

COVID-19 Health and Safety Standards for Students: FAQs

Q: What kind of face covering should I wear?

A: Your mask should be made with a tightly woven fabric (fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source), or be a medical procedure mask (sometimes referred to as surgical masks or disposable face masks). Your mask should fit snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face. Masks with multiple layers or inner filter pockets are also effective. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not recommend masks made with loosely woven or knitted fabric, masks with only a single-layer, masks with exhalation valves, or scarves or ski masks.

Q: Who is considered part of my “household”?

A: A household includes anyone who lives in and shares common spaces in your housing unit. While a single household can include family members and roommates, it does not include group living situations such as dormitories, fraternities or sororities.

Q: What is considered the “University community”?

A: The University community includes the [neighborhood surrounding both the University Park campus and the Health Science campus](#). It also includes properties and facilities operated by USC outside these footprints.

Q: What is considered “essential” travel?

A: Travel that is required as part of your USC academic program or employment (as approved by the University), medical care, or family care, is essential. Non-essential travel includes travel that is considered tourism or recreational, in other words, travel “for fun.” The latest travel advisory from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health may be found [here](#).

Q: I’m an enrolled student, but living in another state or country for the remainder of the semester. Do I still need to follow the University’s standards?

A: You need to follow these standards only if you live in the University community (this includes University Housing or private, off-campus housing), or if you visit the University community. Otherwise, please adhere to the COVID-19 guidance provided by your local public health authorities.

Q: I live in the University community, but I’m making a quick trip to another part of the world that does not require me to wear a mask or practice physical-distancing. Do I still need to follow the University’s standards?

A: Yes. If you live in our community, and you must travel for an essential purpose, you are expected to take steps to keep our community safe. This includes minimizing any chance that you could be exposed to, and unknowingly bring, COVID-19 back to the USC community. During your travel, you should still wear a face covering at all times, stay 6 feet or more away from people you do not live with (including family members you do not normally live with), and self-quarantine for 10 days upon your return to the USC community. You will also be required to adhere to the University’s testing requirement once you return.

Q: I really need to get onto campus but my Trojan Check isn’t working. Can I just sign in to campus as a guest?

A: No, if you are not in compliance with one of the Trojan Check requirements, you are not permitted to be on campus. Please address any concerns about non-compliance by contacting the COVID-19 hotline at 213-740-6291 or covid19@usc.edu.

Q: My roommate goes to large parties every weekend, and is definitely not wearing a mask or physically-distancing while out. They brag about it and post on social media. What can I do?

A: If you do not feel comfortable discussing your concerns with your roommate, you have a few options. You could report your roommate's non-compliance to the University's COVID-19 hotline at 213-740-6291 or covid19@usc.edu. You could discuss a possible room relocation with your apartment's management. You could submit a confidential [TC4T report](#) to the University, who will then follow up with your roommate. You could also take advantage of the [Office of the Ombuds](#), which may be able to assist in a conflict resolution strategy.

Q: I tested positive for COVID-19 and I know I got it after attending a party last weekend at an apartment down the hall. Will I get in trouble if I tell the University that I'm positive, after attending a social gathering?

A: No, the University will not sanction any student for testing positive for COVID-19. The University's goal is to ensure that students who test positive limit their exposure to others as quickly as possible, and that they provide thorough information about their prior locations and known contacts for the purposes of contact tracing. Students who comply with these instructions will not be disciplined under the Student Conduct Code, but they might be subject to reminders, warnings, or restrictions, for the purpose of risk mitigation.

Q: I've already had COVID-19. Do I still need to follow the University's standards?

A: Yes. Experts do not yet know how long you are protected from getting sick again after recovering from COVID-19 or your ability to nonetheless be contagious and infect others. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is still evaluating reinfection risks. So far it seems that reinfection is rare, but it has happened, and the virus continues to spread and develop new mutations, some of which have been more contagious than previous strains. So you still need to take precautionary steps to protect yourself and your community.

Q: I've received the vaccine for COVID-19. Do I still need to follow the University's standards?

A: Yes. While the vaccine is highly effective, it is not 100% effective. Additionally, experts are still learning more about how long vaccines protect against COVID-19 in real-world conditions. Furthermore, there are still large populations that have not yet been vaccinated, or may not be healthy enough to receive the vaccine. For all these reasons, you still need to take steps to protect yourself and the community.