



RIDER
UNIVERSITY

Resolved and Ready

■ **RIDER UNIVERSITY'S PLAN
FOR A SAFE, ENRICHING AND
ADAPTIVE ACADEMIC YEAR**

2020-21

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Introduction

The Fall 2020 Planning Task Force of Rider University has developed a set of comprehensive guidelines to reopen the campus with a priority on creating a safe and healthy environment for our students, faculty, staff, and community. This group is comprised of over 70 administrators, faculty, staff and students, serving on five working groups (Academics, Safe Return to Work, Student Experience, Legal Considerations and Finance & Enrollment). In short, these plans relied on comprehensive input and feedback from the broader Rider University community.

Though New Jersey is currently in Stage 2 of Gov. Murphy's "The Road Back" plan for reopening the state, Rider's Resolved and Ready plan was developed based on the assumption the state will move to Stage 3 prior to the start of the fall semester. As the nature of the coronavirus is ever-changing, the plan is an evolving framework of ideas and recommendations that may be adapted as required. Please view this document as an evolving framework of ideas and recommendations that incorporate best practices throughout higher education. Our ultimate goal is to balance our primary concern for the safety of all campus constituents with our mission of providing a vibrant, living, learning on-campus experience for the students we serve.

The details in this plan are subject to change, pending any new guidelines from federal, state or local levels in response to the evolving nature of the pandemic. Moreover, our plans will adhere to recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Lawrence Township Health Department, and any updated guidelines established by the Office of the Secretary for Higher Education in NJ. These plans have been outlined in accordance with The Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) standards that were issued for institutions of higher education as they begin restarting campus operations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. **As our knowledge and understanding of the COVID-19 virus continues to evolve, all relevant policies and plans will be updated as appropriate as additional information becomes available.**

Several key considerations have guided our fall planning as follows:

- » The University will adhere to all federal, state and local guidelines
- » The University will establish a relationship with a healthcare system in the area for consultation purposes with an infectious disease specialist
- » A policy for testing, screening and contact tracing will be established and in place prior to a full return to campus
- » The University will allow remote work and study to continue, to the extent possible, particularly for those faculty, staff and students with enhanced risk factors
- » Sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) will be made available for anyone who requires it; all community members must be expected to adhere to wearing disposable or cloth face coverings, particularly in classrooms, dining areas, exercise facilities and meeting, event and office spaces, as is mandated by these guidelines
- » Well-established cleaning and disinfecting plans will be in place
- » The University will clearly define social distancing expectations for all campus activities (e.g., classrooms, dining, residency, extracurriculars) and include facilities modifications, where appropriate
- » The University will clearly and regularly communicate plans and policies to the entire campus community; this will include creation of a "Resolved and Ready" website for posting all key information and updates

All faculty, staff, students and external visitors are expected to fully comply with the policies, protocols and guidelines outlined in this document as part of the Rider University community.

“Critical Policies and Procedures” Mandated by Executive Order No. 155

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 155, institutions must submit a restart plan to the New Jersey Secretary of Higher Education

that details policies and procedures that provide for the following health and safety measures within fourteen days of the planned implementation of our plans. Institutions should develop their plans with input from the campus community. Institutions' restart plans must be prominently posted on the institution's website and provided to students, staff, and faculty in advance of the anticipated date for implementation.

1. Training for students regarding COVID-19 sanitization and social distancing practices and protocols as a condition of resuming in-person classes

All Rider University students will receive training in the form of videos and/or printed materials for identifying COVID-19 symptoms, reporting of positive tests and/or exposure and expected personal hygiene behaviors while on campus, which will include:

- » Reporting any exposure to COVID-19 positive individuals; plans for a reporting process are underway
- » Reporting any COVID-19 positive test results
- » Daily monitoring for the following symptoms:
 - » Dry cough
 - » Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - » Fever
 - » Chills
 - » Muscle pain
 - » Headache
 - » Sore throat
 - » Fatigue
 - » New loss of taste or smell
 - » Numbness in toes

Healthy Hygiene Behaviors

- » Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- » Keep a supply of hand sanitizer, if possible
- » Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow
- » Regularly clean all high touch areas in your direct workspace
- » Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- » Maintain 6 feet of social distancing whenever possible
- » It is strongly recommended by the CDC that individuals get their annual flu shot when it becomes available in the Fall

2. Training for faculty and staff on appropriate sanitization and social distancing practices and protocols, as well as institutional policies and procedures developed to limit the spread of COVID-19

All Rider University faculty and staff will receive training in the form of videos and/or printed materials for identifying COVID-19 symptoms, reporting of positive tests and/or exposure and expected personal hygiene behaviors while on campus, as outlined above for Rider University students.

3. Use of face coverings for faculty, staff, students, and visitors, except when doing so would inhibit the individual's health

These policies will be strictly adhered to with one additional exception as follows. While in a classroom setting, faculty will not be required to wear a face covering when plexiglass shields are present on classroom podiums for faculty use, or if faculty choose to use a face shield to allow for a broader range of movement in the front of the class. Seating in classrooms will also be altered to allow greater distance between the instructor and the students in the class. Students will be required

to wear their face covering and faculty are empowered to enforce this requirement as they would any classroom rule that they might establish.

4. Frequent cleaning and sanitization of classrooms, residences, restrooms, high-touch areas and equipment and shared surfaces

Rider has engaged the services of an industrial hygienist, an architectural firm and a mechanical engineer to examine campus building cleaning protocols, room layouts and HVAC/ventilation, respectively.

Cleaning/Disinfection

Housekeeping staff will clean offices, classrooms, restrooms and residential spaces based on CDC guidelines for disinfection and Occupational and Environmental Safety Office (OESO) protocols. There will be increased nightshift deep cleanings and more frequent classroom cleaning. Facilities Management will also maintain anti-bacterial soap dispensers, paper towel dispensers, hand-sanitizer stations and sanitizing wipes throughout campus buildings and residence halls. Building occupants should also wipe down commonly used surfaces before and after use with products that meet the EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19 and are appropriate for the surface. This includes any shared-space locations or equipment (e.g., copiers, printers, computers, A/V and other electrical equipment, coffee makers, desks and tables, light switches, door knobs, etc.). All university vehicles for Athletics, Public Safety, Student Life, Science and Facilities will be frequently sanitized.

Mechanical and HVAC systems

These will be assessed and readied prior to reopening of buildings. Rider will follow the recommendations outlined in the "American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Position Document on Infectious Aerosols" dated April 14, 2020. For most campus buildings and areas, the HVAC system will operate under normal conditions. Where possible, additional ventilation and outdoor air will be increased. Filtration media will be increased to be a minimum of MERV-13 rated, if possible, for each system. Additional ventilation may be considered for certain higher risk areas, if identified. Temperature and humidity control will be maintained as normal. CDC guidance states that while HVAC improvements can aid in lowering the transmission of the virus, none of it can compare to physical distancing and wearing masks while indoors.

Elevators

Use of elevators should be limited where possible to avoid close proximity with others in a confined space. Those using elevators are required to wear a face mask or face covering regardless of traveling alone or with others. You should also avoid touching the elevator buttons with your exposed hand/fingers, if possible. Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers upon departing the elevator. Additional disinfecting protocols will be established to assist in maintaining a safe space.

5. Maintenance of adequate supplies, such as personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies

The University will stock face masks, hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes and will make these widely available to all members of the campus community. Certain areas on campus will be outfitted with plexiglass shields to maintain safe barriers between staff and student transactions. Specialized PPE requirements for the staff of the Health Center, Athletic Training, and Public Safety will be provided.

6. Continued remote instruction for faculty and/or students who are unable to participate in in-person instruction

Pending state and federal guidelines, fall classes at Rider will be delivered in three primary formats. This plan, agreed to by the AAUP, was developed to assure a safe and gradual return to the classroom, with a remote option for those with

individual circumstances and concerns.

Faculty will be given a choice of modalities for their course delivery, and students will be presented with a range of course delivery options, some of which they will be able to select, based on preference. Given that both faculty and students are being given free choice in these matters, we are satisfying the requirement for any individual who is unable to participate in on ground instruction.

Teaching modalities

Glossary of terms for instructional modalities:

- » **Hybrid** - Courses that have a mix of remote and in person components
- » **Remote** - Content delivered virtually, rather than face-to-face
- » **Synchronous** - Content delivered virtually through meetings at specific times
- » **Asynchronous** - Content delivered virtually without real-time interaction
- » **Online** - Primarily asynchronous; no required preset meeting time(s)
- » **Blended Remote** - A blend of asynchronous and required synchronous meetings; any synchronous meetings will occur at the designated course meeting time
- » **Fully Synchronous Remote** - Consists entirely of synchronous sessions; all course meetings will occur at the designated course meeting time
- » **In person** - Content delivered through face-to-face meetings; will follow social distancing guidelines and take place in de-densified classrooms/spaces

Teaching modalities for the fall semester are as follows:

- » **Fully remote**
 - » Entirely remote instruction (may be asynchronous, synchronous or a blend)
- » **Light hybrid**
 - » Students can expect up to 6 in-person meetings/semester with the rest of the course content delivered remotely (may be asynchronous, synchronous or a blend)
- » **Heavy hybrid**
 - » Students can expect 7 or more in-person meetings/semester with the rest of the course content delivered remotely (may be asynchronous, synchronous or a blend)
- » **Fully in person**
 - » Faculty selecting this option will be responsible for submitting a detailed contingency plan for remote or / hybrid instruction to their academic dean

All in person courses (whether fully on ground or a hybrid) will occur in classrooms and spaces that have been properly reorganized to accommodate proper physical distancing. These modalities will then be listed on the Enhanced Course Roster (ECR) Schedule of Classes for Fall to clearly provide students with the type of instruction to expect in each of their individual courses. Students who have already registered for the FA20 semester will have the opportunity to adjust their previous schedules to best suit their preferences.

Academic Calendar

In order to allow more instructional time during the warmer months, prior to the start of the anticipated flu season in the colder months, the semester will begin one week earlier than originally scheduled. Residential students will move out of the residence halls prior to Thanksgiving break and will have one additional week of remote instruction following the Thanksgiving week to maintain a required 13-week semester as follows:

- » **FA20 semester begins:** August 31, 2020 (thru 12 weeks)
- » **FA20 semester ends for on ground instruction:** November 24, 2020
- » **One week of remote instruction beginning:** November 30, 2020 (13th week of instruction)
- » **Final exam period:** December 7 to 11, 2020

J-term and SP21 semester

All courses in J-term will be delivered remotely, allowing students to stay home for an extended period during the winter months (from Thanksgiving to the start of the SP21 semester) where incidents of respiratory illnesses are normally heightened even under normal circumstances. Without a vaccine in place and/or a surge in COVID-19 cases, the SP21 semester may likely require similar considerations as those in place for FA20 (TBD).

Definition of At-Risk Campus Populations

According to the CDC, individuals with certain conditions may have a higher risk for COVID-19 infection.

Those conditions may include:

- » Adults 65 and older
- » People with HIV
- » Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- » Chronic lung disease
- » Diabetes
- » Serious heart conditions
- » Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- » Severe obesity
- » Being immunocompromised

Remote Work and Rider Staff

For staff members who have been instructed to return to work on-site, where other work arrangements are unavoidable, consideration for the following options should be taken by departmental leaders or division heads to maintain physical distancing best practices. Implementation of these staffing models will be made at the departmental or division level, and at the discretion of the supervisor.

- » Mission-critical, on-campus presence given priority
- » Continue expanded use of telecommuting, as available
- » A strategy that combines remote work, alternating days and staggered reporting and departing times to meet social distancing requirements

Staff members whose health condition falls within one of the CDC High Risk Categories or is pregnant may seek a Temporary COVID-19 Workplace Adjustment by discussing with Human Resources.

As on-site staffing increases, we will closely monitor and assess the potential spread of the virus, as well as existing policies and procedures to mitigate it. If localized outbreaks emerge, tighter restrictions and reduced staffing may need to be implemented again.

7. Social distancing in classrooms, residence halls, restrooms, and other areas across campus

Classrooms

Safe classroom spaces are being prepared that adhere to current state and CDC guidelines. We have a particular focus on specialized areas (e.g., science laboratories, music & dance instruction). There will be a reduction/reconfiguration of furniture in rooms to promote social distancing for spaces that do not already lend themselves to social distancing. The front row classrooms will be arranged so that it is an appropriate distance from the white/chalkboard, providing faculty with the ability to lecture away from their podium, without a face shield.

We are developing guidelines for traffic flow into and out of classrooms, stairwells, elevators and hallways in academic buildings, along with providing enhanced cleaning plans. We have also identified unique areas on campus to create opportunities to further deliver the academic curriculum while maintaining social distance (e.g., Cavalla, Mercer Room, BLC/

Yvonne theaters, outdoor spaces).

Library

Plexiglass shields will be installed in the Library at the circulation desk and virtual meetings and consultations with librarians will be promoted to reduce density.

Office Environments

Departments will assess open work environments and meeting rooms to institute measures to physically separate and increase distance between employees, other coworkers, and customers, such as:

- » Placing visual cues such as floor decals, colored tape, or signs to indicate to customers where they should stand while waiting in line.
- » Placing one-way directional signage for large open work spaces with multiple through-ways to increase distance between employees moving through the space.
- » Designating specific stairways for up or down traffic if building space allows.

If you work in an office, no more than one person should be in the same room unless the required 6 feet of distancing can be consistently maintained and/or other appropriate measures can be taken. If more than one person is in a room, masks/face coverings should be worn at all times. A mask or face covering is not required if you are working alone in a confined official office space (does not include partitioned work areas in a large open environment). Masks/face coverings should be worn by any staff in a reception/receiving area while others are present and potentially in close proximity. Masks/face coverings should be used when inside any facility where others are present and social distancing is not possible, including walking in narrow hallways where others travel and in break rooms, conference rooms and other meeting locations.

Restrooms

Limited maximum occupancy of restrooms will be posted based on the close proximity and number of sinks to ensure appropriate social distancing. Face coverings will be worn in all restrooms. Prominent signage will be displayed advising all occupants to wash hands thoroughly afterward using the facilities to reduce the potential transmission of the virus. Additional disinfecting protocols will be established to assist in maintaining a safe space.

8. Limitations on the number of students who may return to residence halls and restricted access to residential common areas

Residential Occupancy

We will maintain the option of double-occupancy and roommates for residential rooms unless otherwise required by the state of New Jersey. This is in alignment with available health guidelines which consider residence halls as family units. As we move forward with fall plans that reflect a variety of teaching modalities including hybrid delivery, in addition to the suspension of the residency requirement for freshman and sophomore students and relatedly suspending late cancellation fees, we anticipate a natural de-densifying of residential facilities which will promote the ability to socially distance and reduce the risk of the spread of infection. As room assignments are confirmed throughout the summer months, Residence Life will identify all vacancies and maximize access to single rooms. Additional sanitation efforts will be enacted in the residence hall common areas, with specific attention to residential common-area bathrooms, and initiating a regular sanitization schedule in suite and apartment bathrooms as well.

9. Designation of space(s) for separation of individuals residing on campus who display symptoms consistent with or have a positive diagnosis of COVID-19

Sick students

Rider is preparing for the likelihood of incidents of COVID-19 surfacing with our residential population. We have developed

a care plan for sick and potentially exposed students, which will include:

- » **Isolation** to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected.
 - » We will ask students who are able to return home to do so for the required isolation period before returning to their residence hall.
 - » For students who require housing (e.g. international or other domestic distance from home, or precarious home/living situations), we will establish isolation housing on campus (for up to 22 students; 12 at Lawrenceville campus and 10 in Princeton, if necessary). Care will include delivery of linens and food service and health care assistance, as required.
- » **Quarantine** to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms.
 - » When we become aware of students who have been exposed to COVID-19 through our contact tracing methods or other reports, the Student Health Center will evaluate the level of exposure and risk of that individual to determine next steps, which may include requiring students to either return home or relocate to a different residential facility for a period of 14-days (for up to 72 students). On-campus care will include delivery of linens and food service and health care assistance, as required.

10. A plan for on-campus transportation, which should include protocols for transporting sick students residing on campus to essential appointments as needed

Protocols for transporting sick students to essential appointments are being developed in conjunction with Public Safety.

11. A plan for the operation of research labs, if applicable

Rider University maintains a small number of faculty research laboratories. During the academic year, these are used at a minimal level by approximately 5-7 faculty members in the sciences, along with 1-2 undergraduate students working on independent research projects. These spaces are large enough to accommodate 6 feet of social distancing for up to 2 people at any given time. These requirements will be adhered to during the fall semester. As with our other policies, all individuals will wear masks or cloth face coverings at all times.

12. A plan for the operation of computer labs

Computer labs that are open during the fall semester will do so with enforced minimum spacing for social distancing, and may require use by appointment if space is restricted. Lab use is subject to change based on state regulations, sustainability of operations, and necessity. Laptops are available to those in need to offset lab use. Computer labs will be disinfected daily in entirety and both before and after use by individuals. Disinfectants will be made available for individual use. Face coverings will also be required while using computer labs. Sanitizing stations will be available and should be used before and after computer lab use.

13. Strategies for food service and dining operations to ensure compliance with all health and safety standards and applicable Executive Orders

When dining on campus, a face mask or covering must be worn until you are ready to eat and then you must replace it afterward. Campus eating establishments will be set up to allow for social distancing between each customer, server and staff, including lines and seating arrangements. All transaction areas will have shields and there will be no self-serve food. Menus and hours of operations will be adjusted accordingly. Additional outdoor seating will be provided as well as extended online ordering, coupled with enhanced grab and go options that may include delivery service. Individuals who are eating should not sit facing one another. If you are eating in your work or living environment (break room, office, residence hall), maintain 6 feet distance between you and others. Departments should remove or rearrange chairs and tables or add visual cue marks in employee break rooms to support social distancing practices between

employees. All surfaces must be wiped, including table, refrigerator handle and microwave after using in common areas.

14. A plan for intended resumption of athletics programs, if applicable

The Rider Athletics Return to Competition Task Force was formed to determine any additional specific health and safety guidelines to be followed as the University opens in the fall and student-athletes can return to athletic activity and competition. Rider Athletics recognizes that the protocols and guidelines for safe return to athletic activity we are implementing (including, but not limited to, screening/testing, sanitization of equipment and facilities, travel, social distancing, and hygiene) are meant to be evaluated and updated as needed as we seek to promote the health and safety of Rider student-athletes, coaches and staff as well as the entire Rider University community. Because of the frequent and rapid changes in best practices related to COVID-19, the guidelines we continue to develop will meet all federal, state, local, Rider University, Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference and NCAA guidance.

15. A plan for the operation of student services

Promoting health and well-being of students will remain a priority. Per American College Health Association (ACHA) guidelines, direct services for physical and mental health will remain primarily as virtual telehealth via Zoom. When appropriate to meet the clinical needs of students, in-person appointments will be available. The regularly offered education outreach on well-being will be extended in the fall to include specific emotional issues related to the pandemic and their educational situation.

We will continue to support students in need as they navigate difficult personal and home situations. Supports will include review of student cases by our student welfare committee, promoting student access to technology required for hybrid or remote learning, access to books, and availability of emergency funding. In anticipation of a possible increased number of students with food insecurities, we will plan to expand the resources available in the Rider Resource Pantry. These will continue to be available pre-bagged and available for pick-up by appointment.

As has been the practice during remote learning late spring and summer, all campus offices will be accessible remotely via email, phone and Zoom interfaces.

16. Strategy for study abroad programs and international travel, if applicable

Travel (domestic and international)

Non-essential travel should be avoided, especially to areas of heightened COVID-19 activity (hot spots). Individuals are encouraged to visit the CDC's webpage for the latest guidance on travel.

Study Abroad

Decisions about students studying abroad will be determined based on CDC guidance and travel ban limitations. Two upcoming short-term study tours (to Taiwan and Ireland) are being postponed or cancelled.

17. Performance of health screenings for faculty, staff, students and visitors, and education regarding self-monitoring for symptoms

Rider University holds a Wellness Fair every fall semester in late October for all faculty and staff. This event includes an opportunity to have a flu shot. Given the current pandemic situation, we have rescheduled the on campus flu shot component of this program to be in September this year. This event will include free seasonal flu shots (recommended by the CDC), and health screenings and self-monitoring education for COVID-19 symptoms.

18. Commitment to working with local and State officials, including the local health department and local office of emergency management, to share the components of the restart plan and revise same as may become necessary

We have established relationships with the following local healthcare provider and have both shared our restart plans and sought her advice/guidance on our procedures and protocols.

Carol Chamberlain, Health Officer- Lawrence Township Health Department

19. Establishment of COVID-19 testing guidance and contact tracing protocols developed in consultation with local health officials and in line with existing State and federal health privacy statutes and regulations. At a minimum, such protocols should include a mechanism to maintain a log of students, faculty, staff and visitors to facilitate contact tracing, and the reporting of any instances of COVID-19 to local health officials.

In consultation with the aforementioned healthcare expert we are developing protocols for contact tracing and seeking guidance on the appropriate use of testing.

We are exploring our current healthcare management system, Medicat, to potentially both manage health screening and contact tracing. Within this system, there is an ability to create a separate COVID-19 clinic that contact tracers could use for both students and faculty and staff. This system includes a dashboard function that demonstrates that an individual has completed their "Symptom Questionnaire" each day.

We are also creating expectations for the campus community to perform self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms, including temperature checks.

We are exploring a partnership with a local biotechnology company located in Hamilton, NJ, Medical Diagnostics Laboratory (MDL), for COVID-19 testing, when circumstances dictate for individuals.

We are already adhering to guidelines for reporting positive COVID-19 cases to the Lawrence Township Health Department (LTHD) and will continue to do so as they are responsible for collecting this data for the Township. We are establishing a plan with Carol Chamberlain to account for students who are sent home for isolation, as this will involve a coordinated effort between LTHD and the health departments of the students hometown.

Guidelines for reporting COVID-19 positive cases for:

Faculty or Staff: If the employee indicates any of these COVID-19 symptoms and/or exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual, the supervisor must require that the employee stay home, and the employee should seek guidance from their healthcare provider. The employee must follow the established guidelines for remaining off campus, and consult with a physician before returning. Sick employees, regardless of the nature of their illness (e.g., non-COVID-19), must stay home.

Students: Students must report their COVID-19 symptoms and/or exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual to Rider's Student Health Center. A detailed protocol for reporting is currently being prepared that will include what students are expected to do, which may include getting tested and quarantining or isolating at home, when possible, or on campus. Sick students, regardless of the nature of their illness, must stay home.

20. Institutions must minimize gatherings where possible. Whenever institutions cannot minimize gatherings, they must ensure such gatherings are in compliance with current state limits.

In-person meetings are discouraged and should be held virtually under most circumstances. If a meeting must be in-person, it must be in a large room with attendees six feet away from each other and/or wearing cloth masks.

Break rooms/lunchrooms/lounges and other gathering areas used by the community members will be closed for gathering. Lunchrooms may still be utilized for food preparation, but only with one individual in the room at a time.

Campus programming and student organization engagement will be planned in the fall in ways that accommodate all students. In-person programming will be complemented with live simulcast of programming for students that cannot attend due to attendance restrictions when applicable. Outdoor event spaces will be activated as needed for events to have proper social distancing and/or virtual event watch areas while maintaining programming for students. Club and intramural sports and e-sports will be presented with adherence to local, state and national guidelines, or virtually when applicable.

Visitors who are not directly related to the individual's or unit's work are not allowed.

External Events on campus will be reduced and evaluated on a case by case basis.

