

Effective May 24, Missouri Southern State University will remove the on-campus face covering requirement for fully vaccinated individuals. The decision is based upon [updated guidance](#) from the Centers for Disease Control and is a huge step forward in our return toward normal operations. Individuals who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine are still strongly encouraged to wear face coverings in accordance with the [CDC guidance](#).

Being fully vaccinated is defined as being two weeks past the final dose of a two-dose vaccine or one dose of a single-dose vaccine.

All are welcome to continue to wear face coverings on campus and are encouraged to do so where recommended by the CDC. Each of us will work through this transition at our own pace, and with varying levels of comfort. Please be respectful and supportive of our Lion community during this time. More information is available on the [face covering page](#).

Vaccination [appointments are widely available](#), and the university strongly encourages all members of our Lion family to get a COVID-19 vaccine, particularly those residing in congregate housing. It is one of the best methods by which we can all enjoy the activities and personal connections we have so greatly missed.

“Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been informed by guidance from the CDC,” said Missouri Southern President Dean Van Galen. “As we look toward the fall semester we are excited to provide our students with an immersive academic and co-curricular experience that feels more normal.”

For the Fall 2021 semester, MSSU will continue its commitment to offering in-person instruction in addition to reviving in-person, on-campus activities. With that in mind, MSSU will be moving to a Modified Phase One of the [Contingency Plan](#) effective May 24. This will move us safely toward our goal of no modifications this fall.

Under Modified Phase One:

- Classes will continue face-to-face
- Masks/face coverings are not required for fully vaccinated individuals, but strongly encouraged for those who have not received the vaccine
- For individuals who are unable to be vaccinated, reasonable accommodations will be provided
 - Students may seek accommodations through the Student Success Center – Disability Services Office
 - Employees may seek accommodations through the Human Resources Office
- Mass Gatherings (50 or more individuals)
 - For outdoor mass gatherings, social distancing is encouraged
 - For indoor mass gatherings, masks are required
 - Mass gatherings for non-classroom activities require 6 feet of social distancing between participants
- External guests are allowed on-campus and must comply with the established guidelines for this phase
- Residence Life has available quarantine and isolation space
- The Beimdiek Recreation Center will operate at 75-percent capacity, offering normal programming
- Athletic activities will take place according to NCAA and MIAA guidelines

Missouri Southern will continue to closely monitor the status of the pandemic, as well as vaccination rates, throughout this spring and summer. Contingency plans are in place for how we will deliver courses in any [Phase](#) including if the state or the institution moves back to a heightened risk level.

In order to provide everyone a more traditional college experience in Fall 2021, it is important we continue to:

- Get vaccinated
- Maintain physical distance
- Wear face coverings (if not vaccinated)
- Keep classroom and office spaces clean
- Practice good hygiene
- Self-assess symptoms, and stay home when sick

“The collaboration and flexibility of our faculty, staff and students over the last 14 months has been inspiring,” said Van Galen. “Through our shared commitment, we kept our campus safe and continued our mission to educate and graduate knowledgeable, responsible, successful global citizens.”

The task force will continue to monitor campus data and inform students, faculty and staff of any further changes. If you have any questions about the university’s COVID-19 contingency plan or phased operations, [click here](#) or email covidtaskforce@mssu.edu.