

# FALL 2021 BLUEPRINT

## COVID-19 OPERATING PLAN



DELaware VALLEY  
UNIVERSITY



## **Fall 2021 Operating Plans for Delaware Valley University**

The 2020-2021 academic year was truly unique and challenging. As a community, we persevered, learned and adapted, and came together to keep our campus safe and to preserve core learning experiences for our students.

Our nation is in a very different place today than a year ago. We have seen vaccination efforts make an impact on how our communities operate. Because of this, we are optimistic that we can proceed with a Fall 2021 experience that to every extent possible returns us to the kind of campus experience that DelVal does best and that students value most: an in-person and experiential academic environment, complemented by out-of-class experiences that engage and involve you through athletics and sport, clubs, activities and events. We want you to be able to spend time with your friends and do the things you enjoy without many of the essential precautions that precluded most of these activities throughout the last academic year.

To do this, we must all commit to the shared responsibility for keeping our campus and its members safe and focused on what matters most: your education both in and out of the classroom.

This shared responsibility means that all of us will commit to doing our part to mitigate personal and community risk and disruption. I previously communicated that in order to operate as we all wish, it will be important that we reach the highest possible level of vaccinations which will be the key to loosening restrictions on campus. I thank all those who have been able to make the commitment to vaccination.

For those who cannot, or who have requested exemption from vaccination, your responsibility is no less important. You will be asked and expected to comply with a different mitigation pathway related to COVID-19. Ultimately, a shared responsibility is just that – we accept the responsibility to take care of ourselves and to prioritize the welfare of our campus. One of our core values says it best:

### ***Act as one learning community with one purpose***

While much has changed in the past year, much is still evolving. At the time of this writing, every state in the country is seeing a rise in cases, almost exclusively among individuals who are not vaccinated and now at the greatest risk of infection and illness. We are not out of the woods yet. If and as conditions change, our plan may require modification and adaptation.

In this spirit we look forward to seeing you on campus this fall. Please review this plan to ensure that you understand our intentions and are able to honor them.

Be well, and I look forward to a successful Fall semester.

Benjamin E. Rusiloski, Ph.D.  
Interim President

## **About the Plan**

This document summarizes the operating conditions for campus in Fall 2021. It applies to all students and employees at all campus locations. It may be necessary to update portions of this blueprint as local, state and federal guidance are adjusted.

*Campus email* will be the primary mode of communication about the plan for all students, faculty and staff and revisions will be communicated through email.

### **Authority and guidance**

The University's plans are informed by directives and recommendations of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Bucks County Department of Health and monitoring of local conditions, the American College Health Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American College Health Association and the NCAA Sport Science Institute regarding student-athletes.

### **Guiding principle of shared responsibility**

This plan operates under the **assumption of shared responsibility** with each community member committing to safeguard their own health and that of others by abiding by the directives of this plan.

### **Accountability and compliance**

Our **principle of shared responsibility** presumes that community members will adhere to our [vaccination policy](#) and submit any and all documentation required.

Fully vaccinated individuals who do not submit vaccination cards will not be exempt from continued mitigation practices. Faculty and staff who have not submitted a vaccination card are required to continue wearing masks indoors. Students who do not upload a vaccination card, or do not request and receive an exemption, will be required to comply with mitigation practices associated with masking, testing, screening and quarantine.

Under the **principle of shared responsibility** all students, staff and faculty are expected to adhere to our community norms and calls for good citizenship. If these are disregarded, the University will seek adherence to our expectations through the Student Code of Conduct and relevant Human Resources and employment procedures established to address non-compliance.

Certain personnel on campus will have access to information about students who, by exemption agreement or inaction, have indicated their intention to wear masks and participate in other mitigation practices. By way of example, likely personnel include, but are not limited to, faculty for safe classroom management, coaches given athletics compliance, and administrative personnel charged with managing aspects of the exemption agreement

Similarly, staff supervisors will be notified which employees are required to wear masks in order to manage workplace safety.

A [COVID Compliance Concerns](#) form is available to report observations of non-compliance by *any* member of our campus community. These reports are routed to the Dean of Students and Director of Human Resources for resolution through the appropriate University procedures for students and employees.

This form is also for use by faculty members to report classroom non-compliance with health and safety directives (including wearing face coverings for those not vaccinated).

### **Personal health and safety practices for Fall 2021**

**NOTE: Mask Wearing Updated 9.1.21:** ALL students, faculty and staff (regardless of vaccination status) are required to wear face masks indoors until further notice due to the increased incidence of the COVID variants. We will update the mask wearing protocols as appropriate based on current conditions in our area.

**Mask wearing and transportation and travel:** All community members, regardless of vaccination status, must wear masks on vans, busses, planes or forms of public transit that may be taken for University trips and travel which include but are not limited to field trips, club activities, events, and athletic team travel.

**COVID testing:** Testing will remain an important strategy to keep our community safe and fully operational. Fully vaccinated students who submit documentation will be waived from this requirement. Non-vaccinated students or those who have not submitted vaccination cards or taken action for an exemption will continue to operate under testing protocols in place during the 2020-2021 academic year.

Specifically, resident students who are not vaccinated will need to show evidence of a negative COVID test prior to move-in. During the course of the semester, all non-vaccinated students will be placed in the pool for random selection for testing, which will occur at the Health Center, with a modest cost (\$5/test) billed to a student's account.

Student-athletes who are not vaccinated would be aware that guidance from the NCAA and the Middle Atlantic Conference may require more frequent testing for non-vaccinated students and you should anticipate that you may have to take the responsibility to be tested up to three times per week at the Health Center, depending on the nature of your sport.

Diagnostic testing for symptomatic students remains an important part of our community health protocols and will be available through the Health Center.

**Medicat health screening:** Non-vaccinated students, faculty and staff must continue to use the daily Medicat health screener. A green badge is required for non-vaccinated individuals to be on campus.

Instructions for use may be found here: <https://delval.edu/sites/default/files/2020-08/Medicat-Sceening-Instructions.pdf>

**Illness and reporting symptoms:** Regardless of vaccination status, individuals who develop symptoms consistent with COVID are urged to report them. Students should report to the Health Center at 215.489.2252 during normal business hours, or Public Safety at 215.489.4444 when the Health Center is closed.

Employees should seek guidance from their primary physician and communicate with Human Resources. Staying home when ill is an essential community health practice.

**Quarantine:** Per current CDC and related guidance, fully vaccinated individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 do not need to quarantine unless they have symptoms. However, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they don't have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative.

Students who are not vaccinated and who become exposed to COVID should expect to depart campus to quarantine. We anticipate being at full capacity in the residence halls this fall, and are not planning special arrangements for non-vaccinated students who must quarantine. Resident students who have requested and receive exemption must submit a departure plan, referenced on the exemption agreement, before checking into housing this fall.

Student-athletes who are not vaccinated and who are exposed are reminded that their personal participation with their team (practice, interaction, competition) will cease during any period of quarantine.

**Hand and respiratory hygiene:** For all community members, good health hygiene through hand-washing, and covering nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing remains essential practice.

**Accommodation of medical or disability concerns:** Certain individuals may have pre-existing medical or disability issues which might pose difficulties in a face-to-face academic or workplace environment. Students may [request reasonable accommodations](#) for themselves for [certain disabling or medical conditions](#) that, per the CDC, put them at an increased risk of severe illness due to COVID-19. Employees seeking an accommodation request under the Americans with Disabilities Act should [complete a request form](#). Examples of accommodations that may be needed are working from home. Contact Human Resources with any questions about accommodation requests.

## **Key University Operations and Practices for Fall 2021**

### **Academics**

- With rare exception, courses will be taught in-person this fall.
- Most classes will utilize 3-foot social distancing parameters.
- Some large classes may be taught remotely only if a suitable venue is not available; others may be held in larger spaces to allow for appropriate distancing.

- **Updated 9.1.21** The following references will be incorporated into course syllabi for the upcoming semester: per University policy, masks are required to be worn indoors by all students, faculty, and staff and compliance is expected.
- Faculty will prepare seating charts to facilitate any COVID contact tracing that should be required over the course of the semester
- Students who are experiencing symptoms of illness should not attend in-person classes. However, students should notify their instructors in a timely manner of their absence from class, whether in-person or remote, due to symptoms of illness.
- Students are responsible for all quizzes, exams, labs, projects, and assignments missed due to absence in each class for which they are enrolled. This should be coordinated through their instructor. Special accommodations for remote/Zoom class participation for non-vaccinated individuals is not planned at this time.
- Faculty may have access on a need-to know basis of those students in their classes who have indicated their intent to wear masks in compliance with the vaccination exemption.
- Faculty may report concerns about classroom non-compliance through the [COVID concerns form](#) is available.
- Faculty members, by policy, will have the right to ask a student to leave the classroom for failure to comply with health and safety expectations around wearing face coverings
- Should circumstances and campus conditions warrant, faculty will be prepared for a transition to remote instruction.
- Off campus internships, placements or clinical experiences are anticipated to proceed normally. Regardless of regulations that may be in place at a particular site, the University maintains an expectation that non-vaccinated individuals will continue the practice of mask-wearing at these sites
- Faculty members will be provided with standard language to include in course syllabi which will address issues associated with masking, attendance, seating and reporting of illness.

## **Athletics**

As of the issuing date of this plan, it is anticipated that athletics will proceed with a complete competitive schedule for the fall semester, subject to health mitigation practices as defined by the NCAA and the Middle Atlantic Conference. Such practices are likely to include required masking, testing and quarantine if exposed for non-vaccinated student athletes. Detailed guidance as it emerges will be communicated through the Athletics Department.

## **Cleaning and Sanitation**

Given our enhanced knowledge of the low risk of transmissibility from contact with surfaces, cleaning will resume a normal operating schedule subject to changes in conditions or service requirements for areas with suspected COVID-19 exposure. Individuals are encouraged to maintain the highest levels of personal hand hygiene.

Classrooms and laboratories will be stocked with cleaning products. Students and faculty should wipe down surfaces (desktops) and high-touch areas prior to the start of class/instruction. Please contact the building manager with questions, concerns or requests for additional supplies.

## **Contact Tracing**

With a high rate of campus vaccination, contact tracing should be minimal during the fall. If required, the community is reminded that County Departments of Health have predominant authority and legal responsibility for contact tracing and notifications of communicable diseases. When contact tracing is warranted, the DVU Health Center staff, who have been trained in contact tracing by Johns Hopkins University, will begin gathering information in support of contact tracing efforts. They will report directly to the Department of Health. Procedures for evaluating, isolating and quarantining close contacts will be issued through our Health Center, in collaboration with the local department of health.

## **Contractors and Vendors**

**Updated 8.16.21:** Contractors and vendors operating or delivering on University property are expected to comply with the same health and safety guidelines as those on campus. Contractors and vendors must be free of illness before coming onto campus and **face coverings are required indoor for all vendors regardless of vaccination status.**

## **Dining and Food Service**

Through our corporate partner Parkhurst Dining, plans to resume normal dining operations in Levin Dining Hall and the PUB are in place. New services and options for students to improve the customer experience will be communicated separately. Grab and Go options that were in place during the past year will be suspended in favor of a more sustainable To-Go container and option.

Masks may be removed while eating but those required to wear a mask are expected to do so after they have finished eating and while they remain in the dining hall.

## **Events and Meetings**

The University will continue to monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation, and reserves the right to alter this guidance to ensure the health and safety of event and meeting attendees. All meetings and activities will adhere to CDC, state and University guidelines for health and safety. The University will

comply with public health orders, including occupancy adjustments for the number of participants or attendees.

Currently, the University plans to allow in-person meetings and events during the upcoming academic year. Capacity of our meeting and event space will follow Pennsylvania guidance, which currently allows for use of meeting and event space at full-capacity.

**Update: 9.1.21: All individuals must wear a mask indoors while attending events or meetings (regardless of vaccination status) until further based on current COVID variant trends.** This policy will be updated on or before Labor Day based on current trends. Masks are not required for any attendee at an event or meeting held outside. External meeting or event hosts are expected to communicate this requirement to all attendees.

### **Guest and visitor policy**

**Update: 9.1.21:** Guests and visitors will once again be welcome on campus provided appropriate precautions are taken. **Any guest or visitor must wear a mask indoors until further notice due to current COVID variant trends.** This policy will be updated on or before Labor Day based on current trends. Hosts/sponsors are responsible for the behavior and compliance of their guests.

Resident students must be aware that the presence of guests in a room is with the mutual agreement of roommates. This agreement process occurs at the beginning of the term. Residents are advised that given the potential health and safety concerns, the expectation for mutual agreement will be heightened.

Guests and visitors to campus are expected to be free of illness. The host individual or sponsoring department is responsible for communicating this expectation to guests. Visitors must be denied access to campus if symptoms are detected.

### **Off-Campus Students**

**Updated 9.1.21.** Off-campus students are still responsible for adhering to the health and safety guidelines contained within this plan and for good citizenship to protect the campus community. Off-campus residents are urged to require that **all guests** or friends in the house or apartment wear a mask for the protection of all, **regardless of vaccination status.**

### **Office Hours and Appointments**

During the upcoming semester, office operations and appointments are anticipated to follow normal, in-person operations.

### **Recreational Facilities**

Outdoor recreation and activity is encouraged and supported! Students may consult with Student Involvement to explore both formal and informal recreational opportunities that comply with any health mandates.

During 2020-2021, the use of Work gym facilities, including the weight/fitness room was limited to student-athletes under the direct supervision of coaches and with strict safety protocols. Plans are currently in development to expand access to the gym and fitness room to all students and further details on the conditions under which this will occur will be in place prior to the start of the semester. Fitness and weight rooms remain higher risk environments which will likely require certain mitigation practices.

Outdoor club sports may proceed as normal. Club sports that occur indoors may occur with appropriate health provisions related to mask wearing and other mitigation. Students involved in indoor club sport will be asked to work directly with Student Involvement staff before beginning activity in the fall.

### **Social Distancing Standards**

The University is observing the distancing standard of 3 feet (about 2 arm's length) of separation in every feasible venue, consistent with local department of health guidelines being implemented in the public-school system.

### **Student Activities and Extracurricular Programs**

Being involved and having the opportunity to be part of clubs and organizations is an important dimension of DelVal's campus life and clubs and organizations are encouraged to identify creative ways for students to interact and engage with each other.

The Student Involvement team will provide guidance and support for student leaders on ways to host meetings and events in a way that aligns with expectations for mask-wearing by those who are not vaccinated, and other prevention strategies.

### **Travel and Transportation**

International travel – both outgoing (DelVal community members traveling) and incoming (international visitors and guests coming to DelVal) remains suspended through the Fall 2021 semester. A decision on spring travel will be made by September 10, 2021.

All community members, regardless of vaccination status, must wear masks on vans, busses, planes or forms of public transit that may be taken for University trips and travel which include but are not limited to field trips, club activities, events, and athletic team travel.

Academic field trips and club and organization travel are permitted to resume with the expectation that all travelers within a vehicle will be masked.

The [Pennsylvania Department of Health COVID-19 Information for Travelers](#) remains an active site and community members are encouraged to use it as a resource for information about restrictions and guidance on travel inside and outside of the Commonwealth.

Similarly, the CDC continues to maintain [useful information about travel](#).

### **Vaccine availability and education**

The one-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine is available at our student health center for students, faculty and staff. To make an appointment to come to campus to get vaccinated you can call the Health Center at 215.489.2252.

Students having difficulty finding the vaccine in their local community may reach out to student health at [healthcenter@delval.edu](mailto:healthcenter@delval.edu) for assistance.

Those seeking more information about vaccination may wish to view the [Vaccine Information Zoom Presentation](#) created by Meredyth VanVreede, our Director of Health Services.

The short [vaccine safety video from the CDC](#) may be helpful to those interested in this issue as it addresses concerns about the speed with which the vaccines have been developed.