

# AU FORWARD

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## FALL 2020 HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN



JUNE 16, 2020

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# Introduction

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In March 2020, American University activated its Pandemic Response Plan as a result of the outbreak of COVID-19. The university response was predicated on several factors, including a declaration of a public health emergency of international concern by the World Health Organization, a declaration of a national emergency by the president of the United States, and a declaration of a state of emergency and a public health emergency by the mayor of the District of Columbia.

Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the DC Department of Health (DCDOH), and several government-issued protective orders, the university took comprehensive actions unprecedented in the university's history to protect the health and safety of the AU community. The comprehensive approach included closing the campus, suspending all in-person instruction, canceling official domestic and international travel, recalling all faculty, staff, and students who were abroad, canceling meetings and special events, closing residence halls, moving all instruction to an online format, and implementing a remote work procedure for eligible employees.

As scientific understanding of the pandemic threat evolves and government orders are amended accordingly, the *AU Forward: Fall 2020 Health and Safety Plan* provides a pathway to return the university to a modified operational level for the fall 2020 semester. Our goal is to continue to deliver on our core education and research mission while implementing safeguards to protect our community. This will be accomplished in a phased, measured approach that is based on risk assessment and risk mitigation strategies. The strategies are specifically designed to address the full range of functional areas within the university and take into account how those functions impact our students, faculty, staff, contractors, and the broader community. They cascade from the decisions, associated guidance, and timelines from the ReOpen DC Advisory Group. To ensure a process that synchronizes with the District, American University is guided by the same baseline document as the ReOpen DC Advisory Group—*Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors*—which was prepared by the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health. In addition, we are following the guidance issued by the CDC and DCDOH.



On May 21, 2020, the ReOpen DC Advisory Group issued recommendations to the mayor to implement a four-tiered, phased approach to begin returning the District to normal operations. Restrictions will be gradually relaxed upon successful completion of each stage, with the understanding that if the District experiences significant deterioration across these metrics, progress on reopening could be halted or the District could return to an earlier phase. The Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area, of which AU is a member, is represented on the ReOpen DC Advisory Group in order to convey the unique health and safety concerns of institutions of higher education within the city and ensure those concerns are properly addressed during the planning and implementation process.

The *AU Forward: Fall 2020 Health and Safety Plan* is premised on the mayoral declaration that beginning May 29, 2020, the District would enter Phase One of relaxing restrictions. As virus transmission in the community is currently declining, the city has begun to incrementally expand reopening efforts. As part of this process, the DC Office of Planning, in conjunction with the Deputy Mayor for Education and the Department of Health, was directed to implement a campus plan approval process for colleges and universities by July 1, 2020, to plan for safe reopening. AU has submitted our proposed approach to the District government.



# University Operating Status

As the city and the region implement Phase One, the university has established three levels of campus operational modes that will support and supplement the governmental actions in the District, Maryland, and Virginia. These modes are specific to COVID-19 and provide the university with the flexibility to scale operations based on reoccurrence, velocity, and trajectory of a further regional outbreak of COVID-19. The modes are:

- Remote Operations (expanded telework with minimally required physical presence to sustain university operations)
- Modified Operations (managed physical presence and in-person operations)
- Full Operations (return to normal operations)

The university has operated in the Remote Operations mode since March 16, 2020. It is anticipated that community transmission of COVID-19 will continue to decline during the summer months; therefore, the university operating mode will transition from Remote to Modified Operations on July 1, 2020. Based on current projections, the university will remain in Modified Operations mode for the fall 2020 semester. Updates to the operating mode may be instituted depending on the trajectory of COVID-19. The following structures will support the Modified Operations status:



- AU will maintain the original starting dates in the fall 2020 academic calendar, with the first day of classes commencing on August 21 for the Washington College of Law and August 24 for the rest of the university.
- Fall break (October 9) will be repurposed to engage students in career readiness and skill development.
- Face-to-face instruction will end at Thanksgiving break to allow students to return home and remain there to complete courses online, avoiding additional travel costs and exposure, and reducing community spread.
- Classes will be delivered through a blend of face-to-face and online instruction, integrating live (synchronous) class sessions and face-to-face opportunities with asynchronous content.

- Residence halls will operate at modified occupancy and adjusted operational status. AU will offer a residential experience to all first-year students and some sophomore students as space permits. All students in the residence halls will live in single rooms.
- All academic, administrative, and athletics buildings and facilities will reopen with adjustments and/or restrictions to reduce density.
- The shuttle system will return to modified operations to ensure physical distancing.
- AU Athletics is preparing for a phased resumption of training, practice, and competition in accordance with all university health and safety standards, and guidance from the NCAA, Patriot League, and EIWA.
- All official university travel outside of the Washington, DC, Metropolitan Area will remain suspended pending a reassessment on September 26. Travel related to research grants must be approved through the Office of the Provost.
- Staffing levels and personnel policies for all educational, administrative, and operational elements of the university will be guided by the recommendations set forth by the Workforce Planning Task Force. It is anticipated a significant portion of the workforce will continue to work remotely much of the time through the fall.



# Risk Mitigation

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It is important to note that risk mitigation does not equate to risk elimination. There are myriad risks involved with operating a university and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated impacts compounded many of those risks. The safety and security of the AU community remains our paramount concern and the safeguards in this plan are designed to mitigate the risk of members of our community contracting COVID-19 and transmitting it to others.

The highest risk period for the university will be the first several weeks following the start of the fall semester due to increased presence of students, faculty, staff, and others who will be returning from communities, both domestic and international, impacted to varying degrees by community spread. The risk to the university also correlates with any uptick of community spread in the city or the region.

The following risk mitigation measures, which will be communicated to the campus community in the form of directives, will be implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19:

- **DENSITY MANAGEMENT:** In accordance with guidance from the DC Department of Health, overall density will be reduced by offering a blend of both in-person and online instruction, limiting and managing faculty and staff presence through Human Resource protocols, establishing adjusted room/space occupancy limits, reducing the number of resident students in the residence halls, restricting visitors and guests to all buildings, and managing attendance at authorized student group meetings.
- **PHYSICAL DISTANCING:** All members of the AU community and any authorized contractors or visitors are expected to maintain a distance of six feet while on campus. The university has taken active steps to proactively establish conditions, wherever possible, in the residential, dining, and academic settings, to facilitate maintaining a distance of six feet.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS:** We are restructuring schedules and responsibilities to minimize the numbers of people who need to be physically present. In addition, we are staggering work and class schedules, working in shifts, and creating additional shifts to reduce contact between individuals, and using technology to facilitate communication. We are also enacting protocols to address community members who are at high risk, those living with someone at high risk, or those who are in isolation.
- **CLEANING/CLEANING SUPPLIES:** The level and frequency of cleaning will be increased for all buildings. This includes more frequent cleaning of high touch surfaces throughout the day, with a special focus on additional daily cleaning of residence hall common areas and community bathrooms, implementing special cleaning requirements for labs, and placing hand sanitizer stations at all building entrances and elevator lobbies. Additional special cleaning procedures will be implemented for areas

where an individual tested positive for COVID-19. Supplemental cleaning supplies for faculty and staff will be centrally purchased and distributed to all buildings via the building manager, Human Resources representative, or other authorized university representative.

- FACILITY AIR QUALITY/WATER QUALITY:** The air quality of all buildings will be increased through the use of upgraded HVAC filters (based on availability) and/or changing filters on a more frequent basis. In addition, the flow of outside air will be increased to a level that will not compromise the space conditioning of any building. The water systems have been properly managed and maintained during Remote Operations to ensure both water quality and safety.
- SPACE MANAGEMENT:** To physically manage density where possible, instructional spaces and common areas will be reconfigured to reduce seating capacity or seats may otherwise be blocked. Plexiglas will be installed at reception desks, customer service desks, cash registers, and residence hall entry desks. Elevators will be limited to two occupants. Special purpose locations such as breakrooms, community bathrooms, and lounges will require users to self-regulate use to ensure physical distancing. Almost all meetings among staff and faculty will continue to be conducted via calls or videoconference, even for those members of the workforce that are physically present.
- TRAINING:** All members of the AU community will be required to complete education training on matters such as physical distancing protocols, wearing and care of face coverings, hand hygiene and personal care protocols, community care standards, signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and illness reporting requirements. In addition, health safety signage and visual cues will be placed around campus. Faculty and staff will also receive a safe return to work guidance manual.
- MEDICAL TESTING/TRACING/ISOLATION:** Decisions on COVID-19 testing for students will be made in accordance with recommendations and at the direction of the DC Department of Health (DCDOH). The university has designated rooms that will be used for isolation of students who are symptomatic or who otherwise test positive. DCDOH will conduct all contact tracing responsibilities for members of the AU community (faculty, students, staff, or contractors) who test positive for COVID-19. DCDOH will also report positives cases to AU when campus exposures are involved. AU will cooperate with DCDOH as they conduct tracing procedures.



- FACE COVERINGS/PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE):** All members of the AU community will be required to wear face coverings that cover the mouth and nose at all times while on campus, with the exception of alone inside residence hall rooms or alone in private offices. The university will order a supply of reusable face coverings that will be available to community members upon request. Disposable coverings will be available in select campus areas and for university personnel to distribute in situations where an individual does not have the appropriate face covering. Face coverings may be removed when eating, but diners must ensure physical distancing. The university will provide PPE to employees whose job function limits their ability to maintain physical distancing requirements in the following departments: Office of Information Technology, Facility Management, American University Police Department, Housing, Resident Life, Audio Visual, and Student Health Center. Contractors will be responsible for providing PPE to housekeeping and food service employees.
- PERSONAL HEALTH PRECAUTIONS:** In addition to wearing face coverings, all members of the AU community are expected to exercise personal health precautions through frequent hand washing, maintaining a distance of six feet between others, monitoring their own health daily, and seeking medical care if symptoms warrant. To support personal health screening, the university will provide a technology platform for all employees and students to use to routinely measure their state of health against known COVID-19 symptoms.

Further detailed health and safety precautions that will be taken in each functional area or environment of the university can be found in Appendix A.



# Resurgence Plan

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As noted above, on July 1, 2020, American University will adjust its operating status from Remote Operations to Modified Operations. American University can enact procedures to quickly return to Remote Operations should there be a resurgence of COVID-19 that compels the city to return to Phase One. Should circumstances require some students to remain on campus, American University will provide for their safety and essential care.



# Coordination with the District of Columbia

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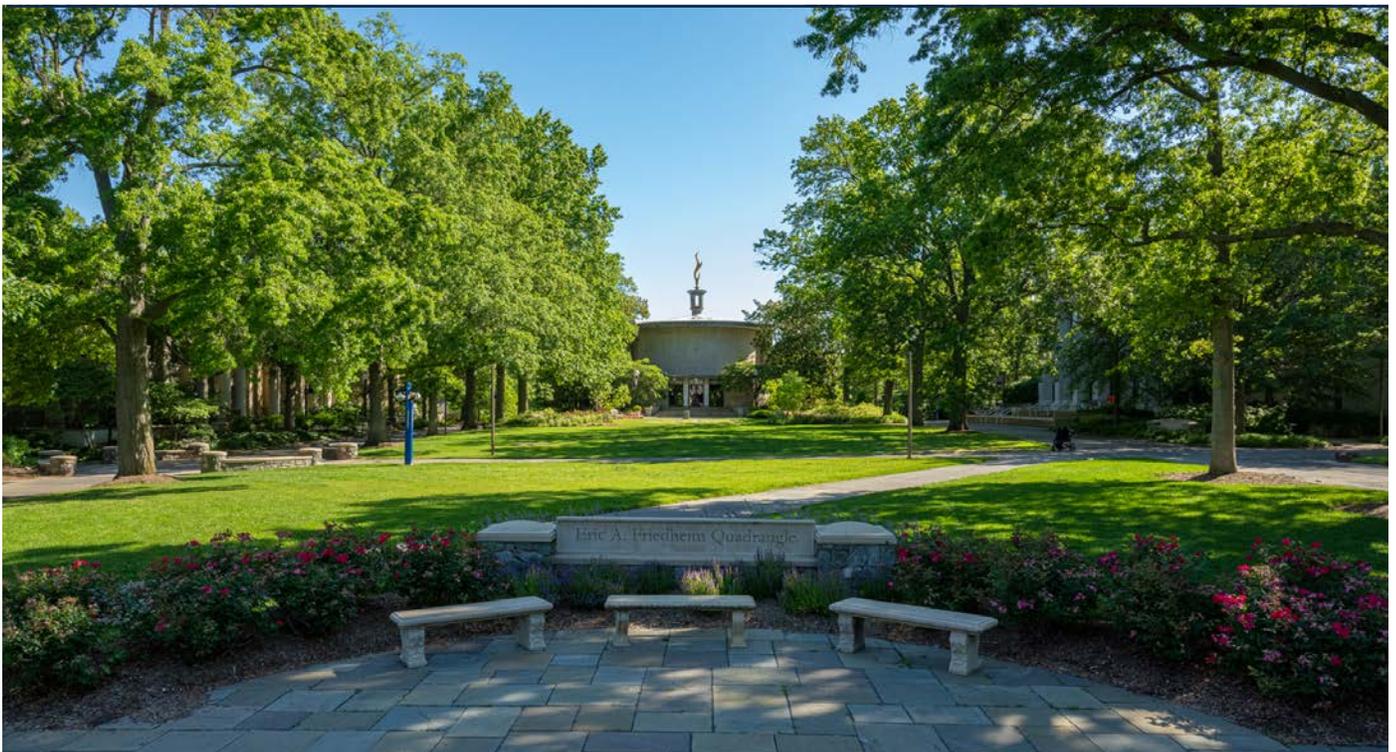
American University will continue to cooperate and coordinate with the District of Columbia governmental agencies tasked with planning for, responding to, and managing the effects of COVID-19. The following members of the AU leadership team have been appointed to liaise with the city on matters of mutual concern:

Dr. Fanta Aw	Seth Grossman	Dan Nichols
Vice President of Campus Life and Inclusive Excellence fanta@american.edu 202-885-3357	Chief of Staff and Counselor to the President sethg@american.edu 202-885-2164	Assistant Vice President, Risk Management dnichols@american.edu 202-885-2534

# Beyond Fall 2020

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This plan will be enhanced and updated in the months ahead based on the trajectory and velocity of COVID-19 transmission in the District, Maryland, and Virginia; direction from government officials; and expert advice on how to mitigate risks to keep our students, faculty, staff, and contractors safe. It relies on the full understanding, support, and cooperation of every member of the AU community. We must each make a personal commitment to our shared physical responsibility and recognize that our individual support of the plan and adherence to its standards will serve to enhance the safety of the entire community and create an environment of community care.



**APPENDIX A:  
HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS MATRIX**

ENVIRONMENT	MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY GUIDANCE	PHYSICAL DISTANCING	ENGINEERING CONTROLS	CLEANING ACTIVITIES AND FREQUENCY
Classrooms	Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times	Reconfigure room to achieve 6 foot separation between desks or workstations	Remove or block desks and/or chairs if necessary to maintain physical distancing	Routine cleaning daily including high-touch and horizontal surfaces
Student common areas (e.g., study lounges, student center common areas)	Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times	Reconfigure common areas to maintain 6 feet between seating or workstations	Remove or block furniture to maintain physical distancing; consider closing staff kitchens/ breakrooms	Routine cleaning daily; high-touch surfaces and horizontal work surfaces daily; provide disinfection wipes (if available)
Computer Class	Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times	Reconfigure rooms to achieve 6 foot separation between workstations	Remove or block work stations to enforce physical distancing	Routine cleaning daily including high-touch and horizontal surfaces
Terrace Dining Room/Food Distribution Locations	Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times	Provide grab-and-go meals and takeout orders; no-buffet/self-service; reservations required for in-hall dining	Remove chairs to maintain physical distancing	Food service cleaning continuously; high-touch surfaces 3x per day
Dining Retail	Maintain physical distancing for take-out only	Provide grab-and-go meals or takeout orders only	Floor marking for food service queuing; provide curbside pickup to maintain	Food service cleaning continuously; high-touch surfaces 3x per day
Elevators	2 occupants only per elevator car with both cloth face covering	Post signage in elevator cars outlining two person limit, cloth face coverings required. Provide Stand Here floor markings in elevator car	N/A	Routine cleaning twice daily

ENVIRONMENT	MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY GUIDANCE	PHYSICAL DISTANCING	ENGINEERING CONTROLS	CLEANING ACTIVITIES AND FREQUENCY
Event Spaces	Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times	Limit occupancy to maintain physical distancing; provide floor markings or signage to maintain physical distancing; Events Exception Committee will review, approve, and recommend precautions	Remove/block desks and/or chairs to maintain physical distancing	Routine cleaning, horizontal surface disinfection and high-touch surface cleaning after each event
Laboratory - Research and Instructional	6 feet physical distancing	Mark floors to identify physical distancing requirements for work stations and shared equipment based on type of research	Only individual lab coats; no sharing.	Routine cleaning daily and by occupant as needed (research) or after each class (instructional)
Library	Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times	Limit occupancy to maintain physical distancing	Remove or mark chairs or computer terminals to maintain physical distancing at workstations	Routine cleaning daily, increased high-touch surfaces and horizontal work surfaces daily; provide disinfection wipes (if available)
Locker Rooms	Maintain 6 foot physical distancing	Limit occupancy; mark floors to identify physical distancing requirements	Mark as 'Out of Service' alternate open shower stalls, sinks, bathroom stalls, and urinals to promote physical distancing	Routine cleaning daily; high-touch surfaces and horizontal work surfaces daily; provide disinfection wipes (if available)
Meeting Space - Conference Room	Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times	Discontinue all in person meetings to promote physical distancing, and accommodate employees displaced from shared offices	Remove or block chairs to maintain physical distancing	Routine cleaning daily; horizontal surface cleaning daily

ENVIRONMENT	MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY GUIDANCE	PHYSICAL DISTANCING	ENGINEERING CONTROLS	CLEANING ACTIVITIES AND FREQUENCY
Office Individual	One person per office	Office should only be occupied by one person	N/A	Routine cleaning daily; high-touch surfaces and horizontal work surfaces daily; provide disinfection wipes (if available)
Offices Shared (Open or enclosed)	Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times	Reconfigure to achieve 6 feet of separation between workstations	Use vacant meeting spaces as offices	Routine cleaning daily; High-touch surfaces daily; occupant cleaning as necessary
Outdoor Spaces	Prohibit gathering in excess of CDC or DCDH recommended guidance (e.g., 10, 50, 100) at time of implementation	Notify attendees of outdoor events of precautions (e.g., face coverings required, physical distancing precautions); Events Exception Committee will review, approve, and recommend precautions	Configure outdoor events to discourage large gatherings; provide physical barriers between event attendees	Equipment, tents, tables, etc. will be cleaned after each event
Reception Area/ Information Desk	Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times	Configure space to maintain 6 feet of distance between workstations	Provide physical barrier between employee and customer where physical interactions are required, Floor marking as necessary to indicate appropriate physical distancing	Routine cleaning daily
Recreation Center, Athletic Training Areas	100 sf/student/athlete (no guests)	Configure space to maintain 6 feet of distance between equipment	Reposition or remove athletic equipment separation to promote physical distancing	Routine cleaning twice daily; users responsible for cleaning equipment after use (if available); staff cleaning high-touch points on roving basis

ENVIRONMENT	MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY GUIDANCE	PHYSICAL DISTANCING	ENGINEERING CONTROLS	CLEANING ACTIVITIES AND FREQUENCY
Residence Hall	Residences - one student per room. 6 feet of distancing in common areas and study lounges	Configure furniture in common areas and study lounges to maintain 6 feet of distance between students	Provide physical barriers at residence hall desks	Routine cleaning twice daily of common areas and study lounges; occupants clean rooms per instructions provided by Housing and Residence Life
Restrooms	Occupancy is 50% the number of sinks, rounding up	Limit occupancy to maintain physical distancing	Block every other urinal/sink/stall to where practical	Routine cleaning twice daily
Shared Resource (e.g., copy room, break room)	Maintain 6 feet physical distancing	Limit occupancy to maintain physical distancing based on configuration	Block or turn off equipment if it's not absolutely necessary	Routine cleaning, horizontal surface disinfection and high-touch surface cleaning daily; provide disinfection wipes (if available)
Shuttles	50% maximum capacity, one rider per row per side of the vehicle. No Standing	Reduce ridership to maintain physical distancing	Block alternate seats to allow riders to sit alone. Load from rear door, exit from front door	Routine cleaning performed by shuttle contractor
Mary Graydon Center	Maintain 6 feet of physical distancing	Reconfigure common areas to maintain 6 feet of separation between seats, workstations, and study chairs	Remove or block furniture to maintain physical distancing	Routine cleaning, horizontal surface disinfection and high-touch surface cleaning daily; provide disinfection wipes (if available)
Swimming Pool	Maintain physical distancing	Not required in swim lanes	N/A	Routine cleaning daily

ENVIRONMENT	MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY GUIDANCE	PHYSICAL DISTANCING	ENGINEERING CONTROLS	CLEANING ACTIVITIES AND FREQUENCY
Child Development Center	No more than 10 people in each classroom including children and teachers	Reduce class size; eliminate classes combining at start/end of day; revise playground schedule; limit visitors and parent entry to center; outline occupancy limits on classroom floors	Remove furniture from classrooms; implement car line for drop-off and pick-up; health screening in car line consisting of confirmation of no temp over 100.4	Continue regular cleaning; removal and cleaning of toys that have been mouthed by child as needed/frequently throughout day; daily cleaning of toys; disinfectant wipes in all classrooms and offices for regular cleaning of high-touchpoints; more frequent/nightly carpet shampooing in classroom spaces
University Vehicles & Golf Carts	1 rider per vehicle	1 rider per vehicle	N/A	Provide disinfectant wipes to drivers to wipe down high-touch points after each use
Customer Service/ Reception Desks	Maintain 6 feet of physical distancing for each staff position when there are multiple staff present	Provide floor markings and signage where visitors should stand	Install Plexiglas barrier dividing staff from customer/ visitor	Disinfectant wipes to clean any material being exchanged