Guide for Returning to School

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Guiding Principles

Given the uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, UMass Lowell has established the following guiding principles as it plans for Fall 2020:

1. UMass Lowell’s top priority is the safety and health of its community members.

2. All university decisions and guidelines will be in accordance with guidance provided by federal (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) and state (Department of Public Health) health officials, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ “Reopening Massachusetts” comprehensive plan (available at mass.gov), and the University of Massachusetts President’s Office.

3. The health and safety of the UMass Lowell community is a shared responsibility among all university community members. All campus community members will be expected to conduct daily self-checks for illness, stay home if ill, maintain social distancing, wear cloth face coverings, regularly wash their hands and sanitize shared spaces and equipment before and after use.

4. With additional confirmed COVID-19 cases likely among university community members or their families and friends, the university will support local health officials in the investigation and tracing of possible and confirmed cases of COVID-19 among campus community members.

5. UMass Lowell’s response to COVID-19 mitigation including university operations will adjust and evolve as the risk and spread of the disease changes and more information becomes available.

6. Flexibility will remain essential for all members of the university community as the university develops a process to accommodate those students and employees more vulnerable to illness.

7. While every attempt will be made to create a pre-COVID-19 student experience, the need for social distancing and the shared responsibilities expected from students may limit or prevent some activities, and affect meeting formats.

8. Many fall courses will resume in-person instruction, but many sections will be delivered virtually such that the campus can ensure social distancing. All faculty will be prepared to offer their courses virtually should changes become warranted.

9. Just like employees and vendors, students living on and off campus will be expected to conduct daily self-checks and stay in their rooms if ill. Any student in university housing who tests positive for COVID-19 will be transferred to an on-campus isolation space and room cleaning and contact tracing will be conducted according to established university and public health processes.

10. On-campus staffing will gradually increase during the summer, although some employees will continue to work remotely. In-person events and meetings will remain restricted by crowd size limitations and cloth face coverings will be provided to all employees working on campus.
Learning on Campus: Although we are expecting campus to be open this fall, we will be offering modifications to our course schedule, with approximately 25% of our classes being offered fully face-to-face, with the rest a combination of virtual and hybrid courses. If necessary, we will be prepared to pivot our on-campus courses to remote teaching in a way that supports a consistent student learning experience. Faculty will be offered a series of online summer trainings designed to support remote teaching and learning. Student services and support remain a top priority.

- All fall courses will have a Blackboard shell with syllabus posted.
- Student advising appointments will continue to be virtual, with face-to-face options as physical spaces allow for social distancing.
- The Testing Centers will operate on a limited capacity with social distancing, with scheduled appointments for students with accommodations.
- Tutoring can be effectively delivered through ZOOM, and a virtual delivery makes it more accessible to students; therefore, we will continue to offer these services virtually even as we are able to offer some face-to-face tutoring in the fall.
- The libraries will be open with limited hours, with student study space reduced due to social distancing requirements. Library stacks will be closed for browsing, but students will be able to request books for pick-up.

Living on Campus: The Fall 2020 housing model was designed in consultation with medical staff in the Wellness Center and considers local, state and federal recommendations for health and safety. In addition, the model is intended to mitigate risk of contagion, while still maintaining a sense of community and connection among students. Based on this model, approximately 3,600 bed spaces will be available for occupancy during the Fall 2020 semester. Please see the Returning to Housing Guide for further details.

- Traditional Hall Single Housing: 1 student per bedroom and limited availability of 2 students per bedroom in larger rooms designed for 3-4 students.
- Suite and Apartment Cohort Housing: Groups of students living together in self-contained suites and apartments - Single occupancy bedrooms as well as double occupancy bedrooms will be available. The room selection process will be designed to prioritize students living together who are known to each other. All students living in Cohort Housing will have to agree to a common set of expectations for behavior within the suite or apartment.
- Connection and community are vital to the college experience, the development of students and their mental and emotional well-being. Residence Life will provide a community focused experience that fosters connection among students while also supporting social distancing.
- Guest access to residence halls and individual units may be limited. Based on CDC and state of Massachusetts guidance. The most up to date guest guidelines will be published on the Residence Life website and in the residence halls.
- Community bathrooms will be cleaned once per day and revisited throughout the day as need by UML Facilities staff. In between these cleanings, cleaning supplies will be made available for residents to clean sinks and counter tops after use.
- Residence halls with in-room bathrooms and shared living spaces located in the room, suite, or apartment fall under the responsibility of the residents occupying that space. During your roommate contract meeting with your RA, you will work to create a cleaning schedule that will meet the minimum established cleaning guidelines.
• All residents will be encouraged to engage in enhanced social distancing measures during the first two weeks after moving-in. The University will follow state guidelines for quarantine of out of state residents. This process is still being defined and will be designed to not impede students’ academic progress.

Dining on Campus: University Dining will provide a high-quality Dine-in and extensive To-Go experiences while considering CDC and state guidelines for health and safety. Dining will take full advantage of multiple modalities of food services and will engage in extensive cleaning and sanitation protocols to ensure food safety and mitigate the risk of contagion.

• Dine-in options will take advantage of opportunities for outdoor seating.
• Plans are currently being developed for a reservation process as well as a capacity tracking program to help students schedule their dining hall visits.
• Specialty meals and events will be offered as part of both the Dine-in and To-Go experiences.
• Operations will be designed to support social distancing including:
  o Occupancy controls to manage spacing in service and dining area.
  o Social distancing implemented in kitchen and production areas.
  o Service adjustments for staff spacing.
  o Elimination of all self-service options.
  o Closure of services areas where social distancing is not possible.
  o Marked and spaced standing and queuing areas.
  o Signage to support and encourage social distancing.

Engagement on Campus: Student Engagement for UMass Lowell’s new and returning students will provide a well-rounded experience through building affinity and sense of belonging, driving engagement with academics, facilitating virtual campus experiences, fostering peer connections, offering service opportunities as well as providing career exploration opportunities. From Opening Week activities to UMass Lowell’s annual Convocation exercise, Engagement Fair and numerous of events put on by various clubs and organizations, students will enjoy a combination of modified in person and virtual activities crafted with public health guidelines in mind. In addition, Campus Recreation programming such as group exercise classes, outdoor adventure trips, clubs and intramural sports competitions will take place based on the university’ social distance guidelines. The Campus Recreation Center will modify hours and activity spaces to incorporate social distancing measures and cleaning best practices.

Getting Around Campus: Transportation services may run at reduced capacity to accommodate the current social distancing guidance. The priority for on-campus shuttles services will be focused on connecting students to classes. Student will be encouraged to utilize alternative means to navigate campus if they are able including: walking, biking, skate boarding, and using electrically propelled transportation devices. Please note that gas powered vehicles may not be stored in the residence halls.

Prior to Returning to Campus for the Fall Semester

Required Education: All students are expected to read and accept the information within this guide to lower the risk of a potential outbreak of COVID-19. In addition, all students must view a University Guidance Video for Returning to campus.
Symptoms of COVID-19: COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness. According to the CDC, symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure to the virus. The following is not a comprehensive list. As with any illness, please consult your medical provider if you are experiencing other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills (repeated shaking with chills)
- Runny nose or new sinus congestion
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- New loss of taste or smell
- Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or foot sores

Assess Your Risk:
According to the CDC, individuals with certain conditions may have a higher risk for COVID-19 complications. It is important that you review CDC guidance and consult with your medical provider as you consider your personal risk tolerance for returning to in person activities on campus. Currently, conditions that may result in higher risk for COVID-19 complications may include but are not limited to:

- Older adults (aged 65 years and older)
- People with HIV
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity
- Being immunocompromised

Accommodations:
Students who wish to seek academic accommodations can begin the process by filling out a Public Accommodation Request form on the Student Disability Services website. Student employees seeking employment accommodations should contact the UML Equal Opportunity and Outreach Office. Students who wish to seek alternative housing due to health reasons should contact the Office of Residence Life. See links below for further assistance.

- Academic Accommodations: www.uml.edu/student-services/disability
- Alternative Housing for Health Reasons: www.uml.edu/student-services/reslife
- Student Employee Accommodations: www.uml.edu/HR/Equal/Accommodations
Agreeing to Expectations and Accountability:

Students returning to campus will be expected to engage in protective personal behaviors to minimize the chances of the transmission of COVID-19. Students coming to Campus are expected to engage in the following measures:

- Conduct the Daily Self Check of COVID-19 Symptoms as outlined by UMass Lowell every time you come to campus or leave your first leave your residence hall room that day. Staying home if one or more symptoms are present, and notify UMass Lowell Health Services.
- Adhere personal mitigation practices based on current guidance and university directives.
- Bring recommended self-care items if you live on campus.
- Adhere to space and event guidelines designed to support social distancing and mitigation of transmission.
- Update contact information including mobile phone information in the Student Information System (SiS) and activate voicemail for those devices so that you can be contacted should you be identified as someone who may have been in contact with a COVID-19 positive person.
- Comply with all COVID-19 testing requirements that may be enacted on campus
- Comply with contact tracing, isolation, and/or quarantine protocols, some which may be conducted in cooperation with local public health.
- Comply with immunization record requirements. All information submitted via the Student Health Portal no later than (TBD) or you will not be allowed to return to campus.

All students are expected to fully comply with the policies, protocols and guidelines outlined in this document as part of UMass Lowell’s Expectations and Guidelines. Failure to comply with university directives designed to limit spread/exposure to contagions (including viruses, bacteria, fungi, parasites, etc.) constitutes a violation of the Student Conduct Code, the Residence Life Guidelines, or other policies at the university. Students may be held accountable through the conduct process for failing to abide by the policies, protocols, and expectations outlined above.

What to Bring:
The following items are expected for students to bring with them upon moving into the Residence Halls. Supply and demand have created some intermittent shortages:

- Face Coverings (at least two)
- Thermometer for personal use
- Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and or Ibuprofen: fever reducer
- Robitussin or Guaifenesin (cough medicine)
- Throat lozenges/cough drops
- Kleenex
- Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol content)
- Insurance card
- Name of phone number of primary care health care provider
- List of allergies
- Prescription medication(s):at least a 3 week supply of each medication
- Soap and paper towels
- Cleaning supplies(Lysol/Clorox type wipes)
Personal Mitigation Practices: Protect Yourself, Protect Others

In the absence of a vaccine, the goals for using mitigation strategies in communities with local COVID-19 transmission are to slow the transmission of disease and to protect the UML campus and surrounding Lowell community. The more an individual interacts with others, and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness spread from person to person. COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness. Primarily spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. Though unlikely to cause infection, it is thought that the virus may transfer to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Using personal mitigation practices is important to lowering the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread.

Social Distancing:
Keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools to avoid being exposed to the COVID-19 virus and slowing its spread. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to maintain distance from others when possible, even if they have no symptoms. Social distancing is important for everyone, especially to help protect people who are at higher risk of getting sick. Individuals on campus should follow these social distancing practices:

- Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people
- Do not gather in groups
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings

Face Coverings:
Face coverings must be worn by all university community members on campus when in the presence of others and in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., common corridors, circulation areas, workspaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, etc.). Appropriate use of face coverings is critical in minimizing risks to others near you. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The face covering is not a substitute for social distancing, rather an additional mitigation layer.

- Putting on the face covering:
  - Wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to handling the face covering.
  - Ensure the face-covering fits over the nose and under the chin.
  - Situate the face-covering properly with nose wire snug against the nose (where applicable).
  - Tie straps behind the head and neck or loop around the ears.
  - Throughout the process: Avoid touching the front of the face covering.

- Taking off the face covering:
  - Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing the face covering/disposable mask.
  - When taking off the face covering, loop your finger into the strap and pull the strap away from the ear, or untie the straps.
  - Wash hands immediately after removing.

- Care, storage and laundering:
  - Keep face coverings stored in a paper bag when not in use.
  - Cloth face coverings may not be used more than one day at a time and must be washed after use. Cloth face coverings should be properly laundered with regular clothing.
detergent before first use, and after each use. Cloth face coverings should be replaced immediately if soiled, damaged (e.g. ripped, punctured) or visibly contaminated.
  o Disposable face coverings must not be used for more than one day and should be placed in the trash after use or if it is soiled, damaged (e.g., stretched ear loops, torn or punctured material) or visibly contaminated.

Handwashing:
Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and wash your hands before and after touching your face.

Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene:
When you cough or sneeze always cover your mouth and nose with the inside of your elbow or a tissue if available. Throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.

Personal Disinfection:
While facilities crews will continue to clean common spaces based on adopted guidelines, we all will play a role in taking additional care to wipe down commonly used surfaces. Follow posted instructions about sanitizing in common use and high touch areas. Also, clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces. Don’t share items such as food, drinks, utensils, vapes, or similar items.

Stay at Home When You Are Sick:
It is important to stay physically distant from others when sick to reduce the transmission of disease. If you are sick, stay home to reduce exposure and transmission of the illness onto other individuals in the community. Students should notify their health care provider first if they are experiencing symptoms and then notify the Wellness Center if they have not done so already to update their health record. If you are a residential student contact the Wellness Center and your residence life staff if you feel ill so they can support you remaining in your room and minimizing contact with others. If you are scheduled to participate in class or work contact your faculty member or supervisor to let them know you will not be able to attend.

Symptom Monitoring Requirements:
Students who return to campus must conduct symptom monitoring every day prior to coming to campus or leaving their residence hall room. You must be free of ANY symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 or have had evaluation and clearance by Health Services to be eligible to report to class or participate in any other activity on campus. Currently, these symptoms include one or more of the following:
  • Cough
  • Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  • Fever
  • Chills (repeated shaking with chills)
  • Runny nose or new sinus congestion
  • Muscle pain
  • Headache
• Sore throat
• Fatigue
• New loss of taste or smell
• Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or foot sores

If you have any symptoms, always wear a face covering to avoid possible virus transmission to others. You should first contact your health care provider. After calling your health care provider, you must also call the Wellness Center at 978-934-6800 to notify them of your symptoms. A health care professional from Health Services will contact you shortly. You should self-isolate until cleared by Health Services to return to on campus activities.

While a monitoring app is not required, several options exist to help gauge symptoms:

COVID-19 Self Checker:  (insert hyperlink for UML symptom checker)

Testing and Contact Tracing

**Testing:** Current CDC guidance does not advise widespread screening testing. However, having capacity to conduct testing for those who have been identified as a contact of a COVID-19 positive person and/or those who exhibit symptoms common in those with COVID-19 is essential to minimizing the impact of an outbreak. At this writing it is not the practice of insurance carriers to pay for screening testing so any initiative to test those who do not meet the current testing priorities may result in an expense to our individual community members.
UMass Lowell Health Services (HS) is engaged in a statewide collaboration with other higher educational institutions to facilitate access to testing under those circumstances. Nurse Practitioners (NPs) in HS can order testing as indicated.

Provision of in-house point of care testing is not currently available, although being investigated. Provision of this service requires equipment including PPE, testing kits, analyzing machinery. Initiation of widespread on campus testing conducted by HS staff would impact service provision of other types of care including but not limited to sick visits.

**Contact Tracing:**
The role of the university in contact tracing can be characterized as supportive. The statutory responsibilities of local public health are to initiate and lead contact tracing. As a reminder, a contact is defined as someone who was closer than six feet from you for longer than 15 minutes. Our role as an organization would be (if requested) to clarify the scope of contact a student or staff member might have had while on campus. Local Public Health Authorities may also contact the University if there is unusual and/or alarming levels of disease requiring more intensive investigations and accompanying interventions. The status of an employee or student’s health is considered protected health information and will not be shared with the community in a manner that would violate the right to privacy of that community member.
Health Services will be asked to conduct the 14-day symptom assessment review and support the logistics of isolation and quarantine when a positive case is identified in our student population. This will be recorded by Health Services in the manner of other protected health information.
Quarantine and Isolation

Quarantine:
Quarantine separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. You may be required to quarantine if you have had contact with a person with COVID-19 even if you feel healthy:

- **Students who live off campus** should stay in their room or elsewhere in their home that facilitates limited contact with other people until 14 days after their last exposure. Individuals should only leave their room only to get food or use the bathroom.
- **Students living in the Residence Halls** will quarantine in their current residence hall assignment. They should stay in their bedroom and have limited contact with other people until 14 days after their last exposure. Individuals should only leave their room to get food or use the bathroom.
- If directed by an outside agency to quarantine, students should report that information to the Wellness Center. Health Services will register that information in the student’s health record and may follow up with the student during the quarantine period.
- Check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms of COVID-19. Students should notify their health care provider or the Wellness Center if symptoms emerge first and then notify the Wellness Center to update their health record.
- Stay away from people who are at higher-risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.
- It is particularly important to wear a face covering during quarantine when in the presence of others or outside of your room.

Isolation:
Isolation separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. You will be required to isolate if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or, are waiting for test results, or have cough, fever, or shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19:

- Separate yourself from others.
- **Students who live off campus** should stay home. If you live with others, stay in a specific “sick room” or area and away from other people or animals. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
- **Students who live in the Residence Halls** will be asked to isolate at their permanent address or other location they have identified through their isolation plan registered with Residence Life. Residential students who are unable to isolate off campus will be relocated to an on-campus isolation space.
  - Students will be able to use their meal plans to order food and have it delivered outside of their on-campus isolation room. Students who do not have a meal plan will be provided information for food delivery services.
  - Refer to Isolation and Quarantine protocol for more detailed information.
- Students should monitor their symptoms daily and notify their health care provider or Health Services if symptoms worsen.

Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

Counseling Services:
UMass Lowell Counseling Services (UMLCS) is available for telehealth support, assistance, and counseling in this difficult time to help our students navigate challenges, persevere, and succeed. Telehealth services are available via video or phone when video is unavailable. To request a counseling
session, call the Wellness Center at 978-934-6800 or e-mail counseling@uml.edu during regular business hours.

UMatter2:
You matter to UMass Lowell and the university is committed to supporting your overall health and wellbeing. UMatter2 serves to educate our campus community and connect one another to support our students’ mental health and wellbeing. Visit the UMatter2 website or Instagram for more information and resources to offer support, manage stress and enhance your resilience. #UMatter2UML

Guidance for Students While On Campus

Class and Labs: On-campus courses will be scheduled to allow for time between classes for recommended classroom cleaning protocols, including cleaning and disinfecting of high touch areas. Students may be asked to wipe down spaces they occupy during class. Lab participants will be required to clean their work areas more thoroughly at the end of each class session. Students will be expected to follow social distancing guidelines and wear coverings while in class, as will faculty. All students and faculty will be expected to follow safety protocols as recommended by the university based on CDC and state guidelines.

Meals: Before and after eating, you should wash your hands thoroughly to reduce the potential transmission of the virus. If dining on campus, you should wear your face covering until you are ready to eat and then replace it afterward. Dining establishments are structured to allow at least 6 feet of distance between each customer, including lines and seating arrangements. Individuals should not sit facing one another. Students are encouraged to take food back to their residence hall rooms, vehicles or to eat outside, if this is reasonable or your situation.

Use of Common Areas/Lounges/Study Areas/Student Spaces: Only use spaces designated as open and follow posted guidelines for use of space. Continue to engage in personal mitigation practices including wearing a face covering and staying 6 feet or more away from others.

Student Services: Student services will continue to be provided and many will continue to operate virtually for fall 2020. Select in-person activity may be approved based on social distancing and event gathering guidelines. Individual meetings will continue using online conferencing programs. Small group educational events, like workshops will be delivered virtually. Please visit the website for specific information about delivery of specific services.

Campus Transportation: If you must take public transportation or use Campus Transportation, wear a face covering before entering the bus and avoid touching surfaces with your hands. Upon disembarking, wash your hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol as soon as possible and before removing your mask. Occupancy of Campus Transportation will be reduced to support social distancing and protect drivers, likely resulting in extended wait times. Consider alternate forms of transportation to navigate campus: walking, biking (bring your own or use the Free Wheelers), scooters (electric or manual).

Using Restrooms: Maintain social distance and follow posted guidelines. Wash your hands thoroughly afterward to reduce the potential transmission of the virus. See the “Returning to the Residence Halls” guide for specific information about residence hall common bathroom usage.
Using Elevators: Maintain social distance or ride solo. Please use the stairs whenever possible. If you are using the elevator, wear your face covering and avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol upon departing the elevator.

Meetings/Gatherings: Convening in groups may increase the risk of viral transmission. Where feasible, meetings and gatherings of any kind should be held in whole or part using the extensive range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, telephone, etc.).

In person meetings are limited to the restrictions of local, state and federal guidelines. If participating in an in-person meeting or gathering, follow the social distancing expectations of that location/event.

During your time on campus, you are encouraged to communicate with others by email, instant message, telephone or other available technology rather than face-to-face. You can also use a range of available collaboration tools (e.g. Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Jabber, etc.).