

Answers to Questions Asked at July 26 DFA Open House

General

Merced County has one of California's lowest vaccination rates, so why are we in a rush to return to in-person work if working from home is safer and has been effective for getting our jobs done? This is especially important for those of us who have unvaccinated children and no one else to protect them. Will I have an option to work fully remote for these reasons?

Yes, about 31% of all Merced County residents are fully vaccinated as of mid-August, and that is one of the lowest rates in California. However, the vaccination rate for UC Merced faculty, staff is more than 80% -- and climbing. Concerns about the coronavirus's Delta variant are understandable, but new mitigations such as face coverings required for everyone indoors, along with a pause until Oct. 1 on large gatherings beyond research and instruction, will strengthen our shields against the virus. Moreover, we need to unite campus-wide as a team as 9,000-plus students return to the university for fall semester. DFA's plan to ramp up on-site work in phases will remain in place. Staff who want to minimize contact with others can talk to their supervisors about setting a hybrid schedule in which the employees comes to the DCC on less-populated days.

Will there be a campus plan to get everyone on Teams vs. other platforms like Slack?

There is no plan to urge or require the campus community to use Microsoft Teams. Platforms such as Slack, Airtable and Box are used effectively by numerous departments and units. That said, Teams integrates with Office 365 tools as a unified communication and collaboration platform. The Office of Information Technology has a guide with numerous tips for using Teams effectively: <https://it.ucmerced.edu/teams>

Work Schedules

Can we stagger staffing and/or maintain the hybrid schedule to allow staff to continue to work remotely if they are not vaccinated or have immediate family members who are not yet vaccinated?

DFA will continue to [carry out the plan](#) to ramp up on-site work in phases. Staff employees who want to minimize contact with others can talk to their supervisors about setting a hybrid schedule in which the employees come to the DCC on less-populated days. Such schedules need to follow the DFA on-site plan.

If we work two days a week on campus, do we have to get tested each week?

Fully vaccinated staff employees must be tested for the coronavirus twice a month under the university's [Lot Quality Asymptomatic \(LQA\) screening program](#).

Vaccination

How would we know someone is unvaccinated?

You probably won't know. Because vaccination-related information is private and confidential, the university will not disclose vaccine status of employees except on a need-to-know basis.

What happens if an employee doesn't submit a vaccination exception and declines to wear a mask?

Employees who do not submit a vaccination exception cannot be at a university-operated location unless they follow the face-covering requirement for everyone inside university-operated facilities.

What are the disciplinary actions are for those not in compliance with the vaccination guidance?

Appendix F of UCOP's coronavirus vaccination policy lays out a step-by-step process for staff who continue to be non-compliant. https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/5000695/SARS-CoV-2_Covid-19

Are we allowed to ask employees if they're vaccinated?

Employees cannot be compelled by supervisors or other university employees to say whether they have been vaccinated. Section VII of the UCOP coronavirus policy (FAQ), question No. 11, says "because vaccination-related information is private and confidential, the University will not disclose vaccine status of ... individuals except on a need-to-know basis." https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/5000695/SARS-CoV-2_Covid-19#page=11

Who will monitor dates and requirements for vaccination booster shots?

The university will follow federal and state guidance on booster shots for any of the approved vaccines. As of mid-August, no such recommendations have been made. The COVID Response Center will notify the campus community of any changes in guidance.

Exposure to Coronavirus

What are the quarantine rules if we make contact with a person who test positive for coronavirus?

Please follow these guidelines from the university's COVID Response Center:
<https://doyourpart.ucmerced.edu/exposed>

What happens when someone tests positive in a work area and exposure has occurred?

Please follow these guidelines from the university's COVID Response Center:
<https://doyourpart.ucmerced.edu/exposed>

Face Coverings

Will family moving people on campus be required to wear masks? The mandate includes visitors. How is that being monitored?

For the move-in period, student residents, their families and move-in staff are required to wear face coverings. On a broader scale, guidance now calls for anyone – employee or visitor – to wear a face covering at any university-operated indoor facility.

At the dining center we are ALL required to constantly wear masks. Will we require masks for all guests while not eating?

All individuals are required to wear face coverings indoor at UC Merced-controlled facilities. This includes dining and retail spaces such as the Pavilion, the Lantern Cafe and the University Store. Face coverings can be removed temporarily for eating and drinking. Unvaccinated individuals should maintain at least 6 feet from others.

DCC

Will there be increased cleaning in DCC? Are the restrooms being serviced regularly? Will hand soap be added to the DCC kitchen area?

According to Custodial Services, the DCC is on a regular cleaning schedule, and the restrooms receive full attention each day. There is a soap dispenser in the first-floor kitchen. Disinfectant spray for self-cleaning will be placed in a centralized location on each floor. Stocking and maintaining disinfectant spray in each huddle room, focus room and conference room is not possible at the moment.

Are sanitation supplies going to be available at DCC for us to clean where needed such as after leaving a huddle or focus room?

Disinfectant spray for self-cleaning will be placed in a centralized location on each floor. Stocking and maintaining disinfectant spray in each huddle room, focus room and conference room is not possible now.

Can unvaccinated and vaccinated people be permitted in huddle rooms together?

Yes, if both individuals are wearing face coverings as required by the university's [COVID-19 mitigation measures](#).