

Responsible RestartOhio



Institutions of Higher Education

The objective of this document is to summarize the minimum operating standards to which Ohio's colleges, universities, and technical centers will adhere as they begin to transition back to in-person, on-campus operations. Higher education plays a critical role with respect to the economic resurgence that lies ahead. Ohio's campuses are the economic engine of towns and communities across the state; producers of talent to fuel essential workforce pipelines; and beacons of opportunity drawing individuals to our great state in search of the opportunity that accompanies a post-secondary credential.

As our campuses seek to re-engage in more normal operations, the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors must always be the number one priority. Our institutions will move cautiously and carefully to ensure that the standards and best practices contained in this document, which are highly informed by the latest guidelines from the Ohio Department of Health, local health departments, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), can be faithfully executed. As public health experts learn more about the best ways to combat the COVID-19 virus, these standards may be revised and updated accordingly.

Minimum Operating Standard

Recommended Best Practices

Phasing

- Campus re-population should occur in thoughtful and strategic phases.

- Stratify and organize phasing based on necessity and risk.
- Consider structuring the phasing process into a sequence that includes early return, main return, and later return, with an opportunity for campus administrators to review lessons learned at each interval and adapt accordingly.

Facilities/ Sanitation

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state and CDC guidelines.*

- Regular hand washing will be required of all employees.
- Hand sanitizer and surface sanitizing supplies will be placed in all high-contact locations.
- Disinfection of high-contact areas, including communal restrooms and shared shower facilities, will occur at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Faculty, staff, and students should clean and sanitize surfaces and equipment in their own work space, classroom, or lab, as appropriate, throughout the day.
- Shared tools and equipment will be sanitized after each use.
- Campus and building access points will be modified to best allow for six-foot physical distancing. One-way entrance/exit and clearly marked foot traffic patterns will be utilized.
- Clear signage emphasizing the use of facial coverings and reminding all to perform daily symptom assessments will be installed at appropriate building entry points and other areas throughout campus.

Minimum Operating Standard

Facilities/ Sanitation (cont.)

Point of Contact

- Campuses must designate a point of contact for communication about COVID-19 procedures with relevant state and local departments and agencies.

Health Monitoring/ Facial Coverings/PPE Requirements

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state and CDC guidelines.
- Require all campus employees to wear a facial covering, except for one of the following reasons:
 - Facial coverings in the campus setting are prohibited by law or regulation;
 - Facial coverings are in violation of documented industry standards;
 - Facial coverings are not advisable for health reasons;
 - Facial coverings are in violation of the campus' documented safety policies;
 - Facial coverings are not required when working alone in an assigned work area;
 - Facial coverings are not required when the student is alone in a residential setting;
 - There is a functional (practical) reason not to wear a facial covering on campus.

(Campuses must provide written justification, upon request, explaining why a facial covering is not required on campus. At minimum, facial coverings (masks) should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.)

- If facial coverings are an impediment to academic content delivery, consider the use of clear facial shields or other physical barriers (such as plexiglass).
- Require all campus employees to conduct daily health assessments, which should include taking their temperature with a thermometer and monitoring for fever, coughing, or trouble breathing.

Residence Halls

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state and CDC guidelines.

Recommended Best Practices

- Keep certain non-essential buildings, facilities, and common areas closed to focus cleaning staff efforts on the areas most heavily utilized by faculty, staff, and students.
- In areas outside of classrooms where close interaction between individuals may occur, campuses should consider the use of shielding (such as plexiglass) to protect faculty, staff, and students.
- Campuses should stagger class start and end times to allow enough time for cleaning between classes, and limit foot traffic in hallways and elevators at any given time.
- Protocols will be established for deep cleaning should someone in the campus community test positive for COVID-19.

- Recommend all students wear a facial covering, except for one of the following reasons:
 - Facial coverings in the campus setting are prohibited by law or regulation;
 - Facial coverings are in violation of documented industry standards;
 - Facial coverings are not advisable for health reasons;
 - Facial coverings are in violation of the campus' documented safety policies;
 - Facial coverings are not required when working alone in an assigned work area;
 - Facial coverings are not required when the student is alone in a residential setting;
 - There is a functional (practical) reason not to wear a facial covering on campus.
- Establish a dedicated HR team to monitor infection reporting and assess/evaluate special accommodation requests.
- Consider strategic utilization of campus mass communication systems (i.e. text and email alerts) to promote healthy prevention measures, notify stakeholders of heightened risk factors, update facility or classroom closure information, etc.

- Where practicable, campuses should de-densify living arrangements to the greatest extent feasible.
- Campus mental health and substance abuse strategies should be strengthened and re-focused to address specific issues of isolation and loneliness associated with de-densified living arrangements.
- Develop a plan for an appropriately sized campus quarantine space/isolation area in the event it is needed.
- Consider a staggered or phased move-in process to minimize gathering sizes and reduce risk.

Minimum Operating Standard

Recommended Best Practices

Course Scheduling/ Academic Programming

- Course scheduling and academic programming alternatives should be considered.

- Utilize remote learning opportunities where practicable.
- Consider utilization of staggered course/term start dates and non-traditional term lengths where appropriate.
- Flexible course scheduling and a range of course delivery options should be made available, with a particular focus on equity concerns.

Classrooms

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state and CDC guidelines.

- Establish maximum occupancy rates for each classroom to ensure minimum six-foot physical distancing capacity in all directions.
- Minimum six-foot physical distancing guidelines will be clearly marked and communicated in classrooms and common areas. In areas where this may not be easily achievable (i.e. labs), consider the utilization of dividers or other physical barriers, or divide labs into multiple sessions to ensure that distancing occurs.
- Work stations should be wiped down with surface sanitizing supplies after each class.
- Consider the use of non-traditional spaces (gyms, theaters, auditoriums, etc.) for classes if needed to achieve six-foot physical distancing capability.
- Consider developing procedures for classroom ingress and egress, along with the use of staggered class times, to minimize the presence of large crowds.
- Allow sufficient time between classes to allow safe egress, entry, and cleaning.

Dining Facilities

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state and CDC guidelines.

- Use disposable utensils to the greatest extent feasible.
- Increase the frequency of surface cleaning.
- Provide take-out meals instead of dining room services.

Retail Operations

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state and CDC guidelines.

- Consider no cash and minimize touch for transactions.
- Consider delivery and pick-up services if feasible.

General Office Environments

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state and CDC guidelines.

- For employees, working from home will remain the preferred option for all who can effectively carry out their duties from home.
- As employees return to campus, consider rotating work schedules and staggering hours of operation to decrease concurrent on-campus presence.
- Adopt a policy to address non-compliance with facial coverings and other relevant PPE requirements.
- In general office environments where minimum six-foot physical distancing is challenged, consider the utilization of dividers or other physical barriers.

Student Activities and General Campus Events

- **Minimum six-foot physical distancing must be preserved to the greatest extent feasible.**

- Consider virtual rather than in-person student activities and general campus events where practicable.

Minimum Operating Standard

Recommended Best Practices

Campus Visitors

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state and CDC guidelines. Minimum six-foot physical distancing should be preserved to the greatest extent feasible.

- Campus visitors should wear a facial covering.
- Visitors to residence halls should be limited.

Testing

- Campuses must employ the most updated and evidence-based approaches to provide a safe environment for faculty, staff, and students. As appropriate, campuses must be prepared to utilize public health interventions, contact tracing and COVID-19 testing consistent with federal, state, and local public health guidelines.

- Any COVID-19 testing should be conducted based on the availability, safety, prioritization, and effectiveness of each testing strategy.

Study Abroad and International Travel

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state, CDC and State Department guidelines.

Gyms/Recreational Facilities

- Campuses must comply with all relevant state and CDC guidelines.

Athletics

- Campuses must comply with NCAA, NAIA, and NJCAA guidance and state guidelines for opening.

- Minimum six-foot physical distancing should be observed at all times to the greatest extent feasible. Reconfigure locker rooms and other shared facility spaces if necessary.
- Sprays and wipes should be provided and every piece of equipment cleaned before and after each use.
- Campuses should consider a staggered return of athletes to campus.
- Campuses should encourage activities to be conducted outside where feasible.
- A risk analysis for athletic travel should be completed before all trips.