Frequently Asked Questions on Updated UTHSC Campus COVID-19 Guidelines

Many researchers have questions regarding the updated [CDC guidance](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html) and corresponding update to the UTHSC campus COVID-19 guidelines. These changes, possible now because of an effective and widely available vaccine, reflect a shift towards greater personal responsibility in managing your health and protecting the health of those around you. Individuals have a right to make decisions that impact their health and a right to the privacy of their healthcare information. However, we each have a responsibility to ensure that our rights do not infringe on the rights and well-being of others.

The frequently asked questions (FAQs) below provide additional guidance for implementing the updated UTHSC campus COVID-19 guidelines.

**Question:** The revised CDC and campus guidelines are different for vaccinated and non-vaccinated individuals. How do we know which set of rules apply? Are we permitted to ask individuals about their vaccination status?

**Answer:** We are not permitted to ask individuals about their vaccination status. The decision by an individual whether to be vaccinated is personal and may be a based on a healthcare status that they do not wish to share with others. It is expected that UTHSC personnel will follow the appropriate set of guidelines. As stated in the UTHSC Code of Conduct, “The university relies on the ethical and responsible conduct of all employees… Employees are expected to conduct themselves fairly, honestly, in good faith, and in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards.”

**Question:** Non-vaccinated individuals are expected to wear facemasks on campus in accordance with CDC guidelines. Are supervisors responsible for ensuring that employees wear masks when necessary?

**Answer:** Supervisors do not have the authority to ask or mandate anyone to wear a mask. Non-vaccinated individuals must understand that others like themselves may be at risk of exposure to symptomatic or asymptomatic individuals. It is imperative that one person’s exercising their rights does not jeopardize the health and well-being of others.

**Question:** Social distancing will be maintained in lecture halls, study spaces and testing facilities with occupancy of every other seat. What are the guidelines for social distancing in labs and offices?

**Answer:** Except as specified above or in specific situations as determined by UTHSC Campus Safety and Emergency Management, there are no general requirements for social distancing. Individuals should be aware that increasing distance is one way to reduce the potential for exposure. Non-vaccinated individuals must be aware that their vaccination status may put them at increased risk of infection. When possible, individuals are encouraged to maintain a distance greater than 6 feet from others.

**Question:** Individuals with fever or viral symptoms are expected to not come to campus. If temperature checks are not required for buildings on campus (except for clinical care facilities) how do can we be sure that individuals on campus are fever free?

**Answer:** Individuals are expected to assess themselves for fever or symptoms of viral illness. Anyone that is symptomatic must remain off campus. Supervisors should communicate that under no circumstances are staff members with a fever or other viral symptoms permitted on campus. The risk of COVID-19 continues to be present in the community. Arrangements should be made with the individuals primary healthcare provider to be tested for COVID-19.

**Question:** Masks are required for clinical care facilities on campus, including waiting rooms. Does this include clinical trial space?

**Answer:** Yes, individuals participating in clinical trials must comply with CDC guidelines related to the use of masks. This may be promoted through the continued use of signage or other forms of communication. Clinicians who believe it to be helpful may chose to mitigate their risk of exposure by opting to wear an N95 respirator in accordance with the requirements of the [UTHSC Respiratory Protection Plan](https://uthsc.policymedical.net/policymed/anonymous/docViewer?stoken=de47aa28-16aa-408b-9c96-cb04f232964f&dtoken=20c479c9-72a1-4c44-9dae-f3accb3253e4). A summary of the requirements for individuals who use respirators is accessible on this [UTHSC website](https://www.uthsc.edu/research/safety/respiratory-fit-testing-training.php).