

University of South Alabama
**COVID-19 Policies for Clinical Students in the Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health
Professions, the College of Medicine, and the College of Nursing**
(Updated 8/26/21)

Key Elements

The University of South Alabama continues to closely monitor the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The health and safety of our students, faculty and staff is our highest priority as University leaders work closely with local, state and federal agencies to share the most updated information. The ongoing impact of the pandemic to our campus and community requires us to make modifications and remain flexible. The University Committee for Reopening Campus will continue to reassess these policies on a weekly basis and update them accordingly.

Students and employees should monitor emails and check the [University of South Alabama Coronavirus Updates website](#) regularly for updates.

Definition of Clinical Students

Clinical students are defined as follows:

- College of Allied Health Professions: Clinical students are those currently enrolled in any of the following programs: Basic EMT certificate, Advanced EMT certificate, Paramedic, Radiologic Sciences (Juniors and Seniors in RADS major code), Audiology, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Physician Assistant Studies, and Speech-Language Pathology.
- College of Medicine: Clinical students are those currently enrolled in the M.D. degree program.
- College of Nursing: Clinical students are those who are undergraduate students in the professional component of the traditional or accelerated BSN program and graduate students in a direct care clinical course required for the MSN, DNP or post-graduate certificate programs.

Guidelines Personal Responsibility, Monitoring and Reporting

All clinical students are expected to remain professional, diligent, respectful, flexible and collegial at all times. Students are expected to maintain the appropriate behavior of a health care professional and respect public health policies. Students are also expected to abide by any applicable federal, state, or local laws, regulations, orders, or ordinances in effect. Healthcare students are expected to:

- Follow current health and safety requirements of the educational and healthcare environment;
- Use proper and consistent hand hygiene; and
- Self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 and self-quarantine if symptoms arise.

Additionally, students are required to abide by the USA travel guidelines listed at:
<https://www.southalabama.edu/coronavirus/travel.html>.

Self-Monitoring Requirements

Students are required to self monitor prior to reporting to campus or their healthcare site (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath, rhinorrhea, loss of sense of taste or smell, sore throat, diarrhea, fatigue, new-onset headache, new-onset of congestion).

Students with NO clinical training (only attending didactic courses)

Regardless of vaccination status, **students who develop symptoms of COVID-19 are required** to contact USA Student Health Center at 251-460-7151 or StudentHealth@southalabama.edu for an appropriate medical evaluation. Students should self-quarantine until test results are known. Students must receive clearance from Student Health to return to classes. Students who receive a positive test result should follow the guidance below.

Regardless of vaccination status, **students who experience a close contact exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual are required** to notify USA Contact Tracing (reportcovid@southalabama.edu) and must abstain from in-person academic and clinical activities throughout any required quarantine period.

Students with part-time clinical training assignments (i.e. fieldwork and/or on-campus classes/clinical labs), except M3 and M4 students in the College of Medicine*

Students who engage in part-time clinical learning experiences and didactic instruction on the USA main campus will follow the general University of South Alabama policies and practices for COVID-19 reporting and quarantine; however, in addition to notifying reportcovid@southalabama.edu, clinical students will also notify the designated departmental or college leadership.

Students with full-time clinical training assignments (i.e. fieldwork and/or on-campus clinical labs)

Students, regardless of vaccination status, who have been identified by the Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions, the College of Nursing, and the College of Medicine as completing intensive (e.g., full-time) clinical rotations may follow quarantine guidelines utilized by clinical settings, rather than the general University of South Alabama guidelines.

Those students in a USA Health clinical setting who are exposed to COVID-19 in the clinical setting and following the masking requirements as stated by USA Health may remain in the clinical setting, self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms, and notify the designated college or departmental leadership. If the student becomes symptomatic, the student needs to leave the

clinical area immediately and cease clinical activities until cleared to return. The student will also immediately notify the designated college or departmental leadership and report the exposure to reportcovid@southalabama.edu, except COM M3 and M4 students who report to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or designee.

Clinical students completing direct care hours at a USA Health clinical setting who are exposed in a community setting outside of the clinical setting will follow USA Health policy for vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. Clinical students completing direct care hours at a clinical agency other than USA Health who are exposed to COVID-19 must notify the designated college or departmental leadership, follow policies of the clinical affiliate, and notify reportcovid@southalabama.edu.

**Faculty/Staff should not discuss or disclose positive cases or any potentially identifying information with anyone other than college leadership, Office of Contact Tracing and Human Resources. College leadership will only discuss positive cases or any potentially identifying information with clinical site administration to ensure the safety of patients, healthcare staff, students, and faculty, and will only disclose the minimum amount of information necessary.*

Relevant Contact Information:

| Office | Contact Information | Responsible Party |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| USA Office of Contact Tracing | reportcovid@southalabama.edu | TBD, Director of USA Contact Tracing |
| USA Student Health | 460-7151 | Ryan Ferguson, Director of Student Health Services |

Clinical Placement Policy

Some clinical sites require that all trainees be fully vaccinated prior to engaging in clinical training at the site. Because of these site-specific requirements, academic progress may be impacted. While you are not required to disclose vaccination status, if you have been fully vaccinated but choose not to disclose your status, you will be treated as unvaccinated for the purpose of clinical site COVID-19 guidelines. All students must follow COVID-19 guidelines of the clinical site. In addition to those guidelines, unvaccinated students are required to wear N95 or KN95 masks at all times in the clinical setting.

Students in the Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions, the College of Medicine, and the College of Nursing may participate in the care COVID-19 positive patients. In the care of these patients, students must adhere to the standard COVID-19 safety precautions that the clinical site and the USA clinical program have implemented. Students are to notify designated program or college leadership if they have specific concerns or reasons as to why they cannot

participate in the care of such patients. All students, regardless of vaccination status, are required to wear N95 masks while caring for known COVID-infected patients.

Students in the Emergency Medical Services program engaging in ambulance service may encounter patients of unknown COVID-19 status. Regardless of vaccination status, these students are required to wear N95/KN95 masks while engaging in ambulance service calls.

Graduate student clinicians in the Master of Science in Speech-Language Pathology (MS SLP) and Doctor of Audiology (AuD) programs are permitted to provide care to patients who briefly remove their mask during evaluation and/or intervention activities. Once the specified procedure is complete, the patient/client will don the mask again. While the mask is not being worn by the patient/client, the graduate student clinician will wear a KN95 or N95 mask and a face shield.

Program Responsibilities

Clinical programs will:

1. Train students regarding:
 - a. COVID-19
 - b. Hand hygiene
 - c. Infection control
 - d. PPE Use
 - e. What to do if exposed to an individual with COVID-19
2. Provide guidance on appropriate utilization of PPE while taking care of COVID+ patients.
3. Require appropriate PPE. Provide direction on how to sanitize cloth masks. Indicate additional PPE requirements, such as face shields.
4. Provide clear direction that the student may discontinue clinical training at any time; however, progression toward graduation may be impacted.
5. Require self-monitoring of symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath, rhinorrhea, loss of sense of taste or smell, sore throat, diarrhea, fatigue, new-onset headache, new-onset of congestion).
6. Provide clear direction to NOT go to clinical placements if they suspect any symptoms as well as who to report this to.
7. Provide clear direction on how to get testing for COVID-19 if symptoms present or if exposed.
8. Encourage students to maintain a safe lifestyle that limits potential exposure.
9. Require students to abide by the USA travel policy for COVID-19.

Re-evaluation of clinical site post COVID-19 exposure

The program faculty will confirm that the clinical facility has complied with containment of COVID-19 based on CDC guidelines and will request the COVID-19 policies and procedures in the event the policies have been updated. In the event that all appropriate measures are being taken, clinical training will continue unless the program faculty determine that the level of exposure risk at the facility precludes such training. If training is suspended at a facility, program faculty will work cooperatively with the facility to determine the next steps to resume clinical training.

In the event that proceeding with clinical training at a site with recent COVID-19 cases or exposure is recommended by the site and the program faculty, the program coordinator will inform the student(s) of the status of COVID-19 at the site.

The respective college policies and processes will be followed to make a decision to continue, delay and re-evaluate, or not return to the clinical site.