



Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

One Silber Way
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
T 617-353-2230 F 617-353-6580
www.bu.edu/provost

TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer
Gary Nicksa, Senior Vice President for Operations
Judy Platt, Director of Student Health Services

DATE: August 18, 2021

SUBJECT: Updated Public Health Protocols for Fall 2021 Semester

As we prepare to welcome back members of our community and a new class of incoming students for the fall semester, we write to share information and updates about our fall public health protocols. For those who have been on campus during the last year some of this will look familiar. For those who are returning to campus or are new to BU, we look forward to sharing information about the multi-pronged approach that was extremely successful last year at limiting the transmission of COVID-19 on our campuses. Please review the following information carefully; additional details and FAQs can be found on the Back2BU website: [Working on Campus](#).

Our faculty, staff, and students have encountered numerous challenges over the past 18 months including balancing academics, work, and care of children and other family members, isolation, and reduced or eliminated social activities, all while weathering a global pandemic that has taken the lives of many of our loved ones. We have learned a great deal and continue to learn how to live with a virus that will likely be with us for months or years to come. BU's guiding principles for fall 2021 center on bringing our entire community back to the thriving campuses we know and love while reducing viral transmission using multiple layers of risk mitigation. These public health protocols, along with the dedication and commitment of each member of our community, will allow us to safely return to in-person teaching, learning, and work.

Vaccination

Vaccination is the most critical component for our successful and safe return to full campus activities. As previously announced, [all students](#) and [all faculty and staff](#) on our campuses are required to be compliant with the vaccination requirement before the start of the fall semester. If you are not already vaccinated, please see the [MassVax Finder](#) or plan to visit the [Boston University Vaccine Clinics](#) offering the Moderna vaccine this month.

Community Testing and Health Screening

We will continue our successful community testing program this fall. All members of our community, regardless of vaccination status, are required to complete a weekly COVID-19 PCR test. As faculty and staff return to campus, managers will update their testing categories accordingly. All faculty and staff will be assigned to a category for testing frequency and should complete a COVID-19 test on their first day back on campus. Under most circumstances, testing will be conducted on a weekly basis. For a list of testing categories, please visit [Back2BU](#).

In addition to weekly testing, all community members on campus will need to fill out a daily health symptom screening. Green badges, which reflect compliance with the testing requirement and symptom screening, which will be required at the test collection sites and at a variety of locations on campus, including but not limited to the dining halls, FitRec, and the Howard Thurman Center.

Most importantly, if you do not feel well, please stay home—even if you are vaccinated. While relatively rare, breakthrough vaccination cases do occur, and we expect to discover more of these given our regular community testing. If you are not feeling well, you can fill out the daily symptom survey and receive a call from the Healthway team to expedite a COVID-19 test at our Health Services Annex.

Masking

Masks will still be required indoors in classrooms, shared offices, public common areas, the BU shuttle, and healthcare facilities. Masks will not be required in private offices, individual residence hall rooms, or residential apartments. Masks may be removed while eating in dining halls and lunch or break rooms, but we encourage physical distancing whenever masks are removed. Enjoying meals outdoors is a great way to stay engaged with colleagues and friends.

Limited Exceptions to Mask Requirement

We recognize that there are some activities core to the work that we do that are very difficult, if not impossible, while wearing masks. Therefore, under very limited circumstances, exceptions to the indoor mask requirement may be considered for academic or programmatic activities. Specifically, an **individual** faculty member, lecturer, TA, or student speaking at the front of a classroom may choose to remove their mask while they are speaking. In these cases, we strongly recommend that the speaker move to a twice-weekly testing cadence and remain 12 feet away from others while unmasked. Similarly, mask exceptions may be considered for programmatic activities that are substantively impeded by masks, including theatre productions, performing arts classes, and athletic competitions. Any time masks are not used indoors, we recommend using badge checks for all in attendance, increasing testing frequency, minimizing the number of people unmasked at any given time, and maintaining enhanced physical distance whenever possible.

Additional Resources

Please join us for the livestreamed [Faculty & Staff Town Hall](#) on Thursday, August 19, at 10 am, for more information about staff remote work guidelines and our plans to safely start the fall semester. Thank you for your attention to this important information and we look forward to a great start to the fall semester in just a few weeks.

As President Brown [announced](#) last spring, we do not plan to offer workplace adjustments this fall. If you have concerns, questions, or require support as we transition fully back to campus, please take advantage of the following resources:

- Faculty-Staff Assistance Office (FSAO) – Email fsao@bu.edu or call 617-353-5381 for assistance. FSAO provides free and confidential support, problem solving, or coaching to address your work or personal challenges.
- Human Resources – Email hr@bu.edu or call 617-353-2380 with any questions regarding your employment or benefits.
- Occupational Health – Email buohc@bu.edu or call 617-353-6630. Occupational Health provides prevention, diagnosis, and treatment for work-related injuries and illnesses for the employees of Boston University.
- Equal Opportunity Office – Email accomm@bu.edu if you have a disability-related question or concern. You may also use this email address if you are pregnant or have a pregnancy-related question.