

As we near the start of the 2021-22 academic year, GCU is continuing to monitor the status of COVID-19 in Arizona. Our plans to return campus operations to the normal pre-pandemic experience are still in effect and are consistent with State of Arizona health policies, which do not allow vaccine or mask mandates in schools. We are confident we can adjust those operations if COVID conditions worsen at some point, but our plan is to reopen the campus without restrictions in the fall semester. That means full move-in and Welcome Week activities, full in-person instruction in the classroom, and campus activities such as clubs and athletic events that will operate without restrictions.

Vaccines are not mandatory on campus but will be available in the GCU Health and Wellness Clinic for any student who wants one. Exceptions are students who are involved in field work or clinical placements, such as nursing, in which the site or clinical partner (not the university) requires them and all employees to be vaccinated. To schedule a vaccine appointment, simply contact the Health Clinic at 844-391-1949 or healthcenter@gcu.edu once you have arrived on campus.

We highly encourage students, faculty and staff to be vaccinated in order to create the safest campus environment possible. [Studies show the vaccine initially is 95% effective](#) in preventing laboratory-confirmed infection with the virus that causes COVID-19 in people who were fully vaccinated and had no evidence of being previously infected. Six months after receiving the vaccine, [new data released last month](#) shows the vaccine is still 84% effective. “Breakthrough” COVID cases in which a vaccinated person does become infected [represent only about 0.004%](#) of those fully vaccinated, according to the CDC. Symptoms and complications have also been less severe among vaccinated “breakthrough” cases.

The recent rise in COVID cases nationally as a result of the Delta variant is primarily among those who are unvaccinated. The Delta variant is significantly more contagious and has been more prevalent among the 15-25 age group. Getting vaccinated is the most effective way to slow and stop the pandemic and ensure that we can continue to resume normal activities on campus. Also, at this time, fully vaccinated students who are not exhibiting signs or symptoms will not be required to quarantine if they are exposed to an individual who tests positive for COVID-19.

Social distancing and face coverings will not be required on campus, including the classroom, whether you are vaccinated or not, although students who wish to wear a mask in various settings are free to do so. An exception is the Health and Wellness Clinic, where face coverings are required.

If students have concerns about being on campus, we will continue to do everything we can to ensure you can take your classes online – course content permitting.

As we did prior to the 2020-21 academic year, we will be sending students a pledge form that must be signed acknowledging COVID conditions and risks on campus. We will also be updating our [COVID information page](#) soon with additional information related to quarantine and other protocols.

We look forward to seeing everyone on campus again soon and are confident that -- as a caring, Christian community – we will have another fantastic school year.