

Volume G1: Governance	G1.0 COVID-19 Return to Campus INTERIM POLICY Effective Date: 06/18/2021 Last Revised: 9/16/2021 Date of Next Full Review: 12/11/2021	Responsible Office: Office of the President
		Responsible Officer: President

POLICY STATEMENT

Northeastern Illinois University (the “University”) establishes this Interim Policy to outline regulations, procedures, guidelines, and best practices to ensure a safe and organized return to work at University locations during the COVID-19 global pandemic regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status.

The University follows the guidelines set forth by the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) (IDPH), and the [City of Chicago](#) and has aligned this policy with the [Covid-19 Return to Campus Plan](#). This policy is subject to frequent change with the introduction of additional public health guidelines from local, state, and federal authorities. Though CDC recommendations are loosening in terms of masks and social distancing for those who are fully vaccinated, NEIU continues to take a more conservative approach to continue to maintain the health and safety of the entire NEIU community.

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

This policy is intended to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19 among students, faculty, staff, and community members as they continue to return to visiting all University locations.

WHO IS AFFECTED BY THIS POLICY

Regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status, this policy applies to all members of the Northeastern Illinois University community: students; employees; applicants for admission or employment; and University visitors.

DEFINITIONS

- Campus:** Refers to all Northeastern Illinois University locations interchangeably.
- Close contact:** For COVID-19, close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.
- COVID-19:** A respiratory disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, a new coronavirus discovered in 2019. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks (CDC).
- Gathering:** A group of individuals outside a single household who are part of a spontaneous or planned event convening for more than ten minutes.
- Handwashing:** The act of thoroughly cleaning one’s hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a disinfectant capable of eliminating the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Equipment worn by individuals to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including face masks, goggles, face shields, gloves, etc.
- Self-Screening:** The protocol by which a student or employee answers questions related to COVID-19 symptoms before arriving at University locations.



SHIELD Testing: A non-invasive saliva-based Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test specific for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. PCR tests are used to directly screen for the presence of viral RNA, which will be detectable in the body before antibodies form or symptoms of the disease are present.

Social Distancing: The physical spacing between individuals or groups of individuals.

REGULATIONS

[G1.11 Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities Policy](#) [American Rescue Plan Act](#)

Students, faculty, and staff are expected to comply with this policy in order to sustain a healthy campus environment as recovery from the global pandemic continues.

The University expects all employees to return to campus on or before August 16, 2021. All remote operations will also conclude at this time.

Offices will return under the direction of the area Vice President or designee in accordance with University policies and collective bargaining agreements. All offices/departments are required to follow University policies and are not permitted to create separate policies related to returning to in-person operations to University locations for their faculty and staff.

Northeastern will continue to update this policy to ensure that it meets or exceeds federal, state, and local health guidelines. Any policy amendments or updates will be communicated immediately through the [University Policy website](#) and Targeted Announcements to the community, and will take effect as of the date and time of publication.

Continue to visit NEIU's [Coronavirus website](#) for the latest information about the University's response to COVID-19, including [frequently asked questions](#) on work-related topics.

ADA/High Risk Employee Concerns:

- All employees will be expected to return to their physical work locations as directed by their department head to prepare for the Fall 2021 semester. Employees may request for reasonable accommodation and must do so following the procedures outlined in the University's [Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities](#) policy.

General Health and Hygiene Rules:

- All students, faculty, and staff shall refrain from visiting any University location whenever they are sick or have any symptoms of respiratory illness.
- Masking indoors is currently required. Students, faculty, and staff, and the general public must wear a face mask or face covering when visiting University locations and in public spaces including classrooms.

Masks are not required when alone in a private office, personal residence hall room, or when dining outdoors or indoors in a designated eating area.

Face Mask Requirement:

Wearing a face mask indoors is currently required. Students, faculty, and staff, and the general public must wear a face mask or face covering when visiting University locations and in public spaces including classrooms.

Masks are not required when alone in a private office, personal residence hall room, or when dining outdoors or indoors in a designated eating area.

COVID-19 Vaccination Requirement:

All students and employees who are on campus are required to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or demonstrate progress towards full vaccination, such as receiving the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by the first day of class on Aug. 23, 2021. All students and employees are required to disclose their COVID-19 vaccination status to NEIU through the approved [student attestation](#) and [employee attestation](#) process. The vaccination requirement is based on the recommendations provided by the [Illinois Board of Higher Education](#) and reflects similar decisions made by other colleges and universities in Illinois and nationwide.



COVID-19 Testing Requirement:

Non-vaccinated or vaccination exempt students and employees are required to participate in weekly COVID-19 testing until this new requirement ends or the student or employee is fully vaccinated and has submitted their full vaccination record.

Student non-compliance with weekly testing requirements will be reported to the Student Affairs office as an incident report that may result in adjudication as student misconduct and non-compliance to university policy and guidelines.

Employee non-compliance with weekly testing requirements will be reported to supervisors for notation in the employee's personnel file. Non-compliance may result in potential disciplinary action up to and including termination, depending on the circumstances and number of such failures.

COVID-19 Specific Health Reporting Requirements:

Positive tests set in motion a [process of notifications and reports](#) that vary by case. Positive tests for individuals who have been on campus are sent through an interdisciplinary team that addresses additional documentation as well as safety, cleaning, tracing and notification considerations.

- Students who test positive for COVID-19 must immediately notify Student Health Services at health-services@neiu.edu.
- Additionally, employees are required to report positive and presumptive student COVID-19 cases and exposures to [Student Health Services](#).
- Employees who test positive must follow their departmental call-in procedures and notify the Office of Human Resources at HR-Office@neiu.edu of their positive test result.

Personal Illness:

- Students, faculty, and staff may not report to University locations while they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (or other respiratory illnesses), such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, muscle pain or body aches, headache, or chills. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention maintain a [current list of symptoms](#) associated with COVID-19.
- Students, faculty, and staff who experience an onset of symptoms while at a University location must leave immediately. Staff should contact their manager to request leave. Faculty should contact their dean or department chair. See Procedures section below for more details.
- Employees who are unable to work due to personal illness should use available sick time. If an employee's available sick time has already been exhausted, they should contact the [Office of Human Resources](#) to discuss available leave options.

Social Distancing Rules:

- To promote campus health and safety, NEIU reserves the right to adjust the capacity of all spaces as outlined in its [COVID-19 Return to Campus Plan](#), to meet or exceed federal, state and city public health guidelines on social distancing. Students, faculty, and staff are required to follow any capacity and space restrictions.
- Students, faculty, staff are expected to report locations or examples of social distancing congestion to assist with identifying potential problem areas to coronavirus@neiu.edu.
- Additional guidance can be found on NEIU's [Coronavirus website](#).

Travel:

Commuting: When commuting to campus via public transportation, follow the [CTA guidelines](#).

Domestic Travel: Persons who are fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine can travel freely within the United States. If persons who are not fully vaccinated must travel, they should follow the [CDC's recommendations for unvaccinated persons](#).

- **University-Sponsored Domestic Travel:** University-sponsored domestic travel by students, faculty, and staff is permitted. Domestic travel requests must be submitted through the standard Travel Authorization Request and Encumbrance (TARE) procedure for official authorization for travel.



International Travel: Fully vaccinated travelers are less likely to get and spread COVID-19. However, international travel poses additional risks, and even fully vaccinated travelers might be at increased risk for getting and possibly spreading some COVID-19 variants.

- **University-Sponsored International Travel:** All University-sponsored international travel by students, faculty, and staff continues to be suspended. Individual requests to be considered for an international travel exception may be presented to the Division Vice President for evaluation.

Personal Travel: Personal travel is not governed by the University. Students, faculty, and staff who are traveling for personal reasons should do so in compliance with the [CDC guidelines for domestic travel](#), the [City of Chicago Emergency Travel Order](#), and the [CDC guidelines for international travel](#).

Meetings & Events:

- Virtual and/or hybrid meetings/events are highly encouraged.
- To promote campus health and safety, NEIU reserves the right to adjust the capacity of all meeting and event locations as outlined in its [COVID-19 Return to Campus Plan](#), to meet or exceed federal, state and city public health guidelines on social distancing.
- Face masks or face coverings must be properly worn at all times per Health and Hygiene Regulations above.
- The number of participants will be limited to a number that allows for social distancing as outlined in its [COVID-19 Return to Campus Plan](#) in the event space.
- While weather permits, events should be held outdoors if possible, with no more in attendance than allowed per [CDC](#) and [Chicago guidelines](#).
- Music and Dance Department events will continue to receive priority in event spaces such as Recital Hall and the Auditorium.
- Given the limited available event space, events for Northeastern students will be prioritized during the academic year first, for in-person events; followed by departmental events for the internal NEIU community; followed by co-sponsored events involving outside guests; followed by external events/rentals. External events will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Serving of food and drink will be limited to individually packaged “grab and go” options that limit event participants gathering together to eat. Caterers must follow the CDC’s considerations for [Restaurant and Bar Operators](#).
- No open admission/ general public events/activities will be allowed at campus locations.
- All in-person meetings must have a record of attendance, and in-person events must have ticketing or pre-registration processes to allow for contact tracing.
- All non-NEIU event attendees are expected to follow all NEIU rules and regulations. It is the responsibility of the event sponsor and/or host department to communicate all rules and regulations to outside guests.

Requesting a Meeting/Event:

- Requests for Fall 2021 meetings/events must be submitted through 25Live. Space Administrators for El Centro, CCICS, PE Complex, Library, Pedroso Center, and C-Building will continue to review and approve requests for their locations.
- Meeting/event sponsors must follow all regulations herein prior to submitting an event request, with particular consideration being given to whether or not the meeting/event could be held virtually.
- Meeting/event requests will continue to be addressed on a first come first serve basis, with the understanding that not all requests will be approved due to limited availability of space. Requests should be submitted no less than 48 hours prior to the event.
- For approved event requests beyond the traditional meeting that cannot be held virtually, the event sponsor will be required to meet with a Student Union, Event & Conference Services (SUECS) Event Planner prior to the event and submit their plan for the adherence to COVID-19 safety protocols for the event.

Violations

Individuals who violate this policy and jeopardize the safety of the community shall be subject to discipline in accordance with procedures outlined in the relevant collective bargaining agreements, handbooks, policies, Student Code of Conduct, procedures, practices, or contracts.



PROCEDURES

Self-Screening: Student and employee participation and engagement is essential to facilitating a healthy and safe environment.

Before Coming to University Locations: Conduct a COVID-19 daily [screening](#) and assessing respiratory symptoms before leaving home and arriving at University locations. Individuals demonstrating the following symptoms should stay at home and contact their health care provider:

- Fever (100.4 degrees or greater)
- Acute respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, trouble breathing)
- Lack of taste and smell

Procedure for reporting all illnesses: Employees requesting time away from work will follow normal call-in procedures and protocols for their department and report time away from work in accordance with University policy. Students should notify their faculty members and stay at home. Individuals are not required or expected to disclose their personal medical conditions. *See the COVID-19 Specific Health Reporting Requirements in the Regulations section above for more details.*

When to quarantine or self-isolate:

- Quarantine if you recently had close contact with a person with COVID-19. Stay home until 10 days after your last exposure. You are not required to quarantine after close contact if you have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 disease and show no symptoms.
- Self-isolate if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, are awaiting test results, or have symptoms of COVID-19. Stay home until 10 days after your onset of symptoms or positive test result. If symptoms still persist, wait until you are medically cleared to return to work.

If an individual becomes ill while on campus:

- Individuals who appear to have flu-like or respiratory symptoms upon arrival at a University location or during the day will immediately be separated from others, be sent home and should contact their health care provider for medical guidance. *See the COVID-19 Specific Health Reporting Requirements in the Regulations section above for more details.*
- The individual may need to be transported home or to a healthcare provider in as safe a method as possible to protect others.

If an employee becomes ill while at work:

- Employees who appear to have flu-like or respiratory symptoms upon arrival at work or during the day will immediately be separated from other employees and visitors and be sent home.
- The employee may need to be transported home or to a healthcare provider in as safe a method as possible to protect others.
- The employee will stay at home and should contact their health care provider for medical guidance. The Office of Human Resources will be contacted if the employee tests positive for COVID-19.
- The employee's workplace will be quarantined for 24 hours and then disinfected.

Procedure for providing evidence of COVID-19 vaccination: Students will follow the [student disclosure and verification process](#). Employees will follow the [employee disclosure and verification process](#).

Procedure for providing evidence of COVID-19 testing: Students and employees will follow the [COVID-19 testing process](#).

Procedure for reporting positive COVID-19 tests: Students will report positive test results to health-services@neiu.edu. Employees will report positive test results to the Office of Human Resources at HR-Office@neiu.edu.

Procedure for returning to campus after a COVID-19 illness or positive test: Individuals may return to campus after being ill with COVID-19 or having a positive COVID-19 test only after the following requirements are met:



- 24 hours with no fever
- Improved symptoms
- 10 days since the date of the positive test or symptoms first appeared

If an employee has been unable to work for more than 10 days due to COVID-19 related illness, they will need to provide a note to the Office of Human Resources from a medical provider clearing them to return to their normal duties.

Procedure for getting testing for COVID-19: SHIELD testing is available on a voluntary basis on the main campus. Testing is also available at many local community clinics and testing sites. *See the COVID-19 Specific Health Reporting Requirements in the Regulations section above for more details.*

Procedure for requesting personal protective equipment (PPE): Facilities Management has [created a form](#) to request personal protective equipment (PPE). Requests are made at the unit/departmental level, and are only approved by deans and vice presidents. Deliveries will generally be made within one week of the request's approval.

Plexiglas or space assessment requests are to be emailed to Facilities Management service request at: facility-mgmt@neiu.edu.

Procedure for requesting an accommodation: Employees who are medically at higher risk may apply for [Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities](#). A medical certification and employee request are required. Please contact the Disability Coordinator for more information at eeo@neiu.edu.

Work Concerns Related to COVID-19: Human Resources will continue to work with employees who have work concerns related to COVID-19, including employees who have been diagnosed with, or care for a family member with, COVID-19, or who need to self-quarantine. Please contact the Office of Human Resources for more information at HR-Office@neiu.edu.

Emergency Leave: In compliance with the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARP), Northeastern will provide eligible employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave related to COVID-19 through September 30, 2021. Here are employee resources:

- [Families First Coronavirus Response Act informational poster](#)
- [Families First Coronavirus Response Act questions and answers](#)

How to apply: [NEIU COVID-19 Emergency Leave Form](#) (best with Chrome browser). We ask for patience as the Office of Human Resources responds to requests as soon as possible.

GUIDELINES

General Health and Hygiene:

Students, faculty, and staff should follow these [health guidelines](#) as part of the return to University locations phased return to University locations:

- Consult with your healthcare provider about getting a COVID-19 vaccination and an influenza vaccination if you haven't already done so.
- Stay home when you are sick (fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, body aches and/or shortness of breath).
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 70 percent alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash (preferably a closed bin).
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



AUTHOR REFERENCE

[Centers for Disease Control](#)
[Chicago Department of Public Health](#)
[Illinois Department of Public Health](#)
[Chicago Transit Authority](#)

HISTORY

- 04/01/2020 Northeastern Illinois University's [Coronavirus website](#)
- 06/01/2021 NEIU's Return to Campus Policy is adopted
- 08/23/2021 COVID-19 Return to Campus Interim Policy is revised. Changes incorporated 9/16/21.

RELATED POLICIES AND OTHER INFORMATIONAL MATERIAL

[Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities.](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct questions or concerns about this policy to:

Contact	Phone	Email
Office of the President	(773) 442-5400	as-raouf@neiu.edu
COVID-19 Task Force:		coronavirus@neiu.edu

DISCLAIMER

The University reserves the right to modify or amend sections of this policy at any time at its sole discretion. This policy remains in effect until such time as the Responsible Officer calls for review. Requests for exception to any portion of this policy, but not to the policy statement, must be presented in writing to the Responsible Officer.