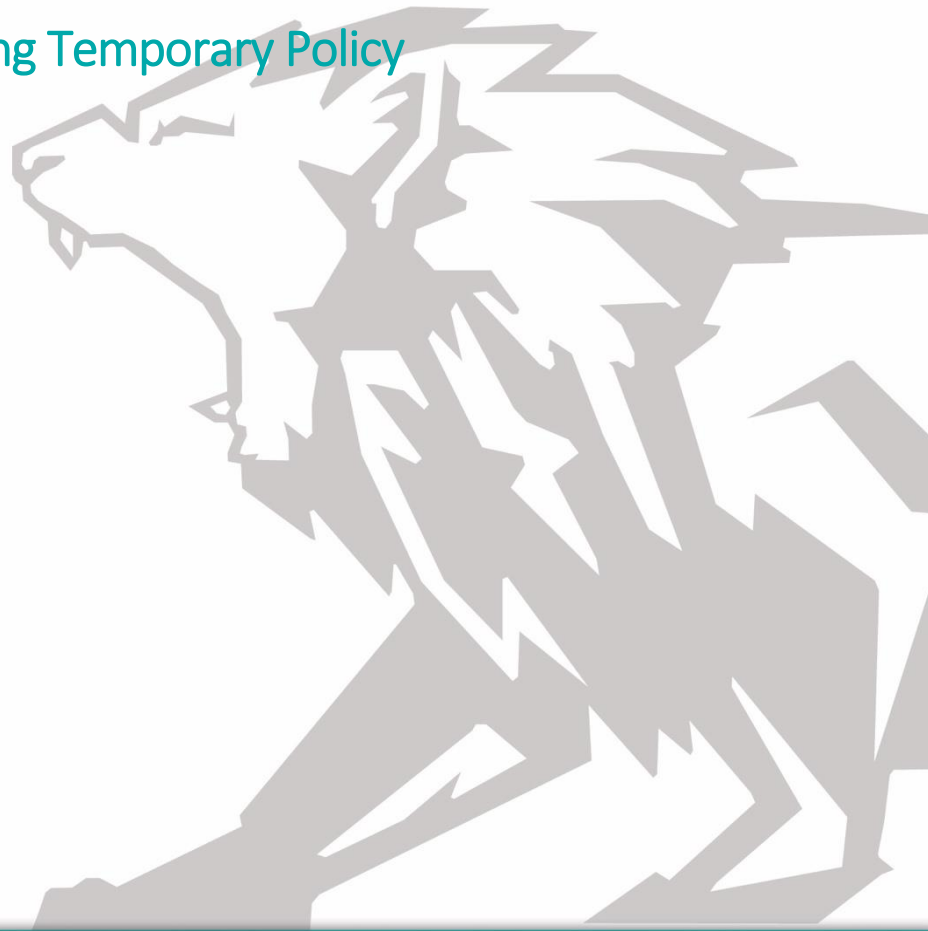


# Ponce Health Sciences University

## COVID-19

## Protocol and Procedures

### Mandatory Student Testing Temporary Policy



# PHSU

PONCE HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

Tamdiu Discendum Est. Quamdiu Vivas

Submitted: April 20, 2021  
Submitted by: Elisandra Rodriguez  
Approved by PHSU Task Force: April 29, 2021

**RE: Covid-19 Mandatory Student Testing- Temporary Policy**

<b>Policy Number:</b> PHSU-TP-FL20-072220	<b>Date Issued:</b> July 10, 2020 Rev. Apr 2021	<b>Next Review Date:</b> October 2021
<b>Applies to:</b> All active Students and visiting/international students with assigned in-person academic activities and or clinical/ practicum rotations during the Covid-19 Pandemic Emergency Period Semester/Quarter/Trimester	<b>Owner:</b> ED of Student Affairs Academic Affairs Student Health Services Office	<b>Primary Contact:</b> Student Affairs

**Related Policies: Covid-19 Travel Policy, Covid-19 Temporary Policies**

**Supporting Forms: Authorization for In-Person Academic Activities, Notification of Inconclusive Result, Notification of Institutional Quarantine**

## Introduction:

Ponce Health Sciences University (PHSU) recognize the urgency for preventive measures to ensure the PHSU Community safety and health. Therefore, PHSU established a Task Force to provide guidance related to Covid-19 prevention. Recommendations from the Task Force included mandatory testing for employees and students before returning to campus activities. For this purpose, the Student Affairs division created an office of Student Health Services (SHS) to centralize all efforts and provide clear instructions and directions for the coordination of testing and management of certifications for student with **Non-Detected** results and orientation and guidance for students with **Detected** results.

## I Legal basis:

This provision is established for faithful compliance with the Puerto Rico Government and Health Department regulations and recommendations of the CDC, Health Organizations and the PHSU Task Force for Covid-19.

This policy is approved by the Institutional Chancellor and is effective as of **Fall 2020**.

The last revision of this policy was on January 2021.

## II Scope:

This policy applies to all Active PHSU students and/or PHSU's visiting or international students who are assigned to in-person academic activities in Main campus, East Campus and San Juan University Center. It also applies to students assigned to rotations/practicums in Allied Clinical Sites with Covid-19 testing requirements.

## III Justification:

The institution recognizes the importance of providing a safe environment in campus amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic the country is experimenting. Based on the CDC, health organizations and governmental entities recommendations the Task Force recommended mandatory employee and student testing prior to reintegration to campus activities.

The Institutional Chancellor accepted the recommendations to safeguard the PHSU Community health and safety, as well as the health of the communities we serve.

## IV Policy:

For such purposes, a student with an in-person academic activity and/or clinical/practicum rotation during the Fall Semester 20-21 is required to undergo a Covid-19 preventive test. The Academic Departments will provide an Official Testing Priority List (OTPL) in which they will certify the first day of in-person academic activities to which the student is assigned. This certified date will be referred to as the **start date** of the student. The test must comply with following requirements:

1. PHSU Requires a molecular Covid-19 test (PCR).
2. The sample must be taken no more than five (5) days before **start date**.
3. The test results must be available in the Student Health Services Office (SHSO) or the Student Affairs Office at least two (2) business days prior to **start date**.

Once the student start date is certified by the Academic Department the Student Health Services Coordinator (SHSC) or a designee from the Student Affairs Office will proceed to contact the student and request the test.

The student may select the primary care physician and reference lab of his/her preference as long as the test and test results comply with the requirements specified above. The cost of the test will be cover by the student's health insurance and the student.

To facilitate the testing, Student Affairs have coordinated in collaboration with the Wellness Center and INNO Diagnostics lab a process to request the medical orders and provide appointments for the test in the reference lab. If the student decides to use the PHSU resources, the SHSC will send the require documentation with specific instructions for the process to the student's institutional email. Students may authorize the SHSC or a student affairs Designee to directly receive the results to expedite the process. Students who do not provide the authorization are responsible for providing the results on time for certification.

### Test Results

#### Non-Detected

Students with Non-Detected or Negative test results **will be authorized** to attend the designated in-person academic activities. A certification will be sent to the Academic Department and credentialing officer for due process. Students may request a copy of the certification by sending an email to [studentcovidtest@psm.edu](mailto:studentcovidtest@psm.edu).

#### Detected

Students with Detected or Positive results **will not be authorized** to attend the designated in-person academic activities. A **Notification of Institutional Quarantine** will be sent from the Student Health Services

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Office requesting the student to stay in quarantine for at least 5 days. After the quarantine, a Physician must certify the student can be reintegrated. PHSU requires the Physicians certification to authorize a Student reintegration to in-person activities.

Also, the student must comply with the Puerto Rico Department of Health mandates and regulations.

The Student Health Services Coordinator will refer *Detected* cases to Student Affairs for the proper follow up and guidance of academic and administrative processes applicable to the student. Evaluation will be on a case-by-case basis.

### **Inconclusive**

Students with inconclusive results **will not be authorized** to attend in-person academic activities. PHSU will request the student to repeat the test.

### **Vaccinated Students**

PHSU will consider a student vaccinated once all the recommended doses of the vaccine have been administered at least 14 days prior to the in-person academic activity.

A PCR test will not be required to vaccinated students who present Covid-19 vaccination evidence to the Student Health Services Office. The SHSC will provide and authorized status for campus in-person activities to vaccinated students.

Students in clinical rotations and practicums must adhere to the clinical site rules and regulations for Covid-19 preventive or mandatory testing.

### **Recent Travelers**

PHSU will abide by the [Puerto Rico government regulations](#) when arriving and traveling to Puerto Rico.

### **Vaccinated recent Travelers**

If the student presents a test in compliance with the PR Health Department standards at the moment of arrival, and if such test also complies with the requirements set forth on this policy, the student will be authorized to integrate to the in-person academic activities and or clinical/practicum rotations.

If the test result does not comply with the PR Health Department regulations previously mentioned the student will have to remain in quarantine until he/she can present evidence of compliance with the PR regulations, including but not limited to present a new Non-Detected PCR test result. Test results will be managed as indicated in the Test Results section of this policy.

## Non-Vaccinated Recent Travelers

The student must present a test compliant with the PR Health Department standards at the moment of arrival, such test must also comply with the requirements set forth on this policy.

The student will remain in quarantine for at least five days, until a new test sample can be taken on the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) day after arrival for the reintegration process. Test results will be managed as indicated in the Test Results section of this policy.

## Self-Report and Notification of Exposure

The University has implemented protocols and procedures to allow students to self-report if; 1) they are diagnosed with Covid-19 or; 2) were exposed to a confirmed Covid-19 patient. With regard to this policy, exposure is defined as “exposed or within close proximity (less than 6 feet) to a confirmed Covid-19 patient for more than 10 minutes without personal protective equipment (PPE) (IE, facemasks). This includes any family or personal scenario(s) along with any clinical setting, or academic exercise where facemasks, face shield and disposable coats should have been worn but were not.

Students must report if they are Covid-19 positive. Protocols for Detected or Positive cases will apply to self-reported cases. Students who have being diagnosed with Covid-19 and/ or have been exposed to a confirmed Covid-19 patient must contact the Student Health Services Coordinator. The SHSC will then conduct a questionnaire that will determine further instructions on how to proceed.

PHSU encourages all students to self-report for the safety of the university community.

## V Amendments:

This policy may be amended by the Institutional Chancellor.

## VI Repeal and Validity:

This policy does not repeal the provisions established by other university policies and or governmental agencies regulations, but rather offers specific provisions for students who qualify for mandatory Covid-19 testing.

This policy will be effective for the Fall 2020 term.

This policy was revised on January 2021.

VII Approval:



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José A. Torres Ruiz , PhD  
Chancellor

April 30, 2021  
Date

## **I. Definitions:**

### **Aerosol:**

A tiny water-based particle with a diameter less than 5 $\mu$ m that is produced by breathing, speaking, coughing, or sneezing. Aerosols may remain suspended in the air for several hours after generation.

### **Asymptomatic:**

Not showing any symptoms (signs of disease or illness). Some people without any symptoms still have and can spread the coronavirus. They are asymptomatic, but contagious. Fever, cough, and shortness of breath are the main symptoms of COVID-19. Change or loss of sense of smell or taste has been reported among mild COVID-19 cases.

### **Basic Reproduction Number**

This is an epidemiologic metric, also called R-Naught, used to describe the contagiousness or transmissibility of infectious agents. Higher numbers reflect greater infectiousness. Seasonal flu:  $R_0=0.9-2.1$ ; COVID-19:  $2.2-2.7^*$ ; SARS:  $2-4$ .

\*<https://doi.org/10.3201/eid2607.200282>

### **The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**

The United States' federal health protection organization.

### **Co-infections:**

Patients can be infected with more than one virus at a time.

### **Communicable**

Similar in meaning as "contagious." Used to describe diseases that can be spread or transmitted from one person to another.

### **Community spread**

The spread of an illness within a particular location, like a neighborhood or town. During community spread, there is no clear source of contact or infection.

### **Confirmed case**

Someone tested and confirmed to have COVID-19.

### **Congregate settings**

Public places that can get crowded and where contact with infected people can happen. This includes places like malls, theaters, and grocery stores.



## **Coronavirus**

A family of related viruses. Many of them cause respiratory illnesses. Coronaviruses cause COVID-19, SARS, MERS, and some strains of influenza, or flu. The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 is officially called SARS-CoV-2, which stands for severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2.

## **COVID-19**

The name of the illness caused by the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. COVID-19 stands for "coronavirus disease 2019."

## **Diagnostic Test:**

A reverse-transcriptase-PCR diagnostic test diagnoses active SARS-CoV-2 infection and requires a nasal swab or saliva sample. Diagnostic tests are highly accurate and sensitive but do not detect cleared infections.

## **Emergency Warning Signs**

The CDC states that emergency warning signs for COVID-19 that warrant more immediate medical attention include difficulty breathing, significant shortness of breath or high fever.

## **Epidemic**

A situation where more cases of disease than expected happen in a given area or to a group of people.

## **Epidemiology**

The branch of medicine that studies how diseases happen and spread in communities of people. A person who studies epidemiology is called an epidemiologist.

## **Flattening the curve**

Controlling the rate of new cases of COVID-19.

The "curve" refers to a graph showing the number of cases of COVID-19 that happen over a period of time. Many cases happening in a short period of time create a graph that looks like a tall spike.

By using protective measures, we can slow down how many new cases happen. This is the "flattening" of the curve – on the graph, the flattened curve winds up looking more like a gentle hill.

Too many new cases happening in a short time can create a serious problem. Hospital systems only have so many supplies, like beds and PPE. There are also only so many doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers. Too many patients at one time can overwhelm these resources. This means sick and injured people may not get needed treatment.

Flattening the curve reduces the numbers of people needing healthcare at one time. This allows hospitals to treat patients throughout the pandemic.

### **Hand Hygiene**

The CDC recommends **frequently washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds as well as the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers** to prevent infection with the virus.

### **High Risk**

Certain individuals are at **higher risk for the COVID-19** than others, according to the CDC.

### **Immunity**

Your body's ability to resist or fight off an infection. Your immune system is a network of cells throughout your body that help you avoid getting infected and help you get better when you are infected.

### **Immunocompromised**

Also called immune-compromised or immunodeficient. This describes someone who has an immune system that cannot resist or fight off infections as well as most people. This can be caused by several illnesses. Some treatments for illnesses can also cause someone to be immunocompromised.

### **Incubation period**

The time it takes for someone with an infection to start showing symptoms. For COVID-19, symptoms appear 2-14 days after infection.

### **N95 Respiratory Mask:**

A disposable, close fitting facial mask that when properly worn filters out 95% of particles down to 0.3um. The N indicates not oil resistant.

### **Outbreak**

A sudden increase of a specific illness in a small area.

### **Pandemic**

When a new disease spreads to many countries around the world.

### **PPE**

PPE Stands for personal protective equipment. This includes masks, face shields, gloves, gowns, and other coverings that healthcare workers use to prevent the spread of infection to themselves and other patients.

### **Person under investigation (PUI)**

When a health provider suspects a person has the coronavirus, but no test has confirmed the infection.

### **Presumptive positive case**

When a person tests positive for the coronavirus, but the CDC has not confirmed the case.

### **Positive vs. Presumptive Positive COVID-19 Test**

A positive COVID-19 test means that the test has lab confirmation, either from a state or local laboratory or the CDC. A presumptive positive COVID-19 test means that a local test has been positive but that the CDC or a state or local laboratory has not confirmed it.

### **Quarantine**

Quarantines keep people away from each other to prevent the spread of disease. Stay-at-home orders are a type of quarantine.

Governments sometimes order quarantines to keep healthy people from exposure to infected people. They give rules to behavior and boundaries to movement.

### **Respiratory Droplet:**

a water-based droplet with a diameter larger than 5 $\mu$ m that is produced by breathing, speaking, coughing, or sneezing. Droplets fall to the ground or settle on a surface quickly after release.

**SARS-CoV-2: The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 infection. According to the WHO, SARS-CoV2 is primarily transmitted between people through respiratory droplets and contact routes.**

### **Screening**

This is not the same as a coronavirus test. This step helps healthcare workers to decide if you actually need a coronavirus test. It is a series of basic questions about your health condition and recent history. Screening may also include other common healthcare procedures, like taking your temperature.

### **Self-isolation**

Also called self-quarantine. Separating yourself when you are sick from healthy individuals to prevent spreading illness.

### **Self-Observation, Self-Monitoring**

The CDC suggests people remain alert to possible symptoms, take their temperatures, seek advice during self-observation periods and be prepared to engage in several types of self-monitoring, with and without delegated supervision.

**Serology test: This is a blood test to detect antibodies to SARS-CoV-2. These tests have variable specificity and sensitivity and can detect both active and cleared infection.**

### **Social distancing**

Also called physical distancing. It means putting space between yourself and other people at all times. The goal is to slow down how fast an infection spread. Stay-at-home orders are a way that the government can enforce social distancing.

The CDC recommends keeping at least six feet between you and others around you in public. Social distancing also includes avoiding crowds and groups in public.

### **Sensitivity:**

The probability of detection; high sensitivity allows detection of rare events.

### **Specificity:**

The probability that true negatives are detected; high specificity reduces frequency of false positives.

### **Surgical Mask:**

Disposable, fluid resistant mask that provides wearer with protection against droplets.

### **Symptomatic**

When a person shows signs of illness. For COVID-19, that includes cough, fever, or shortness of breath.

### **Ventilator**

A machine that supplies oxygen to a patient with severe lung issues. People with severe cases of COVID-19 cannot provide enough oxygen to their body. Their lungs are too limited.

A ventilator machine requires a specialist or respiratory therapist. It is more invasive than an oxygen mask. Many hospitals do not have a supply of ventilators big enough for the COVID-19 outbreak.

### **World Health Organization (WHO)**

This United Nations organization monitors and protects public health around the world.

### **Zoonotic**

This means that a disease was originally was detected in animal but is now infecting people also.