



To: USG Community

From: Erin Ward (on behalf of the USG Health & Safety Committee)

RE: USG COVID-19 Protocols for Beginning the Spring 2022 Semester

Date: January 11, 2022

As we turn our attention to the spring semester, we continue to face the challenges brought on by COVID-19, which now include the rapidly spreading Omicron variant. For the USG community, this meant starting back after the winter break with remote services and limited on-campus activity. ***We will continue limiting operations on the USG campus and encourage everyone to operate as virtually as possible until February 7, 2022.***

USG is working with its academic partners and programs to determine the amount of spring courses that can be offered virtually for the first few weeks of the semester, with the goal of decreasing the number of people on the USG campus during this time. The USG Health and Safety Committee will continue to reassess the situation, considering information from Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, and the University System of Maryland.

Health and safety protocols for returning to the USG campus include the following:

- Everyone must comply with their home campus health and safety protocols on testing, vaccinations, symptom monitoring, etc.
- Everyone returning in-person **must be fully vaccinated**, per the previous USM mandate, unless they have been granted an exemption.
- Most of the partner universities are requiring a **negative COVID-19 test prior to being on campus**. Everyone should report the negative test in accordance with their home institution's procedure. *(USG staff will receive specific information on compliance with UMD health and safety protocols in a separate email.)*
- Individuals are **required to wear a KN95 mask** over their mouth and nose while on the USG campus. There will be some KN95s at the security desk for emergency use. USG Staff will be provided masks from the Health and Safety team. For USG partners, masks can be picked up from program directors. In addition to the KN95s, partner institutions will provide their faculty and students with the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is needed for their classroom, clinic, or lab.
- Everyone is urged to **avoid high risk-of-transmission environments** (e.g. no eating in groups, no studying in groups without masks).
- For those who need **COVID-19 testing** to meet university requirements, the USG COVID-19 testing clinic will reopen operations with the regular Monday (9am - 4pm) and Thursday (11am - 6pm) schedule beginning on January 17, 2022. This clinic is only open to the USG Community; it is not a public clinic.
- We are also planning on continuing to host the free testing clinic on Wednesdays, which is open to the public and operated by Montgomery County. We will keep you informed of any

updates to additional testing opportunities on the campus. In the meantime, there are also other free testing clinics in [Montgomery County](#) and throughout the state.

- Information on **how to report a positive COVID-19 case or to ask questions about possible exposure** can be found on the [USG Onward website](#). There are specific hotline phone numbers, emails and contacts for each institution.

**Reminder** - Individuals should not come to the campus if: (1) they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms; (2) they are waiting for the results of a COVID-19 test because of symptoms; or (3) they are sick in any way, even with a mild illness.

The pandemic has proven to be unpredictable in many ways and while we expect our USG community to be back on campus (with regular scheduled telework) after February 7<sup>th</sup>, we urge those who are planning large, in-person events for February or March to consider planning with hybrid or virtual alternatives, should COVID-19 measures require a greater shift to remote activities. Delaying events until later in the semester is also an option to consider.

For more updates on health and safety guidelines and information, please visit the [USG Onward website](#).

Thank you for continuing to do your part in following these important measures. We wish everyone much success and good health this semester!

**Erin Ward**

Manager, Administration

The Universities at Shady Grove