



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

## Office of the President

<b>SUBJECT:</b>  <b>EMERGENCY POLICY</b> Event Planning and COVID-19 Considerations  <b>THIS POLICY IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE</b>  <b>MORE INFORMATION ABOUT UCF RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS AT</b> <a href="https://www.ucf.edu/coronavirus/">https://www.ucf.edu/coronavirus/</a>	<b>Effective Date:</b>  2/12/2021	<b>Policy Number:</b>  EP – 20-2.2
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	<b>Responsible Authority(ies):</b> President Vice President for Compliance and Risk	

### APPLICABILITY/ACCOUNTABILITY

This policy applies to all events taking place on the university’s campuses, or within any facility on a university campus, or within or at any facility controlled by the university (such as UCF leased facilities and UCF Connect Campuses), collectively referred to as “campus” in this policy. This policy applies to events taking place at any space or facility temporarily being used for a university-sponsored event for the duration of the university’s control/use of that space or facility. This policy applies to all individuals involved in the planning or staffing of any event on campus or attending an event on campus.

### BACKGROUND

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), federal, state, and local agencies have provided guidance on health measures that should be in place for events and gatherings. This policy serves to set expectations for all members of the UCF community, contractors, and visitors to follow when planning, staffing, and participating in events and other gatherings, including guidance to determine when to use some level of informative communication/warning, acknowledgement, or waiver related to COVID-19. This policy anticipates and relies on the cooperation of all members of the university community.

Events are not merely recreational in nature; they can have substantial educational, cultural, social, and economic implications. As such, the university will assess the importance and benefit of a proposed event and consider whether it may take place, provided that all associated public health risks are adequately addressed and mitigated.

Effective September 25, 2020, Governor DeSantis moved the state to Phase 3 of the State of Florida Recovery Plan. Should the university be forced to limit operations due to changing community conditions, the university may call for all events to be placed on hold or canceled, and not be permitted to occur until state or local conditions have improved. Should an advancement of the state and local conditions warrant, the university may reevaluate its ability to safely host events with fewer restrictions, rescind this policy, and/or return to pre-COVID-19 status for hosting events.

The directives in this policy are premised, in part, on two points made by the CDC in their Guidance on Events and Gatherings: first, the *more people* an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading; and second, the *higher the level of community transmission* in the area that the gathering is being held, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering. The CDC uses “gathering” to refer to “a planned or spontaneous event, indoors or outdoors, with a small number of people participating or a large number of people in attendance such as a community event or gathering, concert, festival, conference, parade, wedding, or sporting event.” However, this policy and the procedures outlined in it are directed at planned events (gatherings) rather than spontaneous (unplanned) gatherings. The university recognizes it has little ability to direct the planning or initiation of an unplanned event; therefore, the focus of the university when confronted with a spontaneous event or gathering on campus or in a university facility will be to achieve compliance with campus rules generally or to disperse the participants as feasible if there is a continued lack of compliance.

## NOTICE

This policy is subject to frequent change with the introduction of additional public health guidelines from local, state, and federal authorities. Any policy amendments or updates will be communicated through the university policies website ([policies.ucf.edu](https://policies.ucf.edu)) and will take effect as of the date and time of publication.

The university provides general information on coronavirus and the university’s responses to it at <https://www.ucf.edu/coronavirus/>, which is regularly updated. This website may provide more details on items addressed in this policy.

## POLICY STATEMENT

Events and gatherings at the University of Central Florida as well as university-sponsored events held at any location will be based on official guidance, local public health conditions, and the university’s capacity to execute safety and security protocols. Use of university grounds or facilities for events is secondary to educational and other operational needs of the university. While we recognize that events have educational, cultural, social, and economic benefits, the

reality is there are inherent and real risks of disease transmission when people gather, especially when they gather indoors. As a result, the university has determined to restrict the use of university grounds and facilities for events of any kind as well as limit university-sponsored events. Should an event be proposed that requires an exception to this policy (for example, an indoor event with food), the event should be referred to the Emerging Issues and Crisis Response Team (EICRT), which will assess the importance and necessity of the proposed event and consider whether the event should take place, and, if so, with what restrictions. Requests from third parties for use of UCF facilities for events or gatherings should be reviewed under the same procedures as requests from the campus community. University sponsored events occurring at an off-campus venue are expected to follow the same procedures and protocols as those occurring on campus. This policy is in addition to existing event requests and approval processes at the university (for example, the SAFE Form approval process).

The university adopts the following proscriptions for campus events:

1. Virtual meetings or the addition of an optional virtual forum is encouraged when possible.
2. With the exception of entertainment venues, no indoor events or gatherings of over 50 persons are allowed.
3. Entertainment venues may have up to 50 percent of capacity, with physical distancing and enhanced sanitation and safety precautions, for the portion of the venue proposed to be used for the event. Until further notice, entertainment venues will be limited to the lesser of 50% capacity or 250 persons, if the event will be indoors.
4. Outdoor on-campus events proposed through the SAFE Form process will be evaluated based on the venue location, size, scope, and nature of the event prior to approval.
5. All in-person events must be ticketed **or** RSVP only.
  - i. The ticket process or RSVP must include the appropriate level of warning as defined by university guidance, the requirement to wear a mask, and physical distancing guidelines.
  - ii. Event organizers must maintain event guest lists for 60 days to allow for contact tracing as needed.
6. All on-campus events where food or beverage will be served or where more than 50 people are anticipated to attend must be reviewed through the SAFE Form process.

## DEFINITIONS

**Camps and Youth Programs.** Academic, recreational, and service programs and campus activities designed for the participation of minors who are not enrolled as UCF students.

**Entertainment Venue.** Areas commonly used for large gatherings and events of 100 persons or more, such as, but not limited to: Athletics spaces, Arena/Venue, Alumni Center, Student Union, and outdoor spaces like Memory Mall, Lake Claire, and the Reflection Pond.

**Event.** Any gathering or other assembly of people that requires the reservation of space, which

is held in any facility on any campus of the university, or in any facility controlled by the university even if not located on campus. “Event” does not include instructional activities (e.g., classes, labs, etc.), athletic competitions arranged or sponsored by UCF Athletics Association, or day-to-day activities of the Recreation and Wellness Center that are covered through separate plans approved by EICRT.

**Face Covering.** Reusable cloth face mask or disposable mask. See COVID-19 Return to Campus Policy (EP-20-1) for additional information about face coverings – available at <https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/PolicyEmergencyCOVIDReturnPolicy.pdf>.

**Gathering.** The CDC defines a “gathering” as “a planned or spontaneous event, indoors or outdoors, with a small number of people participating or a large number of people in attendance such as a community event or gathering, concert, festival, conference, parade, wedding, or sporting event.” Gatherings are subject to the requirements of this policy even if they occur in a location that does not require a space reservation. Like “events”, “gathering” does not include instructional activities (e.g., classes, labs, etc.), athletic competitions arranged or sponsored by UCF Athletics Association under their own policy, or day-to-day activities of the Recreation and Wellness Center.

**University-Sponsored Event.** Any event that is held either on campus or at an off-site venue that is sponsored, co-sponsored, and/or funded by the university. University-sponsored events exclude those hosted at a personal residence not owned by the University of Central Florida.

## PROCEDURES

The university cannot guarantee a risk-free environment. However, the following precautionary measures and procedures are intended to minimize the spread of COVID-19 at UCF when faculty, staff, students, visitors, contractors, and volunteers participate in, or staff, events. These precautionary measures must be followed by all who are involved in events on campus, in university facilities, or at university-sponsored off-campus events including those who organize or staff the event and those who attend or participate in the event. See the university’s [COVID-19 Return to Campus](#) policy for more information about these precautionary measures.

### **A. Required Precautionary Measures – Applicable to All Employees, Students, Visitors, Contractors, Volunteers**

- a. Face coverings are required to be worn during all indoor events and at outdoor events. Wearing a face covering is not required or may not be appropriate while actively eating or drinking (but the person should be stationary and also maintain physical distance), or for children under age 2 or who are unable to comply with mask wearing, or for persons of any age who are developmentally unable to wear a mask.
- b. Everyone involved in an event is to practice six feet of physical distancing to the greatest extent possible, giving consideration to venue ingress/egress, line queuing, and ticketing logistics. Best practices to aid in physical distancing during events should be

utilized, such as: limiting the number of participants; staggering arrivals and departures; removing or distancing tables, chairs, and other furniture in common areas; and installing protective shields at reception areas.

c. Everyone involved in an event should follow good hygiene practices such as frequent and thorough hand washing, avoiding touching of the face, and disinfecting touched items.

d. No person should come to campus or participate in or staff an event if they have tested positive for COVID-19, even if they are asymptomatic, until such time as they are cleared to return to normal activities. No person should come to campus (or, if they live on campus, leave their residence hall room) or to an event:

- if they are ill, or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or
- if any person living in the same residence has tested positive for COVID-19 or is sick with or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or
- for the advised period after close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is ill with COVID-19 symptoms, or
- until released by a healthcare provider or a public health official after receiving a positive COVID-19 test result, even if asymptomatic, or
- for the period advised by a healthcare provider or public health official while waiting for COVID-19 test results.

For more information about close contact and about quarantine and isolation, see Section J of the university's [COVID-19 Return to Campus Policy](#).

## **B. Event Locations and Facilities**

a. As much as possible, events should occur using virtual platforms (e.g., Skype, Teams, Zoom, etc.).

b. If an in-person event is necessary, the event planner must structure the event to conform to space capacity limits, physical distancing, and other health measures. The addition of an optional virtual forum for in-person events is encouraged.

c. Outdoor in-person events are preferred to indoor in-person events, and those outdoor events being held on campus anticipated to involve 50 or more people will be evaluated through the SAFE Form process, including consideration of venue location, size, scope, and nature of the event prior to approval.

d. Outdoor events at entertainment venues may have up to 50 percent of capacity, as long as physical distancing can be maintained, and enhanced sanitation and safety precautions can be followed. Until further notice, indoor events in any entertainment venue are limited to the lesser of 50% capacity or 250 persons.

e. University-sponsored outdoor events held at offsite venues may have up to 50 percent capacity as long as physical distancing can be maintained, and enhanced sanitation and safety precautions can be followed. University-sponsored indoor events held at offsite venues in which 50 or more people are anticipated should be submitted to EICRT for review. University-sponsored indoor events held offsite in venues with capacity commonly used for large gatherings and events of 100 persons or more are limited to the lesser of 50% capacity or 250 persons.

### **C. Event Process Requirements and Enhancements**

a. Until further notice, no indoor events of over 50 persons will be permitted except in entertainment venues.

b. For the duration of this policy, all on-campus events over 50 people are considered to be ‘potentially hazardous events’ that must be vetted and pre-approved through the UCF SAFE Form process (University Regulation UCF-4.0292). SAFE forms must be submitted 15 days in advance of the event, but organizers are encouraged to submit requests as early as possible to allow for extra time that may be needed for documentation prior to approval. The Office of Student Involvement will administer the submission process in conjunction with designated building management, and each venue’s ability to safely host the requested event.

c. All events of under 50 people should work with the designated building manager (venue location) to ensure compliance with COVID-19 safety guidelines for all facets of the event. If the event organizer is seeking to hold an event of under 50 people in a facility or grounds space that does not permit reservations, then the event organizer should follow the guidelines of this policy in organizing and holding the event, including all the required precautionary measures listed in this policy. The university reserves the right to require an event organizer to modify an event in process (including, if appropriate, halting the event), if the event is not complying with the requirements of this policy, including but not limited to the required precautionary measures.

d. All in-person events must be ticketed or RSVP only. The RSVP must include the appropriate level of warning as defined by university guidance, the requirement to wear a mask, and physical distancing guidelines. RSVP’d event organizers must maintain event guest lists for 60 days following the event.

e. Consult the appropriate UCF units before implementing safety measures designed to mitigate transmission, such as physical distancing, like Environmental Health and Safety, Emergency Management, and Building Department.

### **D. Food and Beverage**

Until further notice, no food or beverage is allowed at indoor events at UCF. Food and beverage

for outdoor events on campus must be proposed through the SAFE Form process (or, if being arranged at an entertainment venue, be approved by the entertainment venue management), regardless of planned size of the event, and will be evaluated based on the venue location, size, scope, and nature of the event prior to approval.

If food and beverages are approved for an outdoor event, all catering services must be provided by internal third-party contractors (e.g., Aramark) or approved external providers. Exceptions may be granted outside of the approved caterers for cultural and ethnic considerations and must be approved in advance through the event approval process (SAFE Form process or through entertainment venue management). For an event involving a caterer not on the approved caterers list, the event organizer must submit the caterer's COVID-19 operational plan as part of the event approval process in advance for exception approval. Further, any catering provider must abide by the policies and procedures adopted by UCF as well as any applicable federal, state and CDC recommendations related to food and beverage service.

In addition to the above, for events at which food and beverage will be provided as part of the event, the following considerations apply, and the event organizer should outline their food and beverage service plans for the event as part of the SAFE Form process:

- a. If food is offered at any event, pre-packaged boxes or bags should be provided for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing food and utensils and consider the safety of individuals with food allergies.
- b. Grab-and-go options for meals should be provided when possible. If a cafeteria or group dining room is typically used, then, if possible, serve individually plated meals (versus buffet or self-serve stations).
- c. Disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes) should be used. If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.
- d. Individually packaged food items must be commercially pre-packaged. No self-prepared or self-packaged food items are permitted. Event organizers may purchase commercially pre-packaged items (e.g., bottled water, canned soda, individually portioned snacks, etc.) to self-cater for events.
- e. Any catering services must have adopted health and safety standards to address COVID-19 concerns, including such things as appropriate PPE training for staff, provision of appropriate PPE and hand sanitizer to staff, staff hygiene and food handling rules, ongoing cleaning of the food service space, appropriate pre-event staff screening, use of disposable food service items as appropriate, appropriate physical barriers (e.g., sneeze guards or acrylic shield protection), and appropriate illness response protocols.

Entertainment venues operated by third parties or by the UCF Athletics Association have provided to the university detailed operational plans for reopening their venues, including their policies for handling food and beverage during events.

The above-mentioned considerations are applicable for offsite university-sponsored events. Requests for food and beverage at university-sponsored events being held at offsite venues should be reviewed by EICRT. Event organizers should provide food and beverage service plans for the event along with the venue's COVID-19 protocols and operational plan as part of the review.

## **E. Student-Organized Events**

As stated above, all events and other gatherings should continue to occur virtually, rather than in person, as much as possible, and all events must incorporate and abide by the required precautionary measures. These rules apply equally to student-organized events as to university-organized events. Students are advised to plan events or gatherings with all of these precautionary measures and requirements in mind (including wearing of facial coverings, maintaining physical distancing, abiding by capacity limits for the space, and encouraging hand washing or use of hand sanitizer).

Registered student organizations must take the following actions to hold in-person events:

- a. Maintain active registration with the Office of Student Involvement.
- b. Submit an RSO COVID-19 Safety Plan.
- c. Authorized officers must complete the COVID-19 Safety Module.
- d. Comply with all university policies and procedures.
- e. Utilize KnightConnect or similar application for event disclaimer/RSVP/attendee verification.
- f. Utilize the SAFE Form event procedure for any event with anticipated attendance of 50 persons or more.

Organized student groups that are not registered student organizations (RSOs) may organize events on campus and, if they do, will be expected to abide by the requirements of this policy. Requests for space from such groups will be handled as requests from the public or, if a university department is co-organizing the event with the group, as a campus department request.

## **F. Camps and Youth Programs**

All camps and other youth programs must continue to comply with the university's Youth Protection Policy 2-005, register with University Compliance, Ethics, and Risk, and abide by all university-approved event standards as listed within or in relation to necessary safety measures for COVID-19. University Compliance, Ethics, and Risk may update its processes and forms for approval or attendance to reflect changes to university policies and procedures in light of COVID-19.

## **G. Communication**

All in-person events must display university-approved health and safety guidance (such as reminders to physically distance and wear face coverings) in prominent locations, as well as any applicable warnings, as appropriate. Event organizers are encouraged to communicate university policies and procedures to participants in advance of and, as applicable, during the event.



Specifically, event organizers should communicate information about the following to attendees: university policies and procedures; mandatory face coverings; physical distancing; handwashing; cleaning and disinfection; respiratory etiquette and hygiene; COVID-19 precautions on campus; food and beverage restrictions; encouraging those that are feeling unwell (or who are waiting for COVID-19 test results, or who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not yet been released to return to normal activities) not to attend or to participate in the event virtually; and encouraging those that are at higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 to participate in the event virtually.

Depending on the nature of the event, event organizers should consider providing additional messaging through websites; social media channels; ticket purchasing sites; emails and push notifications; mobile apps; signage; event registration and check-in; and event organizers and volunteers. The goal is to provide notice to all participants of applicable health and safety precautions that will be in place for the event.

## **H. Warnings - Disclaimers, Waivers, Releases, and Similar Written Instruments**

As the UCF community returns to a full range of campus operations, it is important that members of the campus community, visitors, and contractors understand the risks posed by COVID-19 in all facets of public life, including when participating in different activities/events at the university. To do that, event organizers or venue operators at the university should develop and utilize appropriate warnings to ensure event attendees, activity participants, and venue visitors understand the risks of such attendance, participation, or visitation.

To assist campus event organizers and site managers with devising and publishing appropriate warnings, the university developed Guidance on Drafting and Use of Warnings (disclaimers, assumption of risk, waivers, releases, and similar written instruments) for the COVID-19 era, available at <https://generalcounsel.ucf.edu/> (direct document link: <https://generalcounsel.ucf.edu/files/2020/07/COVID-19-Era-Guidance-on-Drafting-and-Use-of-Warnings.pdf>). Event organizers should refer to this document to determine what kind of warning would be appropriate for the event in question and whether it can be drafted using the guidance provided.

## **I. Enforcement**

All events must comply with this policy. All event organizers must be familiar with the requirements of this policy and any university requirements for health and safety generally and events specifically. All individuals involved in a campus event – whether organizing it, staffing it, or participating in it – must comply with the requirements of this policy and applicable requirements of the [COVID-19 Return to Campus Policy](#) (EP-20-1).

While the goal of the university is that all individuals will cooperate and voluntarily comply with these requirements, should there be a failure to do so, the university may take action against the noncompliant individual or group. Such action may include education and training, disciplinary action, or removal from the event or the campus with or without a trespass warning. Groups or individuals that organize an event and then fail to comply with this policy may be restricted from organizing further events.

This policy and the procedures outlined in it are directed at planned events (gatherings) rather than spontaneous (unplanned) gatherings. The focus of the university when confronted with a spontaneous event or gathering on campus or in a university facility will be to achieve compliance with campus rules generally or to disperse the participants as feasible if there is a continued lack of compliance.

**RELATED INFORMATION**

UCF Coronavirus Information page (regularly updated):

<https://www.ucf.edu/coronavirus/>

UCF Emergency Policy (EP-20-1.) – COVID-19 Return to Campus:

<https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/PolicyEmergencyCOVIDReturnPolicy.pdf>

UCF Regulation UCF-4.0292 Potentially Hazardous Events – the SAFE Form process:

<https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter4/documents/4.0292PotentialHazardousEventsFINALJune18.pdf>

UCF EICRT Guidance Drafting and Use of Warnings for the COVID-19 era:

<https://generalcounsel.ucf.edu/>

CDC Guidance on Events and Other Gatherings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html> (page last updated January 8, 2021)

**INITIATING AUTHORITY:** President

<b>POLICY APPROVAL</b> <b>(For use by the Office of the President)</b>	
Policy Number: EP-20-2.2	
President or Designee: <u>Alexander Cartwright</u>	Digitally signed by Alexander Cartwright Date: 2021.02.12 09:21:23 -05'00'
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