



**OGLETHORPE**  
UNIVERSITY

COVID-19 Campus Handbook  
Fall 2021 Edition  
Updated September 2, 2021

The Oglethorpe University community continues to move forward amidst unprecedented times. We persist in adapting educational and campus activities to best fit the circumstances and serve the mission of Oglethorpe. The University's COVID-19 Task Force has worked to establish a comprehensive plan for the Fall 2021 semester. This Handbook serves to formally establish the protocols, policies, and procedures for the COVID-conscious campus environment.

The policies outlined in this Handbook remain guided by the following principles:

- We hold as paramount the health, safety and welfare of every member of our community.
- Educational access for our students is essential and critical to ensure their success.
- All decisions must be based on prevailing health and safety guidance from the CDC, state and local authorities, and grounded in scientific and epidemiological principles.
- Taking steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infections is a shared responsibility. Every member of our community must do their part.

This Handbook touches on a number of different areas which may ordinarily be codified in the University Bulletin, Code of Conduct, Employee Handbook, Faculty Handbook, the University website, among other places. These policies carry the same weight and force as any other established University policy. This Handbook will be published on the University website and a link will be distributed to all members of the community by email. Because of the dynamic nature of the COVID-19 virus, the policies are subject to change, and any changes will be widely announced and updated on the University website and/or Oglethorpe's [COVID-19 website](#). All members of the community agree to abide by this Handbook as a condition of their enrollment or employment with Oglethorpe University.

As of the effective date of this Handbook, course delivery will be predominantly in-person. The University will operate housing up to full occupancy for students to reside on campus. The campus will generally be open, and visitors are welcome as long as they adhere to the University's policies. More details are outlined in the applicable sections below. Regardless of the learning environment for Fall 2021, the tuition and fees will remain the same for students. The tuition and fees are in exchange for learning, academic credit, and any augmented academic and non-academic services provided during this time. The faculty and staff have prepared for quick changes to provide for a productive experience regardless of our physical location.

For all those in our community, it's critical to understand that, despite our collective efforts, it is impossible to eliminate the risk of positive cases or an outbreak on our campus. Community spread of COVID-19 is occurring nationally, including in metro Atlanta. That means the virus is spreading through the community in a way that cannot be attributed to travel to a specific location or exposure to a person known to be infected. We cannot guarantee that people present on our campus will not be exposed to or become infected with COVID-19 and suffer the potentially lethal health impacts of contraction. Members of our on-campus community and visitors accept and acknowledge such risks. We certainly do not wish this on anyone, and while we are taking recommended steps to mitigate this risk, we cannot categorically guarantee this will not happen.

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## I. Healthy Campus Promotion Plan

### a. Facility & Campus Operations

The Oglethorpe campus will be open for the start of the Fall 2021 semester, with the goal and intention to remain open so long as it is advisable. “Open” means that all aspects of ordinary university on-campus operations will be functioning to some degree and will be available for use by the community. This includes, in-person classes, residence halls, dining facilities, athletics, library facilities, and the museum. University visitors are welcome on campus as long as they adhere to policies outlined in this Handbook.

### b. COVID-19 Vaccination Policy

All students, faculty, and staff enrolled or employed during the Fall 2021 semester must receive a COVID-19 vaccine and be fully vaccinated in order to be present on campus during such time, or must receive an exemption under a medical or religious accommodation. Students can submit their vaccination information [here](#), faculty and staff can submit their vaccination information [here](#).

Oglethorpe will assist the campus community by providing on-site access to immunizations or identifying sites where individuals may receive a vaccination(s). Vaccinations are provided free of charge. Oglethorpe will consider time spent to receive vaccination as “hours worked” for all employees. Students arriving to campus from abroad unable to access a COVID-19 vaccine or be fully vaccinated prior to arriving on campus may be given a grace period based on the discretion of the Dean of Students.

Individuals may apply for an exemption as a medical or religious accommodation only. Requests for exemptions by employees must be submitted to Human Resources. Requests for accommodations by students must be submitted through the online portal. Individuals who are granted an exemption will be subject to additional COVID-19 testing.

Employees who do not receive a vaccine or exemption may be placed on unpaid leave, and their status will be evaluated periodically. Employees may also be subject to the progressive discipline policy for submitting false information, obstruction of the vaccine policy, or any other violation of the vaccine policy. Students who do not comply with the vaccine policy may be placed on suspension, and/or otherwise ineligible to join the campus community, including residing in residence halls, attending in-person courses, participating in athletics, attending campus social events, or any other campus privilege as determined by the Dean of Students. Students will be responsible for any financial impact of their violation of this policy and may be further subject to the Honor Code and Code of Conduct polices.

### c. Testing

Oglethorpe has employed a variety of testing strategies to assist the community in detecting cases and reducing transmission. PCR testing has been shown to be the most reliable and is

highly recommended, however antigen (rapid) testing is also an acceptable form of testing under this policy.

- **Baseline Testing:** All individuals who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, must submit a negative COVID-19 test taken no more than 72 hours in advance of arrival on campus for the semester. Individuals will be contacted by email and must submit proof of a negative test through the link provided.
- **Weekly Sample Testing:** Following the baseline test, the university will collect weekly testing samples consisting of a randomized 10% of unvaccinated population on campus. Individuals will be notified via email if they are selected and must submit a valid test result through a link provided in the email within four calendar days.
- **Close Contacts & Symptomatic:** Any member of the campus community with close contacts or symptoms of COVID-19 should seek testing and report positive results.
- **Student-Athletes:** Certain student-athletes may be subject to additional testing protocols in accordance with SAA and Athletics Department procedures while actively participating in athletics.


**Any individual who tests positive should refrain from coming to campus and immediately notify:**

- For students: [healthinfo@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:healthinfo@oglethorpe.edu)
- For staff: [sbutler1@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:sbutler1@oglethorpe.edu)
- For faculty: [sbutler1@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:sbutler1@oglethorpe.edu) and division chair for course continuity matters

(Residents who test positive after move-in day will be provided with a temporary living space for isolation).

Please contact [healthinfo@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:healthinfo@oglethorpe.edu) if access to testing is a barrier for any individual subject to this policy.

d. Face Coverings & Social Distancing

	<p><b>Face Covering</b></p> <p>Face covering means a covering of the nose and mouth that is secured to the head with ties, straps, or loops over the ears or is wrapped around the lower face. A face covering can be made of a variety of synthetic or natural fabrics, including cotton, silk, or linen. Face coverings may be factory-made, sewn by hand, or be improvised from household items, including but not limited to, scarfs, bandanas, t-shirts, sweatshirts, or towels. Face covering with exhalation valves may not be used. Gaiters must be double layered over the nose and mouth. A face shield does not qualify as a face covering.</p> <p>Face coverings may also be referred to as masks.</p>
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All persons on the Oglethorpe campus must wear a face covering while indoors, unless alone in an office or residence hall, or actively eating or drinking. All persons on campus should have a face covering with them whenever, and wherever they are, regardless of whether a mask is

required to be worn at that time. Any individual on University property without a face covering may be told to leave. CDC-compliant disposable face masks will be made available throughout campus in various departments and buildings for anyone who needs one. Vendors and campus partners are explicitly required to comply with this policy while on campus. Improper use of a face covering will be considered a violation of this policy. Six-foot physical distancing is otherwise strongly encouraged at all times where feasible, and as designated by signs and postings.

Students who require accommodations from the face mask covering policy must be registered and approved through Accessibility Services. Employees or campus visitors who require accommodations should contact the Office of Human Resources.

e. Facilities: Measures and Precautions

The following protocols apply to all facilities unless otherwise indicated in this policy.

Hand-sanitizing stations will be accessible throughout various campus locations including all public spaces and building entries. Installation of foot pedal door hardware is ongoing for public doors to reduce the surface touching of handles and grab bars. Traditional flush valves and fixture handles will be replaced with touch-free automatic sensors in public restrooms throughout campus. Designated locations that are considered “high touch surface spaces” will be equipped with sanitizing wipe dispensers to allow for self-cleaning before and after use. There will be signage in place identifying these locations as well as highlighting best practices. Additional waste and recycling containers will be strategically placed throughout campus public spaces to encourage healthy behavior and reduce risk of exposure to campus service workers. Transactional spaces will have barriers available to limit face to face contact and protect employees.

Consistent signage will be implemented throughout all campus buildings in locations where opportunities are provided to wash hands, use sanitizing stations, use sanitizing wipes, and use no-touch door hardware. These signs will be placed in open public spaces including restrooms, entry doors, main corridors, open spaces, study spaces, classrooms, elevators, stairwells and fitness facilities.

The University will also implement intensified and more frequent cleaning and disinfection efforts throughout the campus, prioritizing high touch surfaces including doorknobs/handles, elevators, desks/tables, light switches, sinks, counters, and restroom fixtures. Disinfecting foggers will be used to increase cleaning efficiency of high touch surfaces, in addition to increased cleaning. The outlined process and use of equipment and chemicals are approved for use by the CDC.

Current standard (MERV 8) air filters have been replaced throughout all campus building HVAC systems with [ASHRAE recommended](#) MERV-13 air filters to reduce risk of airborne spread in all of our campus buildings. All HVAC systems will be in a constant state of flow prior to and while buildings have occupancy as further recommended by ASHRAE. HVAC control systems will be adjusted to ensure the maximum allowable outdoor air cycling into the individual

building systems according to system type and use. In addition to control measures, all of our systems that cannot function effectively with maximum outdoor air introduction have been equipped with ionization hardware that kills viruses and microbes within the air handlers. This equipment is approved by ASHRAE and the CDC. The facilities staff will check all campus building windows for functionality. Any windows that can be open will be evaluated for operation while considering safety/hazard issues associated. The HVAC water systems will have continuous circulations and all boilers and water heating system and holding tanks will maintain temperatures above 140°F to avoid microbial incursion ([ASHRAE](#)). Potable water systems will be inspected on a monthly basis while buildings are unoccupied, and a bi-weekly flush of the systems will be conducted during periods of shut down to avoid stagnate water which can lead to bacterial growth.

f. Dining Facilities

Dining services will resume full operations for the Fall 2021 semester. Dining at Oglethorpe is provided by Aramark, a national food service company, who has trained all employees and informed their operations for COVID-conscious food safety protocols. This includes additional cleaning protocols, limiting contact on high touch services, providing “grab and go” options, and extensive staff training.

II. Academic Policies

a. Attendance & Participation

Academic courses for Fall 2021 will be in-person unless otherwise indicated. Instructors will work to provide adequate support for students in quarantine or isolation and will have alternative methods of participation for students. Instructors are not required to provide synchronous access and recordings of class lectures may be arranged with faculty on a case-by-case basis. Course materials should be made available via Canvas and/or online. Oglethorpe will not otherwise have a uniform attendance policy across all classes and individual faculty will outline attendance policies in their course syllabi. Penalties and bonuses for absence and attendance may be used toward academic grading in the same manner as before the pandemic. Individual instructors may set their own policies requiring proof of inability to attend. Students who miss more than two weeks of class should expect to talk with the faculty member and someone in student advising about what’s best for their academic program, since it may be difficult to catch up on coursework after more than two weeks’ absence. Students who attend a class remotely from a public indoor location (e.g. study spaces or a lounge) must wear a face covering while attending class and should use at least earphones, if not headsets, to hear and speak with the rest of the class. Any courses with a remote offering may only be attended by registered students.

An instructor reserves the right to exclude students from class, and mark them un-excused, if they fail to adhere to face covering, physical distance, or other applicable policies in this Handbook. Instructors may institute zero tolerance policies for violations.

b. Office Hours and Meetings

Meetings between students and faculty may be held inside with both individuals wearing a mask; may be conducted remotely; or may be conducted outdoors on campus with six-foot physical distance.

c. Use of Recordings

Each instructor may set their own policies as to the use of any recordings of their classes. Instructors may elect to post recordings of the class after the class is over with the understanding that the recordings are posted for the purpose of studying in the class and may not be uploaded anywhere else (e.g. YouTube). Others may share the recordings but only with students with a documented disability related to attending class and using the NDA provided by Accessibility Services for recordings. Any student recording lectures or discussions of the class without prior approval from the instructor shall be considered in violation of the Honor Code for seeking to gain unfair advantage over other students in the class. Distribution and use of someone else's recording (unless an official recording as designated by the instructor) is likewise an Honor Code violation.

d. Performing Arts Courses

Performing arts classes and related rehearsals or performances may be exempt from mask requirements where necessary, and where satisfactory protocols are established and approved by the Provost. In-person class-related performances will be permitted as of the publication of this Handbook, however audience attendees do not qualify for the mask exemption.

e. Honor Code Application

The Honor Code and accompanying policy applies as written for in-person, hybrid, and fully remote classes. This includes sharing screenshots of exams, plagiarizing, use of disallowed materials (including other web sites), and other forms of cheating. Potential violations of academic policies that include an Honor Code violation will still be adjudicated by the Honor Council.

III. Residents & Housing Policies

a. Housing Operations

The University will operate housing at ordinary capacity, so long as it is determined to be feasible by the University administration. Students will not be exempt from their residency requirement for the semester. Usual roommate/suitemate agreements will be expanded to cover agreed upon COVID-19 practices for the unit. Suitemates will be viewed and treated as family units. The agreements will be negotiated and signed by all residents and approved by Resident Advisors (RA) and Residence Life staff. A final copy will be given to all suitemates, and a copy will be kept with Residence Life.



b. Facility Care & General Precautions

Common rooms, common bathrooms, laundry rooms, elevators, handrails, and exterior doors will be sanitized each day by facilities staff. Hand-sanitizing wipes, stations, and masks will be provided in the residence halls for each resident. Disinfecting protocols will be added to the daily cleaning routine of all public spaces in the residence hall buildings. Hand-sanitizing stations will be in every residence hall common space and entry zones.

Common room kitchens will be open and functional. Facilities and security staff will update procedures and additional training in accordance with CDC standards in trash and recycling removal from residence halls, maintenance entry for repairs, and incident response. All staff members that enter the residence halls must wear masks.

Residents are required to wear masks when coming and going inside the residence halls, including in common areas and hallways. Students will not be required to wear a mask in their personal room/suite as agreed to in their roommate/suitemate agreements.

c. Baseline Testing & Preparation for Move-in

Students who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated are required to take a baseline test prior (72 hours) to arrival to campus. Students who test positive should not arrive on campus, and should contact [healthinfo@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:healthinfo@oglethorpe.edu) and the Office of Residence Life for next steps.

All residents should practice enhanced safety precautions before arrival to campus. Any student who is symptomatic in the two weeks prior to arrival on campus must also seek testing.

IV. Athletics

a. General Use of Athletics Facilities

The Facilities and Athletic Departments are working to maintain access to all athletics facilities for the campus community. The Howell Tennis Courts, the Track and Turf Field, and the Salamone Fields will be available when they are not in use by a university sponsored athletics program and between the hours of 9AM-6PM Monday-Friday, with limited weekend hours, or as otherwise posted by the Athletic Department.

The Schmidt Athletic and Recreation Center will be available when they are not in use by a university sponsored athletics program and between the hours of 8AM-10PM Monday-Thursday, 8AM-7PM Friday, 12PM-6PM Saturday, and 3PM-10PM Sunday.

b. University Sponsored Athletics

The Southern Athletic Association's (SAA) Presidents' Council voted to continue with the Fall 2021 season as planned. Oglethorpe and the SAA will continue to monitor the pandemic as the semester progresses and may make modifications or suspend play if circumstances dictate.

Rules for practices, play, and transport, including testing are governed by NCAA and SAA guidelines. Oglethorpe Athletics has further established department and sport specific procedures including testing, surveillance, officials, case thresholds, return to play protocols, compliance tracking, and expectations for coaches. Those policies are incorporated by reference into this Handbook and may be reviewed by request to the Department of Athletics. All athletics teams and student-athletes will be fully informed of and be held accountable to those standards. Athletic Department policies may include exemptions to the indoor mask policy for practices and competitions. The Director of Athletics will have full discretion in enforcing non-compliance with student-athletes and staff with regards to athletics participation. Students and staff may be further subject to disciplinary procedures as outlined in this Handbook.

## V. Events on Campus

### a. University Events

While certain events may take place on campus, remote or virtual options are strongly encouraged where feasible. Attendees at any sanctioned indoor University event, including athletic events, must adhere to mask requirements, and efforts should be made to allow for social distancing. Face coverings are not required for vaccinated individuals at outdoor events; however, they are encouraged for all during larger gatherings, and strongly recommended at all times for those who are unvaccinated. Capacity for any events in the Conant Performance Arts Center will be limited to 50%.

### b. Student Events & Group Gatherings

Remote or virtual events are strongly recommended for student-sponsored events or gatherings. Student events are otherwise subject to the same policies outlined above. Any gathering on Greek Row must be specifically approved by the Dean of Students.

Any group, including the responsible individuals, will be subject to conduct sanctions for a violation of this policy. Student Government Association (SGA) and student organizations will also be subject to group sanctions and funding limitations as provided in the University Bulletin.

## VI. Response to COVID-19 Cases

### a. Case Management for Students

The University will have designated staff serving as Case Managers to assist students with management and exposure to COVID-19, including advisement on quarantine and isolation periods, coordination with housing and dining services, and validation from academic affairs on requests for information. Initial contact by a Case Manager will be made after a report of positive test or exposure is identified or sent by email to [healthinfo@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:healthinfo@oglethorpe.edu).




The county and state are engaged in professional contact tracing and remain the ultimate authority to which individuals should report cases if not done so at a testing location.

b. Quarantine & Isolation

Mandatory isolation will be imposed for any individual who tests positive for COVID-19. Non-residents should isolate in their homes. On-campus residents may return home or may choose to isolate on campus. The University will make arrangements for to-go meals for those who remain on campus.

A mandatory quarantine period will also be imposed for any individual exposed to someone else with COVID-19, either on or off-campus. Campus residents may quarantine in their assigned rooms or a designated quarantine room based on the determination by their Case Manager. Non-residents must remain off campus during the quarantine period.

All members of the campus community must receive an “all clear” from their Case Manager or Human Resources prior to reentry to the on-campus community based on the following:

 <p><b>Quarantine</b></p>	<p><b>Fully Vaccinated Individuals:</b> (a) no quarantine required from exposure only, unless symptoms develop (b) stay masked for 14 days (c) testing suggested 3-5 days from exposure</p> <p><b>Unvaccinated Individuals:</b> (a) 14 days since exposure AND no development of symptoms; or (b) quarantine until a negative test is received 7 days from exposure AND no development of symptoms, stay masked for full 14-day period</p>
 <p><b>Asymptomatic Isolation</b></p>	<p><b>Fully Vaccinated Individuals:</b> 10 days since positive test AND no development of symptoms</p> <p><b>Unvaccinated Individuals:</b> 10 days since positive test AND no development of symptoms</p>
 <p><b>Symptomatic Isolation</b></p>	<p><b>Fully Vaccinated Individuals:</b> 10 days since symptom onset for mild/moderate AND 24 hours fever free without the use of medication AND other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving</p> <p><b>Unvaccinated Individuals:</b> 10 days since symptom onset for mild/moderate AND 24 fever free without the use of medication AND other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving</p> <p>*severe/critical/immunocompromised should extend this period for 20 days or as determined by their medical provider</p>

c. Response to Outbreak

The University will review infection data trends for both campus and broader community case rates. A change in campus alert levels may require strict adherence to guidelines, sheltering in place, campus closure, or other safety precautions. Based on national infection rates, the community can expect that a percentage of the residents will be positive for COVID-19 upon arrival. Understanding that the following two-week period may lead to a small uptick, the community aim is for cases to decline thereafter and remain at or below baseline levels.

VII. Student Conduct

a. Enforcement of COVID Handbook Policies

Taking steps to minimize the risk of COVID-19 infections is a shared responsibility, and each member of the community has an important role to play in keeping the campus as safe as possible. Working together we can help keep our campus open and enjoy the many benefits of in-person learning and interactions. The policies contained in this Handbook are intended to do just that. Any violation of these policies will be addressed by the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities and is subject to enforcement through the Code of Conduct. Violations of this Handbook can also be reported anonymously [here](#).

VIII. Human Resources Policies for all Employees

Policies in this section are in addition to those applicable throughout this Handbook. Oglethorpe further adheres to all federal and state laws related to COVID-19 and the workplace, including but not limited to, updates to FMLA regulations.

a. Work Schedules

All employees are expected to be back on campus for work, unless otherwise provided for by a direct supervisor and approved by Human Resources. Regardless of work location, employees should consult directly with their supervisors on their schedule and arrangements. Supervisors will remain flexible and understanding during this time.

b. Meetings

Continued physical distancing remains critical to prevent further spread of COVID-19. Zoom or Teams are the preferred method to conduct meetings (even one-on-one sessions) or facilitate group discussions, with colleagues or with students. Other preferred methods of communicating include email, instant messaging and phone. In-person meetings must adhere to mask protocols.

c. Employee Protocol for Positive Cases

All employees are required to stay home if they, or any person living in their home, is infected with COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19. Employees who become ill or notified of exposure while at work should go home immediately. As soon as possible, employees should alert [sbutler1@oglethorpe.edu](mailto:sbutler1@oglethorpe.edu) if the employee tests positive for COVID-19.

Faculty who are unable to teach their classes should contact their Division Chair immediately. If possible, the instructor should arrange for another faculty member to substitute.

d. Required Compliance

Individuals who violate Handbook policies and acknowledge their actions will typically be given the opportunity to correct their behavior and/or attend training. Repeated or severe acts of non-compliance will result in the individual's removal from campus until compliance is achieved. Continued non-compliance may also result in disciplinary action for faculty and staff up to and including separation from the University. Oglethorpe will utilize existing disciplinary regulations and policies as necessary but hopes to achieve compliance through a culture in which everyone on campus is dedicated to protecting each other's health and well-being.