



**Mask/PPE, physical distancing, and food/beverage allowances for  
mandatory and optional educational activities in the  
JABSOM MD Program**

**July 24, 2021 (Tier 5)**

Changes since July 20, 2021 are highlighted below

Aloha everyone. For more than a week, we have seen triple digit cases which include mild SARS-CoV-2 infections in those fully vaccinated. Emerging evidence about the Delta variant shows that an unvaccinated infected person can carry 1000 times more virus than the original SARS-CoV-2 strain. Additionally, we know the Delta is about 225% more easily transmissible by those unvaccinated. What we do not know is how likely a fully vaccinated individual can transmit the Delta variant to others, but it is prudent to assume that there is a low risk of transmission. Based on the above, we are making some safety updates.

Effective Monday, July 26, 2021, we will be reverting back to 100% mask-wearing indoors (unless you are working in isolation or more than 6 feet apart from others), even if the entire group is fully vaccinated. Additionally, any food consumed indoors should be at your desk/personal space, outdoors, or in the café where there is more physical distancing. **Please do NOT consume food with others during PBL tutorials or in breakrooms. Please do not reconfigure/move tables and chairs in the café.** We will reassess this policy monthly.

The following are updates to requirements for [masks](#), use of eye protection, physical distancing, and allowance of food during approved educational events in the **MD program** only. MD Program course and curricular component directors will inform the affected faculty, students, and staff to ensure common understanding and compliance. **JABSOM faculty and staff will also periodically remind the students about distancing and check for mask-wearing (especially during breaks).**

[UH Interim COVID-19 Guidelines](#) apply, which includes 3 feet physical distancing indoors and universal masking, regardless of vaccination status, unless you are in a private office, working in isolation or more than 6 feet from others, or we can verify that all in the room are fully vaccinated. UH as a whole is an [Institute of Higher Education \(IHE\) where not everyone is fully vaccinated](#). All of these guidelines are fluid as the prevalence of COVID-19 and vaccination rates continue to evolve.

Also note that unvaccinated students in health professional programs may have restrictions or may not participate in required classes, rotations, or practicums where the site requires COVID-19 vaccination for the safety of patients, other staff, and the public. Missing required coursework would impede the attainment of their degree or certification. For any unvaccinated medical students, we will require weekly antigen testing. The frequency may change if the prevalence of COVID-19 / Delta variant continues to increase.

[Situational awareness and context for decision-making](#)

**Risks:** The number of laboratory-confirmed COVID cases are steadily increasing, with the more contagious Delta variant (and P.1) currently comprising about 55% (increased from 40% 2 weeks ago) of the circulating [variants](#) in Hawai'i. Thus far, rising case counts and [clusters](#) in

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overwhelmingly in unvaccinated individuals are due to large social gatherings, inconsistent mask use indoors (especially in social gatherings, places of worship), and in Hawai'i residents returning home from mainland travel. Travel-associated cases, especially among residents returning home, make up 20% and visitors (2%). The great majority of hospitalized patients are unvaccinated.

Mitigating factors: High vaccination rates, high adherence to mask-wearing, physical distancing, and conducting activities outdoors or in well-ventilated areas are the best way to stay safe. In Spring 2021, JABSOM required vaccination for all medical students. All incoming students will be fully vaccinated by the end of July. All current MS2, MS3s, and MS4s are fully vaccinated. More than 95% of core faculty in OME & clinical departments and OME staff who support the MD educational programs are fully vaccinated. A recent UH system-wide survey of UH/RCUH/UH Foundation employees and staff, with an approximately 60% response rate, showed >96% already vaccinated on the Mānoa campus. Because many of our `ohana are health professionals, in health care settings and/or who work with highly vulnerable populations, we are adopting a higher safety standard. There remain specific situations that continue to require eye protection (i.e., any experience with patients (i.e., HOME, clinical sites).

We continue to strongly encourage vaccination for all members of the JABSOM Ohana. However, not everyone is fully vaccinated. Additionally, many fully vaccinated individuals live with individuals who are at high-risk for getting moderate-severe COVID disease. Therefore, we need to continue to reinforce masking and physical distancing in situations where there may be unvaccinated individuals. Please remember that COVID-19 vaccinations are an individual choice for employees and non-medical students. Thus, we should not be asking “why not” or creating situations where people may be made to feel uncomfortable or pressured into disclosing their immunization status, personal circumstances, or why they are wearing a mask.

If you are going to have food (see below), remember to completely clean up after yourselves and wipe down the area with the provided supplies. We all need to continue with good preventive practices, to keep everyone safe regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Omori and Dr. Buenconsejo-Lum.

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Please note the [current UH COVID-19 Interim Guidelines](#) allow for 3 feet physical distancing in all indoor educational and office spaces with masks on.

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MEB educational spaces

- Larger classrooms, auditorium (301, 304, 314, 315) and PBL rooms: Up to max capacity. However, if the auditorium is available for large lectures, that is preferred to allow for closer to 3 feet spacing.

Anatomy Lab

- Surgical mask. Eye protection is required for the student who wears contact lenses. Depending on the community transmission rates in September, eye protection may be required for all students. Other PPE as required by the lab (made available separately to students before MD2 and MD6).

Clinical Skills (Loui lab or elsewhere) and SimTiki

- Surgical mask WITH eye protection (goggles or face shields). Groupings as makes sense for the activity.

Longitudinal Clinical Mentoring, Community Medicine, HOME clinic, and all Clinical Experiences

- Mask & eye protection or other PPE requirements specific to that site.
- If a student is unvaccinated, the site may not accept that student.

Testing (computer lab or other site)

- Mask for everyone, no eye protection
- Reserve 3 computers as spares/back-up, otherwise to capacity

Food & drink during approved curricular events, including study groups (indoors & outdoors)

- ~~(Indoor) Ascertain if people in the group are comfortable with others eating in close proximity. If not, then no eating/drinking. No food in groups, unless physically spaced (café) or outside.~~
- Outdoor activities should be physically spaced as much as possible if food is planned.
- Food should be self-contained, individually packaged only. This also applies to snacks made available in the library and in the learning resource area.
- ~~If in a mixed group masks may be briefly removed to snack or sip beverages~~
- ~~Beverage — place straw under the mask or briefly remove the mask to sip~~
- As much physical distancing as possible for all educational events where food is allowed

Outdoor educational activities

- Physically distance as much as possible. Break into smaller groups if more than 75. Masks required if mixed group.

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**OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES**

(Optional) Shadowing

- Allowed with approval (see non-credit elective form and separate guidance for shadowing (MS1-MS4)). Mask and PPE requirements specific to that site.

(Optional) Interest groups

- Mask, no eye protection. Max 25 inside, 75 outside and may include faculty or residents/fellows as applicable. No other participants at this time. Utilize as much physical distancing as possible.
- **Food is discouraged. If there needs to be food,** it should be eaten outside and physically spaced as much as possible.
- Per UH COVID-19 Interim Guidelines, all visitors (and students, employees, or vendors) must complete LumiSight UH (or a paper version), regardless of vaccination status. This required self-check must include contact information should the need arise. Anyone ill needs to stay home. Organizers of group activities should place contact-tracing forms into the shred bin after 14 days.
- Please consult the Office of Student Affairs and the JABSOM Special Events team while planning the event to ensure adherence to safety protocols.

(Optional) Volunteering at mass vaccination PODs

- Requires approval by Dr. Omori and Dr. Buenconsejo-Lum.
- Faculty and student volunteers for mass vaccination PODs should be registered through the [UH Medical Reserve Corps](#) (if you are not already registered through the main Department of Health MRC). This is required even if the POD is not directly operated by the Department of Health. Membership in the MRC provides an additional layer of immunity protection for health care professionals and health professions students as described in Exhibit A of the Governor's [18<sup>th</sup> Emergency Proclamation](#) related to the COVID-19 emergency.
- Faculty supervision is required for all students serving as vaccinators.
- Masks required. Additional PPE will be required if the students will serve as vaccinators or vaccine preparers.
- Volunteer opportunities for non-vaccinator roles may be offered by the health systems (i.e., by Kaiser) to students whose longitudinal clinical mentor or LIC preceptors volunteer at PODs. All those sites have faculty to serve as supervisors (even if it is not the student's LCM or LIC preceptor). Students may volunteer on their own time, as their schedules allow.
- Vaccine POD activities do not take the place of LCM sessions, LIC clinical experiences, or other required curricular experiences.

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(Optional) Other volunteer activities

- Mask, eye protection, and any other PPE or requirements specific to that site.
- All medical student volunteer activities need to be coordinated through the Office of Student Affairs, in accordance with AAMC guidance.