

Virginia Tech community can prepare for spring semester with these steps

As students, faculty, and staff anticipate a return to Virginia Tech's campuses in January, they are encouraged to take note of several key aspects of the spring semester plan.

Coming to campus

- Students are asked to commit to a 10-day self-quarantine prior to returning to campus, in order to minimize the chance of transmitting COVID-19. See a checklist for students returning for the spring semester.
- Students are strongly encouraged to secure a negative COVID-19 test result within five days prior to returning to campus.
- Residence halls open for move-in at noon on Jan. 16.

The academic calendar

- The semester begins on Jan. 19 with online instruction; on Jan. 25, in-person and hybrid instruction begins.
- Five spring break days will be observed on Feb. 5 and 25, March 17, and April 6 and 26. On these days, no classes, assignments, or assessments will be conducted.
- Classes end on May 5, Reading Day is May 6, final examinations are on May 7-12, and commencement ceremonies are on May 13-15. (Details on the nature of the commencement ceremonies will be shared at a later date.)

Testing

- The spring semester strategy includes voluntary and mandatory testing, along with adaptive approaches as needed. The university has also increased laboratory capacity for the spring semester.
- Voluntary testing for the Greek life move-in period will begin Jan. 7.
- Residential move-in testing will be conducted Jan. 16-24.
- Random prevalence testing for students will begin Jan. 25 and continue through May 7.
- The complete testing schedule for students will be finalized and released closer to the beginning of the semester.
- Surveillance testing for high-contact employees will begin Jan. 5 and continue through May 7.
- Voluntary testing for students, faculty, and staff will occur Jan. 5-8 and Jan. 11-15; and then daily (Monday through Friday) from Jan. 25 through May 7.

- Pre-sign-up walk-in testing for students, faculty, and staff will occur on Sundays beginning Jan. 31 through May 2, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Schiffert Health Center testing will begin Jan. 4 and continue through May 14, for all symptomatic students and students who have been contact-traced or have a known exposure.
- Testing out of quarantine for students will be handled through Schiffert. Testing out of quarantine for employees will be cleared through the Environmental Health and Safety office, based on ArcPoint testing.

Pods

- Student Affairs is introducing a pods registration program to enrich the collegiate experience. These small groups will allow students to interact more closely in a more relaxed, unmasked environment.

Isolation and quarantine spaces

- During the fall semester, Housing and Residential Life expanded from 430 to 513 beds and did not experience any capacity issues. In the spring semester, the 513-bed capacity will be maintained.

Vaccinations

- Virginia Tech is prepared to partner with the Virginia Department of Health (<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/>) to address the challenges of storing and distributing COVID-19 vaccinations.

Continued vigilance

- Our shared and well-known behaviors – to avoid close contact; avoid crowds; avoid closed, poorly ventilated spaces; wear masks; get a flu shot; and more – will apply throughout the spring semester.

Meanwhile, the university continues to evaluate and enhance its practices, for cleanliness, student programming and services, event guidelines, accommodations and support for employees, health and well-being services, communications and more.

The university's full operational plan is being updated and finalized for the spring semester. The plan and its principles reflect the university's accumulated learning and adapting to the pandemic over the spring, summer, and fall months of 2020; the strategies seek to balance the traditional Virginia Tech experience with the

safety and well-being of the community. As a result of these proven strategies, and the community's commitment to wellness, Virginia Tech was able to manage the impacts of the disease spread within the Blacksburg campus community, resulting in a seven-day moving average positivity rate of less than 10 percent by mid-September that decreased to 1.4 percent by the end of in-person instruction on Nov. 20.

As the spring semester approaches, review the Virginia Tech Daily Email at <https://vtnews.vt.edu/email/sign-up.html> and visit the vt.edu/ready site regularly.

Voluntary COVID-19 testing available for employees early January

Voluntary COVID-19 testing for faculty, staff and wage employees will be offered after winter break from Tuesday, Jan. 5 – Friday, Jan. 8 and Monday, Jan. 11 - Friday, Jan. 15. Employees must register for testing in advance using the following link: <https://vtnotify.students.vt.edu/>.

VTNotify is a new testing system for both students and employees that uses 2-factor authentication. The site shows the user their most recent negative COVID-19 test and allows the user to schedule a test. The system shows test appointments two weeks in advance so if the test date you want to schedule is not available yet, check back two weeks prior to that date. The deadline to schedule is 11:59 p.m. the day prior to the test date.

January testing will take place at Lane Stadium, Gate 1. Employees should receive their results in 48 to 72 business hours of being tested.

See below for commonly asked questions. If you have additional questions about voluntary employee testing, contact employeeesting@vt.edu or call the HR Service Center at 540-231-9331.

As a reminder, employees who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (<https://ready.vt.edu/health.html#sns>) should notify your supervisor, stay home from work, and contact your primary care physician or an urgent care clinic for further instructions on how to get a COVID-19 test.

For FAQ's, visit <https://vtnews.vt.edu/notices/hr-voluntary-employee-testing-January.html>.

Hokie Wellness offering virtual wellness expo for employees in January

Hokie Wellness is offering the 2021 Virtual Wellness Expo for employees on Thursday, Jan. 14, from 10 a.m.-1:30 p.m. via Zoom.

In lieu of the annual Health and Benefits Fair, this expo will give employees the opportunity to explore a variety of topics that include financial wellness, nutrition, caregiving, mindfulness and meditation, physical fitness and more.

President Sands will welcome participants, and keynote speaker, Yael Shy, will present on how to avoid burnout and build well-being.

Employees may also choose to participate in a scavenger hunt the day of the expo. Hokie Wellness prize packs will be raffled.

We encourage colleges and units to support employees who wish to attend sessions of interest, and allow them to attend as time worked.

For more information, descriptions of each of the sessions and to register, visit the Virtual Wellness Expo webpages at <https://hokiewellness.vt.edu/wellness-expo>. Zoom links to chosen sessions will be emailed prior to the event.

If you are an individual with a disability and desire an accommodation to attend this virtual event, please contact Hokie Wellness at hokiewellness@vt.edu during regular business hours no later than close of business Monday, Jan. 11.

Contact Hokie Wellness at hokiewellness@vt.edu with questions.