

Volume G1: Governance	G1.0 COVID-19 Return to Campus INTERIM POLICY Effective Date: 8/23/2021 Last Revised: 1/18/2022 Date of Next Full Review: 5/06/2022	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. NEIU continues to take a conservative multi-layered 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, vendors and contractors.

DEFINITIONS

Campus: All Northeastern Illinois University locations.

Close contact: For COVID-19, a close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period regardless of face mask or vaccination status.

COVID-19: is 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).

COVID-19 booster: Additional required doses of a vaccine needed periodically to “boost” the immune system.

Fully vaccinated: Anyone over 18 must receive a primary series of a COVID-19 vaccine to be considered fully vaccinated. A primary series consists of:

- A 2-dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna), or
- A single-dose COVID-19 vaccine (Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine)

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.



Isolation: Isolating from others when you are sick or when you have been infected with the virus, even if you don't have symptoms.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Equipment worn by individuals to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including face masks, goggles, face shields, gloves, etc.

Quarantine: Staying away from others when you have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.

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 to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

REGULATIONS

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

[American Rescue Plan Act](#)

All 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.

All offices/departments are required to follow University policies and are not permitted to create separate policies 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.

Individuals may 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:

Employees may make a request for a reasonable accommodation and must do so following the procedures outlined in the University's [Reasonable Accommodations for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities](#) policy.

Face Mask Requirement:

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

Masks are not required when alone in a private office or in a shared office space that allows for six feet social distancing, in a personal residence hall room, or when dining outdoors or indoors in a designated eating area that is identified by public signage.

COVID-19 Vaccination and Booster Requirement:

All students and employees who are on campus are required to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and to receive a COVID-19 booster vaccine when they are eligible per CDC booster guidelines. All students and employees are required to disclose their COVID-19 vaccination status to NEIU by uploading a photograph or scan of their vaccine documents to the NEIU Health Portal.

The vaccination requirement is based on the [Executive Order 2021-20, Order No. 87, dated Aug 26, 2021](#).



COVID-19 Vaccination and Booster Exemption:

Individuals may request and receive a vaccination exemption from the requirement 1) if they have a medical contraindication to the COVID-19 vaccine or 2) if the COVID-19 vaccination would require the individual to violate or forgo a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance or 3) they are a 100% remote student (only enrolled in remote or online classes) and will not be physically on campus for any reason. Students living in the Nest residence hall are not eligible for a 100% remote exemption.

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. Students with a 100% remote exemption are not required to test weekly.

Individuals are required to upload weekly test results to the NEIU Health Portal.

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, if employees are aware of positive cases, they 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 of their positive test result.

Personal Illness:

- Faculty, staff and students may not report or return to campus while they are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 (or other respiratory illnesses), such as runny nose, head congestion, 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 will contact their manager to request leave. Faculty will contact their dean or department chair. See Procedures section below.
- Employees who are unable to work due to personal illness will 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:

- These regulations are applicable to all university-sponsored meetings and events whether held on campus or at an off-campus site.
- 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 must be properly worn at all times per Health and Hygiene rules 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 should 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 Spring 2022 meetings/events must be submitted through 25Live. Space Administrators for El Centro, CCICS, PE Complex, Library, Pedrosa Center, and C-Building will continue to review and approve requests for their locations.
- Meeting/event sponsors should consider all of the above guidelines 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-served 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.

Vendors and Contractors:

To continue ensuring the health and safety of our campus community as the COVID-19 situation evolves, Northeastern Illinois University has adopted the following vendor and contractor requirements. These requirements align with the [Governor's Executive Order](#) and [Executive Order Extension](#), which require vaccination or weekly testing for all students, faculty, staff, and vendor or contractor to Northeastern.

All vendors and contractors are required to comply with the following guidelines.

- All individuals must comply with the University's [Interim COVID-19 policy](#).
- It is the responsibility of the vendor or contractor to facilitate, monitor, and maintain documentation around COVID-19 vaccine compliance for their staff and all individuals who visit any University location as their contractor/subcontractor.
- All individuals must also be prepared to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination or proof of recent weekly testing upon entering any University location, if requested.
- All individuals must wear a mask at all times, in all Northeastern locations, regardless of vaccination status. Individuals must wear a [face mask or face covering](#) in public spaces, including outdoor spaces if social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Northeastern recognizes that exemptions may arise for medical conditions and sincerely held religious beliefs. It is the responsibility of the vendor or contractor to establish a process to review, validate, and document qualifying exemption requests for their staff, contractors, and subcontractors.
- Any vendor or contractor feeling sick must stay home. Please do NOT enter any Northeastern location if you have [potential COVID-19 symptoms](#).
- If a vendor or contractor tests positive for COVID-19, it is the responsibility of the vendor or contractor to report potentially exposed NEIU students or employees to Student Health Services at health-services@neiu.edu for the purpose of contact tracing.

Vendors are advised to reach out to their Northeastern contact if they have questions about the foregoing requirements.

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 working environment.

Before Coming to Work: Conduct a COVID-19 daily [screening](#) and assessing respiratory symptoms before leaving home and arriving at University locations. Individuals demonstrating the following symptoms will not come to any University locations and will notify their supervisor and should contact their health care provider:

- Fever (100.4 degrees or greater)
- Acute respiratory symptoms (dry cough, shortness of breath, trouble breathing)
- Lack of taste and smell
- 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.
- Employees are not required or expected to disclose their personal medical conditions to their supervisors.



Procedure for reporting all illnesses: Employees who are ill will notify their supervisor and stay at home.

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 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.

When to quarantine or self-isolate:

If an individual tests ill positive for COVID-19:

- Stay home and self-isolate for five days regardless of vaccination status.
- After 5 days, if you have no symptoms or resolving symptoms (including no fever for at least 24 hours) you may leave isolation with a negative test.
- Take a rapid or PCR test on day 5.
 - If the test is positive, continue to isolate for 5 more days
 - If the test is negative, you may leave isolation
- After 5 days, if you have persistent symptoms, continue to isolate for at least another 5 days and until your symptoms improve.
- Wear a face mask around others for 10 days.

If an individual is a close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19:

- If you are fully vaccinated and have received a booster:
 - You do not need to quarantine unless you have symptoms.
 - Take a rapid or PCR test on day 5.
 - If you test positive or develop symptoms, stay home and isolate.
 - Wear a face mask around others for 10 days.
 - Contact your health care provider if symptoms worsen or persist past 10 days.
- If you are fully vaccinated but have not received a booster:
 - If you are not yet eligible for a booster, you do not need to quarantine unless you have symptoms.
 - If you are eligible for a booster but have not yet received it, quarantine for 5 days.
 - Take a rapid or PCR test on day 5.
 - If you test positive or develop symptoms, stay home and isolate.
 - Wear a face mask around others for 10 days.
 - Contact your health care provider if symptoms worsen or persist past 10 days.
- If you are partially vaccinated or unvaccinated:
 - Quarantine for 5 days.
 - Take a rapid or PCR test on day 5.
 - Wear a face mask around others for 10 days.

Procedure for providing evidence of COVID-19 vaccination: Students and employees will upload a photograph or scan of their vaccination records to the NEIU Health Portal.

Procedure for providing evidence of COVID-19 testing: Students and employees will follow the [COVID-19 testing process](#) and upload test results to the NEIU Health Portal.

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 work after a COVID-19 illness or positive test: Employees 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
- after 10 days since the date of the positive test or symptoms first appeared OR after 5 days if no symptoms and a negative test result on day 5

If an employee has been out of work more than 10 days due to COVID-19 related illness, they will need to provide a return-to-work clearance note from a medical provider.

Procedure for requesting personal protective equipment (PPE): Facilities Management will initially distribute face masks, hand sanitizers and disinfectant wipes to classroom spaces and office suites at the start of the semester. Additional PPE supplies will be available at the Welcome Desk.

Plexiglass or space assessment requests can 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 the need to self-quarantine. Please contact the Office of Human Resources for more information at HR-Office@neiu.edu.

GUIDELINES

General Health and Hygiene:

- Students, faculty, and staff can protect themselves and others by following these [health guidelines](#):
 - 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 content.
 - 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.

Face Mask Guidelines:

[CDC face mask guidelines](#) recommend that individuals wear a close-fitting face mask in public settings, at events and gatherings, and anywhere that they will be around other people. Medical grade masks (surgical and respirators) provide a higher level of protection, particularly against the highly infectious Omicron variant. [Guidance for choosing a face mask](#) includes fit and safety considerations.

AUTHOR REFERENCE

- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [Chicago Department of Public Health](#)
- [Illinois Department of Public Health](#)
- [Chicago Transit Authority](#)
- [CoVid-19 Executive Order No. 87](#)



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
 01/18/2022 COVID-19 Return to Campus Interim Policy is revised

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.