Pittsburg State University

STUDENT GUIDE FOR RETURNING TO CAMPUS

July 22, 2020
Pittsburg State University is a place where students come together - and we want to keep it that way. *Pitt State Together* is everything we are doing to ensure we return to campus and are able to safely stay open. We intend to return to face-to-face classes and student life in the fall. This is largely dependent on the state of COVID-19 in our community and among our students, along with guidelines set forth by public health officials. **It is also dependent on you and your approach to our fall semester.**

Our goal is not only to open, but to stay open for the duration of the fall semester. While we fully understand there is no way to remove all risk, we will continue our reopening plans using these **guiding principles:**

- Do what we can to maintain the **health and safety** of our students, faculty, and staff
- Maintain **transparency** with thorough and frequent communication as the situation evolves
- Provide high-quality experiences for our students that **preserve progress toward a degree**

**NOTE:** While these guiding principles will endure, the information in this document could change and will grow as the pandemic evolves and we continue to prepare for the fall semester.

**CURRENT STATUS**

We intend to open and stay open in the Fall 2020. Three working groups focused on academics, student life, and budget are tasked with how that will happen safely for our campus community.

Though for quite some time Crawford County had few cases, COVID-19 has now reached our region and the number of cases began to rise in June. Our county's reopening plans are still underway, and likewise so are Pitt State's. **Timeline:**

- **All spring/summer:** Essential functions continued to report to campus, and other offices were open as needed.
- **July 20:** All facilities were open and accessible to students, families.
- **August 17:** Fall coursework begins.
- **November 20:** Face-to-face classes dismiss for the semester, commencement for fall semester graduates.
- **November 21:** Commencement for May 2020 graduates.
- **November 21-29:** Fall break and Thanksgiving break.
- **November 30:** Classes resume via alternative delivery methods.
- **December 11:** Semester ends.
LOOKING AHEAD

Our institution will adhere closely to the guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, expertise from the American College Health Association, the state of Kansas’s phased *Ad Astra: A Plan to Reopen Kansas*, local recommendations adopted by Crawford County, and the recommendations from our own healthcare professionals at the Bryant Student Health Center.

We will reopen campus to students with these things in mind:

- **Community health.** As we welcome our students back to campus, we have a responsibility to do all we can to reduce risk of virus spread among ourselves and our communities.
- **Students first.** We are committed to providing transformational experiences to our current and incoming students.
- **Agility and flexibility.** There is no one right answer. Each department has a plan to reopen spaces in ways that allow for social distancing and meet public health guidelines while maintaining quality programs.
- **Keeping campus safe.** We are preparing disinfecting supplies, signage, social distancing reminders, sneeze guards, and a face mask mandate - all designed to help everyone take personal responsibility for keeping our campus safe.
- **Reducing risk.** There is no way to remove all risk, but we are doing everything we can to reduce it.

Feedback is welcome. As we navigate our path back to campus in the fall, input from our students is important. Please email social@pittstate.edu with questions.

STAY TUNED IN

Please pay special attention to email, as you’ll receive several messages in the weeks leading up to the start of the semester. Please also regularly check our website and follow Pitt State on social media for the latest updates.

*pittstate.edu/coronavirus*
DO THESE THINGS NOW

The success of Pittsburg State University's plan to open and stay open depends greatly on your actions NOW. Staying healthy over the summer means you come to campus virus-free and have good habits in place for fall. Do everything you can to prevent contracting the virus as you complete your summer. Things you can do leading up to your return to campus:

- **Wear a mask.** The is one of the most important things you can do to help reduce virus transmission. Wearing a mask is required on the campus of Pittsburg State University with few exceptions. See our face mask policy at pittstate.edu/coronavirus.
- **Stay away from large gatherings.** Don't attend crowded parties or other large gatherings where the virus is proven to spread quickly.
- **Isolate when needed.** If you experience symptoms, if you have been exposed (even if you do not show symptoms), and if you have been told to isolate. Stay in touch with your healthcare provider throughout.
- **Practice social distancing.** Develop new ways of socializing so that you maintain distance between yourself and others with whom you do not live.
- **Maintain good hygiene.** Wash your hands very frequently. Use hand sanitizer if you can't. Regularly disinfect your living space, your car, your phone, and anything else you use frequently.
- **Know what to do if you are exposed.** Fully understand all quarantine guidelines. Understand when you should get tested, and how to get tested.
- **Do not travel to high-risk areas.** The State of Kansas mandates a 14-day quarantine for anyone traveling to high-risk areas. Please keep an eye on the list and do not travel to the areas deemed high-risk.

REALLY – DO THEM NOW!

It really is extremely important that you develop good habits now, and limit your exposure to the virus as much as possible this summer. We are doing our part to make campus safe - please do your part to stay safe until you return in August.

July 22, 2020
BEFORE RETURNING TO CAMPUS

We want the strongest possible start, and the best foundation for remaining open for the semester. For this reason, we strongly recommend all students isolate for the two weeks leading up to your return to Pittsburg and/or your return to our campus. This is about individual responsibility for contributing to the safety of our campus.

We know this is a difficult request, but please understand we are doing everything we can to start the semester healthy and stay that way.

MANDATORY QUARANTINE

The State of Kansas requires a 14-day quarantine for certain people entering our state, and this includes the campus of Pittsburg State University.

- If you live in or have recently visited a state designated as high risk by the State of Kansas. See the list of states here. Currently it includes Arizona and Florida.
- If you are arriving from an international destination, and it's Bahrain, French Guiana, or any country with a CDC Level 3 Travel Health Notice. See the list of countries here.
- If you went on a cruise (ocean or river).

Anyone who meets these criteria must quarantine in Kansas for 14 days prior to coming to campus. Classes start August 17, so this means you must begin your quarantine no later than August 3.

PLEDGE TO A HEALTHY CAMPUS

To help our campus reopen and stay open, it'll take all of us working together, and students have a huge role in our success. We ask that you commit to doing the right things to help keep our campus and community safe, starting with taking the Pitt State Together pledge. We cannot remove all risk, but we can all behave in ways that help us keep our campus open all semester.

Take the pledge here!

July 22, 2020
CAMPUS REQUIREMENTS

We know that COVID-19 is most commonly spread through inhalation of respiratory droplets from an infected person. Many times, infected people do not know they are infected (they are asymptomatic). Therefore, it is important that we take all the available precautions to prevent spread.

WEAR A MASK

Masks are required everywhere on campus with few exceptions. Read the face mask policy here to understand exceptions and enforcement measures.

Students requiring an accommodation for recognized disabilities that prevent mask wearing can contact Student Accommodations.

One washable mask will be provided to you. Please plan to provide additional masks of your own as needed, or check with Gorilla Pantry for a donated mask (gorillapantry@pittstate.edu).

DAILY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Every student who lives on or visits campus for any reason must conduct a self-assessment of their health. If you have symptoms (see page 10) or have been in close contact with anyone who tests positive for the virus, STAY HOME and isolate. Do not attend face to face classes or go anywhere if you are sick.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Keep your distance from other people. This means maintaining six feet of distance between yourself and others. The only exception to this rule are academic circumstances that last less than 15 minutes and where protective equipment is in place to prevent spread of the virus.
OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

When not on our campus, it is critically important that you adhere to all public health guidelines - stay home if you are sick, wear a mask, practice social distancing and good personal hygiene, and avoid large gatherings of any kind. Please remember that you and your fellow students have tremendous positive impact in the Pittsburg community. Let’s keep it that way.

Find new ways to socialize.

College life is in large part about forging new friendships and finding your place among your peers. It's also just really important to stay connected with others. This is still possible at Pitt State - it just might take some creativity. And be on the lookout for new online social opportunities from the Campus Activities Center. A few ideas:

- **Take it outside.** Getting outdoors is good for your physical and mental health. Plan activities with a few friends that allow for social distancing. Take advantage of our beautiful campus and all its outdoor facilities. Walk or bike the many trails in and around Pittsburg.
- **Stay home.** Plan a hallway social hour in your residence hall, with participants staying distanced at their own doorways. Host a small gathering at your house or apartment, making sure to wear masks and social distance. Plan an evening in with your roommate.
- **Go online.** There are plenty of options for playing games, sharing a movie, and chatting with friends and groups online.

Be part of the solution.

Many Pittsburg businesses, employers, and public spaces are committed to community health, and will actively enforce mask requirements and social distancing guidelines. Be a good customer, a good employee, and a good citizen - follow the rules. They are in place for your safety and the safety of those around you. Be part of the solution!

Follow all public health guidelines.

Isolate if you are sick. Wear a mask. Wash your hands and practice other good hygiene. Keep distance between yourself and others. Avoid large gatherings. Avoid crowds (parties, bars).
SOCIAL MEDIA CONVERSATIONS

Be patient. Be kind.

This is a uniquely stressful and emotional time in our lives. None of us have gone through a global pandemic on this scale. As we proceed through the coming weeks and months, it’s important that we support each other and lift each other up. That is especially true during tense debates and conversations, particularly those that take place on social media.

We won’t all agree on everything. We never do. But we can and must always respect one another and speak as we’d prefer to be spoken to.

With social media, it’s easy to call people out and instigate and argue and use words we wouldn’t use during an in-person conversation. It’s easy to be angry and fight. Don’t do that.

Be kind. Be patient with each other. Help each other through this. We’re all in this together, and the only way we’ll get to the other side is by doing it together.

If you feel the need to talk to us, do it.

Our primary mission is to provide transformational experiences to you. We are here for you. We want you to be safe, healthy, and happy. We want your time at Pitt State to be amazing, even during difficult times. We love having productive conversations with you. We want to help.

If you have concerns or challenges and you feel we can help solve them, please contact us at social@pittstate.edu. We’ll answer fast, we promise.
**MONITOR YOUR HEALTH**

It is important to understand the symptoms of COVID-19. **Watch for the following:**

- Cough, fever, chills, sore throat, muscle pain
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell
- Gastrointestinal symptoms

If you exhibit these symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact your healthcare provider for further guidance. This can be your personal physician, or you can contact the Bryant Student Health Center at 620-235-4452.

**ALWAYS ISOLATE/SELF-QUARANTINE IF:**

- You exhibit any of the symptoms above.
- You are a Person Under Investigation (PUI) for having COVID-19.
- You have made close contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19.

Stay in touch with your healthcare provider or the Bryant Student Health Center during this time.

**AT RISK INDIVIDUALS**

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified conditions that may put certain individuals at increased risk for poor COVID-19 outcomes. These conditions include:

- Age - 65 years or older
- Moderate to severe asthma
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity
- Immunocompromised conditions of all kinds

If you are at risk, please talk to your healthcare provider before returning to campus. If you have a recognized disability that requires accommodations related to COVID-19, contact Student Accommodations.

**MONITOR YOUR MENTAL HEALTH**

These are challenging times. Uncertainty, health worries, and social isolation are real concerns and should not be ignored. It is important to take care of yourself. Take breaks from social media, take a walk with a trusted confidante, and stay connected with your family and friends. Professional help is here for you, too: University Counseling Services.
CLASSROOMS AND COURSEWORK

Public health guidelines have brought challenges and, in some cases, opportunities to our campus and how we deliver our courses. Each of our hundreds of classrooms and thousands of courses is unique and requires careful and individual thought.

This fall, classes will be delivered one of five ways:

- **Traditional face-to-face** - this method will be used in situations when the class size and the size of the classroom allow for it, and when the type of coursework demands it.
- **Online** - this method will be used when class sizes are too large to be accommodated safely, and when the type of coursework is easily supported by online delivery.
- **Hybrid** - this is a mix of face-to-face and online, and can take on a variety of scenarios.
- **HyFlex** - this is a new course delivery method we'll use this fall that combines all three of the other methods into a flexible option for students.
- **Other** - for special conditions and circumstances.

Each of our classrooms is being evaluated to determine which courses can fit and still maintain social distancing, which need plexiglas barriers between students and instructors, which need additional voice amplification technology to accommodate instructors wearing masks and/or face shields, and much more. We are working on classroom sanitation practices and schedules and how to reduce density in hallways. Much work remains, and we'll communicate again soon.

The *course schedule* will be updated continually. As the pandemic evolves, course delivery methods are subject to change at any time. Check back regularly as the summer progresses.

**You can see your modified course schedule here.**

Anyone can see changes to individual courses [here](#).

If after viewing your course schedule you have questions or concerns, please contact your academic advisor or the chairperson for your department. Department chairpersons are listed in the contact information for each department at [pittstate.edu/academics](http://pittstate.edu/academics).
University residence halls are dynamic, fast-paced, and highly interactive living-learning environments. The young adults who live on campus are high-energy, and the layout of residence halls place everyone living near one another. The aspects that make residence hall living a powerful experience are also factors that make for transmission of communicable diseases.

We are working diligently to implement public health safeguards in our residence halls. We believe that the combination of these efforts and if students practice self-protection measures (mask, social distancing, strict hygiene and personal space disinfecting routine) they can be safe and virus free. However, given the nature of COVID-19, it is very likely that some students living in residence halls will be diagnosed with the virus.

**For those students not comfortable with this reality, the campus residency policy will be waived for the 20-21 academic year.** If you choose, you can be released from the terms of your Housing and Dining Services contract. Students who cancel their contract but remain enrolled in PSU for the fall semester will receive a credit of their application and prepayment fee ($145). No releases will be authorized once you move into your room. Contract cancellation is available at (620) 235-4245.

**We certainly hope to see you in our residence halls this fall.** For those students who choose to stay, you will receive much more detailed move-in information from our housing team. Move-in will be carefully scheduled to avoid congestion. A few things to know now:

- Our housing team is working with local public health officials and the health professionals at the Bryant Student Health Center to determine quarantine and isolation procedures for COVID-positive residents and anyone in close contact with them. Details will be sent to residents soon.
- There will be additional restrictions for residents regarding congregating in common areas, visitors/guests, and in the dining hall.
- There are a limited number of private, single-occupancy rooms available for an additional fee. Request forms are available for new freshmen and returning/transfer students.
- Housing and dining rates for the fall 2020 semester are adjusted to reflect the November 20 end to on-campus operations. See them here.
CAMPUS DINING

Our hospitality partner Sodexo is well-prepared for students to arrive back at our campus. A few things to note:

- All food service workers will have health and safety training prior to students' return. Focus areas are respiratory hygiene, personal protective equipment use, social distancing, and more.

- **Gibson Dining Hall** details:
  - The space will be equipped with directional signage to communicate traffic patterns that relieve congestion
  - Hand sanitizer stations will be available at the entryway
  - Plexiglas will separate workers from diners at service stations
  - Additional sanitation procedures throughout
  - Furniture adjusted to accommodate social distancing, and additional space for dining available at Gibson Underground
  - Personal refillable containers are not allowed
  - All utensils will be wrapped, and condiment pre-portioned to avoid high-touch situations

At all campus dining areas managed by Sodexo, a new system for table sanitation will be in place. Tables sanitized and ready for diners will be clearly marked, as will those requiring sanitation before the next user.

Sodexo will also utilize their **Bite+ app**, which enables students to order takeout from Gibson Dining Hall.
As the summer progresses, we’ll learn more about the status of events and activities on our campus. The working groups for academics and student life, along with Intercollegiate Athletics and Campus Activities Center leadership, are considering the status and viability of events and activities for the fall.

All allowed events and activities are required to adhere to state-ordered gathering limits, mask mandates, and any University-required health and safety guidelines.

The Student Rec Center reopened July 20. Given the increased risk associated with gyms, students will likely be required to sign a waiver before using the facility.

**EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

**FACILITIES**

Stepped-up disinfection practices are in place, and watch for reminders and directional signage around campus. Please follow all instructions - they are designed to keep you safe.

- **Classroom sanitation.** Classrooms will be cleaned daily. Each academic department will have supplies for classrooms as needed.
- **Common area sanitation.** Common areas will be cleaned daily.
- **Elevators.** Elevators and elevator lobbies are limited to one occupant at a time. Please use the stairs unless you are mobility-impaired. Wash your hands after using the elevator or a stair rail.
- **Stairwells.** It is likely that one-way traffic will be established in stairwells. Please watch for and abide by posted signage.
- **Hallways.** It is likely that one-way traffic lanes will be established in many hallways. Please watch for and abide by posted signage.
- **Office and work space sanitation.** If you work on campus, know that each office has disinfecting supplies and employees will take responsibility for their own work spaces.
LINKS

**Pitt State Coronavirus Web Page**. Central information and announcement resource for the University's COVID-19 response.


**Ad Astra: A Plan to Reopen Kansas**. Governor Laura Kelly's phased approach to reopening the state with guidance for communities and individuals.

**Crawford County Health Department**. Information about COVID-19 in our county. Includes guidance on testing and treatment.


**American College Health Association**. The voice of student health and wellness, ACHA provides guidance, best practices, planning help, and more.

**US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**. National resource for COVID-19 in the US, including travel advisories, evolving symptom and treatment guidance, and prevention techniques.

**World Health Organization**. Resource for the pandemic on a global scale, including travel advisories, evolving symptom and treatment guidance, and prevention techniques.

QUESTIONS AND HELP

We know you'll have a lot of questions - don't hesitate to ask them. To get the fastest response, please direct your question to the appropriate department. If you aren't sure, no problem - send it to **social@pittstate.edu**.

- **Bryant Student Health Center** - physical and mental health questions
- **University Housing** - all residence hall questions
- **Registrar** - all enrollment questions
- **Your academic department** - all questions about course delivery
- **Student Success** - getting started at Pitt State
- **Financial Assistance** - CARES relief or any other student aid question

Don't forget **your academic advisor** - they are here to help, too.
WHAT TO EXPECT

As the summer progresses, Pittsburg State University will be finalizing the processes and procedures designed to make our campus a safe and productive place for you to achieve your goals. Given the fluid nature of COVID-19 and its evolving presence in our region, be ready for changes. Stay in touch with us, check your GUS mail every day, and pay close attention to messages from any department on our campus. More communication will be coming in the weeks leading up to our return to campus. A few things we’re working on:

- **Finalizing protocols for virus management on our campus.** We are working to implement processes for testing, isolation, and contact tracing on our campus.
- **Finalizing course delivery methods.** You can see your revised course schedule here. **Please note that this can change at any time as the virus evolves, so check back often.**
- **Complete revised classroom setups.** Your revised course schedule also likely lists new locations that are appropriate for the size and nature of the course. The goal is to set up classrooms in ways that help keep everyone safe while meeting course requirements. Locations can change.
- **Procuring adequate quantities of disinfecting supplies.** We are preparing for enhanced disinfecting procedures throughout campus.
- **Determining dining operations.** Our partner Sodexo is working to meet student needs while maintaining public health practices for contagious disease spread.
- **Finalizing the move-in process for residence halls.** To reduce congestion, move-in will be scheduled, time-limited, and limited to a few people per family.

BE READY FOR CHANGE

These are uncertain times. We can do our best to predict the path of the pandemic, but we know it's smarter to instead prepare for as many scenarios as we can. **You should do this, too.**

**Be tech-ready.** Make sure you have the technology you need to complete your coursework remotely, if needed. Understand where you can check out a laptop, where you can get reliable WiFi, and how you can access the software required for your courses. Do this now, so you’re ready at any time. Check out IT resources and guidance here.

**Stay flexible.** Remember that we cannot predict everything, and neither can you. It's ok - we are in this together. Living with uncertainty is difficult, but we can do it if we remain change-ready.

**Keep in touch.** Speak up, ask questions, and seek to understand the resources available to you. We have a wealth of support for you - take advantage of it. Make it your mission to connect with as many people as possible so you never feel like you're on an island.

**Check your course schedule.** Do this regularly, as things will change as the summer progresses.