

UMMS – Office of Medical Student Education COVID-19 FAQ: Updated 02.11.21

We have put together this FAQ document to address some of the common questions that arise for our medical students. Some of these questions were addressed when we returned our clinical students to their rotations on June 8, 2020. These questions have been updated since that time, and we are now updating again to include information for recent mandate for required weekly testing. There are three sections of questions in this FAQ:

Section I: Safeguards and Protocols and Educational Programs

Section II: Public Health Measures

Section III: Student Support and Services - Health and Financial

Of note, we continue to need to adapt our answers to these questions to changing data and trends. Not all answers to questions are known or clear, but we try to address them with the best information at hand.

If I had to remember five things, it would be:

- (1) Social distancing, masks on, and hand washing are the **three most effective means of mitigating risk.**
- (2) **Contact Occupational Health Services** (OHS, whether you are a preclinical or clinical student) for questions and to determine if you need testing at (734)764-8021 or occupationalhealth@med.umich.edu.
- (3) **Stay home if you are sick.**
- (4) Use the [Responsiblue app](#) to govern your access to buildings. You may be unable to access buildings without this health screening information.
- (5) We can't reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 to zero, but we can try to mitigate the risk. **Some members of our community will develop COVID-19**, but we all need to work together to limit this number, and to contain exposure to others, especially our patients.

Keeping everyone (including our patients and our campus) safe is a shared responsibility we all have, influenced by what we do inside and outside the classroom and clinical settings. I'm so proud of our medical student education community here at UM. We all stand strong together to learn and serve.

Thank you for being part of UMMS, and Go Blue!

Dean Raj

Section I: Safeguards and Protocols and Educational Programs

Q: What is the screening procedure for coming into the buildings, clinics or hospital?

Beginning February 16, 2021, all students – including graduate and professional students – are required to be tested weekly through the U-M Community Sampling and Tracking Program. [Register and sign up for CSTP testing through a two-step process here](#). Testing through University Health Service, Occupational Health Services or the Michigan Athletics program also meets the weekly testing requirement.

As a reminder, new mobile tool has been developed to replace verbal health screenings to avoid bottlenecks at Michigan Medicine entrance points. The tool, which can be accessed via smartphone on the website healthscreen.umich.edu, will ask questions about symptoms, risk factors and job function. Based on the responses, users will either see a green screen with a check mark, indicating they can proceed through the screening point and report to the clinical environment/classroom, or a red screen, indicating that they should stay home and contact OHS at (734) 764-8021 (7am- 5pm M-F, 7am-12pm Sat) or seek medical attention as appropriate. Our students should answer the online screening questions before leaving for work/class. By not closing the browser, the green screen will be available to display to check-in points once you are on-site.

Q: Will I be able to miss a required experience to get tested (e.g. Doctoring or Anatomy)?

Having to complete the required weekly COVID-19 test is not considered an acceptable reason to defer. Counselors will not be able to grant deferrals to get the weekly COVID test. We encourage you to build the testing into your routine.

Q: What is the testing, tracking and monitoring procedure for medical students?

Please see the full [FAQ](#) from OHS for answers to many questions. Also please see the [Student Services Response Plan](#) on the Medical Student Gateway for different scenarios. The testing protocol is the same for students as for all health care employees. Testing occurs only if there are specific symptoms (determined by OHS).

Q: Whom do I call if I have symptoms that might warrant testing?

- If symptoms do occur and you are a preclinical student, or a clinical student rotating at a Michigan Medicine site, please stay home and call OHS at (734) 764-8021 (7am-5pm M-F, 7am-12pm Sat).
- If you are at the VA, please call VA Employee Health Services at (734) 845-5096 (M-F 6:30am-8pm) or (734) 845-5279 (Sat/Sun 6:30am-5pm).
- If you are at another system besides MM or the VA, follow the protocol for that system, and then call OHS.

In any case, please also seek medical attention if medically appropriate.

Q: What if I am ill, whom else should I call?

Whether or not you are getting tested for COVID, if you are ill, students should continue to use their judgment and strongly consider staying home. If staying home, in addition to contacting OHS (MM or VA), make sure to also communicate with the following 2 additional groups:

- House Counselor as a connector to the curriculum (to provide help with letting the Course of Clerkship Director know)
- If a clinical student - Clerkship Team – connect with a least 1 supervising member of your team as part of professional responsibilities.

Q: How will COVID Positive contact tracing take place?

Again, please see the [Student Services Response Plan](#) on the Medical Student Gateway for different scenarios. For any exposures, healthcare professionals (including students) are asked to monitor for symptoms for 14 days. Quarantine will only be necessary if you test positive, not if just exposed (in the latter case, self-monitoring is the standard). If a classmate in a small group where there was in-person exposure tests positive, or if a clinical team member tests positive, it becomes more challenging, because of the need to protect privacy. The protocol is to notify the student’s supervisor (which may be the course director or clerkship director) and then notification of close contacts occurs. Usually, only self-monitoring is needed for 14 days, as stated above.

Q: What if I need to miss time in our courses, or the clerkships and clinical rotations due to illness? How do I make this up?

Our course and clerkship directors will be flexible for making up time that students may miss due to illness. We are looking at how much time can be missed prior to making up time and how to make up the time lost (including use of online learning and “deferrals” which allows for continuous enrollment). Beyond a certain number of days missed in the clerkships, the time will need to be made up, but there is flexibility in how and when that can happen, especially with the longer post-clerkship time in the Branches.

Q: What masks should I be wearing in the clinical environment?

We have a universal masking policy everywhere on campus (indoors and outdoors) and in the hospital and clinics. For all patient-facing activities in clinical buildings, any tie-on or ear-loop disposable surgical or isolation mask is fine. Face shields are now required for all face-to-face clinical encounters in the hospital and clinics which will be provided by the clinical unit.

Q: What training do I need to complete to be able to use PPE if needed?

All medical students must complete M-Learning modules on PPE education for COVID-19 (Special Pathogens Precautions) ICEX-10003 N95/Face Shield Reuse, and (Infection Prevention) ICEX-C10009 prior to entering the clinical environment. N95 fit testing will occur for rising M2s in TTC.

Q: Will Clinical Students be taking care of COVID positive patients or Persons Under Investigation (PUI)?

A: Yes, as this is an important part of our student’s education for the present and the future. But this process needs to be done safely, with training, and with adequate PPEs and team safeguards. It would be impossible to avoid seeing anyone who is at risk for COVID as patients present with a variety of symptoms. However, **if students have personal health risks, they should contact their house counselor in student services so we can adjust the curriculum with them.**

Q: What happens if there is a COVID-19 surge again? What will happen to my curriculum?

We are monitoring the rates of infection in the state, county, and campus. President Schlissel has said that part of what the campus is also monitoring is human behavior and compliance, and that this will influence decisions as well.

- **For Preclinical students (Scientific Trunk)** – if the campus reverts to going fully online again, we would need to review our offerings for the scientific trunk. As mentioned, most are already conducted virtually or online, but we do have some in-person essential learning activities that we would need to revisit.
- **For Clinical students (Clinical Trunk and Branches)** – as essential members of the healthcare team, we are confident that we can continue your clinical education (and not pause it again), even in the midst of a second surge of COVID infections. We will continue to monitor the work environment for safety (and it has been enormously safe since the beginning), and also ensure there is enough PPE.

Section II: Public Health Measures

Q: What are the key, proven mitigation strategies to reduce COVID spread in the classroom?

We have reduced all classroom activities to only those that are essential to conduct in-person. All others are being conducted virtually. When in the classroom, consistent steps include:

- Masks On – this is our universal policy at UM
- Social Distancing in the classroom when possible (not applicable for clinical skills education) – this may be either 6 feet or 12 feet depending on duration of exposure and movement of individuals.
- Control Duration of Exposure – after 90 minutes of continuous exposure, there is an increased need to have greater social distancing.

Q: If I am a medical student returning from a break, what do I need to do as I prepare to come back?

We ask that medical students for the 14 days prior to returning follow the [instructions from President Schlissel](#) for all students returning to campus, specifically, “All U.S. students coming to Ann Arbor will need to practice enhanced social distancing during the **14 days before arriving**. During these two weeks, monitor your health, reduce your contact with others and [follow the guidance shared](#) by Vice President Harmon and Dr. Ernst (pasted below):”

The specifics of enhanced social distancing include the following: monitoring your health, reduce your contact with others and follow guidance consistent with recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including:

- Taking your temperature two times a day and monitor for fever.
- Watching for cough, trouble breathing or additional COVID-19 symptoms.
- Staying home and avoiding contact with others outside of your home. Do not go to work, school or social gatherings.
- Avoiding public transportation, taxis or ride-shares.
- Maintaining a physical distance from others (about 6 feet).
- Wearing a face covering when in public settings or while interacting with others outside

of the home.

- Seeking medical attention if you develop a fever, other symptoms and/or test positive for COVID-19 – if this happens, please get in touch with your House Counselor and do not come to campus until you receive further instructions.

Q: How should I socially distance outside of the healthcare system?

While no one is going to be monitoring each student, we do have a clear responsibility to each other and to our patients to adhere to public health guidelines in order to stay safe. As healthcare providers and learners, we believe we need to ascribe to a *higher* standard of careful behavior outside of the classroom and clinical setting than what we may see around us. For example: strict social distancing when outside, masks on outside, constant hand washing. We understand that we may bear witness to people not abiding by these practices. **Because of the special role we have with patients and healthcare teams, it is important that we adhere to a higher standard of public health prevention.**

Section III: Student Support and Services - Health and Financial

Q: Whom do we go to for emotional, mental health, and well-being support?

All of your usual resources for support remain as is, and have also been augmented through partnership of our M-Home and Student services units. A comprehensive list of resources has been updated and can be found on the Medical Student home page at <https://medstudents.medicine.umich.edu/wellbeing>. Our team of house counselors will be continuing to check-in with our students, and the regular Virtual dialogues with dean Raj will continue as well. Please remember that your primary point of contact for issues remains your house counselor, but we (your OMSE deans, directors, faculty and staff) are all here to help you, should you need it.

Q: Will my health insurance cover conditions I might contract as a result of a COVID-19 exposure?

Upon matriculation, all medical students were informed of the Medical School's requirement to carry healthcare insurance and, at that time, either enrolled in GradCare or submitted a 'Waiver' of insurance in the University Benefit system because of existing coverage or new enrollment in a non-GradCare plan. In addition, all students have disability coverage for exposures and illnesses while in the clinical learning environment, paid for by the medical school. Maintaining health insurance is essential to the safety of all of our students. This is private information that may only be known by the student. We strongly encourage you to contact your insurance carrier to ensure you have coverage for COVID-19 related illnesses.

Q: How do I access Equipment to work from home?

On August 7, a message was sent from Brad Densen to all medical students titled, “[Tech] HITS Laptop Loaner Program”. This message shared a survey that medical students can complete to identify their technology need to borrow a core-imaged laptop for Fall Term 2020. We also anticipate THSL will open by early September, enabling student access to reliable internet and printing services. If medical students require assistance with enhancing at-home internet, they should contact the OMSE Financial Aid Office in order to review aid options.

Q: How do I access emergency funds (Food, Housing, Technology, Transportation)?

As students at the University of Michigan, medical students had access to CARES Act COVID-19 Funding from the federal government awarded to the institution at-large. Funding applications were managed through the OMSE Financial Aid Office and the UM Office of Financial Aid. In total, 147 applications were received, 120 were approved, and \$156,750 in funding was delivered to medical students for Winter Term 2020. This funding supported student needs related to transportation, technology needs, food, healthcare and housing.

For the Fall Term 2020, the **CARES Act COVID-19 funding is again available** to all U-M students, including medical students. An email regarding the availability of this funding and the process to apply was sent to all students this past week on August 10.

In addition, our Medical School recently received a gift to support medical student emergency funding during this time. We are presently reviewing the donor intent related to this gift and working to develop a process by which students may request and be awarded funding in support of emergent needs. We anticipate funding will support needs similar to those supported by the CARES Act. More information will follow on this from our Office of Financial Aid.

As always, the OMSE Financial Aid Office is here to support medical students and will work to explore options to support unanticipated, emergent expenses.