

**Academic Continuity and the
Health and Safety of Students, Faculty, and Staff Policy for
Winter and Spring Terms 2021
SUNY Suffolk
January 21, 2021**

Following is the SUNY Suffolk plan to phase in the safe return of students for Winter 2020 and Spring 2021 to accommodate the testing and other health and safety requirements mandated by SUNY.

1. COVID-19 Testing and Monitoring

A. Departing Campus in Fall:

The SUNY Suffolk *Final Fall Down Testing Policy Plan* for the remainder of the fall 2020 semester was approved by SUNY on November 13, 2020. COVID-19 Surveillance Pool Testing will continue on our campuses through December 18, 2020. Our fall 2020 semester ends on December 23.

B. Students Remaining on Campus:

We are a non-residential campus and have no students living on our campuses.

C. Returning to Campus for Winter and Spring Terms Testing and Isolation Requirements:

All enrolled students returning to campus for services, on-campus courses, or for work on campus will be tested for COVID-19.

Holiday/Semester Break

When our campuses reopen after being closed for the Christmas holiday, all employees entering campuses will be required to complete the Daily Health Screening Survey which will screen for travel history, COVID-19 exposure, and COVID-19 symptoms over the previous 14 days. All employees complete this survey each day they are scheduled to work on-site.

All enrolled students coming onto campus to seek services after the end of the Winter Session and prior to the start of the spring semester will be required to complete the Daily Health Screening Survey which will screen for travel history, COVID-19 exposure, and COVID-19 symptoms over the previous 14 days, and will be directed to participate in the on-campus COVID-19 saliva pool test at campus test centers.

To comply with SUNY's seven-day precautionary quarantine attestation requirement, students will be required to complete a yes/no response to a statement on their Daily Health Screening Survey which reads as follows:

I attest that I have either:

- a. Completed a seven (7) day precautionary quarantine prior to returning to campus, or*
- b. Should be exempt from the seven (7) day precautionary quarantine requirement because I meet one of more of the following criteria: (i) I am a medical or health professions student designated as an "essential employee"; (ii) I am a commuter student who is*

employed and need to work during the seven (7) day period I would be required to complete this precautionary quarantine; or (iii) I am a commuter student and completing this precautionary quarantine is not feasible based on other bona fide reasons such as caregiving responsibilities or personal needs I must attend to during this period.

Daily Health Screening Surveys are tracked daily by the College.

Prospective students and visitors will be required to complete a Daily Health Screening Survey which will screen for travel history, COVID-19 exposure, and COVID-19 symptoms over the previous 14 days, as a condition of entering onto campus.

Winter Session

Our Winter Session runs from December 28, 2020 through January 15, 2021. All Winter Session Classes will be conducted remotely, except for a very small percentage of courses with clinical practicums, research, and applied learning experiences that require physical presence, as detailed below. Faculty, staff, and students participating in these on-campus courses and in-person activities will be required to complete the Daily Health Screening Survey which will screen for travel history, COVID-19 exposure, and COVID-19 symptoms over the previous 14 days. All employees and students complete this survey each day they are scheduled to be on-site. Students will be required to complete the attestation outlined above to meet SUNY's seven-day precautionary quarantine attestation requirement.

Surveillance Testing

Beginning on January 22 and extending through January 30, all students enrolled in on-campus courses which begin on January 25 will be directed to participate in the on-campus pre-screening COVID-19 saliva pool test at campus test centers within five (5) days of returning to campus. Alternatively, students may present evidence of a negative external COVID-19 test taken within three (3) days prior to return to campus. We will track students who participate in these tests and follow-up with restriction on campus access and/or disciplinary sanctions for all students who do not comply.

Beginning on January 29 and extending through February 6, all students enrolled in on-campus courses which begin on February 1, 2021 will be required to participate in the on-campus pre-screening COVID-19 saliva pool test at campus test centers within five (5) days of returning to campus. Alternatively, students may present evidence of a negative external COVID-19 test taken within three (3) days prior to return to campus. We will track students who participate in these tests and follow-up with restriction on campus access and/or disciplinary sanctions for all students who do not comply.

Students who believe they should be exempt from the return-to-campus testing requirement because of a prior positive diagnostic result for COVID-19 from the prior 3-month period will be required to present documentation of the same, unless they have already submitted this to us while enrolled the previous semester.

Students, faculty, and staff who have traveled to/from restricted states/regions or to/from international locations as defined by New York State will be directed to follow the New York State COVID-19 Travel Advisory and attest that they have submitted the New York Traveler Health form and will follow the guidance of the Suffolk County Department of Health related

to mandatory testing, quarantine/isolation, and timing of returning to campus. We require students and employees to provide a copy of the confirmation of submission of this form if they have traveled and inform them they are not permitted to come to campus until quarantine requirements have been satisfied.

Beginning February 1, 100% of all students and employees coming onto campus for classes or to seek services will be directed to participate in weekly on-campus COVID-19 saliva pool tests at each of our campus test centers. Testing dates have been scheduled on a weekly basis through the end of April on each campus. For students who are not on campus on a weekly basis, students must participate in COVID-19 testing any week they are coming to campus. We will track students who participate in these tests and follow-up with restrictions on campus access and/or disciplinary sanctions for all students who do not comply.

All employees who are required to report in person to campus or to an off-site location (such as a clinical or field site) to conduct some or all of their College work obligation will be tested weekly for COVID-19 as part of the College's regular COVID-19 surveillance testing program, pursuant to agreements reached with our three bargaining units and directives to non-represented employees.

Beginning on May 6 and continuing through May 12, we will conduct end-of-semester testing before students and staff leave campus for the summer break.

Any student or employee testing positive for COVID-19 will be directed to isolate and follow the New York State Department of Health Order on isolation and the guidance of the Suffolk County Department of Health (SCDOH) on length of said isolation and timing of return to campus. As we do not have any residential students, we do not maintain any quarantine or isolation spaces for students. A strong relationship currently exists between SUNY Suffolk and SCDOH with established communication protocols in place.

2. Mode of Instruction:

A. Winter Session 2020–21:

97.59% of our Winter Session credit-bearing classes will be conducted remotely. 2.41% of our credit-bearing classes will be offered in-person (off-site)—these are courses with clinical practicums, research, and applied learning experiences that require physical presence. On-campus density will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable and consistent with NYSDOH guidelines.

B. Spring 2021 semester:

All courses will begin on January 25, 2021 and will be conducted remotely prior to February 1, 2021.

The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs at SUNY Suffolk, Dr. Paul Beaudin, submitted to the SUNY Provost on November 26, 2020 the spreadsheet of notification for the number of students who will be on campus from January 25 to February 1, 2021 and the number who will be completing clinicals off-campus in Winter and Spring, 2021. We are not requesting any exceptions.

After February 1, 2021, 14.72% of our credit-bearing sections will be offered in-person /in-person component, and 85.28% of our credit-bearing sections will be offered in a remote modality.

C. Remote Instruction:

- i. Transparency:** Before the beginning of each semester, we will publish on our website the following percentage of courses which will be offered in-person and remote.

Winter Session 2021:

2.41% of our credit-bearing sections will be offered in-person (off-site).

97.59% of our credit-bearing sections will be offered in a remote modality.

Spring Semester 2021:

14.72% of our credit-bearing sections will be offered in-person /in-person component.

85.28% of our credit-bearing sections will be offered in a remote modality.

The modality of each particular courses is also identified in our online course schedule so that students are informed of the modality in which the section they are selecting will be taught.

- ii. Regular Interaction:** In the following ways, SUNY Suffolk will provide for the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with both the length of time, and the amount of content, in the course or competency, and will monitor the student's academic engagement and success, and will make it clear that the instructor(s) are responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.

Suffolk County Community College provides the opportunity for substantive interactions with students on a predictable and regular basis in its online, real-time online and combined online offerings in the following ways:

- Adoption of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) theoretical framework in course design and redesign
- Utilization of the Blackboard Learning Management System and its discussion board forums and group discussion board forums for faculty-to student and student-to-student engagement, appropriate to course content; and on a predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of the course
- Use of the GradeCenter in Blackboard for facilitation of assessment and providing feedback on a student's coursework, including video and audio feedback
- Availability of Q&A forums to provide information to students or to respond to questions about course content
- Maintaining virtual office hours for student academic support and monitoring
- Provision of direct instruction through the use of Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Zoom and MS Teams in real-time. Also allows for providing feedback, facilitation of group discussions and other instructional activities.
- Delivery of course outlines and syllabi that include academic activities and engagement criteria

The College recently activated the retention center in Blackboard as an aid in identifying students who may be at academic risk due to lack of participation and engagement. This information affords faculty an opportunity to communicate promptly and proactively with students to assist them in achieving academic success in the course.

iii. International Students:

SUNY Suffolk does not have international students living on-campus.

iv. Substantive Interaction: The College will engage students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion, while also including at least two of the following: a) Provision of direct instruction; b) Assessment and / or the provision of feedback on a student's coursework; c) Provision of information and / or responding to questions about the content of a course or competency; d) Facilitation of group discussion regarding the content of a course or competency; or e) Other instructional activities approved by the institution's/program's accrediting agency.

All of the college's courses have been designed with course learning outcomes that are the approved by the College's curriculum committee. The course learning outcomes are the basis from which the content of the courses are delivered and assessed in all modalities. To ensure that in the remote environment substantive interaction is occurring, there are a variety of instructional delivery methods to meet student needs. These modalities were offered during the fall 2020 semester and will continue to be offered in the winter session and spring 2021 semester and include online, blended, (restricted to accredited programs, performance and lab courses) real-time online, and combined online. All of these modalities utilize the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS) for instruction and Blackboard Collaborate, MS Teams and Zoom are available tools used for real-time interaction.

Course assessments are embedded into the LMS and faculty are encouraged to give weekly feedback and to use discussion boards for engaging students. Our Center for Innovative Pedagogy has offered numerous workshops and training opportunities for faculty in online and blended learning as well as instruction in how to utilize the tools provided.

As part of the Quality by Design program that many faculty participated in during the summer, the Community of Inquiry Framework is introduced to provide guidance on how to facilitate meaningful student interaction, create a social presence and provide opportunities for student reflection. Faculty are also required to conduct office hours remotely to further ensure that students can ask questions directly and express any of their course related concerns.

Additionally, our accredited programs have been in contact with their accreditors and notified them of any changes to instructional activities in the remote environment including the use of simulations, telework and other technology-based activities. In compliance with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) substantive change requirements, the College has provided the required notification of the programs that are not previously approved for the online modality but will be offered remotely in the spring 2021 semester. The College continues to strongly encourage quality pedagogical practice in its remote instruction and is planning on additional webinars and training throughout the spring 2021 semester.

v. The College will work with faculty in order to equip them with the knowledge and skills to support remote learning of students with disabilities. We shall remind faculty members that the standard process for requesting and providing academic accommodations would continue to apply, no matter the mode of instruction, while providing guidance and support to faculty to ensure equal access for our students with disabilities in all modes of instruction.

- The Blackboard Ally report titled "Engagement with Instructor Feedback" for the period 9/1/20 through 11/19/20, which details how often instructors fixed an accessibility issue, shows 704 fixes, for a conversion rate of 41.48%.

- The College recently created a virtual Faculty Resources page in its portal with a section dedicated to accessibility resources. Here faculty will find a guide to accessible document and media design, information on creating accessible word documents, and a link to a tool that will provide captioning for Blackboard Collaborate Ultra.
- The College offered a modified Quality by Design (QbD) course in two cohorts this summer with a dedicated module for Content Presentation and Accessibility. 206 faculty completed the course.
- The Office of Disability Services, in collaboration with the Office of Academic Affairs, created and distributed a Faculty Q&A document focusing on standard processes that apply to students who may need an accommodation regardless of the mode of instruction, as well as guidance on how accommodations are to be provided in the remote setting.

vi. The College will work to ensure all faculty and students have access to orientation/training opportunities to familiarize them with instructional technologies and remote pedagogies, especially those faculty for whom such technologies/pedagogies are new and for those students in vulnerable populations.

- The newly-created Faculty Resources page on the College portal contains recordings of recent professional development workshops. These include Blackboard Ally, Blackboard Annotate, Blackboard Basics I, Blackboard Basics II, Blackboard Collaborate Ultra, Using the GradeCenter and Creating Tests in Blackboard. Additional information found on this page includes links to Blackboard tutorials, a Zoom center, Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor training links, and information on current workshops.
- Students can access a student guide to Blackboard and a student orientation to Suffolk Online from the Blackboard log-in page.
- Blackboard Resources for Students links have been added to the College portal page.
- The College has created an Online Education page on its forward-facing webpage which contains technological and pedagogical information and resources for both students and faculty.

viii. The College will utilize instructional support provided by SUNY.

Suffolk County Community College campus communities utilize SUNY-provided instructional support by:

- Participation in workshops provided by SUNY Online during National Distance Education Week and throughout the year
- Regular attendance at the SUNY Online Teaching Community monthly meetings
- Membership and regular attendance at DOODLE meetings
- Membership on the SUNY Online Summit planning committee
- Adoption of Quality by Design for faculty professional development
- Repurposing of the SUNY Open Educational Resources (OER) badge series through a Blackboard community for instructional support
- Usage of COVID-19 SUNY-provided drop-in sessions for both students and faculty

3. Academic Calendar

A. Spring semester classes will be conducted as follows:

All courses will begin on January 25, 2021 and will be conducted remotely prior to February 1, 2021, with the exception of courses requiring face-to-face meetings to address accreditation outcomes. This is a very limited number of students, approximately 563 College-wide. This estimated number includes only on-campus students Jan 25th-Jan 31st. No off-site meetings.

Beginning on February 1, 2021, limited face-to-face courses will begin on-campus. These include lab courses and the continuation of the courses which began on-campus as of January 25. The total number of students on-campus as of February 1, 2021 will be approximately 4,377 College-wide. This estimated number includes all students meeting on-campus the first week of classes (563) plus all other face-to-face on-campus classes that meet on and after Feb 1st (3,814). No off-site meetings included.

B. Spring Break:

Spring break for the spring 2021 semester has been cancelled. Spring semester classes will extend through May 11, 2021 the new end date of the semester.

Presidents' Day will be observed in February and Professional Development Day (remotely for faculty only) will be observed in March. Those are not changes to our calendar.

C. Commencement:

Commencement exercises ordinarily occurring in May will be held in abeyance until further notification is received from SUNY and the State of New York. We will plan and message virtual commencements and/or safely distanced methods of recognition and degree dissemination for our graduates accordingly.

4. On-campus Activities:

A. Federal, State and Local Guidance

Any scheduled activities at SUNY Suffolk for the spring semester, including access to services and/or COVID-19 Surveillance testing shall be held in well-ventilated locations meeting CDC recommendations to improve ventilation.

We continuously assess and confirm that all cleaning protocols are in compliance with NYSDOH Higher Education Guidance and CDC guidance. All in-person activities will continue to follow the mandatory NYSDOH guidance for social distancing as well as the strictures of our approved campus reopening plan.

B. Face Coverings (Masks)

Face coverings (masks) must be worn by all members of the College community on campus at all times, including in classrooms, conference rooms and other spaces, even when six-foot social distancing exists. Exceptions to mask wearing include when students are (1) in their private, personal space, (2) eating meals on-campus while seated and social distancing is appropriately enforced, or (3) by themselves. Faculty and staff are likewise exempt when alone in their office or other space. Any request for a medical, religious, or other accommodation to this policy will be reviewed on an individual basis in accordance with relevant laws and College procedures.

C. Compliance

The Chancellor's Uniform Sanctioning in Response to COVID-19 Student Violations implementing uniform sanctions System-wide for COVID-19 related violations, remains in effect for the Winter term and Spring 2021 semester and will be enforced for non-compliers.

D. Mental Health Supports, Services and Referrals

SUNY Suffolk offers individual short-term mental health counseling to our students. All students receive weekly communications regarding opportunities to participate in remote group sessions focused on: art therapy, pet therapy, breathing and meditation, and yoga. Students can also request individual therapy sessions via our student portal to provide direct connection to the mental health counselors. The therapy sessions occur via web-conferencing.

In addition to the weekly outreach for group therapy and opportunities for individual therapy, all students will receive communication at the opening of the semester alerting them ReachOut SUNY, Thriving Campus, Middle Earth, Crisis Text opportunities including New York State Office of Mental Health and Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk. This information will also be communicated to faculty and staff to provide referral information.

As additional support, the mental health counselors will meet with academic departments to review ways to identify students in distress, and opportunities to connect the student to appropriate resources. All students, faculty and staff will also receive communication regarding the opportunity to participate in the QPR suicide prevention training.

We also provide resources and contact information for local and New York State mental health and COVID-19 support hotlines in our COVID-19 return-to-campus guidelines for students and in our COVID-19 return-to-work guidelines for employees.

5. Reporting Daily Dashboard:

We continue to diligently report daily COVID-related information to the SUNY COVID-19 Tracker in accordance with guidelines set forth by SUNY.

6. What Students Should Know: Transparency:

We prepared information for all students that includes: testing requirements; mandatory quarantine and isolation (with criteria for exemptions); uniform compliance; and the percentage of courses which will be offered in-person, and virtual so they can make informed decisions about their educational experience. This information includes links the Chancellor's Uniform Sanctioning in Response to COVID-19 Student Violations and additional Campus-specific sanctioning so they are aware of the penalties for failing to comply with all COVID-19 related testing and safety protocols.

SUNY Suffolk will coordinate a comprehensive communication plan to students to provide all information related to "What Students Should Know." The first aspect of the communication plan is to inform students of all class modalities, percentage of offerings in each modality, and clear explanation of the instructional delivery for the modality. The messaging regarding modalities began in November 2020 with email and text messages to students with the modality information and modality [video](#). All students will receive email communication regarding testing requirements, mandatory quarantine and isolation, and uniform compliance. The communications will be sent weekly throughout January. The information will also be provided via the coronavirus page of the college website (www.sunysuffolk.edu/coronavirus). Students will receive a link to this information via the website. Additionally, all students reporting to campus for classes will receive instructions regarding the testing requirements as related to their scheduled time on campus. The communication will be sent via email with

supported text messages and delivered in accordance with the testing schedule. This includes communication for entrance testing, three rounds of testing during the semester and exit testing. Student advisement support opportunities will be available to all students throughout the Spring 2021 semester. Students can select advisement via web-conferencing, phone, email, or workshops with limited in-person appointments. Faculty and counselors provide direct, individual student academic advisement. Priority registration for the fall 2021 semester begins on April 5, 2021. Students will receive communications starting on March 8, 2021 to direct them to the appropriate advising service based on their student status and major. Faculty and counselors provide direct, individual student academic advisement.