UMassD returning to work

A guide to a phased in return to campus
Note from Chancellor Johnson

The spread of COVID-19 disrupted our normal way of life and how we operate as a university with astonishing speed. The last half of the 2020 spring semester was not easy. Yet, the UMass Dartmouth community worked hard, and we worked together, to ensure our educational mission continued. In a matter of weeks, we moved all of our courses online and nearly our entire workforce to remote operations. It was an enormous effort and a true test of our ability to adapt and overcome.

With this unprecedented semester concluded, we look toward the future. In this document, you will be able to examine Phase 1 of UMass Dartmouth’s incremental plan for a physical return to campus. It is our over riding goal to continue delivering a high-quality education to our students, while protecting the safety and wellbeing of our entire community on campus and beyond. As we have seen, COVID-19 and its impacts are fast-moving and unpredictable. We must be ready for any scenario and the plans in this document were developed using the best information available at the present time. I want to thank the individuals from across campus who helped put these plans together.

Please review this information carefully. We all must play a part in safely moving UMassD through a phased return to the physical campus. Thank you for playing your part in our collective efforts.

We are in this together. #UMassDTogether

With gratitude,

Robert E. Johnson, Ph.D.
Chancellor

Information as of May 27, 2020 and is subject to change.
Guiding principles

As we look forward to welcoming each other back to campus, we will remain guided by one simple principle: prioritize the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff. In developing this guide, we have generally relied on recommendations from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and COVID-19 Command Center, including the recently issued Reopening: Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplaces, and Reopening Massachusetts, a report of the Governor’s Reopening Advisory Board.

Our return to campus will be phased and deliberate and will require cooperation from the entire campus community. As our knowledge and understanding of COVID-19 continues to evolve, our plan will necessarily evolve. Each of us has an important role to play in keeping the UMass Dartmouth community safe and healthy. Please continue to visit the Returning to UMassD webpage at: https://www.umassd.edu/emergency/coronavirus/

A phased return

Consistent with the phased reopening approach detailed recently by Governor Baker, we will not immediately return to normal operations. Instead, we will implement a phased approach that will be flexible, adapting to changing public health concerns and requirements, and on a timeline that will be informed by our own experiences. Although we are excited about returning to campus, we will continually monitor our progress and, as we have throughout the situation, listen to the campus community and adjust as needed.

A campus Pandemic Emergency Response Team (PERT), led by Chancellor Johnson, will oversee the development and implementation of plans to restore research, teaching, and student life. Committees of subject matter experts clustered around broad functional areas like Academics, Facilities, and Events and Programs will develop specific plans and recommendations for each phase of our return.

Phase I will begin on June 1, 2020 and will include faculty and staff who work in research labs and related support areas or who are necessary to ensure a continued smooth, safe, and healthy return to campus. During this initial phase, the total population density on campus and in each physical space will generally be limited to 25% of our normal operation.

Staff members who have been working on campus as a result of an earlier staffing plan will continue to report to campus. Additional staff members will be gradually added as needed to support the operation in the most critically needed areas. However, remote teaching and working will generally continue throughout the semester. Faculty and staff who are permitted or required to work on campus will be notified by their supervisor with as much notice as possible.

Although our goal is to welcome students back to campus in September, we will continue to be guided by public health recommendations.

Physical access to campus

To keep the population density on campus low, physical access to campus will remain very limited. In addition to those staff members who have already been working on campus as a result of an earlier staffing plan, only faculty and staff who work in research labs and related support areas or who are necessary to ensure a continued smooth, safe, and healthy return to campus will generally be permitted on campus.

Research and laboratory space

Although research and laboratory work will be among the first to resume operations, only labs that have a safe operations plan that includes detailed protocols that comply with the Reopening: Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplaces requirements and has been approved by the Chief Research Officer may perform on-campus research.

For additional information https://www.umassd.edu/research/covid-19/

Remote work

Remote work continues to be the best strategy for maximizing social distancing and lowering the population density on campus. Faculty and staff who are required to return to the campus should discuss remote work options and/or schedules with their supervisor, in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Faculty and staff at higher risk for severe illness should be accommodated to the maximum extent possible
- Child care and home-schooling responsibilities remain a priority
- Creating a rotating schedule of hours or days (e.g. working two days on campus and three remotely) will allow for greater social distancing

Supervisors are encouraged to work with faculty and staff about other staffing options that balance the goals and expectations of the department with the individual faculty or staff member’s personal needs and circumstances.

There continues to be no specific forms or time reporting codes for remote work.
What to expect (and what others will be expecting of you) when you return

Self-Screening

A safe return to campus begins with constant self-screening. Take your own temperature and pay close attention for new or worsening symptoms. Patients with COVID-19 have reported a wide range of symptoms, which can appear 2-14 days after exposure, including:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever (generally a temperature greater than 100° F)
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

Less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. The CDC has additional information and an online Self-Checker, on its Symptoms of Coronavirus webpage.

If you are experiencing any symptoms or have other concerns, please consult a healthcare provider.

Please note that universal testing for COVID-19 is not currently recommended. PCR testing via nasal, nasopharyngeal or throat swab, is ordered in someone who has symptoms or if someone is the direct contact of a known individual who tested positive for COVID-19. If you screen positive on your daily self-screen, you will be advised to contact Health Services for guidance in scheduling testing as indicated.

Stay home if you are sick

COVID-19 is spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person—from a person who is infected to a person who is not. The best way to avoid the spread of COVID-19 is to stay home if:

- You are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms;
- You have tested positive for COVID-19; or
- You live with or have been in close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, is being tested for COVID-19, or is experiencing symptoms.

If you begin to experience symptoms while on campus, please leave campus immediately and notify Sandra Escaleira at benefits@umassd.edu; Human Resources will work with the Facilities team to ensure that any areas suspected of infection are properly cleaned and disinfected.

If you leave or stay home from campus:

- Stay home until your healthcare provider or local board of health clears you to return to work.
- Inform your supervisor about your need to be absent. Note: You do not need to discuss your personal medical situation with your supervisor. However, there are enhanced sick leave benefits available through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Contact Human Resources at humanresources@umassd.edu for additional information.

Depending on your health or other circumstances, you may be able to work from home.
Faculty and staff at higher risk

According to the CDC, some groups are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19:

- People 65 years and older
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
- People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well-controlled, including:
  - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
  - People who have serious heart conditions
  - People who are immunocompromised (many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, autoimmune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune-weakening medications.)
- People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
- People with diabetes
- People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
- People with liver disease
- People whose medical provider deems them at higher risk

If you have a disability or an underlying health condition, or live with someone with an underlying health condition, and you believe you are at risk coming to campus, please contact Human Resources at benefits@umassd.edu or call 508-999-8060.

Protect yourself and others

Avoid spreading or contracting COVID-19—at home as well as at work—by:

- Staying home if you are sick or experiencing any of the symptoms listed above;
- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains 60%–95% alcohol. Soap and water should be used if hands are visibly dirty.
- Maintaining good social distancing practices—maintaining a distance of at least six feet and avoiding confined spaces, including elevators (or use one person at a time).
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or the crook of your elbow when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Discarding tissues immediately after use and wash your hands
- Wearing a cloth face covering
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick;
- Disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces

The CDC has more information on How to Protect Yourself and Others on its webpage.

Masks and other facial coverings

We have all learned that those who do not exhibit symptoms can still spread the virus. Massachusetts also requires the use of facial coverings in all settings—indoors as well as outdoors, where social distancing is not possible. Therefore, except while working alone in an office or enclosed private workspace, all faculty and staff will be required to wear facial coverings or masks, depending on the type of work they perform.

Faculty of staff members who report to campus without a facial covering will not be permitted to remain on campus.

And remember, avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth when removing your mask, and wash your hands immediately before and after removal.

There are a number of widely available masks for purchase. The CDC and Massachusetts Department of Public Health also suggest using homemade masks. Using a scarf or bandana is an easy solution. There are also ways to create a mask using cloth material and hair elastics without the need for sewing. Masks should be made of a machine washable material for frequent cleaning.

However you make your face covering, please remember these important details from the CDC.

Your face covering should:

- Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- Be secured with ties or ear loops
- Include multiple layers of fabric
- Allow for breathing without restriction
- Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

Meetings

As we resume our on-campus work, please continue to use remote meeting technology tools whenever possible. If it is necessary to conduct a meeting in person, the number of attendees should be limited so those present can sit a minimum of six feet apart with all participants wearing facial coverings. Others can join the meeting remotely, if necessary.

Break rooms

Break Rooms and shared kitchen equipment, like toasters and microwave ovens, will generally be closed until further notice. Faculty and staff are encouraged to take lunch and other breaks outside (remembering to maintain social distancing). Please note that no retail food will be available on campus. Faculty and staff should be prepared to bring meals from home. And remember to thoroughly wash your hands before preparing and consuming food. The CDC has additional information on food safety.
Cleaning and disinfecting your workspace

We all need to do our part in keeping our campus clean and safe. Regular cleaning of surfaces and objects with soap and water decreases the amount of the virus that causes COVID-19. Please wipe down your workspace at the beginning and end of each day. Surfaces and objects touched by multiple people (e.g., tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, touch screens, printer/copiers) should be wiped down more frequently. Although cleaning supplies continue to be limited, we will continue to source cleaning and other necessary supplies for faculty and staff to be able to clean and disinfect their work areas.

Cleaning and disinfecting rest rooms and common areas

UMass Dartmouth Facilities staff will clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in rest rooms and common areas in all campus buildings every day to the best of their ability in accordance with CDC and Massachusetts State guidelines and recommendations.

Please keep workspaces free of clutter, excess personal items, and other unnecessary items to allow for maximum cleaning of all surfaces.

Employee assistance program

UMass Dartmouth’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP), provided by ComPsych Guidance Resources is a free available benefit to all faculty and staff. Your benefits give you and your household family members confidential support, resources, and information for personal and work-life issues, including telephonic appointments with EAP attorneys and financial planners, EAP also offers tips for managing stress, confidential counseling, and personal concierge resources including child-care/elder-care and pet-care solutions, low-cost home repair and utility assistance, and more at no cost to you and your family.

Call 844.393.4983 or click here. The UMass Web ID is: UMASS.

Travel

No international or domestic University-related travel is permitted during this phase of the reopening.

Training

All faculty and staff will be required to complete an online training program covering:

• Social distancing, hand-washing, proper use of face coverings
• Self-screening
• Importance of not coming to work if ill
• When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe
• Which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting and suffering from a severe case of the virus

Training is available at: https://my.umassd.edu/group/human-resources/returning-to-campus

Looking ahead

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we begin to transition back to campus. We will continue to be guided by the science and our principles. This semester has likely been the most challenging in any of our professional careers; but we have used our strengths as a community to meet every challenge. We will continue to build on our shared experiences and successes as we take additional steps to return to normal operations.

Please continue to visit the Returning to UMassD webpage at: https://www.umassd.edu/emergency/coronavirus/

Stay safe.
Resources

Returning to UMassD Website-
UMass Dartmouth Coronavirus Updates

Center for Disease Control (CDC)

Governor Baker’s Plan for Reopening Massachusetts

Sign up for text message alerts
• Send COVIDMA to 888-777
• Envíe COVIDMAESP al 888-777

Call 2-1-1 or use live chat for non-emergency questions and help

Email the Governor’s Office or call (617) 725-4005

Domestic violence and sexual assault-
• Massachusetts | Call SafeLink at (877) 785-2020 or access SafeLink live chat. For deaf and hard-of-hearing call (877) 785-2020, or by TTY at (877) 521-2601

Nursing homes - Call Nursing Home Family Resource line at (617) 660-5399

EEOC - What you should know about COVID-19 and ADA Rehabilitation Act and other EEO laws.

Human Resources - 508.999.8060 humanresources@umassd.edu

On-Campus Emergency -
UMassD Police x 9191 508.999.9191