



FLORIDA'S STEM UNIVERSITY®

RETURN TO LEARN

FALL 2020



**A Safe Path Forward
from Today to the Fall Semester**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Florida Tech's Pandemic Response Committee, working collaboratively across campus units, developed the enclosed Return to Learn recommendations to facilitate the university's safe and efficient return to campus-based living and learning in the fall. Operations across campus—from the student experience to the work environment for faculty and staff—were evaluated for risk, assessed for opportunities and challenges, and modified to ensure the health and safety of all Panthers.

Central to this work was the development of the Florida Tech Safe initiative, an evaluation of the university's safety culture, establishment of a safety pledge and implementation of policies and procedures to mitigate the risk posed by COVID-19.

Key recommendations include:

- Implementing employee wellness screenings to safely return to work
- Requiring face coverings in high-traffic areas and where social distancing cannot be observed
- Communicating social distancing guidelines via signage and decals
- Limiting dining to students only and housing to one student per bedroom, unless otherwise requested
- Restricting public access to campus
- Increasing safety cleanings
- Installing plexiglass barriers in high-volume areas
- Establishing maximum attendance/allowance in buildings
- Implementing new academic modifications, including changes to the fall break and policies for Thanksgiving travel

Florida Tech's plan aligns with local orders and ordinances of the City of Melbourne and Brevard County, as well as the state of Florida's phased reopening model. It also follows recommendations from the federal government, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Florida Tech's Holzer Health Center. As knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve, our protocols and plans will be updated appropriately as more information becomes available.



We are in this together.

FLORIDA TECH SAFE APPROACH

Returning to learn can be accomplished by considering the four quadrants of a safety culture. It is through the efforts made by the faculty, staff and students that we can keep our campus safe.

Our safety culture is:

- The top priority.
- Proactive.
- Something the entire Florida Tech community is engaged in and accountable for.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Lower-density seating
- Restructured operational hours
- Adjusted capacity limits

ADMINISTRATIVE SOLUTIONS

- Health screenings
- Work-from-home/flex schedules
- Increased cleaning protocols



PERSONAL SOLUTIONS

- Personal protective equipment (wear nonmedical, cloth face covering)
- Personal responsibility

OPERATIONAL SOLUTIONS

- Barriers between people
- Well-marked pathways

FLORIDA TECH SAFE PLEDGE

Being a part of the Panther family means that each of us must take extraordinary steps to stay well and persistently protect each other. Therefore, I will take responsibility for my own health and help keep the Florida Tech community safe by stopping the spread of COVID-19 and other infections as identified and instructed by the university.

I PLEDGE TO:

1 Protect Myself

Monitor for the symptoms of COVID-19 and report to a medical professional if I experience fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher, dry cough, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat or loss of taste or smell.

.....
Wash my hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.

.....
Get vaccinated for the flu each fall.

2 Protect Others

Maintain appropriate social distancing, especially in classroom settings or the presence of older members of the community.

.....
Stay home if I feel ill or after exposure to someone who is ill or has tested positive for COVID-19.

.....
Wear an appropriate face mask and other protective gear as directed by the university.

.....
Be positive, sensitive and helpful to anyone around who may be troubled or struggling.

3 Protect our Community

Keep my clothing, belongings, personal spaces and shared common spaces clean.

.....
Participate in testing to preserve the wellness of the community.

.....
Carefully observe instructional signs and follow directions.

MODIFICATION HIGHLIGHTS

In addition to campuswide implementation of **physical distancing measures**, **use of personal protective equipment** and **increased sanitation procedures**, policy highlights related to academics, housing/dining and campus life are outlined below.

Academics

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Develop variations for attendance and excuse policies to accommodate students who may be unable to attend courses due to illness or other health restrictions.
- Increase quality, security and proctoring of remote exams.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR FOR FALL 2020

The proposed fall schedule will be maintained, starting and ending at the regular dates (Aug. 17–Dec. 12), with the following modifications:

- The fall break, initially scheduled for Oct. 12 and 13, will be canceled and regular classes will be conducted during those dates. Two additional study days will be added to the end of the term before finals. This modification will avoid unnecessary travel during the fall term.
- In order to better preserve the health and safety of all, students choosing to leave campus for the Thanksgiving holiday will have the option of completing the remainder of the semester (including final exams) remotely. However, students are encouraged to stay, as appropriate.

CLASSROOM LAYOUT/DELIVERY MODES

- Use of face coverings will be mandatory for students and, as appropriate, for faculty and supporting personnel.
- The physical layout and capacity of on-campus classes will be modified to allow for a safe distance between students and a limit on the number of students in a given session.
- Additional sessions may need to be created for the same course, and adjustments in schedule may be necessary to accommodate the additional sessions.
- Classrooms will be instrumented to allow for synchronous or asynchronous remote attendance.
- Students who are unable to attend parts of the class in person will be able to attend remotely, synchronously via Zoom sessions or asynchronously through recorded sessions that will be made available.

LABORATORIES AND TEAM PROJECTS

- Limit the number of students in group projects to five, and enforce the use of face coverings and other safety guidelines.
- Adjust schedule to accommodate laboratory alternating weeks or times.
- Open laboratories on weekends with GSA support to accommodate additional sessions
- Split current lecture/lab courses, allowing students to take lecture via remote access in fall and lab in spring.

**unless otherwise requested*

Campus Housing

ONE STUDENT/ONE BEDROOM POLICY*

- Remove furniture from lounges and close common-area kitchens to promote social distancing.
- Limit elevator capacity.
- Implement regular safety cleanings.
- Equip Residence Life staff with thermal scanners.
- Build a comprehensive plan for isolation and quarantine.

Campus Dining

SEATED DINING FOR STUDENTS ONLY

- Space seating to state of Florida standards.
- Remove communal areas and pool tables.
- Increase outdoor seating and trash receptacles.
- When dine-in capacity is reached, switch to take-out only.
- Eliminate cash transactions—no-contact.
- Suspend service to the public.

Holzer Health Center

VISITS BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

- Any patient with questionable COVID-19 symptoms is roomed immediately.
- Patients only inside the facility; those accompanying patients must wait outside.
- Telephone consultations for routine medication refills or medical questions of established patients.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

- Patients only inside the facility; those accompanying patients must wait outside.
- Enhance online wellness and training tools.

Student Life

- Provide virtual engagement opportunities and resources.
- Host meetings online or in small groups in large rooms.
- Implement esports.

Admissions

- Use video/phone/email options whenever possible.
- Modify campus tour to limit locations and direct contact.
- Limit frequency and capacity for visitors.
- Require face coverings and hand sanitizer use before entry.

STUDENT COVID-19 SYMPTOM RESPONSE

