain the benefits of on-campus, in person interactions and services should understand that given the nature of the COVID-19 virus USF cannot, and does not, guarantee there will be no transmission of the COVID-19 virus or COVID-19 cases on campus. This is the fact of the matter even though USF has made significant improvements in physical spaces, equipment, planning, processes and training. All members of the USF community are therefore strongly encouraged to carefully evaluate their personal circumstances to determine their appropriate level of participation in USF face-to-face and on-campus services and consider all available options.
4. **Effective Date and Changes to the Policy:** This Policy has been adopted as an Emergency Policy under the Board of Governors Guidelines for Emergency Regulations ([BOG Regulation and Development Procedures](#)) to respond to the Emergency Health and Safety concerns presented by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Policy will be effective August 14, 2020 for up to 90 days pending final adoption at the conclusion of the full promulgation period. The Policy will remain in effect until repealed or amended to respond to comments, new information and changing conditions. Substantive amendments to the Policy will be communicated through the university's established promulgation process. ([Policy 0-001 Regulation and Policy Development](#)).

II. **Conduct Expectations**

In this Policy the University identifies examples of individual conduct that will support and encourage a campus-wide health and safety strategy. Conduct that is inconsistent with this strategy or other disruptive conduct jeopardizes the health of all members of the USF community and may disrupt USF's mission and services; and therefore, may subject an individual to discipline, removal from campus and exclusion from University services, venues and activities, as applicable.

1. **Alignment with Other Authorities:** Nothing in this Policy is intended to replace processes, rights or definitions in the Student Code of Conduct, USF Regulations and Policies, or any obligations contained in applicable collective bargaining agreements.
2. **Fact Specific Analysis:** The specific action(s) taken in response to conduct that does not support health and safety strategy will be fact specific and consistent with USF due process requirements and reasonable exception processes, including but not limited to disability accommodations.
3. **Other Responses:** The behaviors and University responses listed in this Policy are examples only and are not exhaustive or exclusive. The university reserves the right to respond to conduct that is inconsistent with the health and safety strategy in lawful ways not described in the Policy.

4. **Risk Mitigation Strategies and Responses:** The following Risk Mitigation Strategies and Responses Table is intended to provide examples that will inform USF students, employees, visitors and on-campus vendors of:
- a. The types of conduct that will be expected of all members of the USF community to support health and safety standards on all USF campuses and instructional sites; and
 - b. The range of potential responses associated with conduct that is inconsistent with supporting health and safety strategies.

Risk Mitigation Strategies	Response To Conduct That Is Inconsistent With Strategies
Isolation of COVID-19 positive cases for medically indicated time period;	Removal from campus, referral to Student Conduct and Ethical Development, possible provisional suspension if a student, referral to Human Resources, possible disciplinary action if faculty or staff;
Isolation awaiting an indicated test result for medically indicated time period;	Removal from campus, possible provisional suspension if a student, possible disciplinary action if a faculty or staff;
Completion of the return to campus assessment;	Reminders followed by redirection when attempting to access other applications, followed by suspension of network access;
Completion of periodic symptom surveys and testing;	Reminders followed by redirection when attempting to access other applications; removal of access to in person services, activities and facilities
Wearing of face coverings in classrooms, group work environments, or enclosed public settings where social distancing may not be maintained;	Request to comply with the guidance followed by removal from the activity, e.g. class, lab, studio, congregate spaces or a workplace, followed by consequences for disrupting the activity;
Maintaining 6 feet of physical separation distance between other people, where signage and markings indicate such is to be maintained;	Request to comply with the guidance followed by removal from the activity;
Completion of education modules on risk mitigation and enforcement;	Multiple reminders to reach goal of 90% of employees in any unit on-campus completing;
Local disinfecting of workspaces including offices, frequently used areas and other areas where work is conducted including classrooms, labs, and similar spaces;	Request to comply with the guidance followed by reminders followed by warnings;

5. Additional Details on Selected Risk Mitigation Strategies

a. Face coverings:

The University of South Florida requires students, faculty, staff and visitors to wear face coverings inside university facilities on campus including, but not limited to, classrooms, conference rooms, shared work spaces, academic and administrative buildings, lobbies and lounge areas, research facilities, residence halls, student unions, performance spaces, retail spaces, museums, libraries and dining facilities. Individuals using a dining facility should cover their face until they sit down to eat and then put the face covering back on immediately after. USF Student-athletes are required to follow the face covering guidelines established by USF Athletics while participating in intercollegiate athletics activities such as training, practice and competition.

Face coverings are required when moving through shared spaces (i.e. lobbies, elevators, stairwells, lounges), when using campus public transportation and while inside university vehicles or golf carts if more than one person is present.

Face coverings may be removed when inside of a private building space, such as a single occupancy office or residence hall room.

USF requires wearing face coverings in outdoor public spaces on-campus when 6 feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained.

- i. Children under age 2 are exempt.
- ii. Both washable cloth and disposable face coverings are acceptable, as long as the employee is not in an area or performing a task in which a higher level of Personal Protective Equipment is required.

b. Testing

The University will engage in various forms of testing, including but not limited to symptom tracking surveys, viral testing, pooled testing and environmental sampling. All such testing will be conducted in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and with the consent of the test participant. However, refusing to participate in a test could be a basis to exclude an individual from on-campus activities, services and facilities such as: in person instruction and access to residence halls, business offices and the workplace, with applicable academic disruptions and employment actions.

- i. Any student, faculty and staff who tests positive for COVID-19 after a USF administered test will be notified of their test results; USF will also notify the appropriate county office of the Florida Department of Health, which is authorized to conduct contact tracing; the individual will be instructed to self-isolate away from any USF campus until medically cleared to return.

- ii. Student, employee and patient confidentiality laws prevent USF from disclosing the names of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19.
- iii. USF will provide updates to the community with allowable details when the university is informed of a positive case: <https://www.usf.edu/coronavirus/updates/usf-cases.aspx>.

However, if a student, employee or the Health Department fails to disclose a positive test, then USF may have no way of knowing and communicating that information.

III. For USF Employees: Return to Regular On-Campus Job Performance

1. USF employees will be returning to on-campus work in a phased approach; this includes but is not limited to faculty in classrooms and staff in their regular workspaces. When planning for the return of employees to campus, units must continue to meet the University's Mission and health and safety standards. USF is committed to flexibility in meeting both obligations, where reasonable circumstances permit.
2. In Phases 1-3 of returning to regular on-campus work, the following conditions will apply:
 - a. **Employees should continue to work remotely if approved.** If in the judgment of University management duties can be performed remotely while still meeting the University's mission, then the employee should be permitted to do so/continue to do so.
 - b. **Employees who are sick should not come to work on campus.** An employee who is exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms or who is diagnosed with COVID-19 should not come to work. The employee should contact his or her supervisor as soon as possible and advise the supervisor of the reason for the absence. The supervisor should consult with Division of Human Resources to determine how the leave should be administered and the case reported. Employee healthcare information will be treated as confidential, as permitted by law.
 - c. **Leave Options for Employees who are: awaiting testing; directed to self-isolate; and for recovery.** The employee should contact his or her supervisor as soon as possible and advise the supervisor of the reason for the absence (i.e. for testing or to self-isolate). The supervisor should consult with Division of Human Resources to determine how the leave should be administered. Employee healthcare information will be treated as confidential, as permitted by law.
 - i. **Leave for testing:** The University will provide paid administrative leave or remote paid working assignment, as applicable, of up to 5 (five) business

days for an employee to be tested and receive results, which may be adjusted at the University's discretion based on the availability of the testing process.

- ii. **Leave for self-isolation:** The University will provide paid administrative leave or remote paid working assignment, as applicable, of up to 5 (five) business days for an employee who is directed by the University to stay home and self-isolate because they are known to have been exposed to a person positive for COVID-19 and therefore may be infectious. This may be adjusted at the University's discretion based on individual and workplace circumstances.
 - iii. **Leave for recovery:** An employee who tests positive for COVID-19 may have access to paid leave under applicable state or federal law, in addition to accrued USF sick leave in accordance with University policies and procedures. In some cases, an employee who tests positive for COVID-19, but is asymptomatic may be able to perform or continue to perform a remote working assignment.
- d. **Procedure for employees who cannot work remotely, but have challenges in returning to campus.** If in the judgment of University management an employee's duties cannot be performed remotely while still meeting University's mission; then the workplace outcome depends on the reason the employee is unable to return to campus, as described in the following sequential order.
- i. **Disability:** If the employee is limited in returning to campus because of a disability or medical condition, then the employee should consult with Division of Human Resources ("DHR") to review available options for reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disability Act ("ADA") or the possibility of leave under the Family Medical Leave Act ("FMLA"), including expanded federal eligibility for leave. The supervisor should not be the primary contact for ADA and FMLA matters, but rather should refer the employee and any healthcare information to DHR.
 - ii. **Health conditions and dependent/elder care:** If the employee is limited in returning to campus because of dependent/elder care obligations, then the employee should consult with DHR regarding FMLA leave, including expanded federal eligibility for leave for dependent care. The supervisor should not be the primary contact for FMLA matters, but rather should refer the employee and any dependent/elder care information to Central HR.
 - iii. **General risk profile:** If the employee is limited in returning to campus due to the employee's risk profile based on CDC guidance¹ then the employee and supervisor should explore options to adjust the work environment to support the employee's return to on-campus work, such

¹ (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/groups-at-higher-risk.html>)

as: flexible work schedules; alternating days in the workplace with days of remote work; hybrid performance of duties with telecommuting and in person work functions (i.e. faculty providing remote lectures with carefully managed in person labs); temporary reassignment; staggered start and end times to limit number of employees arriving or departing at the same time.

However, presenting one or more risk factors does not necessarily equate to a disability under the ADA that would be a basis to provide a reasonable accommodation (i.e. being 65 is not a disability).

- iv. **General concerns:** If the employee is limited in returning to work due to generalized concerns unrelated to the employee's own health or dependent/elder care circumstances, then regular University leave and assignment policies apply.
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***Current Responsible Office: Facilities Management; Academic Affairs**

***Refer to the appropriate Responsible Office website for a current name of the Vice President or other Responsible Officer.**

New: 8-14-20