FAQs: Graduate and Professional Schools Community Agreement

Q: If I sign the Community Expectations agreement, am I waiving any claims I might choose to bring against Dartmouth should I contract COVID-19 from an on-campus exposure?

The Community Expectations do not ask students to waive future claims against Dartmouth. They do, however, require students to acknowledge that even with all the steps being taken to create an environment in which the health and well-being of students are of great importance, Dartmouth cannot prevent the risk of contracting COVID-19 associated with being on campus and engaging in Dartmouth activities.

Q: What happens if I don’t sign the agreement? Am I prohibited from returning to campus until I do? Can I continue being an enrolled graduate student at Dartmouth?

Students who do not sign are not permitted to have access to campus buildings and facilities but could work with their administrations to complete their coursework and/or research remotely to the extent possible. Students who find themselves in a situation in which sufficient progress remotely may not be feasible should discuss possible alternatives with the program director and/or the Student Affairs office at their respective school.

Q: It is clearly stated that the Community Expectations are subject to change, but does signing this document mean that I agree to changes that haven’t been made yet? How will changes be communicated?

Dartmouth retains the right to make changes to the Community Expectations throughout the year as circumstances change, including considering advice from federal, state, and local authorities and the conditions on campus. You remain responsible for complying with those changes. Changes to the Community Expectations will be communicated through email to your dartmouth.edu account, as well as being posted on the Dartmouth COVID-19 website. If any students wish to rescind their agreement with Dartmouth, they may do so at any time by informing and then receiving confirmation from the Student Affairs Office at the respective school. Doing so will revoke any privileges to be physically present on campus and use associated facilities.

Q: How might these policies change throughout the year?

Changes would generally follow advice from federal, state, and local authorities, as well as geographic rates of COVID and conditions on campus. For example, if local positive-test rates exceeded 5%, the general public health guidance for any institution would be to increase restrictions. Currently, New Hampshire has a positive test rate of 1.9% and Grafton County is at 0.8%. This low rate is among the critical criteria that permit some on-campus programs to resume. It is also possible that, based on conditions on campus in response to our current efforts, some of the restrictions put in place at the opening of the academic year could be relaxed, provided rates remain low or decrease.
Q: If housemates don’t sign this, how will this affect the housemates who do?

Compliance with Community Expectations is expected of each individual graduate and professional student and will be assessed individually. For any student who feels unsafe due to the activities of housemates who do not follow public health or Dartmouth guidelines, please bring your concerns to the attention of the Dartmouth Expectations Compliance Team (DECT). The DECT has representation from all graduate and professional schools to ensure the prompt and consistent application of standards across all graduate and professional students.

Q: Will I be forced to accept the vaccine, when it’s available, if I feel that it is not yet fully safe?

It is possible that if there is an FDA-approved vaccine that Dartmouth believes would improve the health and well-being of you and others on campus, failure to take it might mean you cannot continue to have access to campus buildings and will need to continue your education remotely. Medical students who see patients will need to follow the vaccine policies of the hospitals and health systems where they see patients, or take a leave of absence until they can continue their clinical studies. Existing medical exemptions for vaccine requirements may apply, and should be discussed with Dartmouth College Health Services.

Q: Is there an appeal process for sanctions imposed as a result of reported violations to the Community Expectations policy?

The decisions of the DECT are final. Its actions are intended to be prompt and capable of addressing violations effectively without creating a disciplinary record for the student. The DECT may not impose sanctions of suspension or separation. If serious misconduct occurs where such sanctions may be appropriate, the student will be referred to the disciplinary process for their school, which may include access to any appeals that may be a part of those processes.

Q: Can data collected for the purposes of contact tracing be used in DECT or disciplinary actions to prove violations of the Community Expectations?

The Health Service will not disclose health information for disciplinary action. This includes health information provided to the Health Service through screenings, testing, and contact-tracing conversations. As always, the Health Service clinicians at Dick’s House are available on a confidential basis, as are individual student primary care providers and state health officials. We are committed to protecting confidential communications between health care providers and the individuals who consult them, as well as encouraging everyone to follow all medical and state guidance to help reduce the risk of spread and transmission.

Q: How will graduate and professional students be affected by other Dartmouth groups if they do not comply? For example, if we are able to manage ourselves and undergrads are not, are we going to find that we're still not able to progress toward more-relaxed regulations?

This is certainly possible, as restrictions will increase or decrease based on local disease rates and the conditions on campus overall. Through robust testing and case management, methods that were
unavailable in the spring, our intention is to use more targeted restrictions going forward to the extent we can do so while maintaining the health and safety of the community.

**Q: What activities does Dartmouth allow students are while under the constraints of the Community Expectations standards?**

Dartmouth is establishing standards and conditions which we hope will allow the activities of the institution to return to pre-COVID levels over time. However, there are many variables that will affect this goal, some that are within Dartmouth’s control and some that are not. The contribution of students, faculty, and staff in behaving in ways that limit the transmission of COVID-19 is an essential part of this shared objective.

**Q: Are there any benchmarks or milestones that students can look to in hope as we strive for a new normal?**

If case rates remain as they are now a month or two after campus has opened for the fall term for undergraduates, graduate, and professional students, the level and type of permitted activities may increase. If disease rates worsen, there could be an increase in remote instruction, depending on the rates.

**Q: Does the College have jurisdiction over what students do in their off-campus housing? How does Dartmouth intend to enforce such strict guidelines (e.g., two-visitors policy) all around the Upper Valley?**

Yes, because of the potential impact of off-campus behavior on members of the on-campus Dartmouth community, including fellow students, faculty, and staff, Dartmouth is taking the off-campus behavior of students particularly seriously during the global coronavirus pandemic. This expectation for off-campus behavior falls under the Community Expectations, the Honor Code, and/or policies of the different programs and professional schools. However, as the Community Expectations and DECT process make clear, it is our hope that in bringing students’ conduct into alignment with the Community Expectations, we can do so without the necessity of creating a disciplinary record for students. Where the behavior is severe or the student is unwilling to abide by the standards put into place for their protection and the protection of the community, the matter will be referred to the disciplinary process of each school for review and resolution.

**Q: How does Dartmouth define a “guest” to off-campus graduate housing?**

A guest, as referred to in the Community Expectations document for graduate and professional students only, means overnight guests, and the term applies to individuals who are not currently Dartmouth College students.

**Q: What is the difference between the two-person hosting rule and the event guidelines?**

As mentioned above, the two-person guest policy applies to overnight guests only. The event guidelines are intended to establish standards for gatherings of fewer than 10 individuals.

**Q: Does the gathering limit of fewer than 10 people apply to both impromptu gatherings and College-sponsored events? Does it apply equally to indoor and outdoor gatherings?**
Yes, the gathering limit of fewer than 10 people applies to all gatherings, sponsored events and impromptu gatherings, both indoors and outdoors. Whenever possible, gatherings should be held outdoors.

**Q: What are the conditions for having overnight guests in the residence halls?**

Due to the risks associated with congregate living settings, overnight guests are not allowed in residence halls.

**Q: Where do sports fall under the Dartmouth event guidelines? If I play soccer, rugby or Tripod, are those Dartmouth sponsored and thus we can’t have more than nine people? Or, if I receive no money from Dartmouth, am I free to follow state rules?**

Group sports and other recreational activities, outside of structured classes or practices scheduled by Dartmouth, are allowed for groups of nine people or fewer provided participants can keep 10 feet of physical distance between themselves and others at all times. Activities that do not allow for 10 feet of distance between individuals (e.g., pick-up basketball games) are not allowed at this time. Participants must wear a face covering at all times unless engaged in a workout or activity where a face covering may make it difficult to breathe, and they must follow cleaning and disinfecting guidance for shared equipment. These terms apply whether or not the team or activity is considered Dartmouth-sponsored.

**Q: Does the TSA online screening need to be completed every day or every day we come to campus?**

The Temperature Self-Assessment (TSA) screening needs to be completed each day you plan enter Dartmouth campus buildings — before coming to campus — even if you are making a quick trip in to pick up materials (for example). If you live on campus, you have to complete the TSA screening every day even if you stay in your room or suite for the day.

**Q: Do graduate students who have stayed in New England (as their home over the past several months and/or traveled to other New England locations recently) need to quarantine upon their return to the Upper Valley? Are these requirements different for graduate students who live on-campus versus off-campus?**

- All students living in Tuck residence halls on campus must quarantine in their residence for 14 days upon initial arrival and upon return from any travel outside of New England.
- All graduate and professional school students living in off-campus residences, including Sachem Village, South Street, and North Park apartments, must meet a series of requirements before accessing Dartmouth campus buildings and must follow the quarantine requirements for their state of residence.
- Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) guidance allows medical students to report to DHMC for clinical rotations. However, medical students are expected to meet a series of requirements before accessing Dartmouth campus buildings and follow the quarantine requirements for their state of residence outside of DHMC.
Q: For those of us living off campus, should we be following the quarantine guidelines of our state, or something more restrictive?

Following travel or upon arriving in the Upper Valley, students and employees should follow Dartmouth’s guidance regarding accessing Dartmouth buildings and their state guidance outside of school/work, whichever is more restrictive.

Q: Can someone avoid a 14-day quarantine by taking a COVID-19 test in which they test negative?

New Hampshire state guidance does not allow testing to shorten the 14-day quarantine period, thus one may choose to get tested at any time on their own, but they must still quarantine for 14 days if indicated based on travel or a known exposure. You must wait 14 days before accessing Dartmouth buildings and follow your respective state guidance outside of work/school.

Q: Is there a plan for ongoing COVID testing throughout the year?

Yes, approximately 25% of the student body (undergraduate, graduate, and professional students, both those living on campus and off campus) will be tested each week. Approximately 25% of the faculty and staff who are needing to come to campus will also be tested weekly.

Q: Can you explain why we must continue to quarantine even after taking two negative tests?

Because the incubation period of the virus can last up to 14 days, someone can still be incubating the virus and can test negative and go on to develop symptoms as late as 14 days after their last possible exposure. Waiting for the full 14 days to pass is critical to our efforts to identify any instances of COVID-19 among members of our community.

Q: If I test positive for antibodies, do these restrictions get modified?

The Community Expectations and campus-wide restrictions apply to all students. Because the duration of protective antibodies following COVID-19 is unknown, we can’t be sure when someone might become susceptible again. Therefore, for everyone’s safety, the current expectations and restrictions apply to all.

Q: What are the expectations if you’ve been in the Upper Valley for the entire term but your partner travels outside of New England? Do you have to quarantine when they return?

Household members who are not Dartmouth students or employees should follow the quarantine guidance of the state in which they live. The Dartmouth student or employee should stay apart as much as possible from any household members who are quarantining due to recent travel, including sleeping and eating separately and, ideally, having separate bathrooms during the quarantine period.