

Here are a few things the Academic Committee will want to discuss:

Vaccination, Testing and Infection

1. Can we ask whether a person—faculty, staff, student or visitor: (a) has been vaccinated, (b) has been tested, (c) has been diagnosed as having COVID?
 - a. **Yes (b) Supervisors only if notified of failure to comply with testing (c) No**
2. Can we ask our direct reports about whether they: (a) have been vaccinated, (b) have been tested, whether they have received a positive COVID diagnosis?
 - a. **Yes (b) if advised by email that employee is noncompliant with testing requirement, a supervisor should ask if they have been tested (no inquiry on whether they tested positive; the employee should advise the supervisor if they do test positive)**
3. If you ask and they choose not to tell you, is there an appropriate response?
Do not press further.
4. If an unvaccinated or vaccinated community member is diagnosed with an active case of COVID what should they do (and what should they not do)
Protocol to be verified by EHS – employee should notify supervisor and the case is reported per case management guidance
5. If students test positive, what can/should students and instructor do? (**Byron Hughes- EHS**)
6. If an instructor tests positive, what can/should the instructor and administrators do? (**Jack Finney- EHS**)
7. **Link for handling of positive COVID cases:**
[Positive cases, isolation, and quarantine | Ready | Virginia Tech](#)

Exemptions

8. Can employees or students be exempted from being vaccinated and testing? If so, how? How does their presence impact others? Are additional procedures necessary?
 - Students- Byron Hughes (medical or religious exemptions only)**
 - Employees- vaccine is not currently mandated, but strongly encouraged; failure to upload verification of vaccination will result in required weekly testing**
 - The high % of vaccinated individuals in VT community reduced exposure levels considerably; (EHS additional notes?)**
9. If a student who is vaccinated does not feel comfortable coming to class, what can/should the student and instructor do?
The student should contact their academic advisor to discuss options. Revised mask mandates for indoor spaces, availability of vaccinations, surveillance testing, and adherence to campus health and safety protocols have prepared the university to conduct in-person class and lab activities while mitigating the spread and/or impact of COVID-19. Instructors are not expected to prepare or teach a course in multiple modalities.
10. If an instructor who is vaccinated does not feel comfortable coming to class, what can/should the instructor and their supervisors do?
Reported increases in infections from the COVID-19 delta variant largely involves unvaccinated individuals. Data shows that breakthrough infection rates are very low. In the rare instance an individual who is vaccinated gets

infected, only a very small proportion of those individuals face serious outcomes. The Provost's Office, with assistance and support from academic deans, department heads, and campus public safety officials, has established clear expectations to have instruction conducted in-person this fall. Should an instructor not be available to teach a course, departments are asked to assign an alternate instructor.

11. If a student or instructor does not feel comfortable being in a face-to-face class because they have unvaccinated children at home, what should they do?

If an instructor is particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 infection or there is a case of an illness affecting the employee, the matter should be submitted to the Office of Equity and Accessibility for consideration of accommodations. If the situation involves a sick dependent, then Human Resources should be engaged and FMLA leave may be appropriate. Any other requests for exceptions to in-person modality involving issues specific to the instructor(s) should be submitted to the college/unit's HR director for review. Generally, exceptions will not be approved for faculty solely on the basis that they have unvaccinated, healthy dependent children.

(Students- Byron)

12. If a student or instructor does not feel comfortable in a face-to-face class because one or more members of their household is immuno-compromised, undergoing cancer treatment, or have other health issues that place them at greater risk, what should they do?

See above for Faculty.

(Students- Byron)

Masks

13. People are to be masked in public places in doors. Does public include:

- a. Classrooms- **Yes**
- b. Hallways, stair wells and the atrium **Yes**
- c. Restrooms **Yes**
- d. Department office suites- **Depends on whether space is generally open to the general public**
- e. Computer labs **Yes**
- f. Behavioral Research lab **Depends- consult with EHS**
- g. Conference rooms. **Depends – consult with EHS**

This mask requirement applies to any spaces that can be freely accessed by the general public, without restriction, during normal business hours and operations. This does not apply to private work places, such as any office, work area, or employment meeting space that is not open to the public. We recognize that there may be need for additional clarification of what constitutes a public or academic space, and Provost Clarke has asked deans and department heads to determine, in their respective facilities and situations, how that should be defined when there is a question.

14. Are there conditions or uses when conference rooms or the behavior research lab can be considered non-public spaces? Is there a number of people (more than 1) in an indoor space that would still allow that space to not be considered public? **EHS**

15. Under what conditions can more than one person eat in the same indoor room? **EHS**
16. What can/should you do if you find someone who is not wearing a mask in a public space (probably encourage them to do so?)
A reminder that it is a public space requiring a mask would be appropriate. In classroom or instructional settings, faculty can refer to these classroom conduct guidelines.
17. How should we manage personnel who aren't vaccinated and don't wear masks? (Are the procedures different for untenured, tenure-track or tenured, or parttime faculty or wage hires).
Contact department head/assoc. dean and unit Human Resources for guidance/Refer to Attached Mask & Test Refusal Guide
18. How should we manage a supervisor who allows others to work without a mask?
Contact department head/assoc. dean and unit Human Resources for guidance/ Refer to Attached Mask & Test Refusal Guide
19. Will the college provide masks for people who misplace or break their masks?
The university will return to a centralized distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE), effective Aug. 16. Available PPE supplies include disposable facemasks, reusable cloth facemasks, face shields, hand sanitizer and a limited supply of N95/KN95 masks. Departments should complete an Internal Service Form (ISR) in HokieMart to request any needed PPE.

Added Note: Faceshields alone are not considered adequate protection per EHS. "Communicator Masks" are considered acceptable protection. Per Central Procurement: **WHERE TO PURCHASE CLEAR SHIELD COMMUNICATOR STYLE FACEMASKS FOR FALL:**

The clear shield communicator style facemasks WILL NOT be included in the centralized distribution of PPE starting August 16th. These style of masks can, however, be found through many vendors available to the university. Last year's communicator masks were purchased from a SWaM vendor, Vulcan. We have confirmed with Vulcan they have ample supply and can ship out immediately to departments. Vulcan LLC accepts HokieMart purchase orders. Pricing will be provided based on quantity needed. Shipping charges will also apply. Contact information for Vulcan, LLC is: 1443 Hillside Avenue, Harrisonburg, VA 22801, 1-804-837-7241. mashley@vulcanppe.com or jfleming@vulcanppe.com

Classroom Management

20. What if a student in a classroom will not put on a mask when reminded?
In classroom or instructional settings, faculty can refer to these classroom conduct guidelines.
21. What should happen when students in a classroom complain about other students not wearing a mask. **See Above.**
22. Under what conditions can an instructor remove their mask during classes (when it is possible to maintain "X" distance; in the presence of a plexiglass shield on the podium?)
Faculty must adhere to all guidelines of the masking mandate for indoor spaces and therefore should not remove their masks at any time while in instructional and/or public indoor spaces. The same should go for all students or any visitors to the class.
23. Could an instructor use a face shield without a mask when teaching from the podium
Faculty are asked to wear a mask rather than a face shield, which can allow particulates to circulate around and away from the shield. Since nearly 75% of classroom spaces on campus with lecterns don't provide for adequate space between

the instructor and nearest student, face masks are required. (see “Added Note” under Mask Section)

24. If instructors are required to wear masks, can we get them voice amplification equipment? EHS

Buildings

25. Will the classrooms be cleaned and disinfected (if so, on what schedule)

- a. **The Division of Campus Planning, Infrastructure, and Facilities deploys cleaning and disinfecting practices in accordance with CDC, ISSA (the cleaning industry’s global professional organization), and Virginia Tech Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) guidelines. Nightly, classrooms and lecture areas are cleaned and disinfected using EPA-registered chemicals. Surfaces are wiped and left wet for effective dwell time. Electrostatic sprayers and misting machines may be used to improve productivity and coverage. As part of Facilities Operations' standard operating procedures and practices, all common touch surfaces will continue to be cleaned and disinfected using EPA-registered chemicals. Surfaces are wiped and left wet for effective dwell time.**
- b. **Restrooms/showers: Common touch surfaces (such as knobs, handles, dispensers, push plates, switches, and receptacles) are cleaned and disinfected multiple times per day using EPA-registered chemicals.**
- c. **Public spaces: Common touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected multiple times per day using EPA registered chemicals.**
- d. **Floors/tiles: Public areas are spot mopped daily; fully mopped weekly (with auto-scrub as needed); buffed monthly, top scrubbed, stripped, and recoated annually.**
- e. **Floors/carpet: Public areas are spot vacuumed daily; fully vacuumed weekly; extracted annually, and interim cleaned as necessary.**
- f. **Kitchens: Common touch surfaces are disinfected daily with EPA -registered chemicals.**

26. Will there be cleaning materials for faculty to use to wipe down the podium between classes

- a. ***Departments should obtain supplies through their normal purchasing channels. Questions can be directed to procurement@vt.edu.***

27. Have (or will) the ventilation systems been upgraded?

- a. In the classrooms
- b. In the offices
- c. ***To help maximize the health and safety of the on-campus university community and reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus, the Division of Campus Planning, Infrastructure, and Facilities, and Housing and Residence Life, in close partnership with Environmental Health & Safety (EHS), continues to monitor, maintain, and optimize existing HVAC infrastructure in place across the Blacksburg campus. Please direct COVID-related health and safety issues associated with the operation of HVAC systems to EHS at VT-EHS@vt.edu or 540-231-3600. Read more about air quality efforts on campus: <https://vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2020/11/campusplanning-HVAC.html>***

28. Is it possible to provide air purification systems in classrooms?

- a. ***Please direct COVID-related health and safety issues associated with the operation of HVAC systems to EHS at VT-EHS@vt.edu or 540-231-3600.***

Administration

29. What decisions will be made at the state or university level and what decisions can be made at the college, department or classroom level?

Guidance is provided for consistency across campus , however decisions by leadership at the unit/department level is necessary when the guidance is not specific enough for a given circumstance.

30. Who at the university will be following up on whether community members are: (a) vaccinated, getting tested, or are diagnosed as positive? **(definition of community members? Assumption it includes students and employees and not members of the public?)**

Students- Byron

Employees- data supplied in the vaccination portal is handled confidentially; employees not registered will receive notification of required testing; failure to comply with testing will result in notification to the employee and their supervisor; appropriate disciplinary action will be taken for noncompliance. Refer to Attached Mask & Test Refusal Guide

31. Is the process for escalating concerns in any of these areas different under COVID that under normal conditions? **Uncertain of context? Disciplinary actions are applied depending on nature of noncompliance. Refer to Disciplinary Process Handout.**

32. Are there conditions when a request to change from face-to-face to synchronous online instruction would be approved? Who could make that approval?

Any faculty member who seeks to convert courses from “in-person” to “online/hybrid” instruction must receive written approval from their department head and dean prior to informing students and/or the University Registrar. Students have registered for summer and fall classes according to availability and modality, and unless there are extenuating circumstances, faculty should proceed with the original mode of course instruction listed by the Registrar and selected by the student. If approval is granted for converting an in-person course to online, the faculty member must ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, course learning outcomes and student experience are equivalent to in-person modalities.

33. Can faculty change modes of instruction from face-to-face for individual class sessions (perhaps up to two during a semester) to synchronous online without requiring approvals **See Above.**

34. Can faculty choose to hold office hours and other non-scheduled class activities (e.g., team meetings, tutoring sessions) online without prior approval

Faculty may choose to hold these activities remotely as long as all students are provided the same access and services as they would in-person and during normal hours. This option should be coordinated with department heads and clearly communicated to students at the beginning of the semester.