



FALL 2021 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

All planning conducted, decisions made, and actions taken by UL System institutions, collectively and individually, shall adhere to the following hierarchy of principles:

1. The health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and our communities are paramount.
2. The continuity of learning and research must be maintained, adapting to fulfill Principle 1 as appropriate and necessary.
3. The financial health and viability of the enterprise must be protected and are dependent upon the fulfillment of Principles 1 and 2.
4. The social, emotional, and economic welfare of our communities must be considered and are dependent upon the fulfillment of Principles 1, 2, and 3.

VACCINES/MASKS

As you know, vaccines remain our most powerful tool to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. Upon full FDA approval, COVID-19 vaccination will be added to the schedule of required immunizations at all UL System member institutions for entering and continuing students. Like all required immunizations, students shall not be required to comply with the requirement if the student submits a written statement from a physician stating the vaccine is contraindicated for medical reasons or if the student submits a written dissent. Also, like all required immunizations, upon recommendation by the office of public health, unvaccinated students may be excluded from attendance in the event of an outbreak. All entering and continuing students should be notified of the new vaccine requirement as soon as practicable.

The updated guidance now recommends that vaccinated individuals wear masks indoors in communities of substantial or high transmission. The entire state of Louisiana is currently classified as high transmission. Students, faculty, and staff shall wear masks in the classroom and indoor public spaces. Additional masking guidance may be implemented at the university as warranted by local conditions.

Each institution should continue to educate and inform students, faculty, and staff regarding vaccine efficacy and safety and provide ample access to vaccination. Widespread vaccination in our communities is a public health imperative. The authorized vaccines provide substantial protection against the virus, and especially against severe disease, hospitalization, and death. While data from CDC indicate “breakthrough” infection may be significantly more frequent with emerging variants, the personal protection against severe disease and death should be compelling. A recent edition of Straight Talk by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana included a chart showing correlations between vaccination and COVID-19 consequences that is illustrative of the importance:

MEASURE	LOUISIANA	VERMONT	USA
% Fully Vaccinated	36.6%	65.7%	49.4%
Hospitalized per 100k	29.9	1.3	7.3
C19 Deaths in 2021	2,798	109	206,550
Current Deaths/100k	0.2147	0.001	0.083

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Each institution shall establish COVID-19 Vaccine leave to be made available to employees. Such leave will be utilized by employees to receive the vaccine or assist family members in getting vaccinated. Vaccine leave may also be used for employees who experience side effects from receiving the vaccine. Employees who have not yet received a COVID-19 vaccination should be encouraged to do so and use this leave while it is available.

According to the latest CDC guidance, fully vaccinated people can:

- Participate in many of the activities that they did before the pandemic; for some of these activities, they may choose to wear a mask.
- Resume domestic travel and refrain from testing before or after travel and from self-quarantine after travel.
- Refrain from testing before leaving the United States for international travel (unless required by the destination) and refrain from self-quarantine after arriving back in the United States.
- Refrain from routine screening testing if feasible.

Preliminary evidence suggests that fully vaccinated people who do become infected with the Delta variant can spread the virus to others. To reduce their risk of becoming infected with the Delta variant and potentially spreading it to others: CDC recommends that fully vaccinated people:

- Wear a mask in public indoor settings if they are in an area of substantial or high transmission.
 - Fully vaccinated people might choose to mask regardless of the level of transmission, particularly if they or someone in their household is immunocompromised or at increased risk for severe disease, or if someone in their household is unvaccinated. People who are at increased risk for severe disease include older adults and those who have certain medical conditions, such as diabetes, overweight or obesity, and heart conditions.
- Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Get tested 3-5 days following a known exposure to someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure or until a negative test result.
- Isolate if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the prior 10 days or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Follow any applicable federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations.

People who are immunocompromised should be counseled about the potential for reduced immune responses to COVID-19 vaccines and to follow current prevention measures (including wearing a mask, staying 6 feet apart from others they don't live with, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces) regardless of their vaccination status to protect themselves against COVID-19 until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.

TESTING

Testing for COVID-19 infection should be readily accessible to students, faculty, and staff. Institutions should consider implementing mandatory testing policy in on-campus student housing and in association with sanctioned group activities. Such policies should be clearly communicated to the university community.

Vaccination helps prevent infection and provides highly effective protection against severe disease. To ensure the safety of our university communities, unvaccinated faculty and staff are subject to weekly testing in accordance with university human resources protocols.