

# Duke University

## PhD Student COVID-19 Policy Plan

(Effective Date: Aug. 17)

### Scope

The Duke University PhD Student COVID-19 Policy Plan (“**Duke PhD COVID-19 Plan**” or “**Plan**”) applies to any PhD student who, at any point in the Fall semester, attends in-person courses on campus and/or utilizes resources, facilities, or services physically on campus, such as laboratories or libraries.

### Introduction

The world, including Duke, is in the middle of responding to and managing a global pandemic. Duke is very concerned for your personal safety in this pandemic as well as your ability to progress toward your doctorate. While all in-person contact amid a pandemic involves risk, Duke has worked with infection control experts to develop the additional protocols set forth in this document to lessen the risk of potential exposure. Mitigating the risk of person-to-person spread requires efforts from the entire community.

The key elements of this Duke PhD Student COVID-19 Plan, as it now exists or is later amended:

- Are rooted in twin goals to continue the institution’s vital missions of education and research while promoting safety for our students, our faculty and staff, our health care providers, and for the public at large.
- Amplify the provisions of the COVID-19 [Duke Compact](#).
- Are generally aligned with local orders and ordinances of the [City of Durham](#) and [Durham County](#), as well as the [State of North Carolina’s Phased Reopening Model](#), or in the case of students at the Duke University Marine Lab (DUML), the town of [Beaufort](#) and [Carteret County](#) (and you are encouraged to review those orders carefully to ensure compliance with all state and local requirements).
- Are informed by recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), N.C. Department of Public Health, and the Duke Health Advising Team, as implemented by the University; to prevent both symptomatic and asymptomatic spread, these recommendations emphasize aggressive symptom monitoring and reporting, use of appropriate face coverings (those that fully cover the mouth and nose and provide a close fit to the face), physical distancing, and regular handwashing.
- Adhere to Duke University COVID-19 policies and expectations, which are designed to protect your own well-being and the wellbeing of other students, faculty, staff, and our Durham-community neighbors, especially those who are elderly, immune-compromised, or otherwise vulnerable to COVID-19.
- Are attuned to [The Duke Community Standard](#) insofar as it pertains to conduct by PhD students.
- May be supplemented by more specific policies adopted by individual schools or programs, which they will communicate to their students.

Our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, and our policies, plans, and student expectations will be updated appropriately as more information becomes available. Updated policies, plans and expectations will be available [here](#).

**In order to participate in in-person educational activities and/or to access Duke's campus and external facilities, students must attest that they have read and agree to the following responsibilities and expectations. This attestation acknowledges the inherent risks of community transmission, as well as our personal and collective responsibilities to reduce to the extent possible those risks to ourselves and our broader community. The link to this attestation is at the bottom of the document.**

### **Student Responsibilities & Expectations**

**COVID-19 Testing:** If possible, you should obtain a test before traveling to Durham, and also self-quarantine for 14 days.

If you are planning to take courses in-person and/or utilize campus facilities, you must submit to mandatory testing upon arrival, unless you are a continuing student who has already been coming to campus on an approved regular basis this summer. Details about scheduling and other matters will be communicated soon through your school. While awaiting testing results, you will be required to sequester for 48 hours or until testing results are provided by Student Health. Based on daily symptom monitoring results, Student Health may require additional testing.

During the fall semester, Duke plans to institute pooled testing as a means of assessing the incidence of COVID-19 infection in our community. Pooled testing is a method that allows for testing of larger numbers of people while conserving supplies. Details regarding how pooled testing will be administered will be communicated at a later time.

**Student Reporting:** If you are feeling ill or have been in close contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, such as roommates or family members, you must contact the Duke COVID Hotline at 919-385-0429 and choose the "student" option to speak with a medical professional. The COVID Hotline is available seven days per week from 8 am until 8 pm each day. For after-hours assistance please refer to the SymMon app (see Daily Symptom Monitoring below) or the [Student Health website](#) for up-to-date contact information.

**Daily Symptom Monitoring:** Before leaving your dwelling to come to campus for the first time each day, you must complete a daily symptom monitoring activity through the REDCap Duke Symptom Monitoring Application (SymMon) downloadable from the Apple and Google Play app stores. If you report COVID-19 related symptoms through the SymMon app, you must contact the COVID Hotline (see Self-Reporting above) and not attend in-person classes or utilize campus resources until cleared by Student Health. It is of utmost importance that you report symptoms with precision and accuracy to protect the health and well-being of others in the Duke community. As explained more fully in the SymMon app when you sign up, Duke will use this information to ensure individual compliance with monitoring requirements, provide appropriate responses for symptomatic individuals, and analyze trends related to COVID-19 incidence on campus.

**Face Coverings:** You must wear an appropriate face covering at all times when in public settings on campus, both inside buildings and outside unless you are exercising outdoors in a place where appropriate physical distancing is possible. Duke also strongly encourages you to adhere to this practice while you are off campus. Please be aware that as of the publication of this document (summer 2020), the State of North Carolina has a [mandate](#) requiring the use of face coverings in most situations. Appropriate use of face coverings in conjunction with physical distancing is critical in minimizing risks to others. Individuals can spread COVID-19 to others even if they do not feel sick. Duke will supply students with reusable/washable cloth masks for daily use.

While on campus, you may remove your face covering indoors only when eating (and while maintaining a safe physical distance from others), or while occupying a study room by yourself. You must wear a face covering in hallways, bathrooms, common areas, and any other space shared with any other person. You must comply with state and local requirements in addition to Duke's expectations. Students who have a medical condition that may affect their ability to wear a face covering should consult with the [Student Disability Access Office](#) (SDAO).

**Physical Distancing:** While on campus, stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people at all times. Exceptions may include brief periods of time as part of laboratory research or other required activities where all parties are wearing appropriate face coverings. Duke strongly encourages you to adhere to this practice when you are off campus and out in public. As with face coverings, you should understand that state and local orders require you to maintain physical distancing in many situations.

**Hand Washing:** While on campus, you must wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after being in a public place, before and after eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water are not readily available, you must wash your hands thoroughly using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Duke has provided hand sanitizer stations throughout campus.

**Enter/Exit Control:** Duke will regulate and monitor entry to all Duke Campus buildings. The DukeCard is required for entry to all buildings, and no one may hold or prop open exterior doors for any other person. Visitors and guests are not allowed on the Duke Campus at this time. Building occupants are expected to follow signage on traffic flow through building entrances, exits, elevator usage, and similar common use areas.

**Student Events:** Currently, in-person activities sponsored by official Duke student organizations must occur on campus and are restricted to groups of no more than 10 people, whether indoors or outdoors. All student organizations are required to register any in-person event. Additional information will be provided by [University Center Activities & Events](#).

Duke is particularly concerned about community spread of COVID-19 through unofficial social gatherings off campus, and strongly encourages you to abide by public health protocols at all times, whether in your residences or elsewhere off campus. In addition, you are encouraged to review state and local orders that place limits on mass gatherings.

**Duke Dining:** Dining services are subject to modification to address public health concerns, such as limiting the occupancy of dining halls and limiting the amount of time individuals may remain within dining facilities. See the [Duke Dining website](#) for updates to dining operations and meal options, including online ordering, pickup, and in-person dining.

**Contact Tracing:** If you test positive for COVID-19, Student Health will conduct contact tracing to quickly and sensitively identify individuals who could have come in contact with you during the time when you were infectious. This process, which may involve testing, symptom monitoring, and quarantine of those contacts, is essential to helping reduce the potential spread of infection. Duke will make use of this information only to further public health goals.

**Quarantine/Isolation:** Student Health, in consultation with local health authorities as appropriate, will serve as the Duke authority to issue quarantine or isolation directives for students. Students must comply with Student Health's directives. Since the great majority of PhD students live off campus, those directives generally will require infected individuals to stay off-campus in their residence for a designated period of time.

The typical isolation period for a student who has tested positive is at least 10 days depending on duration of symptoms and the typical quarantine period for a student having been exposed to COVID-19 is 14 days. Student Health will determine the scope and duration of the isolation/quarantine directive on a case-by-case basis, based on available medical evidence at the time. You will NOT be able to attend classes in person during the quarantine or isolation period, nor utilize campus facilities or in-person resources. If you test positive and reside on campus, Duke will work with you to arrange appropriate accommodations and provide support services.

**Influenza (Flu) Vaccine:** In light of the strain that the pandemic is placing on our healthcare infrastructure, Duke needs to take all reasonable steps to prevent additional burdens on clinic and hospital capacity. Toward this end, students returning for the 2021 spring semester must receive the flu vaccine via Student Health or provide medical documentation acknowledging vaccination through a third party before they return to campus, unless they receive an approved medical or religious exemption.

**Overnight Travel:** Duke has established limits on Duke-related overnight travel, requiring a demonstration that any proposed trip is essential, that it cannot be reasonably postponed or avoided, and that the individual has planned to minimize the health risks of traveling amid the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information on this policy, please review the Duke Global Travel Policy – [COVID-19 ADDENDUM](#). To apply for an “essential travel” designation, see this [form](#).

Duke similarly expects you to limit personal overnight travel, leaving the Durham area only for the most important reasons and after careful consideration of alternatives (remote interaction; delay, etc.). Any personal travel that does occur should take place in accordance with public health recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19. For more information, please review [Duke’s Statement on Personal Travel](#).

**Request for Accommodations:** The Student Disability Access Office (SDAO) is the office on campus charged with assisting qualified students with disabilities in exploring and implementing reasonable accommodations. Students with medical conditions who wish to pursue temporary COVID-19 accommodations or explore additional accommodations outside of COVID-19 should reach out to the [SDAO](#) for more information.

**Leave of Absence:** PhD students should follow the leave of absence policies in The Graduate School (listed in the [Graduate School Bulletin](#)).

**PhD Students Residing on Campus:** These individuals will be required to sign an addendum to the housing license similar to the [addendum](#) signed by undergraduate students.

## **Accountability**

In order to resume in-person education for the upcoming semester while mitigating public health risks, Duke will need a collective effort by all students, along with all faculty and staff. As such, Duke expects all students to share in our community’s responsibility to hold one another accountable. If you see a peer not complying with public health expectations, address that person respectfully but directly to request compliance.

If you are concerned about non-compliance or behaviors of another member of the community (including students, faculty and staff) that jeopardize health and safety, but do not feel comfortable engaging that individual directly, please contact your Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or department Chair. You can also contact Duke’s anonymous hotline at (800) 826-8109 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week), or the [Duke Office of Audit, Risk, and Compliance](#).

First time, minor violations of COVID-19 conduct expectations will be met with appropriate educational responses. However, anyone who fails to comply with the expectations more than once, or who flagrantly commits a serious violation that creates a health or safety risk to others in the Duke community, will be subject to more significant consequences, beginning with loss of the privilege to attend courses in-person and/or loss of access to campus, and moving up to suspension or permanent removal from the PhD program.

## **Student Acknowledgement**

As a student who intends to return to the Durham campus, I acknowledge and agree as follows:

- I have read, understood, and agree to comply with all elements of the Duke PhD Student COVID-19 Policy Plan and I understand that additional specific policies may be adopted by my school and/or degree program. I understand that I will not be permitted to stay on the Duke campus, or parts of it, including attending classes in person or researching in laboratories and libraries, if Duke determines that I have not complied with elements of this Plan.
- I understand that that the future course of COVID-19 is unpredictable, that many factors will contribute to the severity of the pandemic in Summer and Fall of 2020 and beyond, and that the risks associated with participating in on-campus activity at Duke University are not fully foreseeable. Accordingly, I acknowledge that, even with the reasonable risk mitigation steps taken by Duke and my compliance with the expectations set forth in Duke’s policies and COVID-19-related conduct expectations, I may be exposed to and contract COVID-19.
- I understand that Duke’s approach to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 requires collaboration of all members of the Duke community, including myself. Accordingly, I agree:
  - To maintain appropriate (currently, 6 feet) physical distance from others whenever possible.
  - To complete registration with REDCap/SymMon prior to arrival in Durham, and to complete daily symptom monitoring through SymMon before I leave my residence each day.
  - To be tested for COVID-19 as Duke requires.
  - To cooperate with random temperature screening that may be conducted on campus and to follow instructions if I have a fever.
  - To wash my hands regularly throughout the day.
  - To comply with the applicable contact tracing protocols of Duke University and county and state health departments
  - To get a flu vaccine, unless granted an exception.
  - That the provisions in [Duke’s Acceptable Use Policy, Data Usage During COVID-19](#) apply and Duke may use data about me to develop approaches for understanding where the virus may be spreading, and who is at risk.
  - To wear an appropriate face covering, unless I receive an accommodation from [the Duke Student Disability Access Office](#)
  - To comply with Student Health or local/state directives regarding quarantine and isolation, whether I reside on- or off-campus.
  - To report any exposure to another individual, whether in my residence or elsewhere, who receives a diagnosis of COVID-19 infection
  - To comply with Duke’s rules regarding Duke student organization in-person events and gatherings, including the current restriction that such events must be held on campus and include no more than 10 people per gathering.
  - To adhere to Duke’s most current guidance on travel.
- I acknowledge and agree that these rules and expectations may change as public health guidance and federal, state, and local requirements evolve and as new testing and tracing methods emerge, and I agree to abide by any new rules and expectations promulgated by Duke, as made available [here](#).

In addition, this Duke PhD Student COVID-19 Plan provides students who return to the Duke Campus guidance for health and safety, campus, community, and academic scenarios. All students are required to comply with all applicable federal, state, or local health and safety laws, orders, ordinances, regulations and health and safety guidance adopted by the University or Housing as it relates to public health crises, including COVID-19.