



UMass Medical School’s response to COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

After carefully assessing the current situation and considering the most recent guidance, recommendations and directives from state and federal authorities, UMass Medical School will be mounting a much more aggressive and comprehensive strategy to slow the rate of COVID-19 infections in the communities where we live and work.

The proactive measures, outlined in the FAQs below, are supported by a growing body of evidence demonstrating the effectiveness of deploying robust social distancing tactics, such as limiting public events, prohibiting large gatherings and restricting travel to certain areas. These strategies, and many others, are essential to reducing the rate of infection and preventing sustained community transmission of the virus. The information found in this document reflects current guidance and is subject to change.

We encourage you to visit umassmed.edu/coronavirus for the latest information.

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Campus Operations

Is the Medical School closed?

No. UMass Medical School is NOT closed for business; rather, we are encouraging work in a decentralized manner and employees who work remotely will be paid as usual.

Do I need to work remotely?

- Beginning Monday, March 16, and through Friday, April 3, employees who are not required to perform essential functions at any UMMS location are encouraged to work from home.
- If you are not clear about your status, please consult with your supervisor.



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- Managers and staff are expected to determine ways to stay connected and productive during this time by implementing daily (or more frequent) check-ins and maximizing the use of technology such as calls, emails and videoconferencing.
- It is expected during this time that employees who are working from home will adhere to previous guidance discouraging personal travel by plane, train and bus.
- Helpful tools for employees working remotely are available [at this link](#), using your UMMS credentials to log in. The IT Help Desk can be reached at helpdesk@umassmed.edu.

What is the Medical School doing to protect students, faculty and staff?

Our administration and emergency preparedness teams continue to work around the clock to ensure the health and safety of our community, and guidance will be updated as events warrant. We ask that you stay calm and informed, and follow the reasonable precautions that are in place.

We are asking employees whose responsibilities necessitate their presence on campus between now and April 3 to follow existing precautions, including:

- Practice social distancing by avoiding physical contact and maintaining 6 feet of distance when possible
- Practice good hygiene
- Do not gather in groups larger than 25*
- As always, if you are not feeling well, do not come to work.

*These recommendations may change based on directives from public health and government officials.

Academic Classes

When will students be allowed back on campus?

Academic classes in the [School of Medicine](#), [Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences](#) and [Graduate School of Nursing](#) will continue to be conducted virtually until at least April 3. For more information on virtual learning in each of our schools, look for emails from your instructors about their expectations for remote learning, and ask questions if you need help navigating the online setting.



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Laboratory Research

Will work continue in campus labs?

Department chairs, directors and principal investigators are beginning the process of ramping down laboratory wet lab research activities to a minimal level to protect irreplaceable reagents, cell lines and other essential biomedical research functions. We intend to maintain this lower level of scientific activity, which will require fewer essential staff on all campuses, including MassBiologics, until April 3 or further notice.

Environmental Health and Safety is available as a resource to essential laboratory employees during this transition. Lowering the number and density of people in the labs should make us all safer.

Campus Visitors

I want to have an outside visitor on campus. What steps do I need to take?

- Sponsored visitors should be limited and directed to the main lobby of the Medical School where the sponsor will be contacted to meet and escort the visitor.

Restrictions include:

- Visits to campus by individuals who have traveled internationally within the prior 14 days are suspended. Visits by individuals traveling domestically will require prior approval by the provost.
- UMass Memorial Health Care is restricting visitors in patient care areas. Similarly, beginning Monday, March 16, access to UMMS buildings will be limited to individuals with valid UMMS and UMass Memorial Medical Center badges.

Events and Meetings

Should I cancel my on-campus event or meeting?

For at least the next 30 days, attendance by students, faculty or staff at all off-site work events that include more than 25 participants is prohibited. Virtual participation is allowed.

Conferences, meetings or other events with more than 25 participants that are scheduled to be held at UMMS during this time are to be held virtually, postponed or canceled.

Regular business meetings with fewer than 25 participants should proceed as usual.



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Is Match Day still being held?

Match Day will not be held in the customary manner this year. We are developing an alternative plan to distribute match results and celebrate the event virtually.

While this is a prudent decision, we understand that any departure from our usual celebration is disappointing. Additional information will be forthcoming, and we ask members of the SOM Class of 2020 to please inform your loved ones who might have been planning to attend that they should not come to campus on Match Day.

Travel Restrictions

Can I travel internationally?

All university-organized international trips are cancelled and all university-related travel to [CDC Level 3 countries](#) is prohibited.

Can I travel within the United States?

All domestic university-related travel must be approved in advance by the provost. All university travel must be registered at <https://travelregistry.umasscs.net/>.

- Questions about travel can be directed to International Support Services via internationalsupportservices@umassmed.edu, 508-856-5746 or 508-556-4498.
- Personal travel, particularly to regions impacted by COVID-19, is discouraged and individuals should refer to the [CDC's Travel Health Notices](#) before any future travel.

Health and Wellness

Are there campus resources available if I am feeling overwhelmed and stressed?

Yes. We encourage you to use the [UMMS Employee Assistance Program](#) as a useful resource.

We understand that the COVID-19 outbreak and the resulting uncertainty can cause anxiety and concern. We want to reassure you that Medical School leadership is mindful of this stress and we are working hard to uphold critical public health initiatives and support our community's safety and well-being. As part of an academic community that takes great pride in our unique spirit of collaboration and collegiality, we are confident that you will all be compassionate and understanding of one another and



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that we can find creative ways to stay connected in this unusual time, while all staying calm, informed and safe.

How can I protect myself and others from COVID-19?

[Symptoms of COVID-19](#) may include fever, coughing and shortness of breath. The CDC believes that symptoms can appear 2-14 days after a person is exposed.

As with the seasonal flu, reasonable precautions to minimize the spread of viruses include:

- Washing your hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Avoiding touching your face
- Staying home when you are sick
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the crook of your elbow
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Getting a flu shot if you have not already done so