



# Creating a Safe Environment in the Age of COVID-19

June 2020



**SAMUEL  
MERRITT  
UNIVERSITY**

# Creating a Safe Environment in the Age of COVID-19

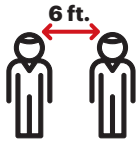
Samuel Merritt University has established a number of policies and protocols to create a safe environment for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors as we enter into a phased re-opening of our campuses. All of our decisions during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic are rooted in a philosophy of "Safety First."

Our plans, as they have been since the onset of the pandemic, have been established from guidelines from the four counties' Public Health departments wherein our campuses lie as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve and as recommendations from the CDC and county Public Health agencies are amended, our policies and procedures will be updated.

In the meantime, we urge all students, faculty, staff, and visitors to adhere to posted policies and procedures at each of our four campuses to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all.

## Safety First: Top 9 Guidelines for Working On-site



Remember to stand 6 feet apart when possible, and as much as your job allows.



Wear a face covering when not eating or drinking.



Have your badge on you and visible at all times.



Avoid touching your face.



Wash your hands for 20 seconds.



Practice hand hygiene, especially before and after touching your mask or face, and entering and exiting rooms.



Wipe down surfaces in classrooms, including door handles, phones, keyboards and computer mouse at least once at the start of your shift.



Stay home if you feel sick.



Do not congregate in a room while unmasked.

# Return to the Workplace

## Making our Environment Safe

### As part of our phased re-opening of campuses we have implemented a number of protocols including:



- A COVID-19 Entrance Screening Questionnaire to be completed on days you will be on campus. Also, upon arrival to campus, you will be screened for symptoms and have your temperature taken prior to entering campus.
- You must show your “Green Approval Badge” from the survey that clears you to be on campus. You can show the screen on your phone or a print out of the Green Approval Badge. It must have the date on the visit on the approval page.
- Detailed cleanings have taken place prior to resuming lab and simulation activities. Once in-person labs and simulations resume, enhanced cleaning for labs, classrooms, restrooms, common areas, and high traffic areas will take place every evening. Academic programs will also assist with cleaning by wiping down workspaces and equipment at the conclusion of lab activities.
- Classrooms and labs have been modified by removing or spacing out furniture to best accommodate physical distancing.
- Providing masks for all students and faculty participating in lab and simulation activities. Lab and simulation activities will follow Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) guidance from local, state, and national health authorities.
- Academic programs have organized students into stable groups of 12 or fewer individuals.
- Hand washing, sanitization, personal hygiene, physical distancing signage throughout the campuses.
- Developing a number of protocols and processes for potential COVID-19 exposure and reporting illness.

### Workplace Expectations & Guidelines

- All students, faculty, and staff are expected to fully comply with the policies, protocols, and guidelines outlined in this document. Failure to do so may result in being ordered to leave campus and corrective action.

- By entering campus, you agree to carefully follow all safety policies, protocols, and guidelines, including those related to the use of face coverings and hand washing/sanitizing.

### Symptom Monitoring Requirement

- Students, faculty, and staff who have been instructed to return to campus for in-person lab and simulation activities, to facilitate distance learning, or to perform an essential business function must complete the COVID-19 Entrance Screening Questionnaire. You must be free of ANY symptoms potentially related to COVID-19, or have been cleared by Academic Affairs/ Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC) or the Office of People and Culture.
- At this time, these symptoms include one or more of the following:
  - » Cough
  - » Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - » Fever
  - » Chills
  - » Runny nose or new sinus congestion
  - » Vomiting
  - » Muscle pain
  - » Headache
  - » Sore throat
  - » Fatigue
  - » Stomach cramps
  - » New loss of taste or smell
  - » Diarrhea or stomach cramps (per Sutter Health)
- If you have any symptoms, you must notify your faculty or clinical coordinator and the SHAC (students only), or your immediate supervisor (faculty and staff). Once reported, the respective groups will help coordinate next steps, and will work to provide the necessary support during this process.
- According to the CDC, individuals with certain conditions may have a higher risk for COVID-19 infection. Those conditions may include:
  - » Older adults (aged 65 years and older)
  - » People with HIV
  - » Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
  - » Chronic lung disease
  - » Diabetes

# Return to the Workplace


## Making our Environment Safe

- » Serious heart conditions
- » Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- » Severe obesity
- » Being immunocompromised
- Students, faculty, and staff who have been instructed to return to campus and have concerns such as being high risk, or having someone in your household that is high risk, should consult with your program chair or director, or the Office of People and Culture.

### Remote Work Arrangements

At this time, the University is continuing its remote work structure wherein faculty and staff are working remotely. This arrangement is subject to review based on the status of the pandemic and guidelines from the CDC and county Public Health departments.

### Reporting Illness



As several states and many counties have eased restrictions as part of a phased re-opening, it's important that we remain mindful of reporting protocols for faculty, staff, and students who show signs of COVID-19 illness even though we are continuing our largely hybrid model of instruction into the summer and fall terms. The re-opening of business and the easing of restrictions at public gathering places do not mean that the virus is no longer with us. Our continued safety requires us to remain vigilant against exposure and spread.

Therefore, the University is asking students, staff, and faculty to self-report all COVID-19 symptoms (suspected COVID-19), and all positive test results for COVID-19 (confirmed positive COVID-19).

Common symptoms of COVID-19, as per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention include:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills

- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea or stomach cramps (per Sutter Health)

Our reporting protocol is as follows:

### Students

1. Report to your faculty or clinical instructor and the University's Student Health and Counseling Center (SHAC).
2. Faculty/Instructor and SHAC should then notify Academic Affairs by phone.
3. Academic Affairs will then communicate with student for purposes of identifying what the symptoms are, how long symptoms have been present, if the student has been tested for COVID-19, if they have results, where they have been, if they have had any contact with students, staff, or faculty, or have been on campus, etc.

Academic Affairs is responsible for maintaining privacy for the student and will coordinate with the student's program to assist with coursework in support of the student as well as advise on their return per the clearance protocol as established by Sutter Health.

### Faculty and Staff

1. Report to your supervisor.
2. Supervisors should notify the Office of People and Culture (OPC).
3. OPC will then communicate with the faculty or staff member for purposes of identifying what the symptoms are, how long symptoms have been present, if the faculty or staff has been tested for COVID-19, if they have results, where they have been, if they have had any contact with SMU students, staff, or faculty, or have been on campus, etc. OPC will then follow its guidelines for allowing the faculty or staff to return to work.

OPC is responsible for maintaining privacy for the faculty and staff. OPC will coordinate with the faculty or staff's supervisor on appropriate next steps in support of the faculty or staff as well as advise on return to work clearance protocol as established by Sutter Health.

# Health & Safety Guidance

## Personal Safety Practices



### Face masks/Cloth Face Coverings

Face masks or face coverings must be worn by all individuals on campus when in the presence of others and in public settings where physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., common work spaces, meeting rooms, classrooms, labs, etc.).

Appropriate use of face masks or coverings is critical in minimizing risks to others near you. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The mask or cloth face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing.

If someone does not comply, the person may be asked to leave the space.

- Masks will be provided by SMU to all lab and simulation students, faculty, and staff while in the lab. Cloth face coverings will not be permitted in lab settings. Employees and students are responsible for wearing their personal masks everywhere else on campus.
- Individuals not participating in lab or simulation activities may also wear a cloth face covering. Cloth face coverings must only be worn for one day at a time, and must be properly laundered before use again. Having a week supply of cloth face coverings can help reduce the need for daily laundering.
- Masks for lab students and faculty will be provided in the lab experience.
  - » While in the lab, the provided masks and not DIY cloth face coverings, must be worn.
- All employees and students must wear masks or cloth face coverings on campus at all times.

Exceptions should be made to the wearing of a face mask for individuals with disabilities where the disability prevents a person from wearing one:

**People with disabilities:** Exceptions should be made to the wearing of a face mask for individuals with disabilities where the disability prevents a person from wearing one.

Ask a person not wearing a face mask if they have a disability that prevents them from wearing one upon entering a University building.

If the answer is “no,” the person should be asked to wear a mask.

If the answer is “yes,” the person should be presented with the option of:

1. If the business can be conducted where a sneeze guard separates them from other individuals in the space, then continue to do business, or
2. Where possible, a clear face guard is offered to the individual with a disability, or
3. Arrange to conduct business remotely with asking the person to leave the space, or
4. If a person cannot wear a face mask, shield, use of a sneeze guard or conduct business remotely, the individual with a disability should seek an accommodation either through the SHAC for students or the Office of People and Culture for employees, including student employees.

**Employees and students:** To seek a mask exemption, medical documentation of the inability to wear a mask must be provided to the Office of People and Culture (for employees) or the Disability Resource Center (for students). Those granted an exemption will be given documentation of the exemption by the DRC or OPC to show, if asked while on campus. Anyone exempt from wearing a mask will be asked to determine and implement an alternate face covering that will reduce spread while addressing disability needs.

**Campus visitors:** Any person not wearing a face mask upon entry to a campus building should be asked to wear one. If they reply that they have a disability that prevents them from wearing a mask:

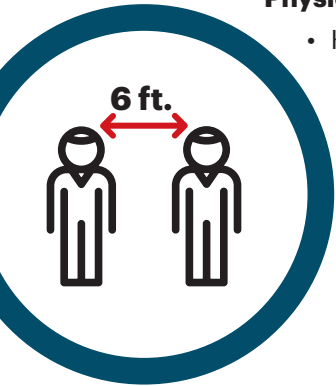
- If the business can be conducted where a sneeze guard separates them from other individuals in the space, then continue to do business.
- When possible, offer a clear face guard to the individual with a disability.
- If neither of those is possible, ask the person to leave the space and instead arrange to conduct business remotely (such as curbside, or via phone or email).

If someone does not comply with campus mask policy, the person may be asked to leave.

# Health & Safety Guidance

## Personal Safety Practices

### Physical distancing



- Keeping space between you and others is one of the best tools we have to avoid being exposed to the COVID-19 virus and slowing its spread. Since people can spread the virus before they know they are sick, it is important to stay away from others when possible, even if you have no symptoms. Physical distancing is important for everyone, especially to help protect people who are at higher risk of getting very sick. Students, faculty, and staff must stay at least 6 feet from another person when possible.

### Gloves

- The CDC recommends wearing gloves when you are cleaning or caring for someone who is sick.
- In most other situations, wearing gloves is not necessary. Instead, practice physical distancing (at least 6 feet) from others, washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds (or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol), and wearing a cloth face covering when out in public.
- Students, faculty, and staff within the labs may use gloves as part of PPE, if necessary.

### Goggles/Face shields

- Students, faculty, and staff do not need to wear goggles or face shields as part of general activity on campus. Good hand hygiene and avoiding touching your face are generally sufficient for non-healthcare environments.

### Personal disinfection

- Faculty and staff working on campus should clean and disinfect personal workspaces and commonly used surfaces within their work space daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, phones, keyboards, faucets, etc.
- Students, faculty, and staff conducting lab activities will be required to wipe down lab work stations and equipment prior to conclusion of the class session.

### Coughing/Sneezing Hygiene

- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow. Then throw used tissues in the trash. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

### Handwashing

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, or touching your face. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth, and wash your hands after touching your face.





# Guidance for Specific Workplace Scenarios

## Public Transportation

- If you utilize public transportation, wear a mask before entering the bus and avoid touching surfaces with your hands. Upon disembarking, wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the preferred form of hand hygiene in healthcare settings as soon as possible and before removing your mask.

## Using Restrooms

- Use of restrooms should be limited based on size to ensure at least 6 feet distance between individuals. Wash your hands thoroughly afterward to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.

## Using Elevators

- No more than two people may enter an elevator at a time, so please use the stairs whenever possible. If you are using the elevator, wear your mask or face covering and avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol as the preferred form of hand hygiene in healthcare settings upon departing the elevator.

## Meetings

- While counties across the state are beginning to allow small gatherings, you are encouraged to communicate with your colleagues and supervisors as needed by email, instant message, telephone, or other available technology rather than face-to-face. You can also use a range of available collaboration tools (e.g. WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Jabber, etc.)

## Meals

- Before and after eating, you should wash your hands thoroughly using soap and water for 20 seconds to reduce the potential transmission of the virus.
- If you are eating in your work environment (break room, office, etc.), maintain 6 feet distance between you and others. Individuals should not sit facing one another. Only remove your mask or face covering in order to eat, then put it back on. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in employee break rooms to support social distancing practices between employees. Wipe all surfaces, including tables, refrigerator handles, coffee machines, etc. after using in common areas.

## Skills Labs, Simulation Sessions, Lab Sessions

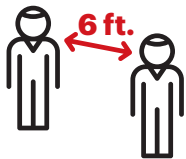
Specific protocols are established for these type of sessions:

- Covid-19 Protocol: Participation in On-Campus Learning Sessions (Students and faculty)  
Link to PDF: <https://bit.ly/3OZM4wY>
- HSSC Return to Campus Policies (students)  
Link to PDF: <https://bit.ly/3fEKIMd>
- HSSC Return to Campus Policies (faculty)  
Link to PDF: <https://bit.ly/3hMg3ib>

## Elevator Rules

**Only 2 people in the elevator at one time.**

**Try to stand 6 feet apart.**



# Mental and Emotional Health

As reports of COVID-19 can create stress, the Sutter Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all students, faculty, and staff 24/7 at 800-477-2258. The EAP staff will be able to connect you with a mental health provider to address any needs you may have to process your feelings. Students who use the EAP should identify themselves as a Samuel Merritt University student. Students may also obtain telehealth video or audio counseling sessions through the Student Health and Counseling Center. Please call 510-879-9288 to learn more or to set up an intake appointment.

All currently enrolled SMU students can also access free, personal counseling sessions during this time in a variety of ways:

**SMU Counseling Center:** Staff Psychologists from the SMU Student Health and Counseling Center are available to conduct virtual telehealth, web-based video or audio sessions. Students MUST be physically located in the state of CA to receive these services. You will need a computer or mobile

phone for this option. You can schedule a Telehealth counseling appointment by calling the SHAC at 510-879-9288.

## **Sutter Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

**Services:** SMU contracts with Sutter EAP to provide students up to 10 counseling sessions per calendar year with a licensed mental health counselor, free of charge. We have been informed that Sutter EAP will also be conducting telehealth sessions during this time. If you would like to schedule an appointment through Sutter EAP, please call 800-477-2258. When calling, identify yourself as an SMU student and a Sutter EAP intake specialist will work with you to find a licensed mental health provider in your community.

**Private Health Insurance:** All SMU students should also all have private health insurance and most plans cover mental health services (counseling, medication evaluation, etc.). You can contact your individual insurance providers to learn more.

# Enter/Exit Control



- Entry into campus will be regulated and monitored as best as possible. All students, faculty, and staff will be required to visit a screening station prior to entering any SMU facility. An identification marker will be placed on your SMU ID Badge to signify you have been through the symptom and temperature screening process, and will allow you to enter and exit throughout the day, as needed.
- Your SMU ID Badge must be worn and visible at all times while on campus. Access without an SMU ID Badge will not be permitted. Do not hold or prop open exterior doors for any other person. The SMU Badging Office will be open and ready to assist with any badging issues.
- Violation of these guidelines may result in the immediate revocation of building access privileges, as well as corrective action.

## Resources

- **CDC Coronavirus:** [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html)
- **County Health Departments**  
Alameda: [www.acphd.org/](http://www.acphd.org/)  
San Mateo: [www.smchealth.org/](http://www.smchealth.org/)  
Sacramento: <https://dhs.saccounty.net/PUB/Pages/PUB-Home.aspx>  
Fresno: [www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-health](http://www.co.fresno.ca.us/departments/public-health)
- **State Resource:** <https://covid19.ca.gov/>
- **Testing Sites:** <https://covid19.ca.gov/testing-and-treatment/#top>
- **SMU Student Health and Counseling Center:** [www.samuelmerritt.edu/discover/student-experience/student-services/student-health-and-counseling](http://www.samuelmerritt.edu/discover/student-experience/student-services/student-health-and-counseling)
- **SMU Office of People and Culture:** 510-879-9260
- **SMU Safety and Security:** [www.samuelmerritt.edu/discover/student-experience/safety-and-security](http://www.samuelmerritt.edu/discover/student-experience/safety-and-security)