



**UNIVERSITY OF THE POTOMAC SAFE  
REOPENING PLAN- COVID 19 PANDEMIC  
FALL 2020**

## I. Overview:

During the past few months, the COVID-19 pandemic has created extraordinary challenges impacting our daily lives. The 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic is a pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The disease was first identified in Wuhan, Hubei, China in December 2019. Through this time the faculty, staff and students of the University of Potomac has demonstrated high levels of grit, persistence, and resilience. As we prepare for our Fall October 26, 2020 (12A) return and for the future of UOTP, we remain focused on continuity and safety with the goal of emerging as a better, stronger university.

According to the CDC, the level of risk for COVID-19 transmission for Institutions of Higher Learning is as follows:

### **IHE General Settings**

- **Lowest Risk:** Faculty and students engage in virtual-only learning options, activities, and events.
- **More Risk:** Small in-person classes, activities, and events. Individuals remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and do not share objects (e.g., hybrid virtual and in-person class structures or staggered/rotated scheduling to accommodate smaller class sizes).
- **Highest Risk:** Full-sized in-person classes, activities, and events. Students are not spaced apart, share classroom materials or supplies, and mix between classes and activities.

University of the Potomac is currently at the lowest risk as our courses are being completed via remote learning via the use of our LMS platform Moodle and Google hangouts for those students following our hybrid modality and continued online for our approved online modality.

The University of the Potomac has designated Andrea Ford and Brandi Morris as co-coordinators as part of the institutions task force. The primary responsibilities include ensuring all State, Local, OSHA, and CDC requirements are met as they relate to the safety of staff, faculty, students, and the community. Support includes: Campus Director- Camilla Meros and Provost- Dr. Tony Johnson. In addition, all staff and faculty members will participate in mandatory health and safety training.

### **Resources**

Contact information and procedures for reaching the local health department.

- UOTP will follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC), DC government/Department of Health, and the Virginia Department of Health. The UOTP website will instruct students
- Virginia Department of Health- <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/>
- Center for Disease Control- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- DC Government/ Dept of Health- <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>

## II. **REPOPULATION OF CAMPUS**



The university plans to begin fall classes as scheduled on October 26, 2020 (12A session) and offer in-person instruction in many courses until the Thanksgiving recess. Staff is scheduled to return to the campus on October 19, 2020 pending the State, CDC, and Legislative requirements. The initial staff return model will be one week on campus one week telework. The course array and the modality of instruction is determined by the Academic departments, working with the Deans of their respective campuses. This will include course instruction plans for students not able to return to the U.S. for in-person instruction.

After Thanksgiving, UOTP will switch to a virtual format for all courses for the remaining days of instruction plus exams. This decision is based on the likelihood that students leaving and returning to UOTP over the Thanksgiving recess would increase the risk for COVID-19 infections on campus.

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The university is committed to reducing the risk of COVID-19 for its students, faculty and staff. UOTP's strategy will rely on a rigorous approach to temperature testing, cleaning, face covering and symptom monitoring, all aimed at keeping the risk of disease as low as possible.

**Employees-** will be required to pre-screen prior to returning. Pre-screening includes completing forms maintained in the Officer of HR stating that they have not experienced any symptoms related to COVID-19 also confirming they have not been in contact with anyone known to display symptoms. UOTP will allow for those with underlying conditions and those over 65 the option of teleworking. UOTP will follow guidelines set by OSHA and State EEOC regulations.

**Students-** will be required to pre-screen prior to returning. Pre-screening includes completing forms maintained in the Officer of HR stating that they have not experienced any symptoms related to COVID-19 also confirming they have not been in contact with anyone known to display symptoms. The forms will be maintained in the Student Services Department along with updated FERPA forms.

### **TEMPERATURE TESTING**

Testing is key to identifying infection and keeping it from spreading. UOTP will implement a two-part testing plan:

- On-campus, temperature checking will be available and required for all staff members and student workers. Testing will be mandatory upon initial entry as well as all reentering the building will require check.
- Students, Faculty (all are PT adjuncts), and Visitors will be required to answer a questionnaire self-identifying any symptoms.

## **III. PROTOCOL FOR MONITORING HEALTH CONDITIONS TO DETECT INFECTION**

### **CONTACT TRACING INFO:**

Contact tracing with Virginia Department Health provide guidance and education about how to keep yourself and others safe. The office performs public health actions on how to understand communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19. VDH also tracks the progress of the

outbreak in Virginia and connects people with resources they may need. UOTP will work diligently to ensure real time information is reviewed daily to keep our community safe.

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/peninsula/contact-tracing/#:~:text=%20Contact%20tracing%20and%20case%20investigations%20are%20important,people%20with%20resources%20they%20may%20need%20More%20>. UOTP will ensure that any employee or student returning after testing positive is kept confidential and that anyone they may have come in contact with two days prior is notified.

#### Returning to work and school after testing positive

- After quarantine, the employee or student must document proof that after 72 to 96 hours: fever is gone without medication, no respiratory issues, and it has been a minimum of 7 days since they have experienced symptoms.
- If there are multiple cases, UOTP will notify all that were in contact with the infected person and will opt to return to temporary teleworking and online modality for course delivery.

## **IV. PPE REQUIREMENT AND SOCIAL DISTANCING**

### **FACE COVERING**

Non-medical face coverings (face masks) will always be required for all community members on campus, except while alone in private offices. The university will have reusable masks available for all staff members and disposable mask upon request for visitors. Accommodations will be made for those unable to do this for documented medical reasons. These accommodations include staggered entry and leave times.

### **PHYSICAL DISTANCING**

Physical distancing, or remaining at least six feet apart, will be expected in all classrooms and where possible in public spaces and in workspaces. The hallways will be marked with a “X” to note appropriate distancing. Offices will be occupied by only one staff member. Visitors will be by appointment only without any exceptions.

### **CLEANING/HYGIENE**

New procedures will be adopted to clean campus facilities. The new procedure will include additional cleaning during the day in the offices and cleaning after each class. This means cleaning will happen 3 to 4 times a day when classes are being held. Students will be provided supplies to clean desks and seats before use and staff will be asked to clean their workspaces. All staff will have ample supplies to ensure their safety and the safety of visitors. Increased cleaning of campus spaces will occur according to VA and CDC guidance. Routine services will be augmented with additional cleaning and disinfection activities in all classrooms, offices, and restrooms. There will be frequent cleaning of spaces with higher occupancy levels and work activity. All occupied spaces will maintain HVAC system operation for maximum space occupancy. This allows for maximum fresh air supply, regardless of reduced occupancy or use. Cleaning activities will consist of:

Routine cleaning: waste removal, floor cleaning, and wipe-down of horizontal surfaces.

Routine restroom cleaning: waste removal, cleaning and disinfection of floors, sinks, toilets, and urinals.

Routine cleaning of dining and lounge areas: cleaning of dining facilities.

Enhanced cleaning: disinfection of high-touch surfaces with wipe-down of high-frequency touch points (e.g., door handles, light switches, elevator buttons, shared equipment control panels, etc.) using EPA-approved disinfectants.

Enhanced disinfection: disinfection of horizontal work surfaces in classrooms and common areas using EPA-approved disinfectants.

## **SYMPTOM SELF MONITORING**

Members of the campus community will be expected to monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 daily and, if symptoms exist, immediately get tested and quarantine. COVID-19 educational sessions will be offered. UOTP does not have a designated Student Health Dept. However, additional information on health care, mental health, and COVID-19 information will be located in our Student Services Department. There will also be information on where to find medical attention, food, and shelter related to COVID-19. UOTP has chosen INOVA Health Systems to assist those in need of COVID care. Inova's Respiratory Illness Clinics provide vehicle-side appointments that are ordered by a medical provider and scheduled ahead of time to test individuals for COVID-19. Vehicle-side appointments are only for individuals who have already been screened by their primary care provider, meet criteria and have a written order for a COVID-19 test. Additionally, Respiratory Illness Clinics offer in-person evaluations and screening for COVID-19 symptoms.- <https://www.inova.org/locations/inova-urgent-care/respiratory-clinics>.

Providers may refer their screened patients to Respiratory Illness Clinics if they do not have the capability to test potential COVID-19 patients. All Inova locations screen all referred patients for COVID-19, and follow Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) and Virginia Department Health (VDH) guidelines to safely care for our community. All Inova Care Sites follow the same COVID-19 testing protocol.

## **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Preserving the health of the campus community will be a broadly shared responsibility. Students, faculty and staff on campus during the 2020-21 academic year will be asked to adhere to a set of actions that protects their health and, even more importantly, protects the health of others on campus.

- Visitors- A list must be provided to the security team daily to ensure all checked in and monitor traffic. No walk-in appointments will be accepted.
- Packages- must be left at the buildings front desk. Staff members will use gloves to retrieve delivered packages.
- Front desk- only one staff member or student worker will manage the office front desk at a time to ensure following strict deadlines.
- Furniture in the front office will be removed to only accommodate two visitors at a time to ensure social distance.
- Signage will be posted at the elevators, front door, and front desk to remind staff, students, faculty, and visitors of social distancing and mask requirements.

- Office hours- The university will maintain office hours of 9am to 5pm Monday thru Friday. Saturday's campus will open from 8am to 6pm. Sundays the university is currently closed. If additional accommodations are required, Sunday hours will become available.

## **V. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

To ensure and maintain a healthy campus environment, UOTP is coordinating closely with local, state, and federal officials to further ensure plans reflect current guidance for addressing the health and wellness of returning students, faculty and other members of UOTP. The University's Department of Operations is developing and operationalizing new policies, procedures, and plans for the start of the 10A term to address the required health measures and oversight necessary to promote safer and healthier campuses. Adherence to vital public health practices will include hand hygiene, physical distancing, mask wearing in common indoor areas of campus and when social distancing cannot be maintained outdoors, proper cough/sneeze etiquette, frequent cleaning of common and high traffic areas, and symptom assessment. The following provides an outline of how UOTP's Department of Academic Affairs will provide prevention and safety strategies in classrooms and instructional spaces across all campuses.

### **CLASSROOMS**

- Class sizes and classroom densities have been evaluated to optimize social distancing guidelines. As mentioned previously, UOTP teaches relatively few large lecture courses and our average class size is also relatively small. This will facilitate dispersing or separating students while maintaining the personal interaction that is the hallmark of the UOTP experience. Some of our larger classes will be transitioned to remote instruction, and smaller courses will incorporate protocols to reduce densities and facilitate social distancing.
- Classrooms will be equipped with additional technology to support lecture capture and mixed-mode delivery wherever possible. This will provide face-to-face and online delivery simultaneously in courses and allow non-F-1 VISA students to utilize the mode that is most suitable for them.
- Classroom densities will be reduced by using spaces larger than enrollment or by rotating groups of students to attend on different days as possible and appropriate. Within the classroom, steps will be taken to maintain a safe environment through social distancing. These steps may include rearranging desk, removing some furniture, or making only alternating seats available for student use.
- Extended learning labs is another strategy that will be used, we will separate students who are enrolled in the same course. One group of students will be in one classroom and another group of students will view the class and instructor in real time in another room called the extended learning lab F-1 students will be prioritized for this modality of instruction. This process will promote instructional

continuity and social distancing.

- All rooms utilized for face-to-face instruction will have enhanced cleaning and sanitizing protocols every 50 minutes as established by the UOTP Department for Operations.
- The Department of Operations will post signs in classrooms and other indoor spaces with social distancing guidelines. Guidelines will be developed to promote safe ingress and egress from classrooms, and measures will be taken to ensure that students do not congregate before or after classes. Communications will be sent to students emphasizing the importance of following health and safety protocols.
- In-person instructional space will be prioritized for courses with performance learning outcomes consistent with disciplinary learning best practices and accreditation standards.

## **ACADEMIC SCHEDULES**

- Dates for the start and end for 2020 and 2021 academic calendar remain unchanged.
- UOTP will transition face-to-face courses to remote instruction and domestic students will be prioritized for these courses. F1 students will continue to adhere to mandated SEVIS requirements.
- Faculty members teaching face-to-face courses in October (12A) and subsequent terms are encouraged to provide robust assessments of student learning throughout the term and reduce reliance on final exams during the last week of the term. Courses with experiential learning components may have in-person sessions as needed, which will be facilitated by having fewer people on campus. Instructors of these classes are nevertheless encouraged to provide all opportunities for in-person instruction and assessment prior to the end of the term.
- Traditionally under-scheduled timeslots will be used to accommodate courses that need additional in-person meetings under lower-density conditions. The expectation is that we will shift from having most of our classes taught during the end of the day and Saturdays to a more even distribution of classes.
- Faculty members will work with department chairs to develop contingency plans that will include the preparation for remote instructional delivery for all courses should the pandemic surge again. The extensive training that is being made available to all faculty will ensure optimal delivery of course content in any instructional mode, providing for a smooth transition.

## **TRAINING**

- Faculty teaching in online, remote, and hybrid modalities will complete ongoing and planned training in the use of blended learning strategies and the Moodle Learning Management System.
- There will be increased capacity in multiple training courses for faculty teaching distance learning and remote courses for October (12A) and beyond, providing appropriate targeted support for different needs and experience levels.

## **VI. DINING/LOUNGE AREAS/GATHERINGS**

- Dining and student lounges will have staggered occupancy availability in accordance with the VA Executive Orders.
- Until further notice, UOTP will not allow social gatherings on campus. Campus activities will be restricted to scheduled work and class hours.
- UOTP will follow the CDC Travel requirements for international students and employees- Stay home for 14 days from the time you returned home from international travel.

During this 14-day period, take these steps to monitor your health and practice social distancing:

1. Take your temperature with a thermometer two times a day and monitor for fever. Also watch for [cough or trouble breathing](#). Use this [temperature log](#) to monitor your temperature.
2. Stay home and avoid contact with others. Do not go to work or school.
3. Do not take public transportation, taxis, or ride-shares.
4. Keep your distance from others (about 6 feet or 2 meters).

## **ANTI STIGMA/SOCIAL JUSTICE CONCERNS**

We're acutely aware of the many equity and social justice challenges that have surfaced during the pandemic. These include everything from higher mortality rates in low-income communities and communities of color to an upsurge in bias and hate against Asians and Asian-Americans. As we developed the reopening plan, we applied an equity lens and we'll continue to do that going forward. We recognize the need to continually build trust in this process through regular and transparent dialogue with our community. The UOTP community will be responsible for ensuring that information provided by the CDC is reviewed and followed.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/reducing-stigma.html>.

## **VII. CAMPUS SHUTDOWN CONSIDERATION IF NECESSITATED BY SEVERE CONDITIONS AND/OR PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE**





If there are multiple cases identified at the UOTP campus, we will immediately notify the local health departments, all staff, faculty, and students who may have come in contact with any infected person(s). If the outbreak is deemed severe, UOTP will immediately close the campus and temporarily return to telework and online education modality. UOTP is already approved for hybrid and online modalities so the urgent retract will not disrupt the delivery of our courses. The situation will be monitored by the UOTP leadership team.

**Communication:**

- **UOTP will continue to provide up to date information including any changes to the plan or new reclosure plans on our website:**  
<https://potomac.edu/about/covid19/>.
- **UOTP will communicate updates via email, LMS Moodle, website, and via text message. All students will be invited to info sessions via Google Hangout and Zoom.**

**Primary Points of Contact at UOTP**

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