



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

MEMORANDUM FOR IMPLEMENTATION

To: President's Executive Council
From: Steve Sosland, Chief People Officer
Subject: Operational Phases – Returning to Campuses during COVID-19 Pandemic
Date: April 30, 2020 (*Updated June 19, 2020*)

Purpose: In conjunction with President Trump's [Opening Up America Again](#) and Governor Abbott's [Report to Open Texas](#), Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) formed two task force teams¹ to develop a phased approach to safely return our operations back to campuses. The plan outlined in this document follows the original [four-phase operations plan](#) initiated by Chancellor Mitchell on March 16, 2020.

These phases will again serve as guidelines as we transition back to work on campuses, clinics, and managed care units, while continuing to respond to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and potential rebound events.

Our priority is to protect TTUHSC team members (defined throughout this document as clinicians, faculty, staff, and students) by maintaining a safe working environment, allowing for the return to operations on our campuses, clinics, and managed care units.

TTUHSC operates in very diverse geographic areas across Texas. Local community leaders will establish guidelines and directives based on the conditions in those areas. Vice Presidents and Deans, in coordination with the Regional Deans, will determine the specific timing for reopening their respective campuses and individual departments based on the COVID-19 situation at each campus, clinic, and managed care unit.

Our phased approach is tailored for our specific operations and goes above and beyond the minimum standards established in the president and governor's directives listed above.

We will measure the success of this plan by returning to work on campuses with no increase in COVID-19 cases on our team. This success depends on the self-discipline of each of our team members.

Emergency Remote Work Operational Phases

Phase IV – Closed Campuses (Current Status)

Intent: On-campus operations restricted to critical functions only and preparation for Phase III.

Personnel Status: During closed-campus operations, all team members are working remotely with an approved [Remote Work Agreement](#) with the exception of those positions designated as mission-critical², who will continue to work fully or partially on campus, and those who have been approved for [Non-Work Pandemic Leave](#).

- *Vulnerable individuals*³ may request accommodation from supervisors when their presence is required on campus, to ensure their safety at work.
- All team members must wear protective face coverings when on campus (refer to Appendix A) and adhere to strict protocols regarding [hand hygiene](#) when on campus.
- Every team member (faculty, staff and essential students) will complete screening in accordance with Appendix B of this document prior to arrival on campus.
- Campus Business Operations Officers will coordinate with relevant departments to identify and mark campus entry points and coordinate staffing, training and implementation.
- All individuals, when in public areas, should maximize physical distance from others.
- All team members should avoid gathering in groups of more than 10 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing (greater than 6 feet).

Nonclinical Operations:

- Cancel all travel and events.
- Implement [mission-critical hiring process](#).
- Conduct all operations remotely, except for minimum workforce needed and approved by the President, including:
 - Critical clinics, as identified by respective Vice President and Deans.
 - Animal Resource Centers.
 - Buildings and equipment.
 - Police Department and Security Guards.

Clinical Operations:

- Noncritical and routine clinical care can and will be conducted via telehealth visits when appropriate, as determined by the Department Chair and clinic supervisor.
- Only the patient will be allowed to attend in-person clinical appointments, unless the patient is a minor or an individual with assistance needs in which case they can be accompanied by one adult caregiver.
- Patients and accompanying guests will be screened upon entry to TTUHSC buildings. Appropriate screening methods will be determined by the President's Clinical Task Force.
- All patients and accompanying guests must wear protective face coverings when on campus (see Appendix A).

Managed Care Unit Operations:

- Clinical care will be conducted via telehealth visits as appropriate, as determined by managed care leadership.
- Additional clinical operations at Managed Care units will follow TDCJ timeline for resuming offender movement/transports.

Academic Operations:

- All academic coursework will be offered online.
- Student participation in clinical rotations may continue as clinical sites allow if adequate PPE is available from clinical locations (see Appendix C), unless otherwise directed by the respective Department Chair, Dean or Provost.

Research Operations:

- Research faculty, staff, and students will implement working remotely.
- On-campus research activity is restricted to critical functions only (i.e., ongoing animal experiments, experiments using time-sensitive materials and reagents, maintenance of clones of cells that cannot be frozen).
- No new animal experiments are permitted.
- Principal Investigators will determine critical functions for labs. Faculty, graduate students, and lab personnel required to be on campus should minimize time spent in the laboratory, utilize appropriate PPE (see Appendix C), and maintain physical distancing guidelines.

Phase III – Restricted Operations

Intent: Continue operations remotely with limited on-campus presence and prepare for Phase II. We will move to Phase II based on specific conditions at each location and department.

Personnel Status: During restricted operations, team members identified in Phase IV as mission-critical are “on duty, working remotely” or “on-duty, working on campus.” Non-mission-critical individuals may be on campus if approved by their respective Dean, VP or Provost.

- *Vulnerable individuals*³ may request accommodation from supervisors when their presence is required on campus, to ensure their safety at work.
- All team members must wear protective face coverings when on campus (refer to Appendix A).
- Every team member (faculty, staff and essential students) will complete screening in accordance with Appendix B prior to arrival on campus.
- All individuals, when in public areas, should maximize physical distance from others.
- All team members should avoid gathering in groups of more than 10 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing (greater than 6 feet).
- Continue [Remote work agreements](#) and [Non-Work Pandemic Leave](#) procedures.
- Testing: As guidelines and availability increases, TTUHSC Clinical Task Force will give guidance on COVID-19 and antigen and antibodies testing.

Nonclinical Operations:

- Continue university mission-critical operations unless otherwise directed by the President, Vice President, Provost or Dean.
- Minimize nonessential travel and adhere to [CDC](#) and [Texas state guidelines](#) regarding isolation following travel.

- Continue employee recruitment for [mission-critical](#) positions only.
- University-sponsored conferences and events may resume with maximal attendance at 25% of room space capacity OR no more than 10 people, whichever is less.
- All attendees will wear appropriate facial covering (see Appendix A) and maintain physical distancing of 6 feet or more.

Clinical Operations:

- Resume elective surgeries and procedures, as clinically appropriate, on an outpatient basis at facilities that adhere to Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) guidelines.
- Clinical team members, and others with regular patient contact, will wear appropriate PPE (see Appendix C), as designated by their supervisor. Dean or Department Chair may approve exceptions for certain specific specialties such as Speech Language Hearing Sciences.
- Continue utilizing telehealth for noncritical, routine office visits when possible, as determined by the Department Chair and clinical supervisor.
- Only the patient will be allowed to attend in-person clinical appointments, unless the patient is a minor or an individual with assistance needs in which case they can be accompanied by one adult caregiver.
- Patients and accompanying guests will be screened upon entry to TTUHSC buildings. Appropriate screening methods will be determined by the President's Clinical Task Force.
- All patients and accompanying guests must wear protective face coverings (see Appendix A) and adhere to strict protocols regarding [hand hygiene](#) when on campus.

Managed Care Unit Operations:

- Continue clinical care via telehealth visits as appropriate, as determined by managed care leadership.
- Additional clinical operations at Managed Care units will follow TDCJ timeline for resuming offender movement/transports.

Academic Operations:

- Continue to offer all academic coursework online, unless otherwise directed by the respective Dean or Provost.
- Student participation in clinical rotations may continue as clinical sites allow if adequate PPE is available (see Appendix C), unless otherwise directed by the respective Department Chair, Dean or Provost.

Research Operations:

- New animal experiments considered essential can resume.
- Essential research personnel may return to their laboratory spaces in order to resume important experiments, defined by the Principal Investigator, and provided appropriate PPE is worn (see Appendix C) and physical distancing of greater than 6 feet is followed.
- Principal Investigators will determine the number of lab personnel who can be present at the same time in the same space.

Phase II - Limited Operations

Intent: Resume university campus-based operations with modifications and prepare for Phase I.

Personnel Status: Team members begin returning to their designated work locations with adequate protection. During Phase II, the place of work for most team members is on campus.

- At the supervisor's discretion, evaluate individual positions that may qualify for remote work. Submit end dates for Emergency Remote Work Agreements or convert to Standard Remote Work Agreements.
- As of September 1, 2020, pandemic leave will be used only for those team members required to quarantine. Non-work pandemic leave ends on August 31, 2020.
- All team members who are sick from any cause including COVID-19 will use normal sick leave procedures.
- Team members who cannot work from home will return to work on campus.
- *Vulnerable individuals*³ may request accommodation from supervisors when their presence is required on campus. This is the final group who will return to campuses to ensure their safety and that of others.
- Every team member (faculty, staff and essential students) will complete screening in accordance with Appendix B of this document.
- All team members must wear protective face coverings when on campus (refer to Appendix A).
- All individuals, when in public areas, should maximize physical distance from others (greater than 6 feet).
- All team members should avoid gathering in groups of more than 50% of room capacity.
- Normal recruiting procedures resume based on operational needs and available budget.

Nonclinical Operations:

- Return employee online training to in-person, where appropriate.
- University-sponsored conferences and events may resume with max attendance at 50% of room space capacity. All attendees will wear appropriate facial covering (see Appendix A) and maintain physical distancing of 6 feet or more.
- Discourage the presence of visitors and nonessential volunteers on campus.
- Use discretion to minimize all nonessential in-person meetings.
- Use discretion to minimize the presence of third-party vendors to only those essential to ongoing university operations.
- Resume nonessential and international travel based on [CDC](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), and [Texas state guidelines](#).

Clinical Operations:

- Resume normal clinical operations and routine clinic visits for patients of all ages, unless otherwise directed by the Dean, Department Chair and clinic supervisor.
- Resume elective surgeries, as clinically appropriate, on both an outpatient and inpatient basis at facilities that adhere to CMS guidelines.
- All team members with patient contact, will wear appropriate PPE (see Appendix C), as designated by their supervisor. Dean or Department Chair may approve exceptions for certain specific specialties such as Speech Language Hearing Sciences.
- Patients and any accompanying guests will be screened upon entry as directed by clinic supervisor.
- All patients and accompanying guests must wear protective face coverings and adhere to strict protocols regarding [hand hygiene](#) when on campus.

- Follow ambulatory clinic policies, direction from health authorities, and guidance from the CDC in addressing any rebound COVID-19 related cases.

Managed Care Unit Operations:

- Continue clinical care via telehealth visits as appropriate, as determined by managed care leadership.
- Additional clinical operations at Managed Care Units will follow TDCJ timeline for resuming offender movement/transport.

Academic Operations:

- Resume didactic and laboratory academic coursework on-campus, as appropriate, adhering to room capacity and physical distancing guidelines outlined above.
- Schools/programs may opt to continue coursework online, at the Program Director or Dean's discretion.
- Refer to Appendix D below for further guidance.

Research Operations:

- Laboratory staff, graduate students, and other trainees return to normal full-time duties, provided appropriate PPE (see Appendix C) is worn and physical distancing of greater than 6 feet is followed.

Phase I - Normal Operations

Intent: Return to daily operations in all areas with no restrictions. Normal work location for some team members (i.e., on campus vs. remote working) may change following successes observed during Phase IV-Phase II operations. Vice Presidents and Deans are approving authority for determining new work locations.

Personnel Status:

- Vulnerable individuals³ can resume public interactions but should continue practicing physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.
- All team members should consider minimizing time spent in crowded environments.
- Face coverings are no longer required except as may be required in patient care and research activities, as designated by a supervisor or program director.
- Continue to avoid physical contact including handshakes, hugs and typical greetings.

Nonclinical Operations:

- Large venues can operate without the need for physical distancing.

Clinical Operations:

- Lift visitor restrictions in clinics.
- Team members who interact with patients must be diligent regarding [hand hygiene](#).

Managed Care Unit Operations:

- On-site clinic visits, procedures, therapies, and group activities resume without the need for physical distancing.
- Team members who interact with patients must be diligent regarding [hand hygiene](#).

Academic Operations:

- Resume academic coursework on-campus without the need for physical distancing.

Research Operations:

- Resume laboratory processes without the need for physical distancing.

Appendix A: On-Campus Facial Covering Requirements

The University requires that all TTUHSC team members (students, faculty, and staff), visitors, vendors and contractors wear protective face coverings on TTUHSC campuses and other university facilities when:

1. They are in patient care units, ambulatory clinic spaces, and procedural areas;
2. They are in common areas on campus, including but not limited to hallways, elevators, stairwells, restrooms, break rooms, foyers, classrooms, event rooms and lobbies; and
3. Physical distancing of at least 6 feet is difficult to maintain.

Exceptions to this requirement are limited to the following:

1. Facial coverings are not required when eating and drinking, which should be conducted maintaining physical distance;
2. Facial coverings are not required as may be permitted in accordance with a requested accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA);
3. Facial coverings are not required as may be permitted in accordance with a bona fide religious belief;
4. Facial coverings are not required for children under the age of 2 years old;
5. Facial coverings are not required, although strongly recommended, when a physical distance of at least 6 feet can be maintained when in a conference room, lab space, or when alone in a private room or office; and
6. Facial coverings are not required, although strongly recommended, to be worn by an instructor/presenter in a classroom or event room when a physical distance of at least 6 feet can be maintained from the class/audience.

Any TTUHSC team member, visitor, vendor, or contractor who fails to abide by these guidelines may be asked or directed to leave the facilities until they wear a facial covering under these guidelines. TTUHSC team members who are directed to leave a campus space for failure to comply with these guidelines may be taken off duty and/or subject to disciplinary action.

Notwithstanding these guidelines, all TTUHSC team members with patient contact will follow all personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements, depending on the circumstances, as designated by their supervisor or program director (see Appendix C).

Appendix B: Daily Screening for Faculty, Staff, and Students

As a trusted member of the TTUHSC team living our integrity value, it is each individual's responsibility to hold themselves and others accountable to keep our communities safe. All individuals on our campuses must wear protective face coverings, wash and sanitize hands often and follow good hygiene practices. Prior to coming to campus or entering any of our buildings, team members (faculty, staff, and students) must conduct a self-screen, including a temperature check, to confirm they are not exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. If a team member does not own a thermometer, upon arrival on campus they may use one as provided by their supervisor or program director. We will require on-line attestations only for those exhibiting symptoms. These protocols are intended to mitigate spread of COVID-19 on campus.

- Those working in patient care may be instructed on additional screening requirements as provided by the directors in their respective clinical sites.
- Team members who are exhibiting symptoms and/or have a temperature > 100° Fahrenheit, will be required to stay home, inform their supervisor/program director, seek proper medical advice, test for COVID-19 as may be appropriate, and submit an [online screening form](#) to the TTUHSC Office of Institutional Health for follow up and additional guidance. Symptoms to be looking for include:
 - Fever greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit
 - New cough that is not attributable to another medical condition
 - New muscle aches (myalgias) not attributable to another medical condition or another specific activity (e.g., due to physical exercise)
 - Throat pain (pharyngitis) not attributable to another medical condition
 - New shortness of breath (dyspnea) not attributable to another condition
- ***If you have COVID-19 symptoms (regardless of presumed origin) stay at home until your symptoms have resolved.*** Team members who test positive for COVID are required to be home for at least 10 days and have been symptom free for 72 hours before returning to campus. Team members who have negative tests can return to campus after being symptom free and 24 hours of feeling better.
- Signage will be placed at campus entrances to remind team members of the responsibility to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms each day.
- Individuals who are not symptomatic, will be required to:
 - ✓ wear protective face coverings while on campus in accordance with Appendix "A";
 - ✓ follow applicable physical distancing guidelines; and
 - ✓ practice hand washing and sanitizing techniques.

Appendix C: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Guidelines

All TTUHSC team members with patient contact and those working in research laboratories will follow all personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements, depending on the circumstances, as designated by their supervisor or program director.

Obtaining PPE:

- All clinical and research team members will be provided with appropriate face coverings and other PPE by their supervisor or director, based on the level of interaction with patients and visitors.
- Students who are working in clinics or labs will work with their program directors for guidance on obtaining appropriate face coverings and other PPE as may be required for their program.

Recommendations for cleaning and replacing PPE:

- All team members are responsible for regular laundering of cloth face coverings.
 - Guidance on do-it-yourself cloth face coverings can be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html> and <https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-and-surgical-masks-face-masks>
- Surgical masks may be worn continually without need of daily replacement; proper fitting and face coverage should be of top priority at all times.
- For information on decontamination of N-95 masks, please contact [Justin White](#) (President's Office).

PPE Enforcement:

Department supervisors and program directors will be responsible for enforcing the PPE requirements listed above. Noncompliance with PPE requirements will be reported to the respective Dean, Vice-President or Provost.

Appendix D: Students Return to Campus or Clinical Rotation under Phase II

Parameters of Phase II Academic Operations:

- Classes typically delivered online will continue to be offered online.
- With some exceptions, on-campus, didactic classes will be delivered online through the summer terms. These include academic courses typically delivered face-to-face or via interactive video technology (e.g., TechLink) across campuses.
- Course activities requiring specialized instruction or student assessment may be offered on campus with priority given to experiences required for: (a) successful academic progression, and/or (b) ongoing compliance with program accreditors or professional licensing bodies.

Examples include student learning experiences in the anatomy lab and other learning laboratories, skills assessments, and simulations. Simulations may be conducted on site only if learning objectives cannot be achieved online. Requirements for facial coverings, other personal protective equipment (PPE), and physical distancing should be appropriate for the activity, while prioritizing the health and safety of participating faculty, staff, and students.

- Students will continue to participate in experiential learning activities (e.g., clinical rotations, community-based experiences) in collaboration with participating sites and guidance from program accrediting bodies. Students must abide by specific site requirements for PPE.
- Students will participate in normal research activities in collaboration with laboratory personnel. Students must abide by specific lab requirements for PPE.

Parameters of Returning to Campus or Clinical Rotations under Phase II:

- The process of students returning to campus or clinical rotations under Phase II will be determined by each school's Dean, taking into consideration the unique circumstances related to local government requirements, clinical rotations, and program demands. The following suggestions are provided as a minimum to insure safety of both students, patients and other TTUHSC team members. Students should contact their program directors for specific requirements.
- Students should self-isolate in their campus communities at least 10 days prior to coming campus or beginning their clinical rotations. During this period of self-isolation, they should monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, conduct daily temperature screenings, follow recommended hand hygiene practices, adhere to physical distancing protocols, and wear facial coverings in public.
- If a student exhibits COVID-19 symptom and/or has a temperature > 100° Fahrenheit during this 10-day self-monitoring period, they will need to submit an [online screening tool](#) to the TTUHSC Office of Institutional Health for follow up. The Office of Institutional Health will coordinate with the student for further follow up and/or testing as deemed necessary.

- If, at the completion of the 10-day self-monitoring period, the student remains asymptomatic, and all other school-specific criteria are met, the student will be allowed to return to campus or attend their clinical rotation in adherence to the daily self-screening provided in Appendix B.

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² Mission-critical core functions, President's Executive Council, Security, Managing Director of Employee Assistance Program, direct patient care providers, clinical department chairs, facilities, operations, budget accounting (emergency purchasing and processing authority), Human Resources (selected staff)

³ Current federal guidelines define *vulnerable individuals* (previously termed at-risk by the CDC) as those over 65 years of age and those with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity (body mass index >40), asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.

